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edited by Enrico Grazzi

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SEZIONE MONOGRAFICA

An Interdisciplinary Approach to English as a Lingua Franca

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An Interdisciplinary Approach to English as a Lingua Franca

The central theme of this special issue of Status Quaestionis revolves around the controversial nature of English as a lingua franca (ELF), a topic that has gained momentum in language research ever since the process of globalization has turned English into the primary international language in fields as diverse as business, science, technology, education, leisure and tourism.

Indeed, the steadily growing number of academic publications, journals, books, seminars and international conferences dedicated to ELF shows that a thriving area of academic studies has developed over the last twenty years.

The aim of this issue of Status Quaestionis is to engage in the current scientific debate with contributions from parallel disciplines, to stimulate an improved understanding of some of the most relevant aspects to take into consideration, like constructivism and the emergent nature of ELF, the transcultural and multilingual dimension of ELF, education for intercultural citizenship via ELF, the contribution of corpus linguistics to BELF studies, and the pedagogic implications of ELF in ELT.

Altogether, this special issue of Status Quaestionis contains a selection of thirteen articles, written by international scholars from around the world, whose research provides more insight into the complex nature of ELF. Their contributions have been grouped according to four thematic areas: a)

Reflections on Language Development; b) ELF and Second Language Education; c) BELF; d) ELF and ELT Around the World.
The following is a brief presentation of each paper.

Reflections on Language Development

Alessandra Chiera, Ines Adornetti, and **Francesco Ferretti** (University of Roma Tre, Dept. of Philosophy). *Learning and Evolutionary Constraints on the Development of Languages*. This paper contributes to the debate about English as a lingua franca (ELF) by addressing some aspects related to the broader topic of language acquisition and evolution. Important features of the emergence of ELF are linked to the 'bottleneck of communication' generated by the sensory and memory processing constraints involved in language production and comprehension. A usage-based perspective on language suggests that the bottleneck provides a constraint that affects the language system both at the processing and acquisition level. Such a tendency might be responsible for the emergence of a global language that serves a communicative purpose. A systematic use of ELF can be explained within an integrated framework that focuses on the contribution of more general processes of language acquisition, change and evolution.

Steve McCafferty (University of Nevada, Las Vegas College of Education) *Inhabiting Another Language (and Culture?).* This article explores Vygotsky's ambition to transform his work into a dynamic, interfunctional perspective of personhood centred on consciousness. He focused on the unity of cognition and emotion at the psychological level. Human consciousness, as considered from the perspective of sociogenesis, necessarily focuses on how people come to experience the eco-social world around them or *Perezhivanie*. How people come to inhabit both a language and culture in development was a primary focus for Vygotsky and has application to coming to inhabit multiple lingua francas in one way or another according to domains of interaction and other contextual considerations.

Kurt Kohn (University of Tübingen, Institute of English Languages and Literatures) *Foreign language teaching from a pedagogical lingua franca perspective*. The author first discusses the pedagogical value of ELF communication from a social constructivist perspective. The key problem in English language teaching (ELT) is not that learners might be exposed to some kind of standard native speaker input variety; rather, the problem is that they are generally not allowed to create their own version of it. In order to provide learners with opportunities for practising authentic and cooperative agency with a sense of ownership and emancipation, ELT needs to go beyond the face-to-face classroom by integrating intercultural virtual exchanges in which speaker-learners of different linguacultural backgrounds use their common target language English as a pedagogical lingua franca.

ELF and Second Language Education

Michael Byram, Durham University (Emeritus Professor in the School of Education). *Applied Linguist, Ethnographer, International(ist) Citizen - Perspectives on the Language Learner*. The author considers three ways of envisioning language learning/teaching and the language learner, and the disciplines or theories on which they are based: a) the language learner as 'applied linguist'; b) the language learner as ethnographer; and c) the language learner as cosmopolitan/intercultural citizen. One criterion for determining which approach to take is the notion of 'internationalism', a reaction to nationalism and chauvinism which language teaching is well-placed to support. Another criterion is that language learning should have educational value.

Enrico Grazzi (University of Roma Tre, Dept. of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures) *The Social Role of ELF to Enhance Intercultural Communicative Competence and Intercultural Citizenship in ELT*. The aim of this paper is to explore the possibility of devising a blended approach to English language teaching (ELT) whereby the reality of ELF and the development of learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and intercultural citizenship 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 age of globalisation and consider its potential as a pedagogical lingua franca to enhance education for intercultural citizenship.

Eduardo Negueruela-Azarola (Universidad de Navarra) *Work and Play in Second Language Learning and Teaching: On Metaphors, Teaching, and Poets*. A look at the field of second language teaching reveals how both the language we use to construct second language learning and language classrooms and the orientation of the teaching practices we implement in formal educational settings are based on an implicit and metaphorical identification of learning activity with work activity. Based on Vygotsky's notion of play as a developmental activity, and inspired by Lantolf's proposals on the importance of play in second language internalization, it is argued that, in some instances, it may be significant to substitute work for play as a leading metaphor to promote conceptual development and understand learning in the language classroom. Play is an essential part of second language development, and then from this perspective, ultimate attainment in language learning is not only about fluency, accuracy, or complexity but also and more significantly about creativity, artifice, and transformation.

BELF

Paola Vettorel (University of Verona, Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures) *Communication Strategies in BELF: Implications for Business English Language Teaching*. In English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF), Communication Strategies aimed at enhancing explicitness and checking comprehension, such as requests for clarification and repetition, or paraphrasing and reformulation, are seen as an essential skill, together with business know-how, clarity of message and explicitness. This paper aims at contributing to this research area by exploring how BELF findings can be taken into account in terms of materials development and classroom practices that are oriented at fostering the development of effective communication in international business contexts.

Valeria Franceschi (University of Verona, Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures) *Achieving Mutual Understanding in the Global Workplace: a Questionnaire-based Survey of BELF Users' Perceptions and Practices.* This study aims at contributing to the investigation of workplace interactions by exploring BELF users' perceptions and practices through a questionnaire-based survey. The survey focuses on both oral and digital interaction, analyzing these contexts separately due to their inherently different nature. Respondents identify what they perceive to be the essential aspects of successful communication and those that on the contrary may lead to mis- or non-understanding. The survey also aims at shedding light on which strategies users employ when faced with potential challenges.

Paola-Maria Caleffi (University of Verona, Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures) *Building Rapport in BELF Communication: Solidarity Strategies in Business Emails.* In the globalized market, business professionals use emails to communicate with customers, suppliers, and even colleagues who may be based in any part of the world, employing English as a business lingua franca (BELF). Based on a corpus of business email exchanges amongst

BELF users, this paper proposes a classification of 'solidarity strategies' (Köster 2006) aimed at building and nurturing rapport in email communication despite the pressure of getting the job done.

ELF and ELT Around the World

Ying Wang, and Yang-Yu Wang (University of Southampton, CGE Centre for Global Englishes) *A Critical Review of 'English' in China's English Education: How far can Chinese Teachers Embrace ELF?* The authors of this article consider classroom teaching in the educational context where language policy interacts with language perceptions and practices, seeking to understand the extent to which Chinese teachers can embrace ELF. With a focus on teacher agency, the study explores language policy, classroom practice and teacher perspectives on English as a subject matter of language education. The findings point to the interaction between teacher agency and policy constraints. The article ends with the suggestion that the approach to English in China's education policy should be reconsidered and that the debates on ELF in relation to Chinese speakers are necessary for possible changes in education policy.

Ana Paula Martinez Duboc (São Paulo State University, Brazil), and **Sávio Siqueira** (Dept. of Germanic languages, Federal University of Bahia) *ELF Feito no Brasil: Expanding Theoretical Notions, Reframing Educational Policies*. The authors present a brief state-of-the-art on recent ELF research in Brazil, followed by an analysis on how such theoretical framework echoes in the recently launched Brazilian National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC) (Brazil, 2018). In particular, the authors take into consideration the place of ELF within the very epistemological conflict that emerges out of a standardized, top-down curriculum framed by a more fluid notion of language. In line with Bakhtinian thought, which acknowledges the dialogical and heteroglot nature of language, this paper advocates in favor of such epistemological conflicts, be them within the ELF research field or in ELF-based educational policies.

Enric Llurda, and **Josep Cots** (Universitat de Lleida, Departament d'Angles i Linguistica) *PLURELF: A Project Implementing Plurilingualism and English as a Lingua Franca in English Language Teaching at University*. This article presents the research conducted at the Cercle de Lingüística Aplicada of the Universitat de Lleida during the implementation of a project on plurilingualism and English as a Lingua Franca (PLURELF) in the teaching of an ESP course at university level. It stands on the hypothesis that the adoption of a plurilingual approach in English language teaching produces more positive results with regard to language development, intercultural awareness, and learners' attitudes than traditional monolingual approaches, thus challenging the deeply rooted idea in the theory and practice of ELT that a monolingual native-based perspective is needed in order to effectively teach the language.

James D'Angelo (Chukyo University, School of World Englishes) *The Reality of ELF in Japan*. This article provides background information on English language attitudes and education in the Japanese context. It considers the value of ELF-informed views for the Japan context, both from educational and business/professional perspectives. Efforts to promote ELF-informed programs will be investigated. It also explores areas of continued resistance to ELF and other pluralistic paradigms in Japan. A new all-EMI major to start from April 2020 at the author's own university—targeting international students from Asia/Pacific— will be outlined in some detail. Finally, the article takes into consideration the challenges which remain to be faced for ELF in Japan.

I would like to conclude by saying that I am deeply grateful to Prof. Irene Ranzato, from the University of Rome Sapienza, for proposing me to be the guest editor of this issue of Status Quaestionis dedicated to ELF studies. I would also like to express my gratitude to the journal's Scientific and Editorial Committees for supporting this publication.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all the contributors who have joined this important publishing initiative. It has been an honour for me to cooperate with them and accomplish this task.

Last, but not least, a special thank you to the reviewers of this issue of *Status Quaestionis*: Michaela Albl-Mikasa, Will Baker, Yasemin Bayyurt, Andrew Blair, Luis Guerra, James Lantolf, Edoardo Lombardi Vallauri, Massimo Marraffa, Inmaculada Pineda, Franca Poppi, Nicos Sifakis, Svetlana Vetchinnikova.

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Learning and Evolutionary Constraints on Linguistic Variability[1]

Abstract
In this paper, we offer some insights that might contribute to the debate about English as a lingua franca (ELF) by addressing some aspects related to the broader topic of language acquisition and evolution. Specifically, it is our claim that some features related to the emergence of ELF can be explained in reference to the 'bottleneck of communication' generated by the sensory and memory processing constraints involved in language production and comprehension. We will refer to the usage-based perspectives to language (e.g. Tomasello 2003) according to which the bottleneck provides a constraint that affects the language system, both at the processing and acquisition level, leading to predictive and rapid learning processes that, in turn, cause an item-based language change: those linguistic forms that are easier to learn and more efficient from a communicative point of view will tend to spread and supplant those that are not functional to communication. On an evolutionary timescale, a similar adaptation process can shape the languages in accordance with a tendency to simplification and uniformity. Such a tendency might be responsible for the emergence of a global language that serves communicative purpose. In the light of these considerations, a systematic use of ELF can be explained within an integrated framework that focuses on the contribution of more general processes of language acquisition, change and evolution.

1. Introduction

Human languages are both systematically structured according to regularity and highly variable. These features - linguistic universals and language variation - make human language an extraordinary communication system in nature, which has inspired the attempts of many scholars to construct a

[1] For the specific concerns of the Italian Academy, we specify that AC wrote sections 2, 3, and 4; IA wrote sections 2 and 6; FF wrote sections 1 and 5.

theory that would explain the emergence of a device with similar characteristics. The discussion on linguistic universals and variation involves several disciplines and may be addressed by different perspectives (e.g. Jakobson 1941; Whorf 1945; Greenberg 1963; Chomsky 1965; Good 2008; Evans and Levinson 2009; Fitch 2011; Corballis 2017). The issue of English as a lingua franca (ELF) – irrespective of the debate about its status, which is an open question (e.g. House 2003; Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2011) – can be viewed as a specific case of the broader topic of language uniformity and variation. Starting from the methodological assumption that exploring the topic of language change is a way to address the issue of ELF, in the present paper we focus on the processes that might have affected linguistic variation, leading to the widespread and systematic use of a global language. Specifically, it is our claim that a focus on language processing, acquisition and evolution – at the level of ontogeny, glossogeny and phylogeny –[2] might shed light on the constraints and pressures which have fostered aspects of uniformity in the language structure.

In this respect, the notion of 'bottleneck of communication' – the fact that users have to face several limitations in the acquisition and processing of language because of the immediacy and poverty of the input – provides an interesting framework under which language change can be investigated, since it has been stated to affect language structure across different timescales (Christiansen and Chater 2016b). The notion of bottleneck offers crucial indications in support of the idea that language undergoes changes which are motivated by needs of learnability and communicative efficiency. In this regard, by referring to the usage-based models of language (e.g. Bybee 2010; Tomasello 2003), we will argue that the main properties of the linguistic structures can be explained with reference to cognitive and pragmatic constraints which pertain to domain-general processes operating in areas other than language. We discuss against this background how language learning and processing are constrained by the bottleneck of communication and the consequences for the issue of language evolution, both at the phylogenetic and historical level, a topic we consider of utmost importance to understand the mechanisms responsible for a global language to emerge.

[2] While 'ontogeny' refers to the developmental processes responsible for language acquisition during the lifetime of a single individual, 'glossogeny' and 'phylogeny' concern the level of evolution: glossogenetic processes are the historical forces that drive language change in a speech community, whereas phylogenetic processes concern the biological adaptations that have fostered the evolution of linguistic communication in the human species (see Tomasello 2003, 282).

2. Views of language change

Although the variability of human language is widely recognized without any particular objections, the debate on the reasons why languages change through time is very lively. Within traditional linguistics, research on variation has mostly focused on synchronic descriptions of language without taking into account the potential role of historical development. This was largely due to the predominance of Saussure's perspective in historical linguistics, and his theory of the arbitrariness of the sign (Saussure 2001), according to which there is no intrinsic connection between a given signal and its signification, i.e. there is nothing in the properties of a particular sign that makes it suitable for the representation of a signification, and vice versa. The principle of arbitrariness establishes a dichotomy between synchrony and diachrony, in so far as at any given moment a language can be defined by the social agreement between the users rather than by historical evolution. Thus, it is possible to study language without investigating the causes behind linguistic signs, to the extent that "the sole object of study in linguistics is the normal, regular existence of a language already established" (Saussure 2001, 72). On the one hand, the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign pushes towards the invariability of the sign, namely "tends to protect a language against any attempt to change it" (Ibid., 73). Since there are no reasons to explain why a certain sign is more suitable than another to express a signification, then a system of arbitrary signs lacks the basis to change itself. On the other hand, however, variability is a fact: Saussurean linguistics does not deny that signs change. To account for this characteristic of signs, the reference is again to the arbitrary nature of language: since signs are arbitrary, then a language "can be organized in any way one likes, and is based solely upon a principle of rationality" (Ibid., 78). In this respect, variation we observe in language could be explained in reference to a chance model of linguistic change (see Butters 2001). Indeed, if a vague general principle of rationality is enough to describe why languages change through time – there are no functional or intrinsic causes underlying this change – then it is plausible to claim that human languages are the way they are because of accidental processes.

Over recent years, the structuralist tenet of arbitrariness has been challenged and rejected by many theories of language. A claim that unites these theories is that human languages do not vary at random and arbitrarily, but are highly conditioned by certain constraints, which have an impact on the possible structure a language may exhibit. By adhering to this claim, in the present paper we discuss some aspects and processes which may explain the conditioned nature of variation in natural language, and how they might be responsible for current phenomena such as ELF. Specifically, in what follows we refer to two different accounts dealing with the notion of variability: the Chomskyan generative linguistics and the cognitive-functional linguistics. Both these accounts make reference to a notion of conditioned variability; however, such a notion is framed in a very different way. While the Chomskyan account considers variation a superficial expression of deeper universal factors, the functionalist perspective – mainly, the usage-based models – views variability as a condition to attain commonalities across languages. It is proposed that the Chomskyan account lacks adequate explanatory power to account for phenomena such as ELF since it treats variability as an epiphenomenon of a priori conditions, which do not provide for aspects of uniformity related to the emergence of lingua francas. Conversely, the usage-based models, by stressing a process of convergence between languages due to constraints emerging in the repeated use, might offer insights on the debate about the causes behind ELF.

The Chomskyan theory of language and the related biolinguistic paradigm (Chomsky 1972; 2007; Moro 2016; Pinker 1994) consider the options of language variance to be determined by a set of innate constraints provided by our genetic endowment, termed Universal Grammar (UG) (Chomsky 1965). UG contains all the information needed to combine grammatical categories and give rise to any particular language, even before hearing an utterance of that language. To this extent, UG coincides with language universals, considered as structural principles permitting the acquisition of all human languages.

The main argument in favor of an innate UG is the argument from the poverty of the stimulus (Chomsky 1972; Crain and Pietroski 2001), the claim that the linguistic environment largely underdeterminates the human knowledge since it does not provide sufficient information to induce every feature of language. This gap between the poor data contained in the input to which the children are exposed and the complexity of grammar they develop can be overcome by assuming the existence of innate structure-dependent rules guiding language acquisition. Since these rules represent the prior basis of language learning, namely they are the essential component of the human language acquisition device, the core of human language has to be identified in the UG. It is worth highlighting that the formulation of the argument from the poverty of the stimulus has been subjected to some criticisms and considered questionable and epistemologically weak. For example, Sampson (2005) has examined corpus data to analyze spontaneous speech and found that the various arguments for UG rest on false premises or logical fallacies. Similarly, by analyzing many classical cases used by the Chomskyan tradition to corroborate the argument, other works have shown that they have no empirical confirmation and offer no support against data-driven learning (e.g. Lombardi Vallauri 2004; Pullum and Scholz 2002). In spite of such criticisms, the argument from the poverty of the stimulus still remains a statement of the generative theory.

Despite the several different perspectives included in the generative paradigm, a major assumption is widely shared by these theories: the idea that the faculty of language is most successfully investigated in terms of an ideal formal system employed by an 'ideal language user' (Chomsky 1965). This assumption is tied to the Chomskyan competence–performance distinction. The linguistic competence is the 'knowledge of language', namely the abstract internalized system of rules possessed by the idealized speaker–hearer; the term performance refers to the ways in which this knowledge is put to use (i.e., the actual use of language) in real situations by the actual speaker–hearer. The competence–performance distinction is closely related to a further dichotomy, that between 'I-language' and 'E-language' (Chomsky 1986). The I-language describes the abstract computational principles underlying grammar processes "that are only manifested in very refined and rarified phenomena" (Boeckx et al. 2009, p. 197). In this view, the primary function of I-language is thinking itself as language is not primarily 'designed' for communication but rather for thought (e.g. Chomsky 2010). The languages we speak are referred to as external languages, or E-language, which are secondary to I-language. From this perspective, the processes and mechanisms involved in language use do not affect the core component of I-language, which is the very object of the linguistic theory and the real challenge (see Corballis, 2017 for a discussion).

These considerations have important implications for the question of language variation and change. In this view, in fact, despite considerable variation in superficial expression, languages differ very little as they rely on a deeper structure that is invariant across languages (UG allows large but highly constrained parametric variation across languages). To this extent, the issue of variability is treated as the question of the biologically driven constraints which place limits on variation, by making a conceivable language possible or impossible (Moro 2016). In other words, the generative model connects linguistic variability to the question of universals. As Pinker (1994, 232) points out, "[a]ccording to Chomsky, a visiting Martian scientist would surely conclude that aside from their mutually unintelligible vocabularies, Earthlings speak a single language". Human languages seem different, but they are not.

As we have argued that the issue of ELF can be considered a specific case of the broader topic of language change and variation, from what we have said so far it appears that the generative model does not represent a good option to investigate ELF (in the Chomskyan model there is no room for the slowly convergence on a global language as language rests on a biological invariant). If one is interested in the study of ELF, an alternative view of variability seems to be necessary. A move in this direction might be that of replacing the Chomskyan innate perspective with a model of language centered on use, in which variability can be viewed as a constraint for the emergence of linguistic universals. Within the usage-based models, actual language use is the primary shaper of linguistic variability. As we will show, the repeated use leads to an intrinsic uniformity of the linguistic structures motivated by certain constraints, which might account for the cognitive and pragmatic causes behind lingua francas and, thus, might explain some aspects of ELF. Before going into details of the question of linguistic variation and change in the usage-based models, a brief overview of the main theoretical assumptions of these accounts is needed.

3. Usage-based approaches of language

Since the '70's, different traditions – from pragmatics to cognitive linguistics – have strongly rejected the idealization of language in terms of an abstract system, emphasizing the social dimension in which language takes place (e.g. Grice 1975; Sperber and Wilson 1986/95; Tomasello 2008). The socially oriented models determine a significant shifting in perspective compared to Chomsky's model: language is viewed as a cooperative form of intentional joint action (Clark 1996), which involves the speaker's ability to adjust expressions according to the recipient's point of view. Indeed, a linguistic interaction is primarily characterized by the speaker's meaning, a complex communicative intention aimed to achieve a certain effect on the hearer's mind (Sperber and Wilson 1986/95). This way of looking at language stresses the role of a double pragmatic ability – on the side of both the speaker and the hearer – to engage with other minds, with the aim of using the right sort of evidence to allow the audience to determine a contextually appropriate interpretation of linguistic expressions.

The main consequence of the fact that language is socially embedded is that it cannot be studied independently from the contexts in which it is used and from the social cognitive abilities it involves. These claims represent the major assumptions of the functionalist usage-based approach to linguistic communication (e.g. Bybee and McClelland 2005; Croft 2001; Givón 1995; Tomasello 2003). In a pragmatic perspective, the functionalist hypothesis holds that a language evolves because grammar is usage-based (Tomasello 1998; 2003) or data-driven (Beckner et al. 2009), rather than a formal, static and autonomous system. The specific underlying tenets of this assumption are that meaning is use, and structure emerges from use (Tomasello 2009). From this point of view, the language structure has to be considered as a dynamic system that is continuously changing by virtue of psychological processes involved in language use (Elman et al. 1996; Tabor et al. 1997). Within a similar perspective, the pragmatic dimension primarily characterizes language as a broader communicative process, both ontogenetically and phylogenetically, with grammar being derivative.

The implications of the pragmatic approach for theories of language acquisition are rather revolutionary if compared to the generative approach. Indeed, a crucial claim of this approach is that the structural dimension of language, which is acquired in the process of language use, can be learned and transmitted through cognitive and social learning skills that are not specific to language. This view is in sharp contrasts with the Chomskyan idea that language acquisition and processing are driven by a language-specific computational system (UG) that is independent from other cognitive processes. For example, Tomasello (2003) has classified the socio-cognitive infrastructure necessary for the acquisition of language into two main general sets of cognitive skills: intention-reading and pattern-finding. Intention-reading concerns the functional dimension of communication, including skills that are necessary to convey and interpret the interlocutor's intentions; pattern-finding is related to the ability to find patterns of regularities within the input, and construct abstract schemas. Other scholars have identified further cognitive processes that might affect the emergence and development of linguistic structures through the general mechanisms of chunking and categorization (e.g. Bybee 2010; Christiansen and Chater 2016a). These are, in any case consistent with Tomasello's model. The assumption that similar general-domain capabilities can guide the acquisition of language from item-based to abstract constructions is basically proved by the fact that these mechanisms are more powerful than it was previously assumed. Recent empirical findings have indeed shown that people are extremely good at detecting distributional and usage patterns (Bod 2009; Monaghan et al. 2005; Saffran 2001). For example, Diessel (2007) has found that frequency has an impact on the processes of language acquisition, with children learning a probabilistic grammar grounded in their experience. In this grammar, indeed, categories and structures are associated with statistical values determined by their frequencies in language use. Moreover, the ability to probabilistically extract grammatical constraints from the input through processes like structural analogy seems to concern the level of language production and comprehension (for a review, see Ibbotson 2013).

Taken together, these various findings have been used to propose that the fundamental argument for the existence of an innate UG – the argument from the poverty of the stimulus – is inconsistent since we are able to account for language acquisition and processing by appealing to sophisticated statistical learning skills involving categorization, analogy and distributional learning (Lieven and Tomasello 2008; Tomasello 2003). The acquisition and use of complex grammatical constructions can be, therefore, explained with reference to biases that are not language-specific in a perspective that integrates language within other cognitive skills. This leads to a theory that sees language as a complex adaptive system resulting from the interaction between cognition and use, where interaction represents the major source of variation. Differently from the Chomskyan tradition, universals of linguistic structure can be conceived of as deriving from the fact that people are endowed with the same set of general cognitive processes (Tomasello 2003) and variation is the norm as consequence of the dynamics involved in language use.

These psychological insights from usage-based approaches open the way for an integrated approach of linguistic variation which, through the specific focus on the dimension of language change, takes account of the interdependency between different timescales of language. A first timescale pertains to the production and comprehension of face-to-face language: here language variation can be generated as a consequence of the processes entailed in the elaboration of language as described in the pragmatic perspective. The second timescale concerns the propagation of linguistic variants in a speech community: here certain variants are selected giving rise to specific language structures. In the next section, we will explore the relationship between language change and the level of language processing and acquisition (the first timescale). In the final section, we will investigate the implications of language change as regards language evolution (the second timescale). Both these interdependencies are addressed by using the notion of bottleneck of communication as a case study.

4. The bottleneck of communication

The usage-based perspective aims to take seriously the question of why we observe a conditioned variation in language structure. By taking linguistic change as a test case for exploring the issue, this perspective places emphasis on the specific notion of bottleneck of communication (Deacon 1997; 2003; Kirby and Christiansen 2003; Smith, Brighton and Kirby 2003), which represents a test bench for the critique of the poverty of the stimulus argument and, as we will argue, is also useful to investigate the issue of ELF. The notion pertains, indeed, to the fact that language users have to face several limitations when they are engaged in language learning and processing. There are two major ways of intending the notion of bottleneck: first, in terms of cognitive constraints and second, in terms of pragmatic constraints.

The cognitive sense of the term concerns the immediacy of language processing, namely the fact that language involves restrictions on storage and computation. In fact, in face-to-face conversation, people should process and keep track of information that is incredibly fast with limited sensory-motor and memory systems (Levinson 2000). This Now-or-Never bottleneck (Christiansens and Chater 2016a) determines that new incoming information can interfere with the previous input unless it is processed immediately. Christiansen and Chater (2016a) argue that such cognitive constraint has significant consequences, for example it can account for phenomena such as the abundant use of prediction and the continuous attempt to reduce cognitive effort in language production and comprehension, and the nature of what is learned in language acquisition.

As for the pragmatic sense of the bottleneck, it refers to the functional pressures of communication, which pushes towards informativity (Croft 2013; Lewis and Frank 2016). From this point of view, language serves a specific communicative function, with interlocutors striving to maximize the communicative success while minimizing energetic cost (Sperber and Wilson 1986/95).

In the usage-based approach, both the cognitive and pragmatic constraints exerted by the bottleneck impact on language change. To explain this impact, there have been identified two major causes (see Croft 2013): the child-based theory suggests that change is driven by a 'transmission bottleneck' during first language acquisition; a further hypothesis points to the pragmatic constraints and proposes to consider language change as a by-product of the individual speakers' attempts to achieve socio-communicative goals in language use. The former hypothesis implies a focus on the relation between language change and language learning whereas the latter emphasizes the relation between language change and language use.

4.1 Language change and language learning

The fact that language processing is highly constrained by the limits of human memory and sensory systems, which act as information processing bottlenecks, has important implications for the issue of language acquisition and transmission. To face the immediacy of language, children are also required to go through a transmission bottleneck, concerning the fact that languages cannot be transmitted in totality from one individual to another since the number of possible linguistic expressions of any human language is potentially infinite, whereas a child must acquire it on the base of the experience of a limited number of utterances (Smith, Kirby and Brighton 2003). The transmission bottleneck is clearly an aspect of the poverty of stimulus and, according to a long-standing hypothesis, represents a strong constraint for the features a language structure may exhibit.

Within child-based theory, the learning and transmission processes by which children acquire language are the privileged contexts where language change occurs (Christiansen 2016; Deacon 1997; 2003; Kirby and Christiansen 2003; Lightfoot 2010; Smith, Brighton and Kirby 2003). In this view, language change takes place through the change of generations from parents to children, based on the fact that the processes by which children analyze the linguistic data are prone to error. In this respect, Deacon (1997, 109) highlights that:

> Languages are under powerful selection pressure to fit children's likely guesses, because children are the vehicle by which a language gets reproduced. Languages have had to adapt to children's spontaneous assumptions about communication, learning, social interaction, and even symbolic reference, because children are the only game in town. It turns out that in a curious sort of inversion of our intuitions about this problem, languages need children more than children need languages.

The assumption underlying a similar hypothesis is that the learnability of a code is a fundamental constraint on the nature and development of that code: those linguistic structures that are easier to learn have an advantage over those that do not meet the learnability criterion. To support this claim, child-based theory of language acquisition has considered the parallels between child language and the diachronic evolution of language. The main changes and developmental patterns which are shared by child language and language history concern sound and morphology. For example, child language includes a pronunciation that is often deviant from that of adults, with a general tendency to reduce and simplify the phonetic structure of words (e.g. Menn and Stoel-Gammon 1994). Further, children tend to overregularize irregular morphology, as in the case of verbs (e.g. Maratsos 2000). Both these phenomena have been observed to characterize also diachronic change. But the strongest evidence in support of the hypothesis that language acquisition is the source of diachronic change comes from various computational approaches that, in recent years, have produced significant data in research on language development (e.g. Brighton et al. 2005; Kirby and Christiansen 2003; Smith, Brighton and Kirby 2003; Smith, Kirby and Brighton 2003). These data show that some general learning mechanisms involved in adults' language processing as well as in children's acquisition process can explain many features of language structure. In this direction, an influential proposal by Christiansen and Chater (2016a), based on a statistical model, suggests that sensory and memory constraints of the Now-or-Never bottleneck lead the language system to build chunks as quickly as possible at increasingly abstract levels of representation, from sound-based units to words to discourse-level representations. This Chunk-and-Pass processing is responsible for the compression processes realized in language production and the predictive processes we observe in comprehension, with people anticipating upcoming information to construct an immediate and incremental interpretation of the global meaning of an expression (e.g. Ferreira and Patson 2007; Otten and van Berkum 2008).

The implications of this model for the timescale of language acquisition are striking. Child learning is constrained by the need of constructing and integrating the right chunks in the 'here-and-now'. The child, rather than "identifying the right grammar (...) [as] a 'mini-linguist', [is] a developing language user, acquiring the necessary skills to comprehend and produce language" (Christiansen 2016, 55). These skills comprise predictive abilities and statistical learning abilities – such as pattern-finding – which are directed to the task of tracking and interpreting linguistic information incrementally (Borovsky, Elman and Fernald 2012; Tomasello 2003). This, in turn, determines an item-based language change, which implicates the proliferation of linguistic forms that are more learnable.

Overall, the emphasis on the constraints of learnability and transmissibility implicates a view that considers the relation between language change and language acquisition in contrast to the Chomskyan tradition: the usage-based approach proposes a 'user-friendly' and 'child-friendly' theory of language (Fernald and Marchman 2006), which emphasizes the role of a wide range of cognitive and social capabilities from different domains. Importantly, in this view, the poverty of the stimulus becomes a huge advantage since it permits the language system to organize itself by exploiting these general capabilities, and enrich its own structure. To this extent, it is the poverty of the stimulus to solve the problem of the poverty of the stimulus (Zuidema 2003), because the restricted richness of input enables children to adapt language to their acquisition procedure, leading to the emergence of linguistic structures (see section n. 3.).

It is worthwhile to highlight that, within the usage-based approach, the reference to the timescale of language acquisition to explain language change and, consequently, language variation is not uncontentious. Some authors argue that there is no evidence that the imperfect learning process of children can explain diachronic change (e.g. Diessel 2012; Croft 2000, 2013). In fact, along with similarities, language acquisition and language history show many differences, with language changes being different from errors made by children learning their first language (Croft 2013). Moreover, the innovations introduced by children do not seem to be maintained into adult language (Kerswill 1996). These considerations open the way for an alternative hypothesis, which considers adults as instigators of diachronic change when they are engaged in language use (Diessel 2012; Croft 2013; Lewis and Frank 2016). Although the two hypotheses are not mutually exclusive, the latter proposal focuses, to a greater extent, on the communicative pressures generated by the interactional dimension of language on the dynamics of language change.

4.2 Language change and language use

Along with the cognitive constraints, the bottleneck of communication implies pragmatic pressures generated by the communicative function of language. In fact, an essential characteristic of language is that it is cooperative in nature: it implies the sharing of information by participating to a form of intentional joint action (Clark 1996; Grice 1975; Tomasello 2008). According to a strictly pragmatic perspective, considering language as a form of joint action implies that speakers are constantly engaged in constructing hypotheses about the mutual communicative intentions starting from the contextual clues and the expectations about the interlocutor's behavior (Sperber and Wilson 1986/95).

In accordance with this way of intending language, it is possible to consider some aspects related to the dimension of language use as pressures shaping linguistic systems. In this regard, Lewis and Frank (2016) claim that the tendency to compression derived from the sensory and memory limitations is counterbalanced by a tendency to informativity derived from the communicative dimension of language. The way people adjust their language output in order to be understood represents an example of this tendency. In this respect, by extending the pragmatic account of language processing to the acquisition timescale, some experimental research shows that the resolution of reference in word learning depends on the use of contextual informativeness (e.g. Frank et al. 2009; Frank and Goodman 2014). Children make predictions about word meaning by combining knowledge of speakers' communicative goals and assuming that they are using language informatively to achieve these goals. Namely, their predictions are constrained by an implicit assumption of informativeness. Similarly, considering the impact of speakers' adjustments to the aim of being more informative, research (e.g. Piantadosi et al. 2011) has shown that along the timescale of language evolution words that are less predictable in their linguistic context are longer, suggesting that the most communicatively efficient code for meanings is one that shortens the most predictable words while more surprising words are longer. This would therefore increase time for the listener to process them. This is consistent with the fact that communication involves two opposite functions: to minimize the cognitive costs (i.e. the speaker needs to produce easy and thus compressible forms), whereas the hearer needs to receive forms that are moderately ambiguous and thus not compressed (Lewis and Frank 2016). Different features of the language structure can, therefore, be explained as the result of an equilibrium between the memory constraints and the pressures to communicate informatively.

Another aspect of language use that has been claimed to shape linguistic structures is the tendency to reuse recently heard forms (Pickering and Garrod 2017; Smith et al. 2017). This phenomenon of convergence of language structures at multiple levels – i.e., phonological syntactic, and semantic – in face-to-face conversation has been termed 'alignment' (Pickering and Garrod 2004). Accommodation to approximate one's speech to that of the interlocutor can be useful as reduce the variability of the output of language users during communicative interaction. This might stabilize communication, given that: "deviations from the 'usual' way of conveying a particular idea or concept are (...) taken to signal a difference in meaning [while] part of the communicative utility of language comes from its conventional use, i.e., the fact that interlocutors tacitly agree on what words and constructions mean" (Smith et al. 2017, 11).

A work by Fehér et al. (2016) that directly tested the impact of alignment in participants learning a variable miniature language found that reciprocal priming leads pairs of participants to converge on a system that lacks variation. Regularization seems to reflect a strategic reduction in unpredictable variation promoted by the communicative context. Pickering and Garrod (2017) have put forward the idea that a similar mechanism of interactive alignment might have stabilized long-term routines in conversation, guiding automatic transmission across the community. In this regard, automatic community alignment can be viewed as a mechanism for driving language change. Overall, these considerations suggest that interaction may be considered as a powerful mechanism for reducing unpredictable variation, which might contribute to explain how language use constraints change in natural language.

The reference to the bottleneck of communication seems to provide important insights into the nature of language change, suggesting that biases in statistical learning interact with language use to shape the structural properties of language. A perspective of language as a system evolving on the basis of this double constraint has implications for the issue of language evolution: the notions of usage-based language and linguistic structure are claimed to be closely connected also when considering the path leading to a uniformity in the linguistic codes along the timescales of phylogenetic and historical evolution. Addressing the issue of language change at these timescales may thus be particularly relevant for the topic of ELF.

5. Implications for language evolution

Before discussing the implications of the usage-based perspective on the topic of language evolution, it is critical to make a clarification about the term 'evolution', which involves at least two senses. On one hand, the term is traditionally used in reference to the evolution of language as a human-specific trait (e.g. Boeckx 2011; Fitch 2010; Pinker and Bloom 1990). In this perspective, investigating the evolution of language means exploring the biological prerequisites of the linguistic competence at the phylogenetic level. On the other hand, some scholars interested in diachronic research have recently started using the term evolution to refer to language change, thus, to the historical evolution of languages (e.g. Bybee et al. 1994; Croft 2000; Ritt 2004). It is clear that these two kinds of evolutionary approaches to language are asking questions which are completely different, although intertwined. However, within the usage-based account, a particular concern is that, by using the level of language acquisition as link between the diachronic change and the phylogenetic evolution, these two timescales overlap. Specifically, the process of phylogenetic evolution collapses on the process of language change, on the basis of a uniformitarian principle (e.g. Smith 2008) which assumes that the processes underlying language change in the early stages of emergence correspond to the same processes underlying the change of languages at the present stage: "there is no sharp distinction between language evolution and language change: language evolution is simply the result of language change writ large (...), constrained by processing and acquisition" (Christiansen 2016, 57). Although the idea of a strong correspondence between the evolution of language and the evolution of languages presents many problematic aspects (for a discussion, see Ferretti 2009), for the purpose of the present paper, it is not worth going into the details of this criticism.

This said, speaking of evolution in the case of languages may appear bizarre: can language changes be treated as phenomena undergoing evolutionary pressures as in the case of biological systems (see Steels 2017)? By adopting an organistic view of language inspired by the Darwinian tradition, the usage-based approach considers languages as 'organisms' that have evolved under selective pressures from learning and processing mechanisms (Christiansen and Chater 2008). From this point of view, it is possible to identify parallels between linguistic and biological change, in so far as language change is considered as involving an evolutionary process based on cultural mechanisms of replication and variation. Differently from biological variation, in fact, languages are claimed to change too rapidly to be the product of a biological adaptation to language (Christiansen and Chater 2008; Deacon 1997; Hurford 1999). In a perspective that views language as an integrated evolving system in its own right (Beckner et al. 2009), understanding what is being selected in language evolution requires looking at the acquisition and processing levels. As we have shown, indeed at these levels critical constraints – the bottleneck of communication – act by shaping the structure of language. The hypothesis of the usage-based approach is that the impact of these constraints extends to the longer timescale of language evolution (Christiansen 2016).

This hypothesis has led to the development of a computational model of language evolution — the Iterated Learning Model (ILM) — that explores the cultural transmission process generation by generation (Brighton, Kirby and Smith 2005; Brighton, Smith and Kirby 2005; Hurford 2002; Kirby and Hurford 2002). This kind of simulative model employs sets of agents, each of which learns their behavior by observing the behavior of others, in a situated environment. To this extent, in these simulations as in real learning processes, the population of agents has to face the poverty of the stimulus resulting from the fact that learners experience only some of the infinite possible linguistic expressions of the system – they have to go through a transmission bottleneck. The linguistic behavior of agents emerges from the cultural pressures generated by the process of repeated use and acquisition from generation to generation (Smith, Kirby and Brighton 2003). The results of this approach show that fundamental properties of language arise from the process of repeated acquisition and use. For example, Brighton, Smith and Kirby (2005) have shown that compositionality is the product of the bottleneck transmission, which pushes the system to become more complex to compensate for the scarce quantity of information available in the initial holistic system. In fact, when simulations are characterized by the absence of a bottleneck of transmission, compositional structures do not tend to emerge. In other words, language systems change over time to overcome the transmission bottleneck and achieve advantages at the level of learnability. The learning-based constraints can be described on the basis of a general model of sequential learning as observed in the Chunk-and-Pass processing: Chunk-and-Pass processing at utterance level constrains the acquisition of language by the individual, which, in turn, influences the way a language evolves through learning and use by groups of individuals, on a historical timescale. The same mechanisms involved in language processing and acquisition are exploited in language evolution, through repeated cycles of learning and use (for a review, see Dediu et al. 2013).

Starting from the results of ILM, the usage-based model derives two main related conclusions: on the one hand, in an evolutionary perspective, the bottleneck of communication represents a solution rather than a problem (Lotem et al. 2016); on the other hand, there is no reason to suppose a biological device specific for language. Smith, Kirby and Brighton (2003, 385) bring together the two aspects:

> This result is therefore surprising. The poverty of the stimulus motivated a strongly innatist position on language acquisition. However, closer investigation within the iterated learning framework reveals that the poverty of the stimulus does not force us to conclude that linguistic structure must be located in the language organ – on the contrary, the emergence of linguistic structure through cultural processes requires the poverty of the stimulus.

In this perspective, the poverty of the stimulus is the engine that drives the evolution of language itself, since language adapts through the stability of generalizations that can be transmitted through the learning bottleneck. As a result, the constraints necessary to solve the problem of the poverty of the stimulus are the product of a cultural process of iterated learning. By considering language as a complex adaptive system able to generate structure itself, ILM rejects the necessity to bring into play innate domain-specific constraints determining language structure, and account for language change by referring to the same general biases observed in the acquisition process, such as those that underpin sequential learning. On an evolutionary timescale, these biases can lead to a basic uniformity. Indeed, if at the individual level the bottleneck of communication has been considered to produce an item-based language, which favors those linguistic forms that are easier to learn and more efficient from a communicative point of view, at the population level we might expect that linguistic patterns that can be processed through the bottleneck will tend to proliferate and spread in the population (Christiansen 2016). From this point of view, long-term processes of language evolution can be described as leading to linguistic patterns that are easy to acquire, produce and understand.

Overall, the evolutionary framework allows to embed language structure in a broader context, accounting for some of its aspects in terms of adaptations to the constraints involved in language use and learning. Such constraints exerted by the bottleneck determine that languages evolve to become easier to perceive, to learn and master, developing specific features that are optimal for this purpose (Smith et al. 2017).

6. Implications for the ELF debate

To what extent might the processes described here be responsible for current phenomena such as ELF? It is our claim that considerations deriving from the usage-based framework might be of particular interest for investigating some aspects of ELF (see also Alptekin 2013). Specifically, we argue that the tendency to uniformity that constraints the evolution of language variation and change because of the bottleneck of communication might be considered as a key element in the debate on ELF. In lingua franca situations, in fact, English makes communication possible between persons not sharing a common code. In this context, successful communication strongly depends on the cooperative enterprise of all speakers, who are engaged in the effort of making themselves understood. In a pragmatic perspective, a similar scenario requires participants to continuously adjust and negotiate their utterances for the specific need of ensuring mutual intelligibility (see section n. 3.). The notion of intelligibility represents the degree to which a piece of information is efficiently exchanged between different speakers (Munro and Derwing 1995) and is highly consistent with that of informativity, which we have identified as a major pressure constraining structural change in language use. But ELF users have to rely to lexical resources that are very high in terms of cognitive load to a larger extent compared to native speakers who adopt a wide range of automatized routines. To this extent, they are continuously engaged in the challenge of making the linguistic form mutually intelligible and communicatively efficient while trying to minimize the processing load. Thus, a plausible hypothesis might be that ELF variants are the product of the relationship between complex pragmatically and cognitively driven constraints involved in the intercultural use of English.

The focus on intelligibility fits with the hypothesis that speakers tend to select linguistic forms and constructions that are more readily understood by their interlocutors. In this usage-based perspective, the frequency of use of contextually guided ELF forms, irrespective of their compatibility with the rules of English as spoken by native speakers, may affect the routinization of those forms, so that they become regular variants of a new language (see Alptekin 2013). Under this view, the constraints exerted by the bottleneck of communication, which act both at the individual and population level, can be considered as a cognitive cause of the emergence of lingua francas such as ELF. A systematic use of ELF can be explained with reference to features that might make it easier to learn and process and, therefore, more efficient once it is adopted.

7. Conclusions

In this paper, we have focused on the issue of linguistic variability, from the point of view of cognitive and pragmatic constraints. From a usage-based perspective, we discussed the role of the bottleneck of communication in the acquisition, processing and evolution of more stable and uniform codes. We showed how it contributes to item-based language change: those linguistic forms that are easier to learn and more efficient from a communicative point of view will tend to spread and replace those that are not functional to communication. The adoption of a similar perspective on language change can provide some insights into the reality of ELF, as long as it may explain some aspects of its emergence within an integrated framework that combines the intertwined contribution of language acquisition, processing and evolution.

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Semantic Consciousness and Inhabiting a Languacultural Community: A Sociocultural Approach

Abstract
Vygotsky's final ambition (see Veresov and Moc 2018) was to transform his previous work into a dynamic, interfunctional perspective of personhood centered on consciousness. What he was able to accomplish before his untimely demise focused primarily on the unity of cognition and affect. Human consciousness, as considered from the perspective of sociogenesis, necessarily involves how people come to inhabit the ecosocial world around them, moving from the social to the psychological. For Vygotsky, language is transformed in this process, becoming primarily semantic in inner speech, and together with *perezhivanie*, or how a person experiences an event/environment (interpretence), mediates consciousness. How we come to inhabit a language, culture, languaculture, or extemporaneous community, whether consisting of speakers of many languages or just one, necessarily involves our associations with language and experience at the intrapersonal level in formulating shared levels of interpretence interpersonally as well.

1. Introduction

From a Vygotskian perspective, how people come to inhabit their cultural-historical contexts through sociocultural activity was a key aspect of Vygotsky's overall research. By the end of his career, Vygotsky believed that human consciousness is mediated through the interconnection of the external and internal worlds and principally through the intersection of language and experience (Zavershneva 2014, 76). Vygotsky's way for understanding this process was the "genetic method," which focuses on psychological development as it unfolds both macro- and microgenetically across time, which led him to posit the "law of psychological development," that development first appears through social interaction and then psychologically through internalization, a transformative process, leading to the dynamic interaction of society and the individual. However, because his empirical research primarily focused on children and adolescents, it is important to emphasize the capacity for agency that typifies adults (see Arievitch 2017), who although driven by societal and psychological needs to belong, also exercise control over the degree to which such needs encompass different aspects of their lives.

Vygotsky (1987) accorded language at the semantic level, in particular, a pivotal role in consciousness both with regard to establishing concepts and in relation to personality, although he recognized that other forms of sign and cultural artifacts also mediate consciousness activity. Additionally, he incorporated emotional development (*perezhivanie*) as a key aspect of his theorizing, for example, as involved in self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-consciousness as mature psychological functions. Vygotsky (1987) also drew a connection between motivation and *perezhivanie* as an aspect of the future in the making in relation to the affordances and constraints that a person experiences both socially and with regard to personality. For example, some people grow up in a world in which the use of multiple languages is experienced, where there are lingua francas that function for use in specific communities as associated with domains of activity, or where the intermixing of two or more languages in the form of code-switching is an everyday aspect of language use. As such, semantic consciousness in relation to interacting with others in meaning/sense-making, and how we come to inhabit a languaculture (or not), is an area within the field of applied linguistics worthy of attention.

2. Semantic Consciousness

Vygotsky had recognized the importance of language in consciousness early in his career. His dissertation, *The Psychology of Art* (1971), was finished by 1925 and at one level concerns the quale of cultural-historical consciousness in exploring subjectivity as produced through different genres of creative writing. Also, in 1925 Vygotsky explicitly called for an end to the dualism of subjectivist and objectivist accounts in psychology through "materializing" consciousness, methodologically, which he argued was necessary for the study of all psychology (Vygotsky 1999). He was able to accomplish this materialization to some degree himself, if still far from achieving a theory of consciousness, his final pursuit (Zavershneva 2016).

When Vygotsky returned to the study of consciousness in the 1930s, he looked to Spinoza in attempting to construct a theory of emotions (Vygotsky 1997b), but was unable to do so. However, he formulated his concept of *perezhivanie* in the last year of his life (Vygotsky 1994) as a unit of consciousness in relation to emotional development. *Perezhivanie* addresses how a "personality" (person) experiences an event/environment as a "refractive" (interpretive) process, not simply "reflective," which Vygotsky dismissed as inadequate to studying psychological development. Additionally, central to *prezhivanie*, Vygotsky considered experiences of the past as impacting the present and as leading to potential futures, including imagination in conjunction with emergent activity as a form of material psychology in connection to motivation – for example, children dressing up in their parents' clothes (Vygotsky 1978). This concept allowed him to take a substantial step in addressing personhood as a whole.

Following Marx, Vygotsky viewed the intertwining of language and consciousness as initially stemming from the social world: "Language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well" (Marx and Engles 1974, 50-51, cited in Eagleton 2016, 19). The primary unit in Vygotsky's study of language and consciousness, however, and one that he had considered from the beginning of his career, is word, which in the end he regarded as "a microcosm of consciousness" as found in the last paragraph on the last page of his posthumous volume, *Thinking and speech* (Vygotsky 1987, 285). Through his examination of word, Vygotsky created two overlapping levels of meaning, *znachenie* or meaning at the social level and *symsl* or sense at the intrapersonal level. Vygotsky defined sense as "everything in consciousness which is related to what the word expresses" as linked to "the internal structure of personality" (276). By 1932, Vygotsky had come to an understanding of consciousness as a dynamic semantic ("semic") system as found in *Thinking and Speech*. *Perezhivanie* includes all forms of sense (Zavershneva 2014, 91-92) as a part of interpretive processes. Speech is vital to *perezhivanie*, or as expressed by Vygotsky as early as 1924 (1997a, 77): "Speech is, on the one hand, the system of the 'reflexes' of social contact and, on the other, the system of the reflexes of consciousness par excellence, i.e., an apparatus for the reflections of other systems."

In attempting to understand the psychological functions of language in consciousness at the intrapersonal level, Vygotsky (1987) proposed a psychological structure for private and inner speech, which he believed are both predicated on contextualized meaning (the "psychological predicate"), whether dependent on internal or external stimuli. For example, the utterance, "keys?" as a form of private speech, might be motivated by the fact that the speaker's keys are not in the place they usually are or perhaps the worry that they were left in another location all together. Meaning/sense could be connected to surprise, annoyance, anxiety, and so on – it is not the externalization of the word, but how it is contextualized in consciousness that is necessary to understanding significance in private speech.

Vygotsky used his analysis of private speech to contemplate and objectify inner speech, the deepest level of intrapersonal psychological functioning in which word is still entailed. Vygotsky (1987, 277) argued that there is "a predominance of sense over meaning, of "phrase over word," and of "the whole context over the phrase." Moreover, as a critical aspect of inner speech, inner sense, is "incommensurable with the word's common meaning" (279), and inner speech is close to thinking in "pure meanings" (280), which also entails "operat[ing] not with the word itself but with its image" (262). Overall, Vygotsky argued that "The communication of consciousness can be accomplished only indirectly, through a mediated path. This path consists in the internal mediation of thought first by meanings and then by words" (282). Also, although Vygotsky (1987) mostly focused on language/word, he included other signs as part of mediation in consciousness and cultural artifacts as well, for example, a clock or a sun dial.

Potentially, we are affected by all forms of sense, including as found in our immediate surrounds, and on a moment-to-moment basis. For example, when interacting with others, sense is affected by facial expressions, blushes, posture; hairstyle, clothing, and jewelry; the building we are in, the music that is playing, the décor of the room, the air temperature, the language we are speaking, and so on (all signs), much of which takes place as unconscious meaning-making activity. We are constantly engaged at different, dynamic, interfunctional levels of interpretation that come together as a unified consciousness state, or as stated by Vygotsky, "Consciousness as a whole has a semantic structure. We judge consciousness by its semantic structure, for sense, the structure of consciousness, is the relation to the external world" (Vygotsky 1987, 137, underline and italics original). Meaning/sense for Vygotsky is the essential component of consciousness as embedded in cultural-historical contexts of activity and as experienced/interpreted by a person in relation to events and environments.

3. Inhabiting a Language and a Culture?

The sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1973), used the term "inculcation" to describe the degree to which community members are subject to the forces of enculturation, specifying language as the leading agent in this process. However, this is the "strong" version of the theory[1]. In countering this stance, Lemke (2002, 74), argues that we are less bound to "the habitus of class, gender, sexuality, [and] culture [than] Bourdieu's idealized model of modernist identity presumes." This weaker version of habitus would seem to apply to many people today, in part owing to the influence of changing societal circumstances, including multinational, multiracial, and multiethnic plurality (or super-diversity) having increased as the world has grown smaller owing to migration and social media, which have brought about a more global sense of connection for many. This is not to argue, however, that social belongingness is any less of a force, but that it has been extended beyond the limitations of mid- to late-twentieth century habitus to include virtual communities as well, providing more scope for identity than when people were largely confined to their immediate surroundings, including intersectional identities through belonging to different communities, as is true for those who use lingua francas.

Within a community, Thibault (2004, 176) argues that "Meaning is stored, not at the level of the individual per se, but at the level of contextual configurations which integrate individuals to their ecosocial environment and therefore to the systems of interpretence that are embedded in these." For example, with regard to language, intellectual communities put considerable emphasis on the use of "scientific" language, also the case for legal and many other professions where there are established interpretive norms. In other communities, it is what you do, not what you say, that is most valued – being an artist, dock worker, or secretary, although the use of technical language as opposed to everyday language is still expected to varying degrees. It seems safe to say that the vast majority of people around the world earn a living on the basis of everyday, social language, interpretence

[1] Kramsch (2015, 463) argues that Bourdieu's concept is not utterly 'deterministic' despite the view taken by many scholars.

remaining at the level of society at large or as negotiated with immigrant and other workers for whom there are special language considerations.

According to Rosa (2007, 304-305), in a process he entitles "actuation," or becoming a part of a new community, "the new-comer becomes attuned to the socio-cultural environment making it a part of his/her own *Umwelt*, at least to some extent." Moreover, Rosa contends that "Newcomers are subjected to mastering the use of objects and symbols, pragmatically, semiotically, and semantically, something that can only be done by participating in socio-cultural practice" (305). This level of participation can eventually lead to an image of self, "as an object among others, as an agent and as an actor" (308). On this view, people become able to interpret and participate as members, but as adults, there is agency in doing so; some practices are more accepted than others, and others are resisted (consciously or unconsciously).

Rosa (2007) also considers community forms of practice as dramaturgical activity. We perform in order to learn how to conform, which has its roots in sociogenesis. As adults, we are all actors in performing social roles. Moreover, as Newman and Holzman (1993) note, we also transform through our activity of performing. This is the case for each of the social positions we occupy, whether we are deeply engaged or only on the periphery in the way that Bakhtin (1981) contends that we are "hetroglossic" in relation to different social discourses: how we speak to our families, store clerks, friends, colleagues, and so on. But the extent to which these roles become internalized and the ways in which we carry them out makes both conformity and conventionalization jagged constructs. The term actuation is also limited, suggesting that change is only a one-way process, but of course newcomers also change their ecosocial environments as part of the self-other dialectic that surrounds interaction and internalization. Also, communities can be emergent, developing interpretence through interaction over time as leading to a larger group, a society, a culture – or not, simply remaining momentary or short-term engagements.

The principle of alterity (otherness), applies to individuals in communities as an underlying aspect of human consciousness and development: We are constantly configuring others in relation to ourselves, which is illustrated by Bakhtin's (1981,) concept of addressivity with regard to meaning-making, or as stated by Salgado and Gonçalves (2007, 611) "… [a] person is always in a process of a new becoming, in a living act of addressing other people". However, despite the seeming constant renewal of addressivity, Bakhtin (1981, 293-294, cited in Rosa 2007, 307) considers how words as more stable cultural, conceptual objects (if changeable at the same time) are "appropriated:"

> The word of language – is half alien. It becomes 'one's own' when the speaker inhabits it with his intention, his accent, masters the word, brings it to bear upon his meaningful and expressive strivings. Until that moment of appropriation [...] the word exists on the lips of others, in alien contexts, in service of other's intentions.

Inhabiting a languaculture at this level is what is expected of native speakers across many of the social roles inhabited in a culture and suggests a shared sense of meaning in consciousness, that is, that we come to know others as we know ourselves, not only through language but shared experience/history as well. At one point in the history of the English language this was a common meaning for the word consciousness (co-consciousness) as found in the writings of the philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1651/1914[2], cited in Natsoulas 2015, 26-27). Certainly, Marx in his assessment of the relationship of language to consciousness (above) viewed the two as operating together at the societal level but discounting possible individual differences, although aware of them. But unlike Marx, Vygotsky (1987) ascribed different functions to inter- and intrapersonal language in consciousness and its manifestations.

An illustration of the difficulty of reaching the state of shared language as leading to shared sociocultural consciousness for L2 speakers in a L2 environment (a native-speaker centric viewpoint) is found in Bram Stoker's novel, *Dracula* (1981[3] cited by Gee 1996, 90-91), where the Count expresses his frustrations about not being able to pass as a native speaker of English, his main concern is not meaning-making per se, but rather the experience of otherness:

> 'But, Count,' I said, 'you know and speak English thoroughly!'
> He bowed gravely. 'I thank you, my friend, for your all too-flattering estimate, but yet I fear that I am but a little way on the road I would travel. True, I know the grammar and the words, but yet I know not how to speak them.'
> 'Indeed,' I said, 'you speak excellently.'
> 'Not so,' he answered. 'Well I know, that did I move and speak in your London, none there are who would not know me for a stranger. That is not enough for me. Here I am noble, the common people know me, and I am master. But a stranger in a strange land, he

[2] Hobbes, Thomas. 1994. Leviathan. London: J. M. Dent.
[3] Stoker, Bram. 1981. Dracula. London: Penguin Books.

is no one; men know him not - and to know not is to care not. I am content if I am like the rest, so that no man stops if he sees me, or pause in his speaking if he hears my words. I have been so long master that I would be master still - or at least that none other should be master of me.'

It is likely that the Count would have felt more at home in today's London, a time at which not sounding (or moving) local does not mean that you are not, although feelings of alienation as related to usage still can have a negative impact, and in the same way.
Vygotsky (1987) recognized that there is a dialectical unity between language and consciousness at the inter- and intrapersonal levels, that one is not simply a reflection of the other. For Vygotsky (1994), the two levels dynamically inform one another, but internalization as an aspect of *perezhivanie* also implies refraction, that meaning is transformed in the same way light goes through a prism. An example of this relationship, again involving use of a L2, is provided by Hoffman (1989, 107, cited in Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000, 165):

I wait for that spontaneous flow of inner language which used to be my nighttime talk with myself ... Nothing comes. Polish, in short time, has atrophied, shriveled from sheer uselessness. Its words don't apply to my new experiences, they're not coeval with any of the objects, or faces, or the very air I breathe in the daytime. In English, the words have not penetrated to those layers of my psyche from which a private connection could proceed.

Hoffman no longer has the vital connection she once felt through inner speech in the L1, affecting the unity of thought, language, and subjectivity in consciousness. Her experience of the ecosocial environment she currently inhabits has created a mental vacuum of sorts caused by a loss of relevance for the first languaculture, a void which the L2 is unable to fill. In Vygotskian terms, the L2 has not moved into the realm of inner sense-making at the level of the psyche, or at least in regard to the specific function Hoffman mentions.

4. Embodied Meaning-Making

Meaning-making through signs is also embodied through nonverbal forms of communication, including movement, facial expressions, gaze, posture, body language, gesture, and so on, becoming recognizable to members of a languaculture or community, mediating semantic consciousness both inter- and intrapersonally as well. For example, "... when a young child pretends to drink from an empty cup and looks playfully to the adult's face, one could say that in addition to pretense for the self this is also an iconic gesture to share this representation with the adult, communicatively" (Tomasello 2008, 152), while simultaneously moving into systems of interpretence that "frame" a languaculture, allowing for shared consciousness/intersubjectivity.

In fact, Vygotsky (1978, 56) noted that a child first enters the world of semiotic mediation through the proto-gesture of reaching for an object that is too far away, an adult bringing the object to her or him. In this case, sign mediates the behavior of others, a central aspect of human language as connected to real-world activity. However, there has been much speculation about the relationship of speech and gesture (co-speech gesture) psycholinguistically, over the years but there is almost universal agreement that the two are closely interconnected.

McNeill (2012; 2005; 1992) argues that speech and gesture combine in the unfolding of a thought in communication (both inter- and intraprsonally). The two modalities each bring different affordances. Speech provides a linear, segment-by-segment unfolding of meaning, while gesture is non-combinatoric, presenting meaning holistically and spatio-motorically, carrying meaning in a more direct iconic, memetic fashion than speech, (an upward sweep of the arm on the word "grow" with the utterance, "They just grow so fast"). Other gestures, however, are codified as emblems such as the shrugging of the shoulders to mean "I don't know" and are cultural. Gestures also carry sense as well as meaning, for example through muscular tension, finger articulation, the exaggeration of a gesture in space, and as culturally and/or idiosyncratically based. Importantly, gestures also can function as part of the negotiation of meaning when no common language is shared, for instance in recorded examples of first contact during the period of European exploration by ship (Vandenabeele 2002). We also gesture when thinking or during other private forms of speech activity. Additionally, although most people are largely unaware of their own nonverbal activity, gesture is very much a part of identity, members of different discourse communities also adopting different forms of gesturing in addition to community-specific gestures (McNeill 1992).

Moreover, typological differences among languages also impact gesture production, L2 studies having investigated whether or not advanced and naturalistically exposed speakers of a L2 that has a different typology from the L1 (motion events) change their gestures to conform to L2 speech production (co-expressiveness). Results indicate that this does happen, but not typically at all levels of grammatical difference (Stam 2015), despite the lack of need to do so linguistically. These findings seem to imply a unity in consciousness as attached to meaning-making in a language, that there is an embodied/cultural schema underlying language in use as argued by cognitive linguists, and that people come to accommodate changes unconsciously whether through observation of others or as an accommodation as to how thought is unfurled according to patterns of speech in conjunction with underlying embodied schema embedded in the L2. However, contextualization in relation to identity must also be considered. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the role of imitation in development, as in the example from Tomasello (above), but as an adult, not everyone is comfortable imitating new gestures or forms of gesturing in relation to languacultural learning (see Peltier and McCafferty 2010).

5. Lingua Francas

From a Vygotskian perspective, cultural-historical experience is vital to the genesis of sociocultural consciousness in development, language having the most significant role in this process. If a person grows up bi/multilingually in a culture and has constant exposure to a language as a part of everyday experience as found for English in Europe for many people (e.g., Berns, de Bot, and Hasebrink 2007; Graddol 2006; Seidlhofer, Breiteneder and Pitzl 2006), then the semiotic mediation of consciousness, both inter- and intra-personally, likely also entails the use of English, whether domain specific or as found in code-switching. There is also the phenomenon of translanguage to consider, as a "trans-semiotic" system that primarily employs linguistic meaning from different languages (Garcia and Wei 2014, 42). This perspective recognizes that sense-making occurs differently in different languages and the cultures that ground them. It could be argued that there is an almost explicit effort to understand how language affects meaning in consciousness through translanguaging.

With regard to forming nonverbal interpretence in LF/L2 environments, Haught and McCafferty (2008), for example, found that a small group of L2 adult students from different languacultural backgrounds studying English in the U.S. imitated the teacher's use of gesture after he was asked to model the lines of a script they were rehearsing (the use of gesture was inadvertent on the teacher's part as an act of dramatizing the lines). Also, the students imitated each other's gestures when watching a video of themselves rehearsing the same script, but only the gestures first initiated by the teacher. These two incidents are forms of private rehearsal, appropriating specific gestures as accompanying dialogue and thought to be "native-speaker like" as an aspect of coming to interpret and inhabit their classroom and languaculture surrounds. In an additional example involving movement and not just gestures, Bragg (2017) found that native-speaker tutors and university international students in a writing tutorial situation bodily accommodated one another through synchronizing movements, mirroring body language, posture, gestures, and head movements in relation to interactions concerning the language and content of an assignment. Shared attention is a means to create shared consciousness, embodiment clearly playing a part in the process.

Speech in LF contexts if significant as leading to internalization for one reason or another, would also be expected to be found in private speech (true for gestures and other communicative signs). Inner speech, although remaining a rather mysterious realm, involves semantic meaning-making activity which would include a LF and accompanying semiotic systems if internalized. However, inner speech is exclusively inward, remembering that private speech is still audible, making it a good deal more "linguistic" than inner speech needs to be, which, again, is closer to thinking in "pure meanings."

However, if the LF is used for business concerns, interaction primarily taking place through phone calls and electronic forms of communication, then relations between language and semantic consciousness perhaps would be viewed differently than in the scenarios above. In these instances, social interaction may differ depending on both the quantity and quality of engagement. If the LF primarily functions for transactional purposes, language activity corresponding to doing not being as instrumental, then semiotic mediation in consciousness may not be tied to the LF. However, the negotiation of meaning would still take place, which includes "… disattending to speech perturbations and non-standard features in linguistic form" (Firth 1990, 249) as part of "interactionally supportive behavior" (256). In these circumstances, it still seems possible that at times a shared level of semantic consciousness might develop between interlocutors as leading to intrapersonal contextualizaton in private and/or inner speech.

A final area of consideration is language contact, for example, international conference attendees. Although participants are likely to share English as a LF, if that is the language of the conference, and able to follow discourse related to professional matters, this does not mean social interaction in the LF will follow the pragmatics of native speakers as a “target” (House 2003). Instead, social interaction is dependent on the participants of any one particular group and often operates as a multilingua franca, and monolingua EFL users also can be involved. Other considerations besides language also exert influence of course, including status, age, gender, personality, and so on, as affecting language use. In many such cases the analogy to a “community of practice” (Wenger 1998) has been considered, that members have a common endeavor, although a gathering at a conference for lunch may not reflect any particular community goals, and is not in this sense a community of practice (Ehrenreich 2009).

However, in all LF interactions, as with interaction in general for the purpose of communication, shared interpersonal interpretence is necessary at some level if semantic consciousness is to align in a meaningful way. In order to effectively do so, there has to be some level of suspension of assumptions, that another person may not be saying exactly what they mean, that they might want to renegotiate meaning. Additionally, interlocutors have been found to use one another’s gestures during conversation, to shore up a sense of shared meaning when one speaker is less proficient in the LF (McCafferty 2002). Such negotiations appear to be an aspect of what Bakhtin (1981) characterizes as renewal as key to his notion of addressivity, but which also can involve suspending aspects of identity to one degree or another as well, and would seem an aspect of gaining LF multicompetence.

Inner sense is inextricably tied to consciousness, but in line with Vygotsky's (1987) thoughts, not words and their meaning as found in everyday speech but transformed for intrapersonal functions as associated with experience, associations, images, and particularly sense. If this is the way language functions privately, then it is not surprising that we are able to operate linguistically with others when adherence to form as culturally based in pragmatics is not tied to any one languaculture, meaning-making becoming emergent, remembering that for Bakhtin (1981) this is also the case for native speakers, if not to the same degree (at least in most instances). Inner speech would seem to entail a vast store of semantic information that applies to intellectual, emotional, and phenomenal experience in conjunction with, but not entirely dependent on, language, and certainly not on language only at a conventional level.

6. Conclusion

Communities, no matter if they are monolingual, bi/multilingual, multilingua franca, or established for impromptu purposes, all need to establish shared social meaning. Given that this is the case, it appears that an extension of the community of practice model also to function as a model for LFs would seem somewhat misplaced. Wenger (1998) focused on task oriented performance, while LFs focus on finding shared levels of interpretence and at one level or another of standardization – from a discipline-based undertaking to a spontaneous gathering. Moreover, and no matter the linguistic nature of the community from the L1 to the L5, meaning-making is always to some degree emergent, and analogous to what poets do (Vygotsky 1987). As such, LFs do not exist as impoverished codes. There are conditions in which signs are meant to be limited such as the use of gestures at a saw mill (Kendon 2004) where hearing others above the noise of the machinery is not possible, but the need for communication still vital. Studying the linguistic features and structure of a LF without reference to the people and the environment, although significant at one level of understanding, does not suffice to capture the human experience of meaning-making.

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Foreign language teaching from a pedagogical lingua franca perspective

Abstract
According to a social constructivist understanding, foreign language teachers should enable their learners to reflectively explore their own foreign language communication and to negotiate and refine their requirements of communicative and communal success. Suitable conditions for such an experience can be provided in intercultural virtual exchanges in which 'learners' of different linguacultural backgrounds are engaged as 'speakers' and use their common target language as a pedagogical lingua franca. Two case studies involving secondary school students with English and German as target languages will be presented to illustrate the pedagogical lingua franca approach and to discuss it with regard to issues of learner agency, non-native speaker emancipation, communication monitoring, and pedagogical mentoring.

1. Introduction

While intercultural communicative competence development may figure quite explicitly in foreign language curricula in secondary schools, its actual pedagogical implementation is generally rather weak. Due to the somewhat restricted and restricting communicative and intercultural options provided in the face-to-face classroom, functional aspects of communication are usually foregrounded and receive almost exclusive pedagogical attention. Aspects of intercultural communication, on the other hand, play only a minor role in what actually happens in the classroom. The contrast could hardly be starker between communicative practices in school and genuine communication in an intercultural and globalized world, the professed target of up-to-date foreign language teaching.

With regard to English, this discrepancy has in particular been emphasized in pedagogical discussions inspired by research on English as a lingua franca (ELF). The focus is on speaker-learners who communicate in intercultural exchanges and manage to make best use of their often limited verbal resources when trying to achieve mutual understanding. In this connection, attention shifts from the kind of language being used to how it is used in communication under lingua franca conditions. What counts is the extent to which speaker-learners succeed in activating their communicative capabilities (Widdowson 1978) when deploying their verbal resources to understand their partners and to find expression for what they want to convey. The processes and outcomes involved are generally depicted as strategically creative, richly variable and communicatively successful in terms of intelligibility.

These positive characterizations of ELF communication are often intertwined with comments that cast pedagogical doubt on the wide-spread preference in English language teaching (ELT) for some kind of standard native speaker English (SNSE). A frequently repeated line of argumentation draws attention to the possibility of communicative success despite deviations from SNSE norms and suggests looking for pedagogical solutions "beyond normativity" (Dewey 2012). But what could this possibly mean? Raising speaker-learners' awareness of the inherent native-speakerism of ELT and inviting them to drop their SNSE orientation altogether? This is the impression one might get from most of the current suggestions for an ELF-inspired reform of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Kiczkowiak and Lowe (2019) argue along these lines and take their readers on a journey from 'teaching EFL' to 'teaching ELF'. In addition to "teaching intercultural communicative skills" (Ibid.: 23), they emphasize the pedagogical value of "raising our students' awareness that conformity with 'native speaker' norms is not always the most desirable goal" (Ibid.: 23) and of "exposing our learners to a wide range of language models, so that they are adequately prepared for the diversity of Englishes they will encounter outside the class" (Ibid.: 23).

As a result, 'teaching EFL' and 'teaching ELF' appear as two mutually exclusive and pedagogically conflicting alternatives. In their view, speaker-learners are required to choose between, on the one hand, a traditional and outdated focus on varieties of standard native-speaker English and, on the other, the development of intercultural communicative competence for a globalized world. In this article, I take the opposing view that it is both necessary and possible to find a unifying and reconciling solution that aims to strike a balance between the SNSE preference in EFL and the need for getting ready for the challenges of international and intercultural communication (also see Kohn 2018b).

2. Towards a pedagogical lingua franca approach

As a pedagogically designed target language model, SNSE can be conceptualized as comprising two complementary and interrelated types of competence components: (A) a repertoire of phonetic/phonological, lexical and grammatical means of expression and (B) the skills and routines of using these means of expression in spoken or written communicative interactions. Choosing a certain English target language model is not a trivial matter; it usually has a socio-educational origin and history with strong implications for learners' emerging speaker identity. Any decision for or against a certain model thus needs to consider the local educational context and conditions. But how do the demands and challenges of ELF communication fit in? My argument is that the SNSE model as such is not the problem; the way it is taught and learnt, however, certainly is. This becomes evident in the light of a social constructivist perspective, according to which acquiring mastery of a language in the sense of a repertoire of linguistic means of expression essentially involves processes of individual and cooperative creation (also see Grazzi 2013). Hence, whatever the target language taught, speaker-learners will always develop "their own version of it in their minds, hearts, and behaviour" (Kohn 2011, 80). The outcome is MY English (Kohn 2018a), be it as a first, second or foreign language depending on the conditions under which it was formed. Throughout this development, speaker-learners are influenced by their personal dispositions and biographical characteristics as well as by their communicative experiences and communal aspirations. Continuous guidance concerning the direction of their learning is provided by their personal requirements of successful communication, which serve as beacons of navigation and enable them to assume agency for their own learning (Kohn 2020). As a result, speaker-learners inevitably change, adapt and expand their target language input due to the essentially creative learning processes they engage in.

This social constructivist insight suggests that our pedagogical concern regarding issues of normativity and native-speakerism should not be focused so much on the repertoire and skills specified by the target language model but rather on the conditions of learning and teaching towards this model. Is learning, despite all declarations of learner autonomy, in the end narrowed down to copying and cloning? Or are speaker-learners granted the kind of pedagogical space and guidance that would help them appropriate the target model for their own communicative and communal needs and purposes (also see Seidlhofer 2011, chap. 8; Widdowson 2009, 211)? The key pedagogical problem in foreign language teaching should not be seen in whether speaker-learners are exposed to some kind of standard native speaker input variety as the language taught. Rather, the problem is whether and to what extent they are pedagogically encouraged and supported to take on a more emancipated role by drawing on their ordinary social constructivist creativity when 'acquiring' their own signature brand of the input variety taught (Kohn 2018b, 38).

The social constructivist perspective on language learning draws attention to the processes of individual and collaborative creative construction by which 'learners' develop and appropriate their own English and their own ways of using it in intercultural ELF contexts guided by their own communicative and communal requirements of success and their satisfaction as 'speakers'. This leads to the question and pedagogical challenge of how the foreign language classroom could be changed and enriched so that it helps speaker-learners engage in creative processes of target language appropriation by social constructivist learning.

An option currently favoured in pedagogical ELF debates emphasizes the need to raise teachers' (and students') awareness of the nature of intercultural ELF communication through the observation, analysis, and reflection of recorded manifestations of ELF interactions (Sifakis 2019; Sifakis et al. 2018). Pedagogical insights are expected to be gained from the study of communicative input material. The pedagogical lingua franca approach introduced by Kohn (2018a; 2020) takes a different stance by shifting the pedagogical scope from ELF 'input' to ELF 'involvement'. Instead of drawing on other speakers' ELF communication as a "model" (Kiczkowiak and Lowe 2019, 23), speaker-learners from different countries and of different linguacultural backgrounds are enabled to meet in intercultural encounters. They use their common target language English as a pedagogical lingua franca and explore their own ELF interactions through reflective practice. Authentic communicative ELF involvement thus becomes the very centrepiece of a pedagogical solution, which can be easily transferred from English to other target languages as well (Kohn 2016).

How can a pedagogical lingua franca approach be implemented? While a traditional school exchange involves travelling abroad and, in this connection, is faced with difficulties and limitations regarding time, budget, and organization, intercultural virtual exchange and telecollaboration offer pedagogically innovative alternatives. Embedded in blended learning settings, they open up an online space in which intercultural contact, communication, and learning can be taken outside and beyond the physical classroom environment. The pedagogical arrangement is that of a flipped classroom, with an important extension and generalization: the widespread focus on flipping knowledge acquisition is replaced by the idea to flip anything that is deemed pedagogically relevant and desirable but difficult to pursue and achieve in the face-to-face classroom (Kohn and Hoffstaedter 2015). In our case, this concerns intercultural communicative practice and development.

In the Erasmus+ project TeCoLa (www.tecola.eu) and its predecessor project TILA (http://tilaproject.eu), we implemented a pedagogical lingua franca approach with the help of telecollaboration activities in intercultural virtual exchanges. The aim was to provide secondary school students with opportunities for authentic communicative interactions in intercultural contact zones as part of their foreign language learning experience. Corresponding to the project partners' countries and languages, the main target languages used as a pedagogical lingua franca were English, French, German and Spanish. The spoken and written communicative collaboration activities were supported by video platforms like Skype or BigBlueButton, an OpenSim-based virtual world, digital walls in Padlet, Google Docs/Slides, and an accompanying Moodle course with chat and forum. To facilitate a lively communicative exchange, the students were matched to work in pairs or small groups. Adopting a blended-flipped learning arrangement, the intercultural telecollaboration exchanges were generally linked to preparatory or follow-up activities in class. In this way, the teachers involved were able to pedagogically mentor and indirectly assess telecollaboration activities during which they were not present. Regarding the thematic orientation of the exchanges, preference was given to 'soft' intercultural topics such as eating, fashion, sports, or waste disposal. With this decision, the intercultural focus was shifted from the topic to the communicative moves the telecollaboration partners engaged in when trying to cope with challenges arising from cognitive, attitudinal or behavioural differences and divergences.

To avoid problems due to a lack of matching class hours, weak internet capacities, or insufficient communicative privacy in the computer room, we encouraged our teachers and students to arrange their telecollaboration access from home. This had the beneficial side effect of forcing the students to be more autonomous. They were required to check their technological infrastructure, make appointments, and manage their online meetings. In addition, communicating from their home environment makes the tasks more authentic. It becomes easier for students to leave their own mark by, e.g., bringing in their thematic associations and interests. They may also extend the duration of their interactions or even make appointments for more 'private' meetings on Facebook or WhatsApp. While moving outside the actual foreign language teaching context reduces the researcher's opportunities for data collection, it significantly increases the pedagogical value of the exchange. After all, the pedagogical lingua franca approach is about learning for life. Using school-related tasks as a stepping-stone towards private communication outside school only further increases the degree of authentication and is thus pedagogically desirable.

3. Learner agency and non-native speaker emancipation

To throw some light on the pedagogical value of using one's target language as a pedagogical lingua franca, I will now report on a case study that was carried out as part of the European TILA project (Kohn and Hoffstaedter 2017). Emphasis is on foreign language learning in secondary schools and the effects of a pedagogical lingua franca approach on the students' learner agency and non-native speaker emancipation. The study was based on three text and four video chat conversations in English between Spanish and German student pairs as well as on two video chat conversations in German between French and Dutch student pairs. The students were between 14 and 16 years old; their CEFR proficiency level was B1. In the English conversations, the topic was "New technologies and social media"; in the German conversations, three topics such as "School", "Fashion" or "Media" could be chosen from a list of ten. Telecollaboration access was from home and pedagogically embedded in preparatory and follow-up activities in class. The empirical data available for analysis included the recorded conversations and semi-structured reflective feedback interviews with four of the students.

Compared to face-to-face foreign language teaching, the telecollaborative pedagogical lingua franca condition significantly increased the students' learner agency in terms of the sheer amount of communicative participation.

The average duration of the conversations was 46 minutes, which is a depth of immersion that is hardly achievable in regular classroom activities. In this connection, it should be noted that the oral video interactions, while similar in duration to the written text chats, produced a far richer output as measured by the number of words used. In the interviews, some students also mentioned the relevance and authenticity of the intercultural exchanges, thereby emphasizing their potential for enriching foreign language learning with real-life communication.

Another manifestation of increased learner agency concerned self-initiated and collaborative topic development. The private home environment seemed to invite students to go beyond the agreed topics and to bring up their own thematic interests and preferences, either spontaneously or triggered by lexical/propositional elements in their partners' contributions. Again, there is an interesting difference between the written and the spoken mode of communication: while self-initiated topics occurred in only one of the three text chats, they were a regular characteristic of the video chats. Other things being equal, spoken conversations thus seem to be more likely to encourage authentication through thematic appropriation.

Greater thematic flexibility was accompanied by more challenges concerning expressing and understanding intended meanings, which required a collaborative languaging effort as a third kind of learner agency (Swain 2006). In our case study, the focus of languaging was on successful communication rather than on form and issues of correctness. This was clearly in keeping with the lingua franca nature of our conversational exchanges. A particularly enlightening case of languaging for communicative success occurred in a German lingua franca conversation between a French and a Dutch student. When the French student argued that homework should be fun, she used the German word "lustig" [Translation: "funny"]. Since the Dutch student heard "lüstig" [lystıç] (with *Umlaut*) instead of "lustig", she did not understand her partner and also failed when trying to consult an online dictionary. Eventually the two students detected the mishearing/mispronunciation and managed to resolve the lexical communication problem. Interestingly enough, however, the lexical repair led to yet another communication problem on the propositional level since the Dutch student misinterpreted the original statement as saying that homework was fun: "Warte! Du findest Hausaufgabe Spaß?" [Translation: "Wait! You think homework is fun?"]. Her partner then used a paraphrasing strategy to successfully close the languaging cycle: "Ich denke, dass

Hausaufgaben langweilig sind und es sollte lustiger Hausaufgaben sein" [Translation: "Homework is boring and should be more fun"].

A fourth kind of learner agency essential for ensuring communicative success concerns the partners' rapport with each other. In our pedagogical lingua franca conversations, rapport-related agency could be observed particularly in manifestations of an overall cooperative, consensual and supportive attitude, e.g. "That's pretty much my opinion as well", "I wish you luck", "I think you are going to do great", or "Wow, you draw! I envy you". What is more, in situations of stress and frustration because of unsuccessful communication and failed languaging repairs, the conversational atmosphere was sometimes characterized by empathetic moves of comfort and encouragement, e.g. "Oh God I can't talk about it in English because I don't know the words." - "Doesn't matter [...] I know like we are beginners of English; we haven't got such a level to speak about everything we want."

All these qualities of increasing learner agency from communicative participation to thematic appropriation, collaborative languaging and empathetic rapport arguably contribute to the emergence of more emancipated non-native speaker identities. As a key force in this process we can identify speaker satisfaction, that is the extent to which the interacting speakers are actually satisfied with their communicative performance and the way it meets their own requirements of communicative and communal success. The pedagogical lingua franca approach offers a space for students to check and explore their familiar requirements of success with regard to their validity for authentic communication and to adapt and extend them as deemed necessary and suitable. The reflective interview data available from the case study provide first insights into the complex interrelations between learner agency, speaker satisfaction and non-native speaker emancipation.

The students were generally highly satisfied with being immersed in communicative interactions they felt were authentic: "I think it's good because it puts us in a real situation [...] with real people." Authentication went along well with thematic autonomy: "Wir haben uns echt gut verstanden [...] uns weniger auf die Aufgabe konzentriert [...] sondern mehr auf uns selber und so über private Sachen geredet [...] ich war sehr zufrieden mit dem Gespräch" [Translation: "We got along really well [...] were less focused on the task [...] but more on us and talked about private things [...] I was highly satisfied with our conversation"]. When trying to 'morph' one's participant role from learner to speaker, sufficient room for thematic autonomy is a crucial element of emancipation.

Increased authenticity also made the students aware of the need to adapt the requirements of success they had internalized from foreign language practice in the classroom to real-life communication. This concerned in particular shifting attention from the mere correctness of linguistic means of expression to whether these forms were used successfully to contribute to conveying the intended meaning. Pedagogical lingua franca communication was perceived as a facilitating condition ("We both like have the same level, we are in the same boat.") and obviously made it easier for the students to shift from correctness to communicated meaning: "Weil das ja auch nicht ihre Muttersprache war, war's dann schon so okay. Es [Fehler machen] ist eigentlich egal. Sie kann mich verstehen" [Translation: „Since it was not her native language, it was okay. Making errors doesn't matter. She can understand me"].

Another emancipatory advantage of the pedagogical lingua franca condition was its value for promoting the students' confidence and self-assurance: "Das Selbstbewusstsein steigt einfach mit jeder Unterhaltung, und man fühlt sich immer sicherer" [Translation: "Self-assurance increases with each conversation and you become more confident"]. Not surprisingly, exchanges with native speakers were judged to lead to communication apprehension: "Ich weiß nicht, ob ich mich nicht sogar noch weniger getraut hätte, weil ich einfach noch viel mehr Angst gehabt hätte vor Fehlern" [Translation: "I don't know, I might have been even less courageous because of fear of making errors"]. Confidence and self-assurance enabled students to move from languaging for correctness to languaging for communicative success, and they also helped them accept and endure uncertainty or breakdowns when communicative ambition surpassed available resources and capabilities. Cooperation and empathetic rapport ensured a supportive atmosphere.

To conclude, "[in] the telecollaborative lingua franca conversations, the students' readiness for agency and emancipation, cooperation and rapport seemed to emerge spontaneously. In our interpretation, this was due to the activation of their natural and educationally nurtured disposition for social presence and cooperative interaction combined with the facilitating force of the pedagogical lingua franca condition" (Kohn and Hoffstaedter 2017, 363).

4. Communication monitoring

When speaker-learners try to make best communicative use of their linguistic (and non-linguistic) resources and capabilities, they continuously check their performance against their requirements of communicative and communal success. They do this before, during and after the event and in consideration of the respective communicative situation. This is what we refer to as communication monitoring. In terms of empirical extension, the concept overlaps with procedures of negotiation of meaning as introduced in Varonis and Gass (1985) and further explored in many subsequent studies (Gass 1997). The crucial difference lies in the explanatory framework. While negotiation of meaning stands in the interactionist tradition of SLA research, our conceptualization of communication monitoring is based on a social constructivist understanding of communication and language learning with its assumption of speaker-learners being in charge as potentially self-responsible and emancipated agents of their own communicative success (Kohn 2018a, 19). Being in charge culminates in the strategic processes of monitoring by which they try to minimize the inevitable gap between communicative intent and achievement and thus to maximize their speaker satisfaction.

To gain a more differentiated and deeper understanding of communication monitoring in pedagogical lingua franca exchanges, we designed and implemented a case study as part of the Erasmus+ project TeCoLa (Hoffstaedter and Kohn 2019). The study involved 6 pairs of Dutch and German secondary school students (16-18 years, B2) who engaged in pair exchanges in the TeCoLa Virtual World (TVW). The students accessed the TVW environment outside class hours from their homes, and they used their common target language English as a pedagogical lingua franca. In the virtual world, the students were represented by their avatars through which they were able to move around, talk to each other, and exchange written messages via a text chat function (Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Students discussing issues of waste disposal in the TVW

Multimedia boards were used throughout the environment that could be edited by the teachers to create learning stations or paths to support task-based learning activities. The student pairs in our case study were required to do a learning path about the topic "Waste and waste avoidance". They followed the path from board to board reading the information presented, watching a video clip and discussing the issues raised. Further information about this task and other TeCoLa tasks is available in the Task section of the Teacher resources on the TeCoLa website (http://tecola.eu).

Drawing on recordings of the virtual exchanges, worksheets, and reflective interviews with the students and teachers involved, special case study attention was given to identifying and exploring the main manifestations and practices of communication monitoring and their implications for pedagogical mentoring and teacher education. Our conceptual model of communication monitoring distinguishes monitoring moves in relation to four kinds of challenges that need to be addressed to make a communicative exchange successful: (A) task instruction, procedure, content, and purpose, (B) comprehension of words and utterances, (C) utterance production with a focus on form and meaning, and (D) partner orientation and rapport (Fig. 2).

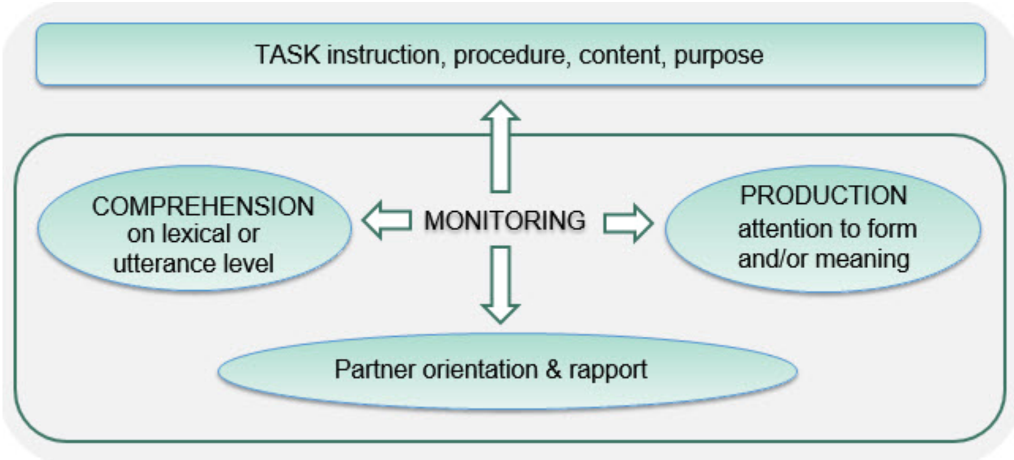

Figure 2: Target areas of communication monitoring

In task-related monitoring the students collaborated to check whether they agreed on how to understand the learning path task at hand and whether they carried it out according to their understanding. Relevant issues included instructions (“So, what do we have to do?”), procedures (“Oh, must I click down there?”), content (“I’m just watching the last part of the video ... well, I think it’s C.“), and purpose (“Why is this good for our English?“).

As regards comprehension-related monitoring, explicit signalling included utterances like “What does X mean?” or “I don’t understand what you want to say”; nonverbal signals did not occur since the avatars could not display subtle gestures or facial expressions. In most cases, comprehension problems had their origin in problems the respective partners encountered when trying to express themselves. This explains why, apart from the occasional online look-up, most attempts to solve a comprehension problem included a cooperative paraphrasing or translanguaging strategy by the partner, e.g. “What does ‘avoid’ mean” - “‘Avoid’ is, ehm ya, how can I explain it? Ehm, we are trying not to.” It was interesting to note that many comprehension problems seemed to go unattended. Quite obviously, the students only addressed problems they considered being in stark conflict with their requirements of success and let the others pass.

Production-related monitoring, by contrast, occurred far more frequently, which also points to the pedagogical relevance of output processing (Swain 2005). Explicit indicators of the speaker’s insecurity included formulation checks (e.g. “How do you say it ‘apple skin’?”) and comprehension checks (e.g. “Do you understand?”). Most of the production problems, however, were not signalled explicitly but were evident from the speakers' repair moves, e.g. pauses, structural breaks, or reformulations. Attention to pronunciation, word form or grammatical structure was rare; the primary focus was on the complementary desires of expressing one's thoughts and being understood. As regards expressing themselves, our speakers encountered in particular two overlapping problems: lexical gaps and messy propositional formulations. Both problems were generally tackled in a cooperative manner. When dealing with a lexical gap, the partners often resorted to a strategy that combines a more or less successful initial paraphrase with an online look-up or an equivalent from their native language, e.g.

> A: "I don't know, these things you put into your glass where you can drink. It's long and thin. Maybe wait" [starts look-up]
>
> B: "Oh, straw" - A: "Yes, yes, yes. 'Strohhalm' [German equivalent]".

In the case of a propositional formulation problem, speakers' tenacity to meet their own requirements of success can make all the difference, as the following example shows:

> A: "... if you make a law which forbids to use, to produce plastic bags for shopping malls, ya, for shopping malls, then maybe you have one, you have a big - Hah"
>
> B: "Yeah, I know what you mean. It's a bit difficult."

Because of student B's reassuring and comforting intervention, student A could have easily stopped trying, but he did not give up, fought his propositional frustration and eventually managed to express himself to his satisfaction.

> A: "... plastic usage will go down rapidly and if you also try to find other ways to conserve all these fruits like eh the meats you have in the plastic bags, maybe you find other ways to conserve it that it stays fresh."

The sibling of expressing oneself is being understood by one's partner. This is why, more often than not, our students used comprehension checks along with their struggle for expression:

> A: "... also the pollution of big factories and other companies, because of the policy [means 'pollution'] of our air, I think it's also harmless, harmful for us to breathe these air."
>
> A: "Do you know what I mean?"
>
> B: "Yes, I know what you mean."

Although B confirmed comprehension, A did not seem entirely satisfied with what he managed to express:

A: "I don't know how to describe it, so I tried."

Successful communication has an essentially cooperative quality with relevant implications for communication monitoring. In addition to monitoring one's own comprehension and production, it is important and advisable to also keep an eye on one's partner's performance. To clarify the possible partner-oriented monitoring moves, it is helpful to distinguish between five cases:

1. Speaker X does not have a comprehension problem and uses verbal or nonverbal backchanneling signals to confirm continued attention and comprehension;
2. Speaker X has a comprehension problem and tries to get his/her partner to give support in the form of e.g. repeating more slowly or providing a paraphrase;
3. Speaker X has a production problem and tries to get his/her partner (e.g. by a formulation check) to give support by, e.g., making suggestions for a solution or by allowing for more production time;
4. Speaker X tries to find out whether his/her partner has a comprehension problem (e.g. by an explicit comprehension check) so as to be able to respond by, e.g., formulating more clearly, using a paraphrase, or shifting the topic;
5. Speaker X notices that his/her partner has problems with contributing or finding a suitable expression and tries to help by pausing and allowing for more time, by uttering a production prompt (e.g. "Do you separate your rubbish?"), or by suggesting an expression as a possible solution.

These partner-oriented monitoring moves, which significantly strengthen the interactivity between the communication partners, are particularly successful when accompanied by the expression of empathy and rapport, e.g. regarding solidarity and comfort ("Yeah, I know what you mean. It's a bit difficult.") or team spirit ("Yes, we are a very good team."). The relevance of empathy and rapport was emphasized by one of the Dutch students in his reflective interview: "We both had the feeling that we could help and understand each other. […] I think I normally try that with as many people as possible - just to reinforce each other."

While our case study conversations draw attention to major kinds of communication monitoring in pedagogical lingua franca exchanges, they are considerably poorer with regards to the density and diversity of the actually occurring overt monitoring moves. Most of the students' comprehension and production-related monitoring was self-centred and its partner orientation rather weak. It is thus not surprising that comprehension checks generally seemed to be motivated by the speakers' own production insecurities instead of by an interest in their partners' ability to understand. In addition, across all exchanges, expressions of rapport were scarce and, what is more, there were no instances of explicitly signalled rapport monitoring.

5. Pedagogical conclusion

When monitoring their communicative performance, speaker-learners work towards improving it in terms of their own requirements of success. In doing so, they become aware of their strengths and weaknesses, create opportunities for further languaging and learning, and promote their non-native speaker emancipation. For pedagogical reasons, a rich exploitation of the possibilities of communication monitoring would thus be highly desirable. This leaves us with the question of how to account for the students' rather modest overt monitoring behaviour.

To begin with, the influence of communicative routines available from ordinary 'out of school' communication needs to be mentioned. Overt monitoring is in a potential conflict with keeping the flow up, hence the frequent strategies of 'wait and see' and 'let it pass'. An optimal balance between the two very much depends on the respective communicative interaction and its situation-specific requirements of success. Low-stakes communication as in small talk is, for instance, often characterized by somewhat loose monitoring, whereas high-stakes communication, e.g. in exams or job interviews, might make a stronger overt monitoring effort advisable, in particular regarding comprehension. Issues of politeness play an important role and need to be considered as well, especially in connection with rapport-related monitoring.

Another factor that strongly influenced the monitoring behaviour of our case study students was the educational school setting with its focus on task completion over communication. For most students, finding the right answer and getting the task done seemed to be the guiding force and reduced their readiness for engaging in more extended discussions. This school effect was even reinforced in pairings where one of the two students was the dominant communicator, answered all the questions, and left the weaker partner little room for contributing.

Full exploitation of the intercultural and communicative language learning potential of the pedagogical lingua franca approach, whether in virtual encounters or face-to-face, requires continuous pedagogical mentoring. With regard to virtual exchange, O'Dowd, Sauro and Spector-Cohen (2020) explored the essential role of teachers as pedagogical mentors with attention to online interaction strategies. In our pedagogical lingua franca contexts, the focus is on enabling the interacting speaker-learners to develop their skills and readiness for communication monitoring beyond the routines of ordinary communication. Relevant measures and interventions include helping them

- raise their awareness of the pedagogical value and effects of communication monitoring,
- refine and negotiate their requirements of communicative and communal success,
- adopt consensual and cooperative ways of communication monitoring with an emphasis on partner orientation and rapport,
- acquire verbal and non-verbal means of expression relevant for communication monitoring.

The ADAPT strategy of "Successful Intercultural Communication" with its five steps of 'Awareness', 'Don't judge', 'Analyse', 'Persuade yourself', and 'Try' provides a suitable backdrop of general guidance (Chong 2018).

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'Applied Linguist', 'Ethnographer', International(ist) Citizen - Perspectives on the Language Learner

Abstract
In this article, I consider three ways of envisioning the language learner, and the disciplines or theories on which they are based. The language learner as 'applied linguist' suggests that learners and their teachers draw on linguistic analyses of the language they are learning/teaching. To see the language learner as 'ethnographer' means to include the skills, knowledge and attitudes of ethnography in what is taught/learnt. The language learner as international/intercultural citizen needs to take into account insights from both citizenship education and internationalism, a counterforce to nationalism and chauvinism, which language teaching is well-placed to support.
In pursuing these three possible visions of the language learner the crucial criterion is that language learning should have educational value and respond to contemporary societal conditions.

1. Introduction

From the end of the 19th century and the 'turn-around' of language teaching and learning encapsulated in Viëtor's (1882) famous call - der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren - the language learner was expected to aspire to be a native speaker. Only in recent decades has this begun to change. In this article, I propose to trace changes, not in an historical analysis but in conceptual terms, by comparing and contrasting different role-models language learners have been offered, sometimes simultaneously, sometimes consecutively.
My analysis is not historical but ideological, for I have a personal and specific view of which role-model is preferable.

As my title suggests, I shall begin with the language learners as 'applied linguist' and then move to the 'ethnographer' and the international(ist) citizen. Particularly in the third section, I will argue that language teaching should take into account its place within the purposes of general education and, in particular, how it can help to counter-act the extremist nationalism in contemporary societies.

2. 'Applied Linguist'

The language learner as 'applied linguist' is set in quotation marks because it is not to be taken literally. Language learners are not in a strict sense applied linguists, but this label makes evident that they are expected to use knowledge about language supplied by scholars in linguistics or 'linguisticians'[1], and change it into knowledge how to use the language for communicative purposes. This is not simply another way of referring to 'communicative language teaching' since other methods or approaches - be they 'grammar-translation' or 'audio-lingual' or 'direct' etc. - had and have communicative goals. 'Grammar-translation' is communicative in that it led and leads to the ability to read texts written by native speakers, often literary or philosophical texts and often from both past and present. This is one kind of communication. Similar but more complex purposes, with additional communicative competences, are the intended outcomes of other approaches such as 'direct method', and include the three other 'skills' of speaking, listening and writing, but the communicative purpose of reading remains equally important.

Knowledge about language is supplied by linguisticians for teachers who change it into knowledge useful to learners and, in the course of learning that knowledge, learners are often expected to acquire some of the skills of linguisticians themselves. They become not just 'linguists', students and users of specific languages, but students of language. They might consider this to be unnecessary or at best a necessary pre-condition for using language with accuracy. Knowledge about language is often not attractive to learners, and at best seen as a 'necessary evil'. On the other hand, the concept of 'language awareness' sees knowledge about language as a virtue, as a valuable acquisition in itself (Hawkins 1984; Donmall 1985; Garrett and Cots 2012). The argument is that, since language is the main distinguishing feature of being human, it is a worthwhile educational aim that learners should know about themselves as linguistic beings. For, otherwise, they will not become aware of their implicit knowledge of their existing language(s), let alone the languages they learn. Their knowledge about their existing language(s) is over-shadowed, and even suppressed, by their knowledge how to use those languages. The fact that they have a capacity which is extremely complex - just as complex as the phenomena of the natural world they learn to wonder at - does not occur to them because everyone has it. If everyone has it, then it must be simple. The complexity of their language capacity might be more

[1] This is a clumsy word but needed to distinguish such scholars from 'linguists' i.e. people who study specific languages.

widely recognised - just as physics and chemistry etc. are recognised - if there were a Nobel Prize for discoveries in linguistics.

'Knowing how', or procedural knowledge, thus dominates declarative knowledge or learners' knowledge about their existing language(s). If the value of 'language awareness' is ignored, procedural knowledge of a new language is also prioritised over declarative knowledge. Teachers often also support this prioritisation because the transfer form declarative to procedural knowledge has been cast in doubt (Véronique 2012) as the speaking and listening skills have been prioritised over reading and writing.

That declarative knowledge is useful in writing (and reading) whether in a learners' existing or new language(s), is evident enough, because with time to revise and reflect, it helps to refine and improve written production and/or to improve interpretation of written texts. It is more controversial to say that declarative knowledge can also improve speaking and listening. The argument that fluency is as important - or perhaps more important - than accuracy has long been well and justifiably made (Brumfit 1984). Over-emphasis on accuracy (declarative knowledge) impedes fluency (procedural knowledge) especially in the early stages of learning a new language. On the other hand, at advanced stages - whether in existing or new languages - fluency can be enhanced by declarative knowledge when fluency becomes not just the ability to communicate efficiently - to convey meaning - but also the ability to communicate effectively: to express nuances of meaning, to be rhetorically effective in both writing and speaking.

In short, the language learner needs to have some of the skills and knowledge of an applied linguist whether they want to take a native speaker as a role model or not. For the question of a native speaker as a role model is a different matter and, indeed, an 'applied linguist' is more able to decide for themselves, since they will understand the issues more clearly through their knowledge about, or awareness of, language and human beings and their societies as linguistic phenomena.

3. 'Ethnographer'

'Ethnographer' too should not be taken literally. The language learner as ethnographer is not a replacement for the 'applied linguist', but an enrichment. Among language teachers, the enrichment of Chomsky's concept of language competence by Hymes's 'communicative competence' (1972) is well known, and captures at least in broad terms the point I want to make in this section.

Hymes and, in Europe, van Ek (1986) demonstrated that communication can be neither efficient nor rhetorically effective if based solely on language competence. For learners have in their existing language(s) not just linguistic but also sociolinguistic and cultural competence, the former being a part of the latter. In practice, when Hymes's ideas about existing languages were transferred into teaching learners new languages, more emphasis was put, in so-called 'communicative language teaching', on sociolinguistic than on cultural competence. Similarly, the use of van Ek's analysis for the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2001) put more emphasis on sociolinguistic than on social and cultural competences. Hymes in particular was often mis-understood despite his saying that cultural competence is more than sociolinguistic competence.

The role-model which captures this new complexity is the ethnographer. Children are born ethnographers and use their ethnographic skills to explore the world around them - by observation and questioning - and decide how to respond to it. The vast majority 'go native' and become not 'participant observers' but 'participants' in the world around them, and subsequently lose their ethnographic skills and declarative knowledge as their procedural knowledge takes over. Analogously to the re-discovery of their knowledge about language through learning new languages, learners can re-acquire ethnographic skills and declarative as well as procedural knowledge about new worlds they meet through new languages. They can simultaneously turn these skills back onto their existing worlds and, again in an analogy with language awareness, teachers should encourage this as an educational outcome.

Unlike the child-ethnographer, the professional ethnographer does not usually 'go native'. They maintain their position as participant observer and fulfil their task of presenting and interpreting the world of a human social group - be it an isolated group in the Amazon or the Pacific, or a group which constitutes a social institution (a school, hospital, commercial company etc.) in their own society - to their readers in an 'ethnography', as a written report or by other means.

The language learner as ethnographer can follow this lead. They can become an interpreter of a new world they experience through a new language for those they know in their existing world(s) and language(s). They can do this simultaneously both for others and for themselves. Through heuristic comparison and contrast, through reflection and analysis, they can understand a new world and better understand their own, and this will make them better communicators in both (Byram 1997).

Comparison and contrast, and the ability to investigate more deeply what they do not understand, can - and in my view should - lead to learners to curiosity and an ability to decentre and challenge what they have hitherto assumed to be 'normal' and 'natural'. They can, and in an educational perspective of self-knowledge, they *should* become critical and gain 'critical cultural awareness', i.e. 'an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of a systematic process of reasoning, values present in one's own and other' worlds. (Byram forthcoming). At this point, the ethnographer becomes not just a participant-observer but an engaged commentator on other worlds and their own.

Some ethnographers take a particular interest in language. Michael Agar with *inter alia* his concepts of 'rich points' and 'languaculture' (1991, 1994a, 1994b) has been introduced into the discourse on language and culture teaching, notably by Risager (2006) who uses the concept of 'languaculture' or 'linguaculture' in her analysis of the language-culture nexus. Language learner ethnographers too can focus on the rich points which reveal the differences - and learning difficulties - between their own language(s) and new languages. For, the world(s) learners know is/are embodied in and accessible through their language(s) existing and new, and semantic analysis will help them to notice and integrate rich points in the language-culture nexus into their own learning.

The issues become all the more fascinating - and with good pedagogy can be made fascinating as part of learners' language awareness - when they learn a lingua franca. Are the 'rich points' from learners existing languages transferred into the shared language? Neither Agar nor Risager address this directly, and there is room for more research, as well as opportunity for imaginative pedagogy.

There is no doubt that this vision of the language learner as (linguistic) ethnographer - appropriately realised according to the age, context and stage of learning - is a challenge to teachers. Teachers themselves are usually 'applied linguists' and may even have been trained as 'pure' linguisticians. Including the skills and knowledge of ethnography is a different matter and requires an additional commitment, but one which can be embraced (Roberts et al. 2001).

In sum, the language learners as ethnographer is a concept which enables learners to gain declarative and procedural knowledge with which they can analyse and reflect in new ways and, in using all their communicative skills, be a participant-observer in other worlds and their own, and act as mediators between the two. They are 'intercultural speakers' (Byram 2009) who may decide to pursue the linguistic competences of a native speaker, but who will certainly pursue the competences of the mediating ethnographer with respect to (inter)cultural competences.

4 International(ist) Citizen

In this section I do not need to use quotation marks around international(ist) citizen, but there are other preliminary explanations necessary. The distinction between 'international' and 'internationalist' is important. The former is a descriptive term and the latter prescriptive because it includes values. The former refers to the ways in which a learner needs to be a mediating ethnographer or intercultural speaker if they are to be an efficient and effective communicator. The latter refers to the ideological position I think a learner should take in their critical thinking and actions. I might have chosen to write 'intercultural and/or internationalist citizen'. The precise meaning of 'internationalist' will become clear below.

A learner with critical cultural awareness is an engaged thinker, reflecting on their own and other worlds. Thinking may lead to action; critique of (an aspect of) the world, whether one's own or another, may be the first step towards taking action to reinforce what is 'good' and change what is 'bad'. It is possible for this step to be taken in any context, but in an educational context the teacher may encourage the learner to do so. This introduces complex ethical issues and responsibilities, as any pedagogical decision does. Some language teachers may be reluctant to take on such responsibilities, but in some views of education for citizenship, encouraging learners to be active citizens is normal practice (e.g. Mirral and Morrelle 2011).

Education for citizenship is usually focused on learners' own world(s) as experienced in their existing language(s). In the teaching of new languages, the focus broadens to include other worlds as well as one's own. In education for citizenship in one's own world, the values and actions are usually those which are 'normal' and 'natural' in that world. In language teaching for 'intercultural citizenship' (Byram 2008), the values may be new, perhaps even in conflict with the existing 'natural' and 'normal'. A new concept of normal and natural is required.

One set of values, and the actions which realise them, are 'internationalist'. Other value-sets may be drawn from religions or philosophies. My view is that, because language teaching usually introduces language and worlds rooted in other countries, the appropriate values are internationalist, but this is not the only reason for my view. Internationalism has been an antidote to (extreme) nationalism or patriotism - the last refuge of a scoundrel, as Samuel Johnson said (as cited in Boswell 1986, 182) - almost from its inception. Nationalism is dangerous and, as I write this, is becoming more so. It has led to conflict in the past and threatens to do so again. Internationalism is necessary today as much as ever.

Internationalism is a complex phenomenon which has been under-researched by historians (Kuehl 2009) but for my purposes here, it is 'liberal internationalism' which is important, defined by Halliday as: "a generally optimistic approach based upon the belief that independent societies and autonomous individuals can through greater interaction and co-operation evolve towards common purposes, chief among these being peace and prosperity." (1988, 192).

Holbraad too links liberal internationalism with "confidence in the rational and moral qualities of human beings" (2003, 39) and "faith in progress towards more orderly social relations." The language learner who espouses internationalist values thus engages, often with the encouragement of their teacher, in co-operation to achieve shared objectives (Porto 2014; Yulita 2017).

The language learner as internationalist does not replace the 'applied linguist' nor the 'ethnographer'. The knowledge and skills of both - and especially the critical cultural awareness of the ethnographer - are important and fundamental for the internationalist learner. In practice, the learner can use their applied linguist and ethnographer competences to work with other internationalists who speak other languages in the common pursuit of internationalist values and actions. Using contemporary technologies and the instruments of globalisation, learners can act together with learners in other geographical locations, in their own country or abroad, to reinforce what they together see as 'good' and change together the 'bad'. In doing so they acquire new internationalist identities (Byram *et al.* 2017).

The introduction of values and judgements about the 'good' and the 'bad' sets new challenges for language teachers. The ethical issues involved in encouraging learners to act internationally as intercultural citizens have to be addressed by teachers who promote internationalist values. The challenges must not be under-estimated and the implications for teacher education are substantial, but cannot be the focus here.

5. Conclusion: language learning and Bildung

On a number of occasions above, I have referred to the 'educational' context and purposes of language learning. I have had in mind throughout that languages are, most often, learnt in schools and higher education as part of general education. Other contexts of learning exist but are outside the range of this article.

The German concept of *Bildung* and similar concepts of *dannelse* and *bildning* in Scandinavia, provides a good basis for further clarification. *Bildung* refers both to the realisation of a learner's potential as an individual, their inner self, and also to the influence of outside factors which facilitate this development. These factors, in schools and universities, include teaching but also other activities across whole institutions and their formal and informal curricula.

In terms of the 'applied linguist' and the 'ethnographer', the learner's potential - drawn upon in early childhood but then 'forgotten' as their skills and knowledge become 'second nature' - can be re-stimulated by what teachers do. This is the element of *Bildung* which focuses on the realisation of an individual's potential. The internationalist citizen, by contrast, is an external concept, created in society, into which the learner can be encouraged to grow, to acquire new identities and new ways of seeing the multiple worlds into which, over time, learners enter through the language they learn. Declarative and procedural knowledge are necessary but should not be the sole focus of teachers' attention. Language learning should be a path to *Bildung* and teachers have a responsibility to facilitate *Bildung* whichever subject they teach. Language teachers are no exception and make their contribution from their specific international perspective and, I have argued, through internationalist values they are well-placed to embrace, provided they have appropriate teacher education.

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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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statusQuaestionis
language text culture

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Work and Play in Second Language Instructional Activity

Abstract
An implicit and metaphorical identification of learning with work activity frames the language used to construct learning and the orientation of the teaching practices foregrounded in formal educational settings. Play practices -improvisations, simulations, creative writing, games- as exploratory and creative processes are sometimes present in the L2 classroom, although rarely at the center of L2 pedagogy. In L2 research, the developmental powers of learning as play are marginally explored because of the limiting effects of a learning as working identification (but see exceptions: Lantolf 1997; Lantolf 1999; Cook 1997; Cook 2000; Broner and Tarone 2001; Belz 2002; Pomeranz and Bell 2007; Bell 2009). Inspired by Vygotsky's (1978) research on play as a major developmental force, it is argued that learning as play should be transformative. It is defined with the following four features: developmental-historical, imaginative-creative, regulatory-intentional, and conceptual-framing. Three examples are used to illustrate a transformative practice inspired by play: Strategic Interaction (Di Pietro 1987), Creative Writing, and Concept-based Teaching. Learning as transformative play should foreground different pedagogical possibilities when researching and teaching languages in formal educational settings.

1 Introduction

The social and historical complexity of institutional educational settings makes the definition of learning activity a challenge. In the globalized world of second language standards, learning activity as the core issue in instructional settings is often constructed as efficient mastery of outcome-oriented tasks that can be understood through descriptors and milestones, see for instance standards in Council of Europe (2001) or ACTFL (2014). The attribution of features such as efficient, task-oriented, or outcome-based to formal learning processes is seen as neutral and transparent. These features are the historical frames underneath the edifice of the culture of education in modern societies (Bruner 1996). The underlying rationales are almost always opaque to participants (Smith 1998). Assumptions are invisible because they are a historical given. It is quite challenging to spot large social and educational frames behind instructional activity in late modern society when participants are part of the picture. The framing is not in sight. In this article, I consider how learning activity is framed and defined through an implicit, sometimes explicit, metaphorical identification of learning with work activity.

In what follows, I analyze how a pragmatist learning as efficient work understanding frames pedagogical practices in the L2 classroom. I also reflect on why play elements are at the periphery of the L2 classroom. The marginal presence of creative and exploratory play is based on an implicit understanding of both learning as efficient work and genuine learning antithetical to play. Play is framed under a motivational-enjoyment umbrella, a simple and sometimes needed break to return to real learning-as-work tasks. This type of play as basic competitive games is certainly present in the classroom, although it is maintained at the margins of classroom activities. Finally, I review Vygotsky's understanding of play activity (Vygtosky 1978) as a major force in the development of historical identities, imagination, self-regulation, and abstract conceptual thinking in children. Inspired by this Vygotskyan understanding of play, I argue for the centrality of learning based on transformative play in L2 instructional activity.

2. Large frames are hard to see: the learning-work equation

Instructional activity, that is, teaching-learning in formal settings, is a historically and culturally situated activity that integrates features of learning, working, and playing.[1] Instructional activity in classroom settings focuses on organized learning. A classroom is an ideal context for careful explaining, conscious learning, and guided understanding and practice. On one hand, instructional activity shares organizational features of work. It is part of an adult working reality where teachers work for schools and administrators. On the other, play elements such as make-believe learning exercises, ritual but creative activities, games and simulations, school recess, and artificial but coherent assignments are also present in instructional contexts. Such is the

[1] Schools have a tendency for encapsulation and isolation (Engestrom 1996).

mixed nature of instructional activity where learning, work, and play are intertwined.

A functional logic of efficient work in formal learning is predominant in shaping large-scale education efforts. It is present in goal-driven syllabi, mechanically-oriented homework and quizzes, repetitive learning exercises, real-world transactional tasks, rule-regulated behavior, or outcome-oriented assignments and assessments. Classroom learning that over-emphasizes an efficient, functional, and measurable orientation to learning is based on the logic of work from a pragmatist point of view. There are historical circumstances to understand why learning is equated with work in modern societies. Good quality work needs to be measurable and efficient. Tasks are divided, and standards are set. The consequences of measurement in work activities has an effect on how to establish pedagogical milestones in learning curricula. Furthermore, there is a logical expectation that learning should prepare students for future work-related activities. Work activity is considered the leading activity of adult life in late modern societies[2]. This expectation is over-emphasized in contemporary societies where production, efficiency, and pragmatism are paramount. Play, although critical in adult leisure activities, is seen as optional, even childish, and generally non-productive in the adult world. This is also the case in learning activity. Playfulness may be seen as relatively important for motivation and student engagement, but it is seen as peripheral for real learning measurement. A pragmatist, productive, utilitarian, work-based understanding of education in general, and L2 learning in particular, may be coherent with the spirit of efficient standardization of modern and late-modern societies. To be sure: an

[2] Leontiev (1981) observes how different moments in human development are characterized by a main leading activity. The three basic categories for leading activities in human life seem to be: play, learning, and work. At a developmental level, one may distinguish them. Toddlers fundamentally play in daycare, children fundamentally learn in schools, and adults fundamentally work in offices and factories. However, learning, working, and playing are not exclusive realities. Activities are not neatly compartmentalized in late modern societies. Play provides extensive learning opportunities, learning is most often constructed as working, and there is considerable learning in adult work activity. The same activities for the same participant may be sometimes predominantly play, work, or even learning. Professional sports are a good example where play becomes work. Artistic activities are sometimes work based on play as creativity. Indeed, the necessary fluid and dynamic nature of human activity makes compartmentalization into exclusive categories complicated, and probably taxonomically misguided.

outcome-oriented and work-driven construction of instructional activity is helpful. It neatly organizes and frames teaching/learning intangible outcomes through the logic of efficient work. Even if an understanding of learning as work is coherent with late modernity contemporary views on the roles of work and play in adult life, it still needs to be pondered and examined. It over-emphasizes production, sameness, negotiation and reality, and outcomes at the expense of creativity, difference, transgression and imagination, and explorative alternative identity forming processes.

Still, and as mentioned above, the powerful framing effects of the identification of work with learning derives from its invisibility. And it is the case indeed that an implicit mapping of learning activity with work has remained largely unchallenged in much of the literature in contemporary theorizing in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) with few notable exceptions (see for instance Lantolf 1999; Sullivan 2000; Cook 2000). A work metaphor for understanding SLA supports efficiency and practicality in all fronts: instructed SLA is a about a focus on tasks and outcomes. It also sets priorities in research agendas.

The ultimate goal for instructed SLA through a learning-is-working lens is effective and efficient participation in global societies (MLA report 2007). This participation is constructed as naturally driven by the logic of work organization in late market societies and the protocols of professional business exchanges in human interactions. Students who aim to attain superior proficiency in a second language are assumed to need considerable effort and countless hours of hard work. Serious, committed, and hardworking learners may avoid any type of learning as play so as not to lose precious time in the L2 learning process (but see Bell 2009 on the benefits and complexity of humor in the language classroom).

In short, even when playfulness is present in language classrooms, it is implicitly assumed that its usefulness is more connected to relaxation in working towards goals and outcomes rather than promoting identity-formation, self-regulation, creativity, transformation and development, transgression and imagination, and communicative and conceptual development.

3. Conceptual metaphors of learning as efficient work and learning as joyful play

A statement such as learning a new language is hard work seems irrefutable at first. Theoretical constructions emerge in a specific historical and social circumstances which favor certain types of ontological, epistemological, and ethical principles (Valsiner and van der Veer 2000 on intellectual interdependency). Theories are based on explicit, sometimes implicit, metaphorical understanding of difficult to define abstract notions explained in terms of concrete objects. Examples such as the *mind* is a computer, a language is a system, communication is a business transaction, or learning is accumulation of input are helpful concretizing conceptual devices, but they can be limiting as well (cf. van Lier 2007).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980), in their pioneering work on everyday metaphors, contend that conceptual understandings reflected in the language used to talk about everyday lives help us to understand complex reality in specific ways. *LOVE IS A JOURNEY*, *the MIND IS A CONTAINER*, or *IDEAS ARE BUILDINGS* are three of many underlying conceptual metaphors implicitly contained in how people talk when they make sense of everyday experiences.

Part of power of metaphors, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), is their invisibility. This implicit metaphorical conceptual system, the metaphors we live by as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argued, is not transparent to participants. It builds on their linguistic constructions of the world, and we are not conscious of these. We are not aware we use these metaphors, but the language we use reflects them. It is how we talk about issues that gives away the framing metaphors. For instance, the conceptual metaphor *LOVE IS A JOURNEY* is revealed in expressions such as: *Our relationship is at a crossroads; We can't turn back now; Our love is of the track; We'll have to go our separate ways.* The argument is that these linguistic frames are indeed conceptions through words that speakers take for granted in the sociocultural construction of complex issues through language.

Here it is argued that a conceptual metaphor for learning operates in the culture of education in modern societies. Learning as the central process in educational settings is defined in terms of work. Learning is a diffuse complex process. It is better explained by metaphorical thinking. The *LEARNING IS WORK* metaphor helps practitioners understand the more abstract and fluid quality of learning activity. The more subjective, chaotic, abstract, and intangible quality of learning compared to the more objective, organized, concrete, and measurable logic of work activity justifies the mapping of work features onto learning activity. Work as a modern activity is a cultural construction with specific implications in late modern, market-driven, hyperconnected societies. Work, as well as learning as work, is laborious, serious, and repetitive. Learning as work, as well as work activity, should be efficient, well organized, goal-driven, measurable, and accountable.

The reasons why students are viewed as workers in the classroom are coherent with the logic of contemporary societies. Classrooms are part of work activity for adults. Teachers and professors are paid to teach. Students pay to learn, often times, through sustained effort and sacrifice. As mentioned above, the power of a conceptual metaphor lays in its invisibility. Teachers are not generally aware that they construct learning activity as work, and even more, that many of the classroom practices implemented are justified by an implicit understanding of learning as work.

The *WORK METAPHOR* is partly reflected in the language used to talk about learning. Words such as homework, tasks, collaboration, negotiation, scaffolding, design, effort, situated practice, or group work index a work view of learning activity. Consider examples in (1) which may be commonly heard in a classroom:

LEARNING IS WORK METAPHOR
You have to *work really hard* to learn Spanish indicative/subjunctive.
We are going to *work* in groups today.
Remember to do your *homework* for tomorrow.
This learning *task* requires some *serious effort*.
You have to really *practice and work on* your conjugations.
These situated *practice tasks work really well* for beginning learners.
These are *really hard-working* students.
You need to clarify that point so that it *works in* that paragraph.
Language learning is hard *work*

There are certainly instances where teaching language reflects an underlying learning as play understanding in expressions such as in (2):

(2) LEARNING IS PLAY METAPHOR
We are going to do *role-plays* today.
Since it is Friday, I have some *games* for the class.
You should *play* with that idea in your paper.
You need to *play* and *juggle* with it to really learn this concept.
He is a *team-player in* this class.

However, these types of expressions are less frequent and not as central in classroom discourse work-related expressions. It is also revealing to note that linguistic expressions where learning is constructed as play may be substituted for terms and expressions that are also part of the learning- as-work metaphor. Games and role-plays may be constructed as tasks, and the teaching of writing in modern language classes is not so much about playing with ideas but working them into neat paragraphs.

(3) LEARNING AS PLAY IS ALSO WORK
We are going to do *role-work* today.
Since it is Friday, I have some *tasks* for the class.
You should *work* with that idea in your paper.
You need to *work* and *struggle* with it to really learn this concept.
*?[3] He is a *team-worker* in this class.

The reverse does not tend to be true: thinking about examples of work in terms of play. Consider examples in (4) as parallels to (1):

(4) LEARNING AS PLAY IS ALSO WORK
*? You have to *play really well* to learn indicative/subjunctive in Spanish.
*? We are going to *play* in groups today.
*? Remember to do your *home-play* for tomorrow.
*? This *learning game* requires some *playful* effort.
*? You have to really *play* on your conjugations.
*? These situated practice *games play* really well for beginning learners.
*? These are really *hard playing* students.
*? You need to clarify that point so that *it plays in* that paragraph.
*? Language learning is *hard play (or even: *?Language learning is playing hard).*

One could argue that these phrases are just a question of collocations in language. One could take the example of "hard play", or even "play hard", which sounds incoherent compared to collocations such as "hard work" when applied to instructional activity[4]. Still, the point is that "working hard leads to language learning" is conceptually more coherent than "playing hard leads to language learning". The argument here is that this is the case because of our cultural understanding of learning in terms of work activity.
At the very least these examples reveal an easier mapping of working onto learning vs. play onto learning. It also points to the power of implicit conceptual metaphors to understand, concretize, and discursively explain the

[3] *? It is used to mark examples which do not sound semantically coherent.
[4] In organized sports this collocation makes sense: "You have to play hard to win." "You have to work hard to win" is less likely. And you can say, "You have to work hard to play tennis well."

nature of complex processes such as learning. In any case, lurking beneath the present argument of conceptual metaphors is the idea of behavioral fidelity to the metaphors used to explicate teaching. This does not necessarily have to be the case. Language and discourse do not determine teaching practices, although they may orient priorities, which is the argument here. Still, there is a need for additional analysis of the recent history of L2 learning to reflect on pedagogical proposals based on learning as work.

4. Learning as work in the recent history of L2 teaching

It is argued here that learning-as-work research and teaching practices have been adopted by the profession as of paramount relevance to the teaching field, partly because they are coherent with a late modern cultural identification of learning with working. A cursory review of the recent history in L2 teaching is provided to illustrate the power of the work = learning equation. Pedagogical practices in schools are many and eclectic. Still, through the publications in the field of SLA, it seems that the learning as work metaphor acted as one of the determining forces in situating learning-as-work pedagogical practices as central to the field of SLA.

In the field of L2 teaching, and before the arrival of the different Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approaches that flourished in the 1970s and 1980s, classrooms were constructed as mechanical realities in which students learned to translate, repeat, and drill (Pomerantz and Bell 2007). Learning was not necessarily boring or devoid of any creativity or playfulness. It is reasonable to assume that pedagogical practices were eclectic and there was room for creativity. However, before CLT, learning opportunities provided to students as understood in the L2 literature were framed under a productive efficiency metaphor of learning as repetitive work. A behaviorist understanding of learning as repetition was framing these efforts (see Savignon 1997 on the influence of behaviorism on L2 teaching in the 1960s).

Play and games were integrated into the pedagogical practices for the communicative language classroom starting in the1970s and well into the 1980s. Several reasons could justify the emergence of this new trend: the importance placed on self-expression and interaction that came with CLT (Savignon 1997), the emphasis of humanist approaches to language teaching coming from the 1960s as a reaction to behaviorism (see for instance Richards and Rogers 2002 on Community Language learning), and perhaps partly because of the prominence placed on learning languages as if L2 learners were children (Krashen 1985).

In the 1980s, under the CLT umbrella, learning as play can be found in several publications: language games used for conversational fluency in the communicative classroom (Klippel 1984; Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby 1984; Crookall and Oxford 1990 among others), Theater Arts as projects for language courses (Maley and Duff 1982; Smith 1984), and simulations (see for instance, Jones 1982) as a relevant tool to promote communicative competence. In these proposals, there are ideas for integrating creativity, imagination, and playfulness as the essence for promoting interactions in the communicative language classroom. In retrospect, it is also revealing to point out that there were well developed "play-inspired" CLT approaches in the 1970s and 1980s: see for instance Oller and Richard-Amato (1983) description of Simulations, The Silent Method, Sociodrama, or Strategic Interaction. They all have faded away in the 1980s and 1990s, and they do not seem to be an important part of mainstream research on instructed SLA in the 2000s and beyond.[5]

Savignon (1997) highlights how games, simulations, and theater arts in the CLT classroom have an intrinsic value beyond a motivational argument. For Savignon (1997), play activity such as simulations provide involvement and allow teachers to become one of the players in the classroom simulation (Savignon 1997, 195). Savignon (1997) also comments how theater arts brings fantasy, in the sense of creativity to the class. The acceptance of play as a component of the curriculum also increases the possibilities for a variety of group-building strategies, although Savignon cautions that a curriculum cannot be based exclusively on play activities (Savignon 1997, 187). This seems to have been the key. Play was not seen as a central approach to construct curricula. Although there were certainly approaches mentioned above (for instance Di Pietro 1987 Strategic Interaction) which connivingly argued that play in the sense of simulations, creativity, and drama-based improvisations could and should be used for constructing curricula and entire courses.

In mainstream eclectic CLT, play survived in language games used in classrooms for motivation and fun. In the introduction to learning game monographs of the 1980s, authors claim that if there is to have any relevance

[5] There is a revealing irony in Oller and Richard-Amato (1983) precisely titled "Methods that Work", when indeed the publication is about approaches that are fundamentally about play.

for teachers, games must be clearly related to practice. Consequently, these publications are compilations of language games or game-type activities for promoting communicative development in the classroom. In these listings of games with brief introductions there is no theoretical account of why games are beneficial from a research or theoretical perspective. For instance, Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (1984, 1), in their outstanding compilation of language games, argued using a logical rhetorical move that the inclusion of games in the classrooms, will help to sustain interest and work in language learning:

> Why Games? Language learning is hard work. One must make an effort to understand, to repeat accurately, to manipulate newly understood language and to use the whole range of known language in conversation or written composition. Effort is required at every moment and must be maintained over a long period of time. Games help and encourage many learners to sustain interest and work.

Games are constructed as opportunities for relaxation and motivation, although Wright, Betteridge, and Buckby (1984, 1) acknowledge that some games create a genuine context for meaningful language use in the classroom, and argue that games "are thus not for use solely on wet days and at the end of the term". Motivation and fun are common justifications for proposing the implementation of games in the language classroom so as to nurture positive attitudes in learners (see for instance Jones 1982; Klimova 2015). Still, if play were to be considered a developmental force, other issues such as creativity, emotion, imagination would be paramount in learning processes.

Moreover, when a play element is present in the CLT classroom, Cook (2000, 193) argues that CLT "has neglected those pleasurable, emotive and controversial aspects of social interaction which are expressed through the genres of play". Even when there is an attempt to include samples of authentic language use in the communicative classroom, there is a privileged place for business discourse, polite conversation, and basic referential functions, whereas genres such as songs, jokes, prayers, and advertisements are not as central.

Although games and simulations were part of CLT in the 1980s, at least if one considers the publications for language teachers in this decade, the publication of language teaching games took a back seat during the next decade. From the point of view of language teaching methodology, the 1990s are the decade where Task-based approaches to L2 teaching and research rose to prominence in the field. Revealingly enough, the games of the 1980s are quite similar to the tasks that became central to the field of SLA in the 1990s.

In this respect, it could be argued that Task-Based Learning (TBL) approaches were instrumental in making some features of games part of the language classroom through the notion of tasks.
Significant and revealing for the present argument is that tasks fall under the implicit but prevailing learning-as-work metaphor. In task-based learning negotiation, outcomes, and real transaction are explicitly highlighted. Nunan (1989, 5) explains how the concept of task has been defined differently in several fields of study. Nunan (1989) uses Long's (1985, 89) definition: "a task is a piece of work undertaken for oneself of for others, freely or for some rewards". Tasks are in this respect very much part of a work-based understanding of learning (see also Cook 2000 below).
Nunan (1989, 40) also distinguishes two types of tasks for classrooms: real-world tasks and pedagogical tasks. But real-world tasks are not "real". These tasks require learners to approximate in class the sort of behaviors that may be required of them in the world beyond the class. This is indeed make-believe play of the sort found in language games and simulations for the classroom. Pedagogical tasks focus on the teaching of specific issues using strategies such as division of roles, information gaps, shared and conflicting goals for the completion of actions that parallel language games.
Indeed, many of the tasks proposed in TBL (see for instance, Willis's 1996 framework for task-based teaching) could be considered games: Information gap tasks as guessing games, sorting tasks as classification games, listing tasks as memory games, and debate tasks as simulation games. These tasks, like games, are outcome-oriented, participants have clearly specified roles, and language is a medium to attain an objective. Similar to the language games before, sometimes tasks integrate competition (debate tasks), other times there is an element of cooperation (information gap tasks). To be sure, the power of the learning- as-work metaphor is such that if games were considered peripheral although valuable for motivation in the 1980s, tasks are considered central and productive for anything and everything in the language classroom. Crookes and Gass (1993, 4) propose: "a task is a productive analytic unit for looking at classrooms and a productive unit with which to construct syllabi and materials". Tasks are units for research, syllabus design, task-based teaching, and assessment.
TBL is a major contribution to CLT. The point here is to realize how proposals that are coherent with the implicit conceptual metaphor of learning-as-work have become more prominent in the field of Applied Linguistics in the last decades. The result is that TBL is considered in the

SLA research community as one of the leading contributions in the last few years, whereas games have hardly been treated as an object of research. Confirming the hypothesis outlined here about the importance of conceptual metaphors in organizing language teaching in the classroom, the games of the 1980s were a complementary and non-essential activity to most pedagogical approaches for teaching languages. To be sure, valuable pedagogical approaches with significant insights for the communicative classroom - approaches that were creative and playful- have been almost forgotten (Silent Way, Sociodrama, Strategic Interaction, etc.). TBL, however, and the notion of task, clearly based on a learning-as-work metaphorical mapping, has been the basis for successfully constructing a whole and unique approach to language teaching and research.
In the field of SLA, Cook (2000, 157) has already argued that a narrow understanding of the notion of task proposed by Long (1996) is too restricted: "there seems to be in the choice of the word task an implied alignment of language education with work". Cook (2000, 161) explains how even a broader interpretation of task based on the importance of meaning, spontaneity, and reality is opposed to an understanding of language play where form, artificiality, and ritual also matter. Cook (2000, 195) outlines several recommendations so that a play element in language can enrich the language classroom. Among other proposals, Cook (2000) argues that a play element helps teachers justify the explicit teaching of deductive rules and the use of play genres and literature in basic language courses. It supports the importance of artifice in the classroom and understands the relevance of variety of interactional patterns in teaching. It also better conveys the forces of freedom and tradition in teaching methodologies.
Towards the end of the 1990s, and the beginning of the 2000s, there is a questioning on the lack of research on language play and its connection to L2 learning. Lantolf (1997; 1999), Cook (1999; 2000), Broner and Tarone (2001), Belz (2002), Pomerantz and Bell (2007), and Bell (2009) challenge the consideration that play elements, language play, and humor specifically, are not seen as central for L2 teaching and learning. This lack of relevance of language play in teaching is accompanied by a lack of theorization and research on play, and specifically language play in SLA, which also feeds back into the marginalization of play activity in the L2 classroom.
From a Sociocultural Theory (SCT, henceforth) perspective based on Vygotsky's research proposals, Lantolf (1997; 1999) argues that language play in L2 acquisition is about the focusing of attention with the purpose of

internalizing language. Language play is not simply fun. Language play is a fundamentally developmental activity which is self-initiated by students with the intent of focusing on a new language feature. Inspired by SCT, Sullivan (2000, 119) also remarks the limiting effects of the work metaphor still frame L2 teaching from a communicative perspective. Exploring the underlying assumptions of a Western construction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in a Vietnamese classroom, Sullivan remarks:

> Another core notion underlying the CLT approach is the concept of work. CLT includes 'pair work', 'group work', 'task-based learning', 'co-construction', 'scaffolding', and 'collaboration'. Each of these terms incorporate the notion of work. We work at tasks just as we work when collaborating... If the terms 'pair work' and 'group work' were changed to 'pair play' or 'group play', we would have a very different image of the purpose of groups.

To conclude, it is argued here that the learning as work metaphor is a powerful force in orienting practices in the field of SLA. Practitioners have adopted more easily pedagogical practices that are coherent with a commonsense understanding of learning as work. It is coherent with implicit and strong assumptions about the goals of L2 teaching in late modern societies. This is not to say that there have not been proposals and pedagogical practices that integrate play construction and understanding of classroom learning. There are certainly approaches based on a diffuse understanding of learning as play such as language learning games, gamification, and creative oriented activities. However, it seems that they are peripheral to main research, teaching, testing efforts in the field.

5. Learning as transformative play: A Sociocultural theory take

A third step in thinking about learning in a more complete fashion, and to go beyond a basic identification of learning activity with work is to widen the notion of learning to include play. This also requires a careful consideration of play and to go beyond the commonsense view that play is for fun. In contrast to views of play as trivial and circumstantial, play is a fundamental object of research in academic scholarship. Play is a transformative developmental activity in human ontogenesis (Bruner, Jolly, and Sylva 1976). Research on play illustrates how it is not only for enjoyment or relaxation, but it is a significant historical and cultural force in human History

(Huizinga 1956). The notion of language games is central in Philosophy of language (Wittgenstein 1958), in Sociology (Callois 1961), and in psychological therapy (Berne 1973).

Precisely, this reclaiming of the importance of learning as play in the classroom requires understanding play from a developmental point of view. A sociocultural understanding of L2 learning (Lantolf 2000; Lantolf and Poehner 2008; Negueruela and Garcia, 2016) helps practitioners to go beyond the motivation-for-learning and student excitement understanding of play. Play in the classroom is a transformative developmental force. Learning as play may bring enjoyment to some learners, but it should move beyond relaxation, fun, or gamification. Play may be beneficial from the point of view of classroom engagement, the creation of learning opportunities, and the generation of excitement and student-centered classroom dynamics. Nevertheless, the argument here is that play is a psychologically developmental and transformative activity.

In human ontogenesis, play is one of the critical leading activities in the sociocultural development of pre-schooled children (Vygotsky 1978, 98). In a Sociocultural understanding of human development, the influence of play on children's development is "enormous" (Bruner, Jolly, and Sylva 1976). From a SCT perspective, there are four features of developmental play as outlined by Vygotsky (1978): (1) It is historical. Play promotes going beyond the present; (2) It is imaginative and regulatory: creates alternative worlds guided by rules; (3) It is intentional: it promotes self-regulation and autonomy; (4) It is conceptual: it is about perception becoming conception, that is, the emergence of categorization and abstract thinking.

First, play is developmentally historical. It promotes the emergence of a future-oriented reality. Play creates an imaginary situation based on an unattainable present. Understanding children's play only based on the present pleasure that it brings to children is incomplete. Play brings the future into the present. For children, play appears to resolve the tension of the frustrating present. It creates a future that has not yet arrived. It represents a future in the making: "To resolve this tension the preschool child enters an imaginary, illusory world in which the unrealizable desires can be realized, and this world is what we call play" (Vygtosky 1978, 93). From a SCT perspective, play for children is about a make-believe future reality that becomes present through imagination.

Second, play is ruled-based. It is about make-believe imagination framed by rules. Play activity appears early in child development. It evolves, changing the relationship between imagination and rules. The evolution of play from childhood to adult life is explained by the dialectical relationship between imaginary situations and rules: “the development from games with an overt imaginary situation and covert rules to games with covert imaginary situation and overt rules outlines the evolution of children’s play” (Vygotsky 1978, 96). An example of play for children is Vygotsky’s description of a child playing horse with a stick. Play continues to be critical in adults in competitive, creative, artistic, and game like activities where rules and imagination are intertwined (e.g. like a chess game, where adults unreflectively understand the imaginary qualities of king or queen figures but need to overtly know the rules of engagement to play). For children, rules mark the division between work and play, “a division encountered at school age as fundamental” in a child’s ontogenesis (Vygotsky 1978, 104).[6] In work, which for the child generally means school, others impose rules, whereas in play activity, rules are jointly constituted. This is critical for the third feature of play as a developmental activity.

Third, play fosters the emergence of intentionality, purpose-oriented activity, and self-regulation. Play is not a rule-free activity, and a paradox is established in play, whereby play creates an imaginary situation but reality sets the rules of operation. The child freely accepts the rules of play. A game is “a rational and appropriate, methodical and socially coordinated system of behavior or consumption of energy, subordinated to definite rules” (Vygotsky 1997, 93). Children’s wishes are realized through play when they allow the categories of reality pass through play activity. For Vygotsky (1978, 103), “the purpose defines the game and justifies the activity”. In play, the internal world of the child becomes united with the external reality: “imagination, interpretation, and will are the internal processes carried by external action” (Vygotsky 1978, 100).

Fourth, play is about perception becoming conception. The child learns to act cognitively in play activity, and the unity between immediate motives and simple perception is lost. For children, each perception is a stimulus to the activity. “But in play, things lose their determining force. The child sees one

[6] Rule-constituted activities are those where the rules are necessary for the performing of activity, that is, play activities such as: chess, basketball, etc. If the rules are broken, the activity cannot continue. Rule-governed activities are those where the rules are not essential for the activity. For instance, in the case of driving, one must follow the different traffic regulations, but they can be broken, and the activity still continues (see Searle 1998).

thing but acts differently in relation to what he sees. Hence, a condition is reached in which the child begins to act independently of what he sees" (Vygotsky 1978, 97). It is through play that the child separates the field of meaning from the visual field. The relevance of play in children is such, that "it is through play the child achieves a functional definition of concepts or objects, and words become parts of things" (Vygotsky 1978, 99). Play separates meaning from action and objects, and in this distancing from reality, abstract thought emerges. Play creates an imaginary situation and can be considered as a means to develop abstract thought. "The essence of play is creating a new relation between the field of meaning and the visual field, between situations in thought and real situations" (Vygotsky 1978, 104). In play, as opposed to basic unmediated perception, meaning is foregrounded, and action or object are backgrounded. Meaning and intentions originate the activity.

From the point of view of development, and according to Vygotsky (1978) these four features of developmental play (historical, imaginative, regulatory, and conceptual) create a zone of proximal development for the child, where a child always behaves beyond his mental age. This is the wider background of play: "Action in the imaginative sphere, in an imaginary situation, the creation of voluntary intentions, and the formation of real-life plans and volitional motives, all appear in play and make it the highest level of pre-school development" (Vygotsky 1978, 102). The relationship between play and development can be compared to the instruction-development relationship, "play provides a much wider background for changes in need and consciousness" (Vygotsky 1978, 102).[7] Precisely, it is the quality of play as a voluntary creative transformative activity that makes it especially meaningful for L2 research and L2 pedagogy.

6. Learning as developmental play: Preliminary implications for the L2 classroom

The goal of this final section is to reflect on how a transformative developmental understanding of play prioritizes different pedagogical possibilities for L2 classroom. Framing teaching/learning activity through

[7] Newman and Holzman (1993) also articulate concrete ideas and practices for psychological therapy and community intervention inspired by Vygotsky's ideas on play as a transformative revolutionary activity.

transformative play foregrounds four features: identity and history, emotion and imagination, regulation and intentionality, and conceptual understanding. Here I briefly illustrate how a transformative play perspective offers a different road to approach L2 teaching/learning. I focus on four topics: (1) transformative play to better explain actual practices for communicative development; (2) reintroducing pedagogical approaches that were based on play as transformative, such as Di Pietro (1987) Strategic Interaction; (3) Creative writing programs as a source of L2 development; (4) conceptual teaching for communicative development.

In general, a first step for a transformative understanding of play for L2 instructional activity is to illuminate the real but make-believe nature of L2 communication in classroom settings, the actual playful nature of using the L2 in classrooms, the importance of encouraging creative and artificial language play in students, the relevance of allowing for an open and playful dynamic in learners' communication, the changing roles of students and teachers, or the significance of creativity as imitation in language development as opposed to repetition as mimicking (see also Cook 2000 on repetition and language play). These are already pedagogical practices in approaches that promote communicative development in the classroom. The goal here should be to make them central for setting learning goals for language programs.[8]

A second step to reclaiming transformative play as learning is to reintroduce communicative teaching approaches from the 1970s and 1980s that argued for play and creativity as major developmental forces. There were pedagogical proposals that foregrounded simulations, creativity, community, as seen in Oller and Richard-Amato (1983). To be sure, the argument here would be that the L2 professions would do well in recovering pedagogical proposals based on play so as to re-think their contribution through a more complete understanding of learning as not only work but also play. The goal is not to adapt some activities and techniques from these approaches, but to construct whole courses and curricula based on the notion of play as historical, imaginative, regulatory, and conceptual.

For instance, and from the present perspective, one of the communicative approaches from the 1980s that appropriately exemplify a transformative

[8] In this article I have not explored digital games and its connection to L2 learning (see for instance Acquah and Katz 2020). Gaming is certainly a relevant topic to be explored connected to Vygotsky's understanding of play.

understanding of learning as play is Di Pietro (1987) Strategic Interaction (SI). A SI approach to communicative development in the L2 classroom argues for the scenario as a pedagogical tool to promote communicative development. The scenario is a tool to construct a whole program. For sake of brevity, I offer Table 1 below as an illustrative feature-based heuristic to show how SI foregrounds learning as transformative play.

FEATURES OF TRANS-FORMATIVE PLAY	HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT Focus on identity.	IMAGINATIVE Focus on creativity as alternative results.	REGULATORY Focus on the connection between emotions, intellect, and intentions.	CONCEPTUAL Focus on conceptual frames in communication.
STRATETIC INTER-ACTION	Focus on role of participants as historical agent in communicative contexts. Start with needs to students. Syllabi are emergent and the outcome of instruction.	Promotes guided improvisation as the key to communicative development.	Centers on language as used to resolve tensions and establish identities. Strategic competence is central.	Debriefing on interpersonal communication after improvisations.

Table 1. An analysis of SI through transformative play features.

The key of SI is designing improvisation activities, scenarios o various configurations, so that the student may experience and understand the improvisational yet structured nature of human interaction. This drama-inspired approach promotes strategic competence first. The key to a well-designed scenario are conflicting roles and dramatic tension. Through these scenarios students improvise and prepare in groups so as to participate in communicative situations where they have to be strategic. They also learn to understand the three-dimensional nature of interpersonal communication: there is a message, there is a transaction, and there are roles and identities at play. Much could be said about how SI is indeed a fruitful approach for promoting communicative development through improvisational play based on drama techniques (see Alatis 1993). Suffice it to say here that improvisation, drama, creativity, and reflection are placed at the core of L2 teaching.

A third step is to think about how central pedagogical issues such as the teaching of reading/writing and interpretation are re-framed from a transformative play approach to learning. The argument will be that Creative Writing Programs should be the core of writing programs in L2 teaching. Writing/reading instruction, the emergence of literacy, is a core developmental activity from a sociocultural perspective (cf. Scribner and Cole 1981; Bodrova and Leong 1996). More specifically, research on reading/writing in the L2 classroom has developed pedagogical proposals to argue for the centrality of multiple literacies, texts and interpretation in the L2 classroom through the notion of design (cf. Kern 2000).

A transformative play orientation to learning questions a canonical approach to the teaching of writing in the classroom. From a utilitarian perspective, writing is constructed as a process where there is the production of an artifact: writer as worker engaged in the production of a manuscript through different drafts. From a work as labor perspective, one could argue that reading/writing is as a craft: writer as artisan engaged in the task of composing a specific text for a specific context: genres. Learning as transformative play highlights the role of writers as artists. This implies foregrounding creativity: meaning-making through creating texts by exploring the developmental powers of transformation and transgression. The issue is not to conform ideas to a genre, but to question and break genres through writing, self-expression, and exploration. The goal is that this process will promote an understanding of canonical genres through the creation of new models of writing. This approach is reserved mainly for "creative writing programs".

In L2 teaching, creative writing courses as a source of L2 development are rare and truly exceptional. There are certainly writing courses which integrate a few creative writing techniques. However, creative writing is a marginal pedagogical approach in L2 writing instruction. L2 reading-writing programs or writing courses which specifically play with language and focus on literature as play, rather than on literature as themes analysis and argumentation, are indeed quite rare. A focus on imagination and language play through creative writing in Foreign Language Departments at universities is almost absent outside of Creative Writing Programs. L2 writing courses should find inspiration in Schools of Arts, and Creative Writing Schools. Certainly, creative writing tasks are used in some L2 writing courses. The point here is to frame a whole L2 reading/writing program and based an entire course on creative, self-expression exercises where students write stories to understand a story, write a poem to understand a poem, or write/perform plays to understand a play. In the end, from a transformative play perspective, the goal of teaching reading/writing for L2 learners is to foreground identity development and creativity.

A final example to understand learning as transformative play is to focus on the conceptual nature of L2 development from a sociocultural psychology perspective (Vygotsky 1986). L2 development is about the quality of cultural tools made available to learners in formal teaching (Negueruela 2003). Cultural conceptual tools are the key to explain the internalization of new conceptual knowledge (Arievitch and Stetsentko 2000). Marjanovic-Shane and Beljanski-Ristic (2008) argue that play and art are central in conceptual development. From a play perspective, the promotion of conceptual internalization in the L2 classroom is about understanding language through creative transformation and transgression (Negueruela 2008a). From a conceptual approach, L2 instructional activity is about both: (1) the internalization of categorization in a new language; and (2) the emergence of self-regulation through these new categories of meaning (Negueruela 2003).

These new categories of meaning connect with the teaching of complex grammatical notions. These challenging notions are connected to thinking-for-speaking patterns (Slobin 1996), such as aspect, modality, or voice (see Negueruela 2008a; Negueruela 2008b; Swain et al. 2009). A conceptual approach to L2 grammar based on the teaching categories of meaning is not about explaining complex notions in the classroom. It is a question of exploring how mastery of meanings and forms may be better promoted from a learning-as-play perspective that understands the importance of creativity as the basis for self-regulation, identity, and interpersonal communication. The issue is conceptual transformation, using the concept as a tool for understanding second language communication (Negueruela 2003). Different creative activities (drawing, drafting, designing, and conceptualizing) are at the core of internalization from a transformative stance (Negueruela-Azarola and Fernández-Parera 2016). The key principle is playful-guided creativity that leads to mastery of conventions and the internalization of complex conceptual categories.

7. Concluding Remarks

The implicit, sometimes explicit, learning-is-efficient-work identification defines, constructs, and assesses instructional activity through an outcome-oriented understanding of instructional processes. It prioritizes rational cognition, task-based approaches to teaching and assessing, and frames goals of curricula in terms of standards and norms, which are certainly helpful but contingent on specific educational frames. This learning-working equation also tends to leave out, or at the very least marginalize alternative results, emotional experiences, exploration, and creativity. These are paramount to personal identity, interpersonal communication, and meaningful L2 development.

An understanding of how the learning-working mapping operates to foreground pedagogical practices should allow practitioners in education, and specifically in the field of SLA, both researchers and teachers, to rethink priorities in teaching, testing, and research agendas. The hope is that this essay opens up a preliminary exploration of different priorities in curricula and syllabi based on a different type of understanding: learning as transformative play, which is still not fully explored as an object of L2 research. To be sure, the thesis here is that this is the case because learning is almost always implicitly framed in SLA/Applied Linguistics as containing work features. The work metaphor for teaching and learning is not exclusive to the field L2 teaching. It is present in most educational contexts. If play is seen as leisure activity, then there is no central place for creativity, imagination, arts in the classroom setting, where productivity is paramount.

The minimal theorization and research in the L2 teaching on play activity until relatively recently also maintains instructional activity as play in a marginal role in most language classrooms. Research on creativity in the field of Applied Linguistics (Swann and Maybin 2007) suggests that we need to understand creativity not based on the notion of novelty and artistry produced only by talented experts, but as a socially oriented, contextualized, and critical phenomenon present in everyday contexts. From the present perspective, and as Cook (2000) points out, the over-emphasis on reality, practicality, and efficiency in language classrooms, transactional communication in tasks, sameness in meaning without theorizing meaning, preponderance of reality over artifice, attention paid only to implicit diffuse inductive meanings and not forms, structural nature of language in teaching even at the level of discourse and genre, and lack of value placed on play elements such as language play (Lantolf 1997; Pomerantz and Bell 2007) and humor (Bell 2009), not only limits but also may even hinder classroom-learning opportunities.

From a learning as transformative play perspective, ultimate attainment in L2 learning is not about rapid and natural fluency, perfect and precise accuracy, and sophisticated and elegant complexity (House and Kuiken, 2009). The final goal is artistic and humanist development. It is about identity and voice: creativity, artifice, and transformation. In this sense, for learners to be ready for a world of ever-changing realities, classrooms need to play hard, play in groups, engage in home-play, and play with language (Lantolf 1997; Cook 1997; Cook 2000; Broner and Tarone 2001; Belz 2002; Pomerantz and Bell 2007; Bell 2009). The final outcome of L2 development, if there is such goal, is improvised, transformative, and transgressive playfulness to establish and maintain agency, social relationships, and identity exploration.

In the end, the hope is that transformative play promotes meaningful L2 learning and significant engagement in learners. As Vygotsky's (1978, 102) remarks inspired by Spinoza: "in play activity, the rule becomes the desire". Understanding language learning as transformative play may also confirm the pedagogical experience of language teachers who witness the intense engagement and significant learning that play brings about in classrooms. Properly designed improvisations, simulations, Theater Arts, Creative Writing, language play, humor, imaginative improvisations, or any creative make-believe instructional activity should be at the core of language programs. The hope is that this essay initiates a reflection for teaching and research communities to be able to derive concrete, feasible, and pedagogically appropriate applications for specific contexts at the level of curricula, testing and assessment, and course design.

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statusQuaestionis
language text culture

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Communication Strategies in BELF: implications for business English Language Teaching[1]

Abstract
Research has shown that Communication Strategies are one of the main tools employed by ELF users to reach common understanding and effectiveness in communication, with participants cooperatively and jointly constructing meaning through several pragmatic moves. In English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF) in particular, Communication Strategies aimed at enhancing explicitness and checking comprehension, such as requests for clarification and repetition, or paraphrasing and reformulation, are seen as an essential skill, together with business know-how, clarity of message and explicitness.
The pedagogical implications of findings in BELF communication have so far been researched to a certain extent, for instance looking at the inclusion of Communication Strategies in ELT business materials, and at BELF-oriented training in some higher education programmes. This paper aims at contributing to this research area by exploring how BELF findings can be taken into account in terms of materials development and classroom practices that are oriented at fostering the development of communication skills to effectively communicate in international and intercultural business contexts.

1. Introduction

The role that English has developed as the global lingua franca of communication in a plethora of domains, from personal mobility for leisure, study or work to digital communication, is unquestioned. Research into English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) communication has grown exponentially since the 2000s, with the aim of uncovering the function and uses of English as a common code among speakers of different linguacultures who interact in a variety of settings, from academia to the workplace. English, either as a

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corporate or as the main contact language in internationally-oriented global interactions, has also become the main language of business, and research into English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF) has thrived for more than a decade now, investigating how BELF is effectively used by professionals to conduct global transactions. Research has widely shown that BELF communication is characterised by an "essentially pragmatic approach to language issues" through a "skilful and strategic use of BELF together with other languages" (Ehrenreich 2010, 411). Besides the specificity of the genre and domain as to knowledge/know-how, discourse practices and terminology, clarity and explicitness have also been shown to be essential characteristics of BELF communication in that they are part of the process of 'getting the job done'. A strategic use of the language through pragmatic moves in joint meaning negotiation, alongside accommodation towards the participants also in terms of rapport-building and relational skills, are other crucial aspects of BELF interactions. Including these essential skills in ELT business-oriented training materials and practices would appear fundamental to prepare (future) professionals to effectively interact in the global business arena. This paper aims at exploring how research findings from BELF could inform ELT business materials and classroom practices in fostering the development of effective communication skills in international business contexts, particularly in terms of communication strategies, intercultural awareness and the creation of rapport.

2. BELF – Business English as a Lingua Franca Communication

One of the effects of the global spread of English, and more in general of globalization processes, is that English has *de facto* come to represent the most widely used language of international communication, in business as in other contexts. While sharing the characteristics of English used as a contact language in its lingua franca role (ELF), interactions in Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) settings are also influenced by the specificity of the work domain, that is, by flexibility and adaptation of the speakers' "pragmatic and strategic competence to the various communicative challenges on the international workplace", where "[a]ccommodation, relational talk and rapport-building are seen as essential aspects of communication in (B)ELF environments" (Cogo and Yanaprasart 2018, 100).

BELF, or English employed as a communication code in business contexts, has been defined as ‘neutral’ since it is not the L1 of any of the speakers: even when participants for whom English is a native language are involved, the specificity, fluidity and hybridity of (B)ELF contexts make the ‘English’ that is employed characterised and appropriated in its lingua franca role. BELF has also been defined as ‘shared’ since it is used to conduct “business within the global business discourse community, whose members are BELF users and communicators in their own right – not ‘non-native speakers’ or ‘learners’” (Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, and Kankaanranta 2005, 404).

Given the hybridity and the inherently inter/transcultural nature of (B)ELF encounters, flexibility and adaptation involve both language use, not last in the multilingual nature of (B)ELF, and cultural aspects. In addition, the specificity of BELF contexts entails that a diversity of business (and corporate) cultures are at work, too. As Cogo and Yanaprasart put it, “BELF is a dynamic medium of communication with multilingual resources coming to play in and within English in the professional workplace” (2018, 101).

Negotiation and co-construction of meaning through pragmatic moves and communication strategies are hence particularly relevant in BELF, not only because of the diversity of linguacultures - and corporate cultures - of the participants, but also due to the specificity of the context - the ‘B’ of BELF - where ‘geting the work done’ implies, and relies upon, accuracy in content throughout the process of mutual understanding. Communicative competence in BELF “calls for clarity and accuracy in the presentation of business content, knowledge of business-specific vocabulary and genres conventions, and the ability to connect on the relational level” (Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen, and Karhunen 2015, 129).

The multifaceted set of skills that are part of intercultural and multilingual BELF interactions has been framed in the Global Communicative Competence (GCC) model (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011), that comprises competencies related to the three intertwined layers of Multicultural competence, Competence in BELF and Business knowhow (see Fig. 1). These three interweaving layers all contribute to successful BELF communication and, together with the strategic skills they involve - active listening, accommodation and tolerance towards different ‘Englishes’ (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2013) - have been shown to be indeed more relevant than adherence to standard and native-like language proficiency (e.g. Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2010; Cogo 2016a), above all in highly contextual BELF interactions.

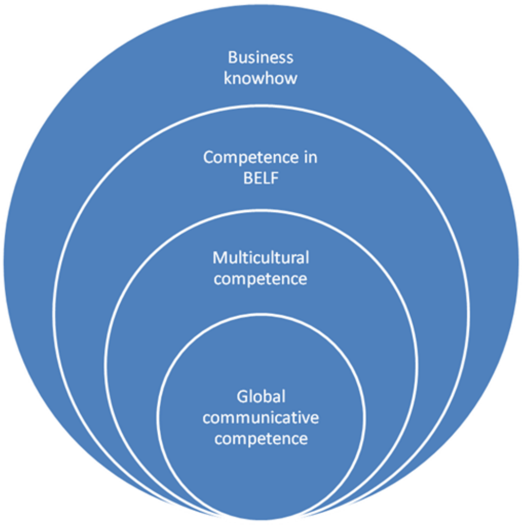

Figure 1: Model of Global Communicative Competence in a business context (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011, 258)

The innermost level of GCC, Multicultural competence, comprises skills to manage interaction with participants of different linguacultures, including accommodation to diversity in cultural (national, corporate and professional) and linguistic terms. In the second layer, competence in BELF, we find knowledge of business genres, skills in managing tasks and building rapport, and aspects related to strategic competence "such as an ability to ask for clarifications, make questions, repeat utterances, and paraphrase", alongside "clarity, brevity, directness and politeness" (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2013, 28). The last layer refers to business knowhow, including both general business discourse and more specific domains of use (Ibid.).

Particularly relevant to the discussion in this paper is the second layer, Competence in BELF, especially in its strategic competence aspects. Indeed, communication strategies aimed at checking and ensuring understanding, as well as at enhancing expliciteness, such as repetition and paraphrase, constitute an important element in ELF interactions; they are even more relevant in BELF, where clarity of content as to the business issues dealt with is paramount (e.g. Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011). Such pragmatic moves, that often include resources from the speakers' multilingual repertoires (e.g. Cogo 2016a), are exploited by interactants "to accommodate and adapt to their interlocutors and negotiate meaning and understanding" (Pullin 2015, 34). Several studies have shown how communication strategies are widely employed by professionals in international business contexts (e.g. Cogo 2012; 2016a; 2016b; Bjørge 2010; Ehrenreich 2010; Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011; Pitzl 2010; Franceschi 2017; 2019; submitted). A cooperative and active listening attitude oriented at reaching mutual and effective understanding (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011; Palmer-Silveira 2013) has also been highlighted, whereby "intercultural business encounters are not to be seen as "a minefield of mis-communication, but as a negotiated form of strategic communication" (Nickerson 2012, 239).

3. BELF and Business English Language Teaching

While the implications of ELF research findings in, and for, ELT has been a widely explored area over the last decade (e.g. Alsagoff et al. 2012; Bayyurt and Sifakis 2015a; 2015b; Bayyurt and Akcan 2015; Sifakis and Tsantila 2018; Matsuda 2012; 2017; Vettorel 2015; 2016), the impact that BELF research can have in syllabus design and business-oriented ELT has been less investigated. However, given the significant role that BELF plays in international professional communication, business-related curricula and materials ought to be informed by BELF research in order to adequately prepare students for international communication.

Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2010), drawing on findings from their study on users' perceptions of BELF, highlight three main aspects that should guide the teaching of English for Business purposes: curricula should be based on business knowledge and awareness of specific, real contexts; materials coursework and assessment should include strategies for effective business communication, with the ultimate aim of teaching students to be "flexibly competent" in BELF (not ENL) communication (2010, 208). The fact that BELF represents a "working language", different from "Official English" conceptualized as ENL, is reiterated by Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen, and Karhunen (2015). The authors also point to the importance of developing GCC in teaching, taking into account that in BELF the "two primary criteria for success are getting the job done and maintaining rapport with their communication/business partners", also through clarity, politeness and strategic communication/Communication Strategies (2015, 141). It is also stressed that the development of skills related to the three layers of GCC could be realised through case studies, simulations and problem-solving activities, familiarizing 'in context' not only with specific terminology and genre, but also with discoursive and communication practices and strategic accommodation moves (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2013, 30-31).

Pullin (2015) includes also the need to develop an intercultural dimension in Business and Economics curricula in higher education within a sociocognitive approach to language learning, where students ought to be encouraged to "deploy the adaptive strategies used in BELF communication" (2015, 45). Pullin identifies in Task-Based Learning and Teaching (TBLT, see e.g. Ellis 2003) a possible approach to introduce, and practise, BELF authentic communication in the classroom, with a focus on interaction and on noticing as to (inter)cultural awareness. Besides outlining the learning aims, two tasks with advanced learners are illustrated: in the first, the simulation of meetings based on research data, and in the second interviews with professionals carried out outside the classroom (cf. also Pullin 2013b). The simulated meetings took place in groups after some preparation tasks; participants worked cooperatively, and Communication Strategies (CSs) were employed in meaning co-construction, for specific terminology, too. Feedback was discussed in the reflective post-task activities, and helped identify difficulties and awareness of variation (Pullin 2010b).

A similar view on the need to use authentic data from the workplace in business-oriented ELT has been set forward by several researchers in Europe and elsewhere (e.g. Louhiala-Salminen 1996; Nickerson 2002; Poncini 2002, 2004; 2013; Planken, van Hoft, and Korzilius 2004; Bremner 2010; Evans 2013), with the need of exposure to "real-life BELF communicative contexts", that has been highlighted also by students (Faltzi and Sougari 2018, 249).

Business meetings in particular (e.g. Angouri 2010; Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1997; Rogerson-Revell 1999, 2010) are an area where the mismatch between research findings and teaching materials has been shown (Nickerson 2005), together with an inadequate treatment of communication strategies in ELT business materials (Franceschi 2018; Vettorel 2019; cf. also Evans 2013). In this respect, Planken's (2005) study on negotiation simulations shows that the strategies successfully used by experienced business people could be usefully introduced in classroom practices, both in terms of pragmatic and strategic competence; in addition, Tarnopolsky (2012) stresses the importance of a content-based and experential approach for the development of communicative competence in the workplace.

In BELF Communication Strategies are hence part and parcel of (Global) communicative competence, in that they are effectively and cooperatively deployed in meaning co-construction, either pre-emptively or retroactively, to ensure mutual understanding. These strategic and pragmatic moves also work towards preventing, and resolving, potentially problematic areas, such as lack of comprehensibility, cultural and discourse differences, as well as stereotypical associations with particular accents in English in terms of prestige (Gerritsen and Nickerson 2009), whether for native or non-native BELF users. In this perspective it should be noted that in professional domains, as Nickerson points out, "the distinction between an L2 speaker and a foreign language speaker has little relevance for BELF and IBE [International Business English, involving also L1 speakers] business interactions" (2015, 398). In BELF contexts, as the GCC model stresses, effective interactions aimed at 'getting the job done' can rather be ensured through an interweaving set of skills 'good business communicators' enact. In this perspective it would hence seem most relevant to identify "a core set of accommodation strategies used by all professional business people, regardless of whether they speak English as an L1, [that] will help to establish what it means to achieve professional communicative competence" (Nickerson 2015, 393). Examples of this strategic and accommodative behavior should then be part of business-oriented ELT materials and practices, in order to prepare (future) professionals to communicate in the complexities of the global business arena, developing skills related to BELF communicative competence as part of GCC.

4. BELF-oriented ELT materials/activities/practices: some suggestions

Before setting forward a few proposals for the introduction of BELF-oriented materials and practices in ELT, it should be mentioned that some general principles, particularly as to a 'change in mindset' in taking account of the current sociolinguistic reality of the ways in which English is used in its lingua franca role, can be valid in ELF as in BELF. As general informing principles, first of all the appropriation of English by its (B)ELF multilingual users, and the legitimacy of their 'uses' of the language in its own right, and not in comparison with ENL usage, should be viewed as a starting point. Secondly, the fact that (B)ELF speakers are by definition bi/multilingual and most often interculturally aware, and that plurilingual and pluricultural resources are integral part of their multilingual/cultural communicative competence ought equally to inform pedagogic choices and practices.

These, as other aspects, should be fully integrated into the need for a (B)ELF-aware approach in teaching (and learning), in order to cater for the complex sociolinguistic diversity in (B)ELF and foster the ability to communicate effectively with speakers of different linguacultures by deploying a range of strategies, from creative appropriation of the language to strategic moves. Last but not least, in pedagogic terms we ought to be aware that there cannot (and should not) be a 'standardised' and fixed recipe for (B)ELF-informed materials and pedagogic practices; they should rather be tailored to the specificity of the educational context, syllabi, and learners' (future) needs.

Naturally, the specificity of the professional domain, as we have briefly illustrated in the previous sections, plays an important role in BELF. Nevertheless, in the process of communication both ELF and BELF users show an adaptive and effective use of resources and strategies, that are adjusted and suited to the specificity of the interaction. As Pullin well summarizes,

> Effective speakers of BELF have the ability to exploit their linguistic and cultural resources, in using communication strategies to accommodate and adapt to their interlocutors and negotiate meaning and understanding. For example, such resources may include awareness that politeness may be enacted differently in different cultural settings, or that genres do not always follow the same patterns in all cultures. It is these communication strategies alongside cultural and linguistic awareness that are of interest in teaching English for Business in ways that are relevant for the twenty-first century, in addition to moving away from native speaker socio-cultural norms (Pullin 2015, 34).

These would seem, then, focal aspects that should inform ELT business-related materials and classroom/training practices, within the more general aim of promoting knowledge, and raising awareness of, linguacultural and professional differences, in order to foster tolerance, flexibility and accommodative attitudes in communication. It is indeed the ability to accommodate, seen as "the work done by a speaker to change and adapt one's communication to the interlocutors, their socio-cultural background or the socio-cultural context of the exchange" (Cogo 2016a, 366), that can lead towards and ensure effective communication, often reached by means of pragmatic fluency and strategic moves.

BELF-informed practices in business-oriented ELT could hence be promoted by taking into account and developing the following areas.

- Activities aimed at raising awareness and practice of communication strategies, both speaker and listener-initiated, within meaningful meaning-negotiation contexts

This area would more generally be set within an 'active listening' perspective, which sees practices aimed at effective communication and mutual understanding relying both on the speaker and on the listener, and hence communication strategies as part of 'normal pragmatic practice' (Widdowson 2003). The relativity of notions of 'perfect communication' (Pitzl 2010) in any language, and of 'correctness' as associated only to native-speaker/ENL norms would constitute a side area, that could help develop awareness of, and respect for, other 'accents' (e.g. Kankaanranta 2012; see also the awareness-raising activity 'My English' in Chan and Frendo 2014), as well as the use of multilingual repertoires of speakers as a resource (e.g. Cogo 2016a; 2016b).

The main aim of focusing on Communication Strategies would be to improve communication skills to interact in BELF contexts, whether for L2 or L1 speakers, and more specifically develop BELF competence as described in the GCC model (see also Nickerson 2012; 2015). For instance, extracts from the professional subcorpus in VOICE, such as the following examples (see Franceschi 2019, 65), could be used to raise awareness of how Communication strategies are effectively employed in BELF settings.

Excerpt 1 (VOICE, PBmtg300)
2261 S8: [...] you (start) </7> to (offer all of your) (.)
2262 S2: <7> mhm </7>
2263 S8: shippers you know i mean =
2264 S2: = yeah
2265 S8: hh the people which are booking with you huh?

In this case, attention could be drawn on how a paraphrase of the word "shippers" is made to pre-empt a possible non-understanding of the term, and in the next example (Excerpt 2) on different ways of dealing with requests for clarification (Franceschi submitted):

Excerpt 2 (VOICE, PBmtg3)

2278 S1: okay (4) er NOW er talking about TARGET . (2) er (.) kids are (no more) (.) GULLIBLE
{word is used in the presentation material} than adults. per<5>haps even less so </5> they're
2279 S5: <5><un> xxxxx </un></5>
2280 S4: excuse me er (.) GULLIBLE i've never heard that word. what does that mean? (.)
2281 S5: hm
2282 SX-1: <pvc> gullabry <ipa> ˈgʌləbri </ipa> </pvc> (more like) <6> that?</6>
2283 S4: <6> @ </6>
2284 S5: @@ (.)
2285 S2: <L1kor> x [first name5] xx?</L1kor>
2286 S4: gullible?
2287 S1: gullible gullible (1) yeah gullible means (2) not english word (.) (but) like er GREEDY ? (.)
[...]
2319 S1: <2> O:H </2> yeah i think <3> (it) EASY to be influenced </3> [...]

In Excerpt 2, attention could be drawn on how clarification of a word ("gullible") is dealt with, first with a different (non-standard) pronunciation provided by SX-1 and then, after S4's repetition of the problematic lexical item with a rising intonation, through paraphrasing by S1, at first with an uncertain definition, and then with a more appropriate one. Raising awareness of such strategies as commonly used in BELF interactions can certainly represent a starting point to foster active practice of these pragmatic moves.

It should be noted that ELT business materials generally do not include a focus on Communication Strategies in a consistent and BELF-oriented way (e.g. Franceschi 2018; Vettorel 2019). However, some recent materials presenting collections of activities devote attention to this area, as for example, Chan and Frendo (2014), where a few tasks on active listening in business communication are presented; some suggestions for the inclusion of pragmatic moves are included in Kiczowiak and Lowe (2018), too. Active listening in more general contexts is also examined in Chong (2018), with a series of tips and reflections that could well be adapted in BELF-oriented teaching. The use of multilingual resources is however very rarely – if ever – included in pedagogic materials, particularly in their accommodation and rapport-building function, which has been shown to play an important role in BELF. Certainly, corpora including interactions in business contexts (e.g. VOICE) could be used for awareness-raising activities, exemplifying how BELF users deploy all resources at their disposal to cooperatively construct meaning, as in the examples above. Such activities would then be followed by active practice, with tasks involving simulations of interactions focusing on employing these resources, and on communication strategies (e.g. asking for clarification/repetition, repetition/reformulation/paraphrase, etc.).

- Cultural and intercultural awareness; knowledge and respect for other cultures; corporate cultures

Aspects related to differences in cultural practices have been shown to play an important role in BELF (e.g. Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, and Kankaanranta 2005), together with corporate cultures. Effective communication in international and intercutural BELF settings is based upon a range of complex and interweaving aspects that, as we have seen, go well beyond a fixed view of 'national cultures', and ought hence to be addressed in teaching practices (e.g. Kikzkowlak and Lowe 2018).

Tasks related to (inter)cultural awareness are generally included in ELT business coursebooks, particularly in more recent or specifically-focused ones (see for instance Dignen 2011), as well as in collection of activities to complement coursebooks and classroom practices (e.g. Gibson 2000; Chan and Frendo 2014). However, in many cases the perspective that is presented in coursebooks is connected to 'nationalities', where 'other cultures' are situated in a nation-state static perspective, rather than as a complex, multiple and on-going product of trans-national and trans-cultural fluxes (Angouri 2010; Baker 2015), as it is often and increasingly the case in ELF and BELF contexts. Furthermore, such representations should also go beyond Western-oriented perspectives (Nickerson 2015). The same can be said when looking at volumes for professional language learning addressed either at classroom work (e.g. Dignen 2011), or providing additional materials and activities (e.g. Gibson 2000), which do include examples aimed at developing intercultural awareness and communication across cultures. However interesting, and certainly useful as a first step to promote knowledge and respect for other cultures (e.g. Kankaanranta 2012), the overall perspective adopted in these materials cannot be defined as BELF-oriented, but is rather, once again, in the greatest majority of cases based on a 'national' view of cultures.

In this case, too, ELF corpora including BELF data could provide opportunities for reflection on (inter)cultural aspects in professional contexts; the Intercultural Awareness (ICA) model developed by Baker (2015) could for instance constitute a guideline for the different steps, in connection to the Multicultural Competence layer of GCC.

One additional aspect that ought to be taken into consideration is that of corporate cultures, which may present differences in conventions, discourse practices as well as strategies for communication (Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, and Kankaanranta 2005). In this respect, Communities of Practice (CoP) may be at work within corporate cultures (Angouri 2010), or even shorter-lived Transient International Groups (TIGs, Pitzl 2018; 2019), with their own cultural and interactional practices. In this case attention could be drawn to the specificity of these contexts, with awareness-raising and noticing tasks on data from literature and, when available, BELF-related corpora. Such awareness-raising activities could then be followed by tasks aimed at guided and freer practice, for example within a task-based and project work approach, in BELF-oriented communicative contexts.

- Building and maintaining rapport/relational work

One area that has been shown to be particularly relevant in BELF interactions, and that cuts across all categories above and the three layers of GCC (e.g. Pullin 2010a; 2013a; Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011, 260) is that of relational work aimed at creating and maintaining positive interpersonal rapport among the participants. Building and maintaining rapport in BELF is carried out above all through small talk, which has been shown to be enhanced by intercultural skills, as well as through the use of the participants' plurilingual repertoires, where other languages are employed in addition to English as the common code (e.g. Kankaanranta and Planken 2010; Cogo 2016a; Poncini 2003; 2013; Sung 2017). While topics and activities related to small talk in different work situations are generally tackled in business ELT coursebooks (e.g. networking events, greetings and conversation topics, see Vettorel 2019), they are once again not presented from a BELF perspective. Employing examples from BELF data, similarly to what was exemplified above, could in this case too represent a starting point to first raise awareness of and then practise language use in realistic contexts.

To sum up, BELF-oriented pedagogic ELT materials and classroom practices in all the three main areas above should be connected to 'authentic' data, deriving both from BELF corpora and from 'real(istic)' work situations, for example through case studies, simulations and problem-solving activities. This would foster first of all knowledge and awareness of linguacultural and professional differences, as well as opportunities for reflection on how (effective) communication is realised in 'authentic' BELF interactions (see e.g. Sung 2017; Evans 2013). Activities aimed at raising awareness of these differences, and strategies to overcome them in BELF use, could be integrated in classroom work from lower levels (Pullin 2015, 47), focusing both on intercultural and strategic competence, for example through noticing tasks on differences in telephoning, also drawing on the students' experiences, or examining differences in terms of address through mini-research projects. Subsequently, these tasks would lead to the development and building of skills in all the three layers of GCC 'in context'. Such activities could be realised both in face-to-face, task-based projects, possibly including internship experiences abroad, too (Faltzi and Sougari 2018), but also taking advantage of the affordances offered by digital technologies. Blended learning, digital platforms, webconferences and social media can indeed represent relevant environments to devise and put into practice such projects, providing cooperative and real-life experiences of BELF use.

5. Concluding remarks

As we have seen, internationally-oriented business communication through English in its lingua franca role is characterised by meaning negotiation, the use of pragmatic strategies 'to get the job done', as well as in rapport building. Professional communication in the domain of business today involves a complex and interweaving set of skills, represented in the Global Communicative Competence (GCC) model (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011), comprising Multicultural competence, Competence in BELF and Business knowhow. In order to adequately prepare (future) professionals to communicate internationally in the globalized world of work, ELT business materials, syllabi and training practices should include elements from all the three layers of GCC, and above all those connected to the development of BELF and multicultural competence; as Pullin points out, the GCC notion is "particularly relevant in curriculum development for BELF", not least with reference to the notion of 'socio-pragmatic competence' as comprising "social norms and their relative natures" and "pragmatic strategies for communication" (2015, 39), which characterise the adaptive and flexible nature of BELF interactions.

In turn, this implies a need to reconsider traditional notions of linguistic (native-like) competence: as we have seen, effective communication in (B)ELF does not rely on 'grammatical (ENL) correctness', but on the different aspects of GCC, moving away from a native/non-native speaker dichotomy and emphasising a strategic use of language for successful communication. What ought to be promoted in business-related ELT is then the development of what has been defined for ELF as communicative and 'lingual' capability' (Seidlhofer and Widdowson 2017) where the speakers' repertoires are strategically used in the co-construction of understanding, both in rapport-building and in the process of 'getting the job done', tailoring it to the specificity of BELF contexts. With Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, and Kankaanranta, "in BELF teaching, learners should be trained to see themselves as communicators, with real jobs to perform and real needs to fulfil; it is these jobs and needs that should be emphasised, not the language they use to carry them out" (2005, 419). Such a shift in perspective would also entail going beyond conceptualizations of language as 'native-like', rather seeing it as 'appropriated' to suit the participants' communicative goals.

As it has been pointed out for ELF, in order to take account of BELF research findings in ELT business materials and pedagogic practices, teacher education plays an important role (e.g. Pullin 2015), both in applying a BELF-aware approach and in exploring ways to exploit and integrate existing materials with 'authentic' BELF language use. Indeed, awareness in this area, and particularly in the importance of communication strategies in (B)ELF communication, is growing (e.g. Pullin 2013b, 2015; Seidlhofer 2011; Kiczkowiak and Lowe 2018). However, the challenge Nickerson identified more than ten years ago in applying BELF research findings to the "development of appropriate teaching materials" (2005, 378) still seems to be open. In this perspective, a crucial future research area in business ELT materials and practices for researchers, material developers, teacher educators and practitioners alike would be to include the pragmatic and skilful use of Communication Strategies by BELF users 'to get the job done' and build rapport; working in this direction could contribute to the development of those skills and competencies needed to effectively communicate in BELF contexts.

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Achieving mutual understanding in the global workplace: a questionnaire-based survey of BELF users' perceptions and practices[1]

Abstract

Maintaining mutual understanding is one of the pillars of ELF communication, and even more so in the business context, where high-stakes interactions often take place. In order to achieve their communicative goals in and outside the professional context, ELF users engage in proactive, cooperative behavior to ensure that comprehension is achieved, employing a range of strategies to prevent or solve instances of miscommunication. This study aims at contributing to the investigation of workplace interactions by exploring BELF users' perceptions and practices through a questionnaire-based survey including close-ended and Likert-scale questions. The survey, aimed at non-native speakers who use English as a Lingua Franca for professional purposes, focuses on both oral and digital interaction, analyzing these contexts separately due to their inherently different nature. Respondents, recruited through network sampling, were asked to identify what they perceive to be the essential aspects of successful communication and those that on the contrary may lead to mis- or non-understanding. The survey also aims at shedding light on which Communication Strategies users employ when faced with potential challenges, and at comparing preferences of use in different oral and digital media of communication.

1. Introduction

In the current globalized society, companies and business organizations work increasingly within international networks that are constantly expanding and shifting; in order to communicate effectively and successfully in potentially high-stakes interactions, professionals need to possess intercultural and strategic abilities to adapt to the needs and purposes of the individual communicative events they participate in. Such interactions nowadays occur overwhelmingly in English, which has become the *de facto* global language in

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many domains, including business. The concept of English as a Lingua Franca refers to "any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice" (Seidlhofer 2011, 7), highlighting the fluidity and hybridity of language use in international communicative events that have different participants, needs and purposes. ELF is "highly context-bound, negotiable *in situ*" (Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen and Karhunen 2015, 218). The acronym BELF (English as Business Lingua Franca) has been adopted for use in business communication; the 'B', which stands for business, is used to emphasize the domain of use (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2013, 17), which involves a "goal-oriented nature, shared business fundamentals, and strategic management" (Kankaanranta et al. 2015, 129). Indeed, in their extensive study of the topic, Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta have identified three aspects that can foster successful communication in international workplace settings, summarized in the Global Communicative Competence (GCC) model: multicultural competence, competence in BELF and business know-how (2011, 257). These three aspects are intertwined and concur to success of professional interactions. Multicultural competence includes active listening, accommodation skills, and tolerance towards different accents and varieties (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011, 259). Business know-how involves professional competence in the participants' field of work and relates to knowledge of both general principles of business and the specific aspects of the participants' line of work. According to the authors' interpretation of a survey they carried out, business know-how is perceived as a prerequisite for successful communication by professionals using English for international communication at work (Ibid, 257).

The third aspect is the focus of this study: BELF competence, which is defined as the ability "to adapt to the forms and norms of the language required in each business situation" (Ibid., 259). Effective BELF use involves possessing strategic competence, including the ability to ensure that messages are conveyed and understood accurately by performing relevant strategies such as asking for clarification, checking and confirming, paraphrasing; "[i]n business, the role of strategic skills is understandably of utmost importance since "letting it pass" (Firth 1996) is not a feasible option: misunderstandings can cause extra work and incur additional costs" (Kankaanranta et al. 2015, 131). Lack of mutual understanding can have serious consequences for business; indeed, Business English users in international environments often employ pragmatic and Communication Strategies (henceforth CSs) deliberately and advantageously to both prevent and solve potential communication breakdown. While CSs were originally conceived of in compensative terms, as in strategies used by non-native speakers to fill the gaps in their linguistic knowledge, they are now seen as a central aspect of communication in L1 communication as well (e.g. Tarone 1980; Firth and Wagner 1997; Savignon 1997). Amongst the empirical studies that have been carried out in ELF over the years, pragmatic and communication strategies have been included, suggesting that such skills are displayed by ELF users as part of the effort they put into maintaining mutual intelligibility. Pragmatic strategies have been studied comprehensively in the academic context (Mauranen 2006; Kaur 2009; 2011; Björkman 2011; 2013; 2014); however, fewer studies so far have been carried out in BELF, preeminently in face-to-face communication (Pitzl 2010; Franceschi 2019, submitted), with limited attention being paid to digital channels such as e-mailing (Caleffi 2020; Ren 2018) and social media platforms (Brunner and Diemer 2019) despite the frequency of technology-mediated interactions in the workplace. The results of these studies have highlighted the importance of both self-initiated and other-initiated CSs in international environments, including multilingual strategies such as codeswitching (Poncini 2003; Cogo 2016; Franceschi 2017) especially in interactions where clarity and accuracy of comprehension are paramount for the success of the professional encounter. Strategies such as asking for repetition and clarification, rephrasing, asking for confirmation of understanding appear to be considered especially important by professionals themselves, as suggested from survey responses (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011, 256), as well as strategies enhancing explicitness. These strategies are paramount in business interactions (e.g. Franceschi 2019, submitted) to ensure that mutual intelligibility is maintained and that communication breakdown is either prevented or solved as quickly as possible.

However, despite the importance of strategic competence in workplace interaction, it appears that such skills are not fostered in traditional Business English coursebooks. There is a need to build student abilities and train them to strategically "deploy the adaptive strategies used in BELF communication" (Pullin 2015, 45). Reed's (2011) review of Business English course material suggests that Business English teaching material are conceived within a traditional EFL perspective (2011, 326) in both face-to-face and digital environments. Indeed, Caleffi and Poppi's recent study on handbooks and coursebooks focusing on email writing highlighted that the "linguistic input provided is still oriented towards nativeness and prescriptivism" (2019, 93). Studies carried out specifically on CSs in recent Business English coursebooks (Franceschi 2018; Vettorel 2019) showed that little attention is paid to CSs, both in terms of fostering awareness and building strategic skills in both face-to-face and digital contexts, within the specificities and peculiarities of these channels. Indeed, Vettorel states that "business ELT materials do not deal consistently with pragmatic strategies and even when examples are provided, they are rarely accompanied by reflection tasks" (2019, 79). Scholars therefore advocate the use of authentic data and simulations (e.g. Pullin 2015), "informed by research and be guided by the future profession of the graduates" (Kankaanranta et al. 2015, 142).

This study builds on previous studies on CS use in ELF and aims at investigating how people in workplace environments actually employ their strategic skills in face-to-face and digital interactions, with specific attention to the peculiar characteristics of these two ways of communicating and the way they may influence comprehension and the use of pragmatic strategies. This was done by means of an anonymous survey oriented to non-native speakers of English who communicate in English as part of their work.

2. Methodology

The survey included 3 sections, one on background information, one on oral interactions, and one on digital interactions for a total of 35 closed questions[2]. The questions included were either multiple choice, multi-response (where the user may tick more than one possible answer) and 5-point and 6-point Likert-type questions. The latter type of question was used to measure agreement with statements related to perceptions and behavior in English use in the workplace (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, disagree, strongly disagree), with investigated aspects drawn from previous research on ELF and BELF communication. Similar Likert-scale questions investigated frequency of use of CS (never, rarely, sometimes, often, very often) in different situations during oral and digital interactions where potential non-understanding and misunderstanding may occur. Similarly,

[2] The questions were originally 36; however, one of the questions, "In which sector do you work?" was eventually scrapped as the answers 'primary', 'secondary' and 'tertiary' were not immediately comprehensible to non-Italian speakers.

these questions were formulated on the basis of previous ELF and BELF research on pragmatic strategy use in oral and digital interactions. In order to compare levels of agreement/frequency in Likert-type items, each response was given a numerical value[3] so that central tendency and dispersion can be calculated for each item. As Likert-type data are widely considered ordinal data (cf. e.g. Joshi et al. 2015), median and interquartile range (iqr) were used as measures of central tendency and dispersion rather than mean and standard deviation.

Respondents were recruited through network sampling, which "uses social links between networked individuals to locate and add additional units to the sample" (Callegaro et al. 2015, 50); data was collected online from April to June 2019. However, it has to be taken into account that one setback of anonymous online surveys is that data may not be reliable as people who do not fulfill the criteria for participation may still fill in the questionnaire or might answer inaccurately.

A total of 96 responses were collected, of which 2 were rejected, as they did not fulfill the criteria established. To be eligible, respondents needed to be non-native speakers of English and working in a non-English speaking country. While current definitions of ELF do not exclude native speakers, as they would be required to display strategic skills when interacting in international contexts, a choice was made not to include them in the investigation as well as non-native speakers living and working in native-speaking countries. Not all questions were marked as compulsory, as it was assumed that not all respondents would be engaging in every type of interaction investigated; as a result, not all questions were answered by the entire sample. Due to the choice of network sampling, starting from the researcher's own contacts, the final result could be considered a convenience or availability sample and therefore a non-probability sample. As a result, a normal distribution should not be expected: hence, "without further assumptions – which are usually risky and impossible to verify – in principle this prevents any standard statistical inference calculations" (Callegaro et al. 2015, 54). Respondents in the sample tend to be young – as will be seen in the following section, the majority is within the 25-40 age bracket – and well-educated – most of them possess postgraduate degrees, with the 11% possessing a PhD. It is therefore possible to surmise that with a younger,

[3] From never = 1 to very often = 5 and from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 6.

more educated sample, results might show more internationally-oriented attitudes and behaviors than a more heterogeneous sample.

3. Findings

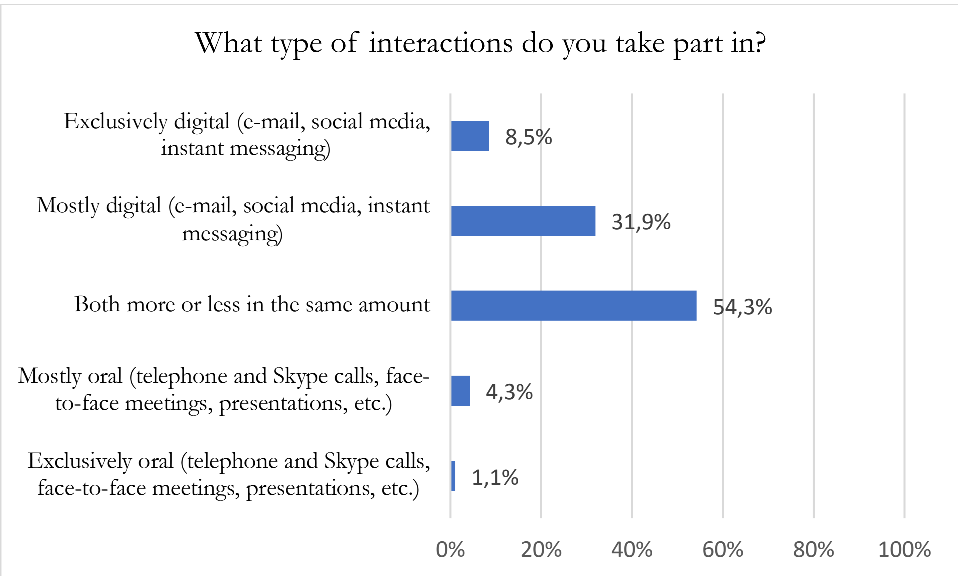
3.1. Respondent background

Out of the 94 respondents, just under half have Italian as their mother tongue; one third of the speakers speak Russian as an L1, whereas the remaining speakers include a range of languages (e.g. Spanish, Finnish, Ukrainian). Similarly, around half of the respondents live in Italy, whereas the rest of the respondents live across a number of European and extra-European countries. About one third (33%) work in a medium-small company, while 31% for a multinational company, 16% for a big company, 8% own their own business and 5% are freelance workers. The remaining 7% selected 'other', which means their workplace does did not fit into any of the presented categories. The vast majority have completed tertiary education, with over half respondents having a Master's Degree (54%), 19% an undergraduate degree, and 11% have a doctorate. As anticipated, due to the non-probability, convenience sampling, such percentages do not represent the wider population. As to age, 73% of respondents are in the 25-40 range, with 17% being in between 40-55 and 8% between 18 and 24. The young age and degree of formal education received entail that the respondents have often received extensive education and training in English. With the exception of the 1% (1 respondent) who claimed they have never received formal education in English and 4% who studied English for less than 5 years, the vast majority of respondents received at least from 5 to 8 years of education (20%), from 8 to 10 (23%) and 52% more than 10. However, despite their experience with general English, over half (55%) of them have received no specific training in English for business purposes. Out of the remaining respondents, 20% covered business English in their school curriculum; 16% received training within their companies, and 19% received training by either a language school or a private teacher. The sum of these figures is over 100% as some respondents have received training in Business English in multiple contexts during their lives and careers. This means that while many respondents may have long-term, possibly extensive experience with English in classroom contexts, they were not specifically exposed to Business English training.

3.2. English use

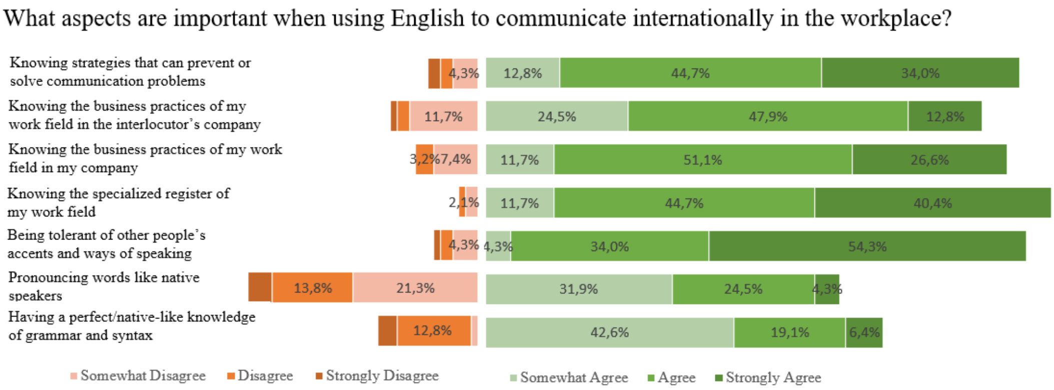
A number of questions aimed at gathering information regarding how often respondents use English at work, the type of interaction they engage in most frequently, and the type of speaker they communicate with. Results show English use appears to be frequent for the majority of respondents - around 88% use English multiple times per week; more specifically, 74% stated they used English every day or most days. The graph below shows that the majority of people use English equally in oral and digital contexts. For the remaining half, most engage mostly or exclusively in digital communication, whereas it is a much smaller number that is involved mostly or exclusively in oral interactions. While more people than expected interact both orally and digitally, it is still true that digital communication appears to be more frequent than face-to-face.

Figure 1 Types of interaction.



If we break down the different types of communication, e-mailing appears to be the most common way of interacting, followed by face-to-face and instant messaging. Videoconference conversations and social media use for work purposes appeared to be the least common types of interaction, with 66% using videoconferences and 60% working with social media platforms. The vast majority of the respondents (95%) stated they communicate with other non-native speakers, whereas 62% interact with native speakers. Only 38% interact with speakers from post-colonial countries, or what Kachru (1985) called the Outer Circle of English, which includes territories where English was imported through colonization.

Figure 2 Important aspects for international communication at work.

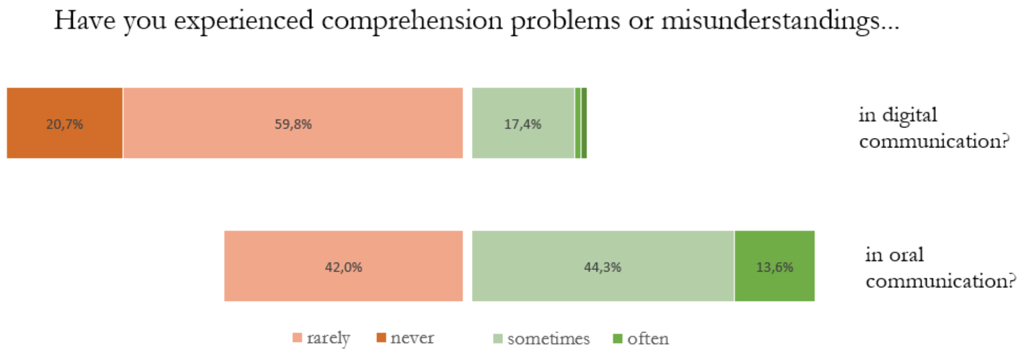


When asked to determine their agreement with the aspects above, the majority of respondents appear to indicate that tolerance is paramount in communicative success (median=6, iqr=1). Flexibility and acceptance, alongside a co-operative behavior, have been underlined as a positive aspect of ELF communication generally as well as in BELF (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2013). Native-like pronunciation and grammar on the other hand obtained the lowest agreement scores (median=4, iqr=2 for both) in the set, in line with the basic principles of ELF stating that a focus on native-like competence is unneeded in international interactions.

The other elements find similar degrees of agreement (median=5, iqr=1). As it can be seen, the importance of knowing the register of the work field is agreed upon, as well as knowledge of communication strategies. Business know-how, one of three main aspects of BELF according to Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2011) is also seen as very important in such communication: employees should be familiar with the business practices of their own companies as well as those of the interlocutor's company – such knowledge provides a shared common ground that can prevent misunderstandings and ensure that all parties are working with the same background information. Indeed, the following question "Do you think that having a shared knowledge of the business know-how involved in the interaction can help mutual understanding?" showed definite agreement, with only 3 respondents selecting disagreement (median=5, iqr=1).

The following questions looked at the different categories of face-to-face and digital communication.

Figure 3 Comprehension problems or misunderstandings in different channels of communication.[4]



The diverging stacked bar chart shows that while miscommunication does inevitably occur in both channels of communication, it appears to be more common in oral communication n (median=3, iqr=1; N=88[5]) than in digital communication (median=2, iqr=0; N=92[6]). These results, not unexpected, may be explained with the nature of (written) digital communication itself, which allows for additional processing time and does not include the additional risk of mispronunciation or hearing problems.

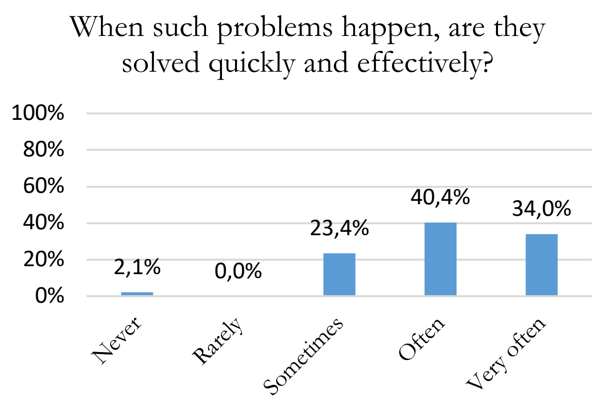
When it comes to the type of speaker the respondents were more likely to encounter problems with, it should first be noted that in both oral and digital communication, over 20% of the respondents reported never interacting with speakers of post-colonial varieties, whereas they appear to communicate mostly with non-native speakers, as only 4,3% (oral) and 1,1% (digital) report

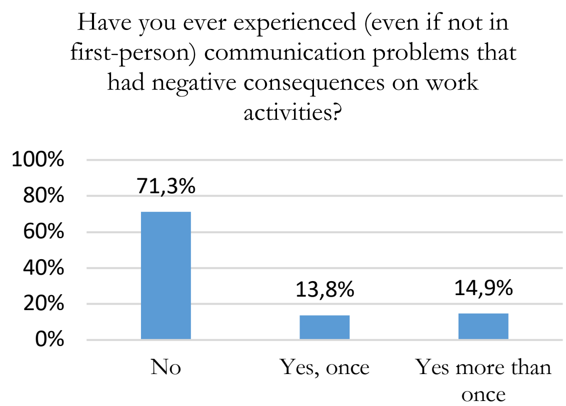
[4] This element was investigated in two separate questions: *12. Have you experienced comprehension problems or misunderstandings in oral communication?* And *14. Have you experienced comprehension problems or misunderstandings in digital communication?*
[5] 6 respondents reported never taking part in oral communication in English.
[6] 2 respondents reported never taking part in digital communication in English.

not interacting with this type of speaker. These percentages increase to 9,8% (oral) and 5,3% (digital) for native speakers, suggesting that non-native speaker/non-native speaker communication is the most common for the respondents. Interactions with native speakers appear to be perceived as the least problematic in both channels of communication (oral: median=2, iqr=2, N=85; digital: median=2, iqr=0, N=91), whereas non-native speakers and outer circle speakers appear to be seen as the source of more frequent communication issues. This appears to contradict ELF-related studies that highlight communication issues between non-native and native speakers of English, where native speakers are deemed poor international communicators (Carey 2013) and would benefit from training in accommodation (Tatsuki 2017).

When communication problems happen, however, they remain very rarely unsolved: as respondents state, such instances are resolved quickly and efficiently in the majority of cases.

Figure 4 Communication problems resolution and consequences.





The perception reported is that whenever misunderstandings or non-understandings occur, an effort is carried out to solve them as quickly as possible, due to the importance of being on the same page.

Indeed, the majority of respondents reported that they have never had any experience, first-hand or otherwise, of communication breakdown being at the root of negative consequences at work, such as loss of clients or orders, rewriting of agreements and the like. These results seem to corroborate the idea that the 'let-it-pass' strategy (Firth 1996) is avoided in BELF communication: due to the potentially high stakes of business interactions, all parties collaborate actively to ensure that essential information is shared and understood by all relevant parties. However, at times misunderstandings or non-understandings may not be solved, therefore affecting one or multiple parties negatively in terms of time and revenue loss.

The following questions investigated the different channels of communication, oral and digital, in order to ascertain different perceptions and behaviors.

3.3. Oral interactions

The first aspect to be examined in this section is the degree of agreement with a number of potential problematic elements that could disrupt communication and/or create misunderstandings in face-to-face/videoconference and telephone interactions.

Figure 5 Problematic aspects of face-to-face/videoconference interactions.

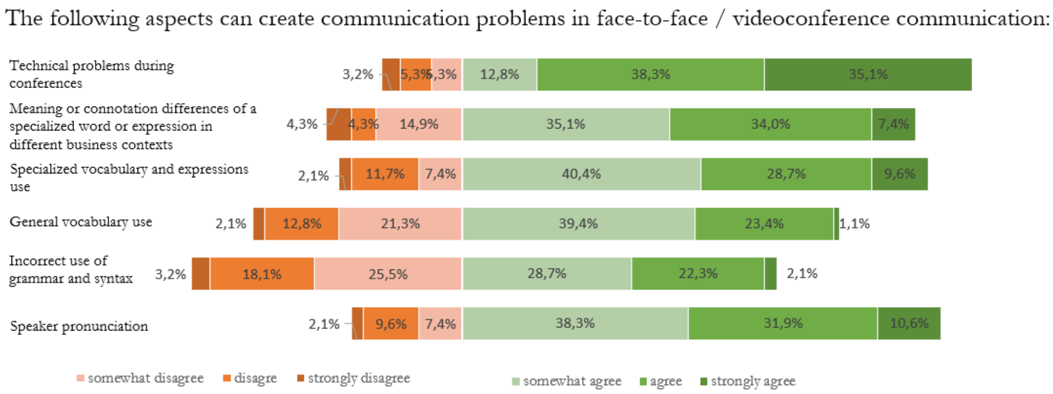
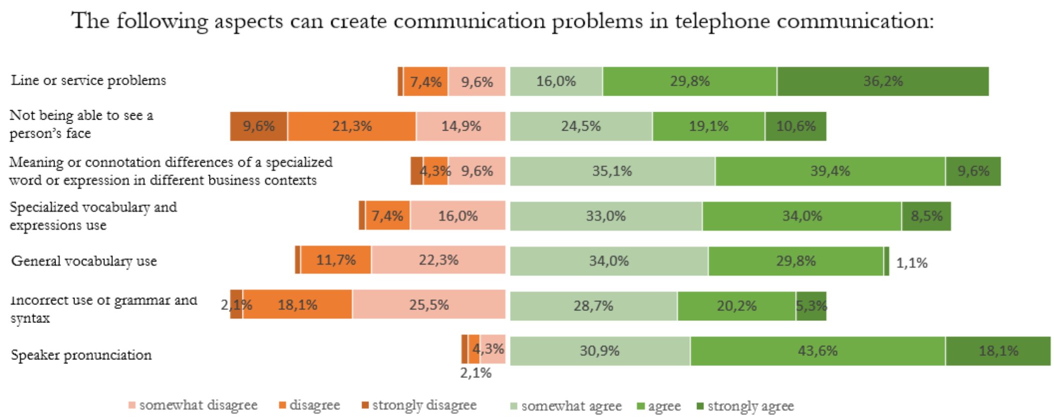


Figure 6 Problematic aspects of telephone interactions.



Percentages remained similar for face-to-face / videoconference interactions, with technical problems being reported as a particularly problematic area alongside speaker pronunciation. Despite responses suggesting that native-like pronunciation is not paramount to communicative success, it appears however that the distinctiveness and variability of international accents may lead to problems in oral interactions. Agreement levels on this item are slightly higher for telephone conversations (median=5, iqr=1) than for face-to-face/videoconference (median=4, iqr=1); nonetheless, being unable to see the interlocutor does not appear to create additional problems for a considerable number of respondents. This may be seen as somehow contradictory, as without any type of visual information – lip reading, facial expressions and gestures, presence of additional material – it is paramount that pronunciation is very clear over the phone to ensure understanding. In line with ELF tenets and previous studies, incorrect use of grammar and syntax did not receive a high degree of agreement in either type of interaction, although this emerges more clearly in the diagram above than in median and interquartile range values (median=4, iqr=2 for telephone; median=4, iqr=1 for face to face/videoconference) suggesting that accuracy was not considered as important as other aspects of telephone communication. In both questions, specialized vocabulary and meaning and connotation differences were thought as being potentially more problematic than general vocabulary use. This may be ascribed to the fact that a misunderstanding due to meaning or connotation differences may not be solved if both parties are unaware of the different assumptions under which they are operating. As for specialized vocabulary and expressions, a person unfamiliar with those may not be entirely aware of all the implications of the terminology used in practical terms.

Respondents were then asked what they would do if they did not understand something the other party would say; this question was asked twice, in relation to telephone conversations and in to face-to-face / videoconference interactions. The elements the respondents were asked to evaluate were the following, by stating how often they engaged in the following behavior, in a 5-point scale from 'never' to 'very often':

- I tell the other person explicitly that something is not clear (I'm sorry, I didn't understand)
- I signal with my facial expression / gestures that something is not clear (only face-to-face / conferences)
- I ask the other person to repeat the sentence that is not clear (I'm sorry, could you repeat?)
- I ask the other person to clarify the meaning of a word or expression (what do you mean with....?)
- I ask for confirmation that I understood correctly (Did you mean....?)
- I don't interrupt the conversation and see if I can understand as the conversation continues
- If there are other colleagues from my firm, I ask them to summarize / explain what was said (only face-to-face / conferences)

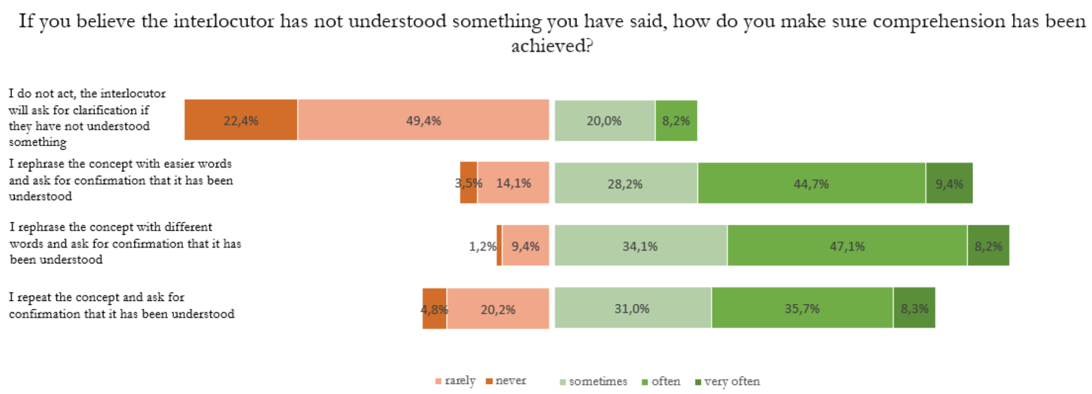
Table 1 Strategies used when comprehension is not clear.

		I say something is not clear	facial expression / gestures	repeat what is not clear	ask for clarification	ask confirmation	I don't interrupt	I ask a colleague
face-to-face/ videoconference	median	4	3	4	3	4	3	2
	iqr	1	2	1	1	1	1	2
	N	85	84	84	82	82	83	82
telephone	median	4	/	4	3,5	4	3	/
	iqr	1	/	1	1	1	1	/
	N	83	/	84	82	82	81	/

Responses did not vary significantly for those strategies that were common to the two questions; the strategies employed more often appear to be asking for repetition, stating that something is not clear, and asking for confirmation. The lower scores for clarification of a word or expression may be related to a lower incidence of non-understanding due to a specific element in the conversation in the respondents' experience. On the contrary, ignoring the problem to see if it is solved by itself later on is not a popular strategy to adopt (median=3, iqr=1, N=83 for face-to-face/videoconference; median=3, iqr=1, N=81 for telephone) reinforcing the perceived need to address and solve communication issues as soon as they arise. In face-to-face and videoconference interactions, the use of non-verbal cues is not a popular strategy (median=3, iqr=2, N=84), with even lower frequencies (median=2, iqr=2, N=82) reported for asking for a colleague's help.

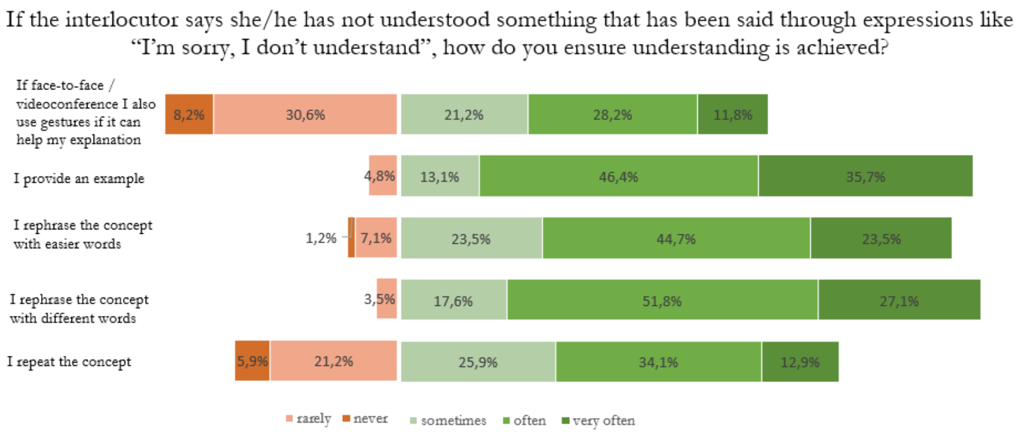
The following question, "If the topic of the interaction, or a given word or expression imply additional knowledge of your local context (local or national laws, company policies, etc.) of which the interlocutor(s) may not be aware, what do you do?" showed that the majority of people would either provide the information during the interaction (54%) or before the interaction (35%). Respondents were also asked to state how often they would employ a series of strategies if they thought their interlocutor had not understood something they said:

Figure 7 Strategies used when suspecting communication problems.



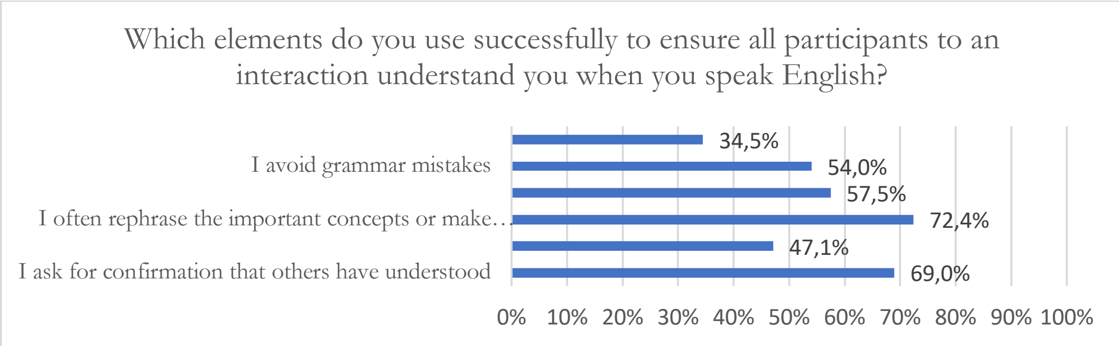
As can be noticed from the chart, inaction is again avoided (median=2, iqr=1; N=85), showing again a distinct preference for taking action and making sure the hearer has understood the message clearly; indeed, while respondents did use repetition as a strategy (median=3, iqr=1,5; N=84), rephrasing with different or easier words appears to be the preeminent strategy employed, with a slight preference, in percentage terms, for rephrasing with different words. While repetition may be useful in the case of mishearing, it is not helpful in the case non-understanding is caused by a comprehension issue. Using rephrasing as a strategy right away may help solve the problem sooner and save the interlocutor's face at the same time, anticipating a further request for clarification in case simple repetition did not solve the issue. Results are predictably very similar in cases where the interlocutor has specifically stated there is a comprehension issue, as may be seen in fig 9 below.

Figure 8 Strategies to solve communication problems.



Rephrasing with different or with easier words still remain frequently-used strategies, with "providing an example" as another popular linguistic behavior. The use of repetition, as in the previous question, and gestures appears not to be a preferred choice (median=3, iqr=2, N=85). Again, non-verbal language does not seem to be exploited consistently by respondents as a supporting element in solving communication problems. In the last question related to oral interactions, "Which elements do you use successfully to ensure all participants to an interaction understand you when you speak English?" respondents could select multiple options, as shown in figure 3:

Figure 9 Elements that contribute to successful communication.

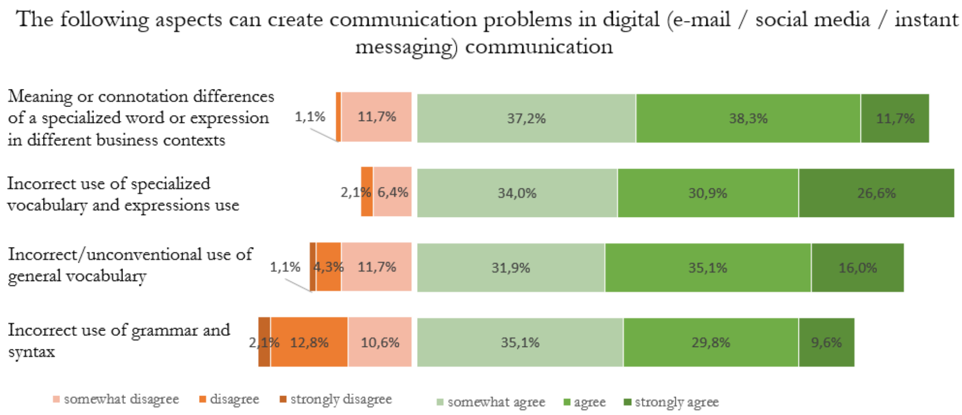


Rephrasing and use of examples appear to be the most frequent strategies, followed closely by asking for confirmation. Avoiding grammar mistakes is also cited as a strategy by around half of the respondents: while native-like accuracy in grammar and syntax is not considered essential, non-normative uses are still perceived as an undesirable trait, possibly due to the wording of the element itself. Native-like pronunciation, on the other hand, is consistently not seen as paramount to the success of interactions.

3.4. Digital interactions

When asked to indicate which aspects of digital communication could be problematic for comprehension, results showed higher degrees of agreement for all the elements that were also investigated in oral interactions, as can be seen in fig 10 below:

Figure 10 Problematic aspects of digital interactions.



Incorrect use of grammar and syntax was considered the least problematic element in the list, similarly to oral interactions (median=4, iqr=2). The other three elements have higher degrees of agreement when compared to oral interactions, as summarized in table 2.

Table 2 Problematic aspects of interactions investigated across types of interaction.

		general vocabulary	specialized vocabulary	meaning or connotation differences
telephone	median	4	4	4
	irq	2	1	1
face-to-face	median	4	4	4
	irq	1	1	1
digital	median	5	5	4,5
	irq	1	2	1

This difference may be due to the presence, in the questions on oral interactions, of specific elements that do not apply to digital communication (pronunciation, technical issues) that received very high degrees of agreement and in turn might have influenced agreement scores on the remaining elements.

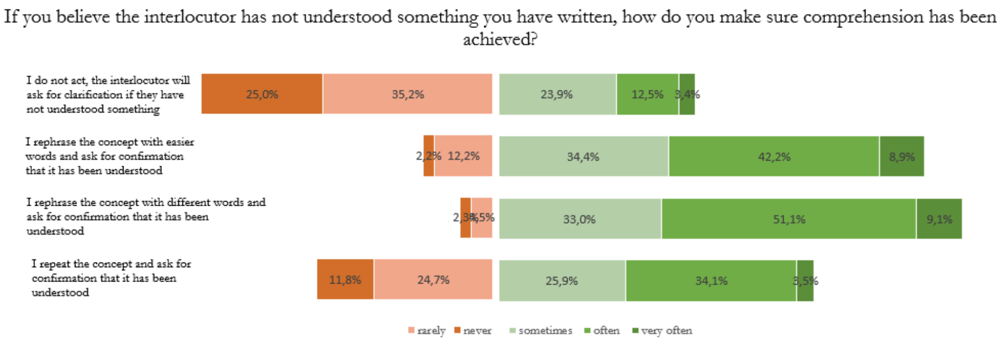
Respondents were then asked how often they would use specific strategies when not understanding a written message, reporting their behavior through the same 5-point scale employed in the oral interaction section:

- I ask the other person to rephrase the sentence that is not clear (I'm sorry, could you explain this again?)
- I ask the other person to clarify the meaning of a word or expression (what do you mean with….?)
- I ask the other person to give me an example (Could you please give me an example?)
- I ask for confirmation that I understood correctly (Did you mean….?)]
- I ask a colleague for help
- I look for unknown words in a dictionary

As in previous questions, asking for a colleague's help was not a popular strategy (median=3, iqr=1, N=87), although the reported frequency was higher than for face-to-face interactions. On the other hand, respondents appear to favor the use of dictionaries more frequently (median=4, iqr=2, N=87). Looking up words in a dictionary may suggest that respondents, taking advantage of the asynchronous nature of many digital modes, may try and solve the problem by themselves before involving the interlocutor, possibly for face-saving reasons. This may however prove to be a double-edged sword, as words might have different meanings or connotations within specific business practices or industries than those commonly found in dictionaries. Asking for confirmation (median=4, iqr=1, N=87) has a similar score to both types of oral interaction, whereas asking for clarification (median=4, iqr=1, N=88) appears to be used more frequently than in oral interactions.

In case a topic is discussed or a word is used that implies specific knowledge of the local context, respondents would act the same as in oral interactions, that is, providing the relevant information - this time via link or attachment – (83%) rather than waiting for the interlocutor to ask for specific information: this is again tied to a need to be proactive to prevent misunderstandings before they occur.

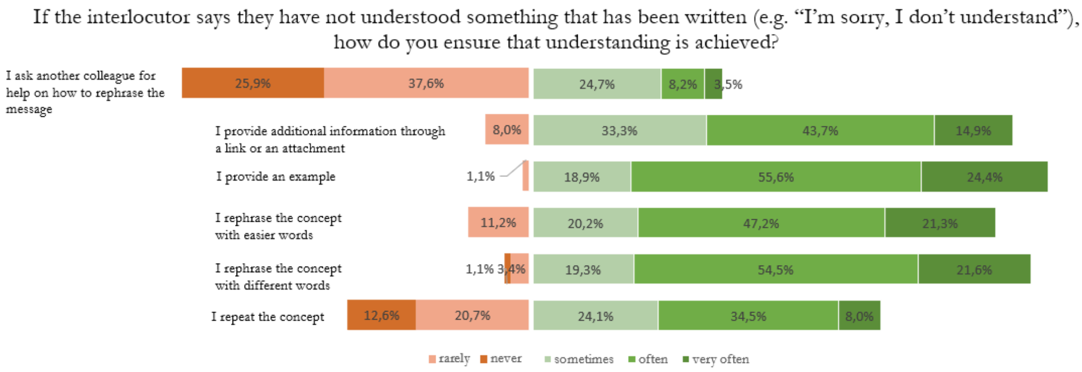
Figure 11 Strategies used when suspecting communication problems.



Solving the alleged problem through repetition (median=3, iqr=2, N=86) is not attempted as often as rephrasing (median=4, iqr=1, N=88 for rephrasing with different words, N=90 for rephrasing with easier words). Again, these findings are consistent with responses for oral interactions, even though repetition frequencies were expected to be lower in digital interactions. Using exactly the same exact words again in writing would indeed not be very helpful in case of a suspected communication breakdown, unless repetition was used as a strategy to highlight important or salient points. Similarly, when respondents were asked how they would act if they thought their interlocutor had misunderstood or not understood something, waiting for the interlocutor to make his/her lack of understanding explicit is not a preferred option, much like in oral interactions (median=2, iqr=1,5, N=88).

In the case where the interlocutor has made a comprehension problem explicit, asking for help is again the least frequently used strategy among those investigated (median=2, iqr=2, N=85). Repetition saw a lower degree of agreement (median=3, iqr=2, N=86) compared to the other options provided, as can be seen from the bar chart below (fig. 12).

Figure 12 Strategies to solve communication problems.



These results appear to suggest that different channels of communication do not influence users' preference for which CS to use, at least for those strategies that were investigated in both sections of the survey.

The last two questions in the survey involved the influence of the lack of non-verbal cues on comprehension in digital communication. The question "Do you think that lack of gestures, facial expressions and other elements (intonation, pauses, etc.) in digital communication influence comprehension?" saw 73% of respondents agreeing that the lack of such elements may create ambiguous situations or influence comprehension negatively. This appears to contradict responses for oral communication (cf. Fig. 6), where being unable to see the interlocutor's face was not considered a major problem in telephone interactions.

The last question investigated the primarily asynchronous quality of digital interactions. "Do you think that the 'gap' in time between a message in digital conversation and a response facilitates communication in English?" saw 65% of respondents agreeing that the delayed response gave them time to understand the message and prepare a response, with the possibility of looking things up in the dictionary. Only the 11% stated that they did not see any difference between the different types of communication, whereas the remaining 24% stated they preferred communicating orally, on the account that it is "faster and you can address individual points as they emerge in the conversation".

4. Discussion of findings and conclusion

In Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta's 2011 study, survey responses showed that clarity "was without question the most important feature to guarantee communicative success" (2011, 255) according to the participants in the studies, with grammar knowledge taking a backseat to the knowledge of the specialized register of the users' field of work (2011, 253). The results of the present study appear to support these claims, as having a native-like competence in pronunciation in grammar and syntax had a much lower degree of agreement than the other elements investigated. This suggests that linguistic accuracy is not as important in effective BELF communication as other aspects of communication, which may be related to the three layers of the Global Communicative Competence Model (see also Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2013): knowledge of business practices, linguistic competence in the relevant register, strategic competence in language use to ensure mutual comprehension, and acceptance of different ways of using the language.

The tendency to proactiveness in pre-empting and solving communication problems that has been attested in both previous ELF (e.g. Mauranen 2006; 2012; Björkman 2011) and BELF (e.g. Franceschi submitted) studies is shown in participant responses as well: very few users would wait until they received an explicit request for information or a sign of non-understanding, they would act proactively to avoid misunderstanding through the use of CSs or by providing additional information relevant to the conversation before or during the interaction. While most studies so far have looked exclusively at face-to-face communication, this study attempted at investigating differences in attitudes and linguistic behaviors in digital interactions as well, in addition to looking at specific behaviors in CS use. Digital communication is extremely common in the workplace these days, with 32% respondents in this survey stating they engage mostly in digital interactions. The lack of non-verbal and paralinguistic cues is recognized as having a potentially negative influence on comprehension; however, respondents do not report exploiting non-verbal language as part of their strategies and appear to rely more on verbal strategies when dealing with communication issues. As this survey measured subjective perceptions of respondent behavior, it may be so that participants are not fully aware of the extent of their use of para-linguistic and extra-linguistics features in communication and may have underestimated its role. The potential issues raised by a lack of visual cues are also recognized in oral telephone conversations, where speaker pronunciation is widely seen as a potentially problematic aspect – while native-like pronunciation is not necessary for successful interaction and might even be detrimental in case of regional native accents, the way a person speaks may still influence comprehensibility negatively (cf. e.g. Jenkins 2000).

Where items remained the same, responses did not vary significantly across types of interaction. In both types of interaction, rephrasing is preferred to repetition when non-understanding on the interlocutor's part is suspected. Unless a specific request for repetition or clarification is made, speakers may recur more often to rephrasing as it may solve either a hearing or a comprehension issue, acting as a preventive measure and as a face-saving device to the interlocutor. However, interaction data suggests that upon ambiguous requests speakers in oral interactions tend to favor repetition over clarification (Kaur 2009; Franceschi submitted), trusting the interlocutor to make a further request should they need one. This discrepancy may be explained if we assume respondents might have overestimated their use of rephrasing, perceived as the most effective option, whereas during actual interactions they may fall back on repetition as it allows speakers recycling of existing material, reducing cognitive load unless necessary (Kaur 2009, 142).

To conclude, results relating to aspects of BELF communication already explored by previous research appear to be in line with such studies involving both surveys and interviews (e.g. Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011; Ehrenreich 2010; Rogerson-Revell 2010) and linguistic analysis (Franceschi 2019, submitted), underlining the role of all three layers of the GCC and of the need for skillful use of certain communication strategies to maintain successful communication. The attempt to investigate preferences in CS use across different channels of communication has not highlighted any significant differences between oral and digital interactions for those strategies that were relevant to both. As this study explored self-assessed behaviors in a small sample of BELF users, further studies would be needed to examine CS use in workplace digital interactions, namely analysis of naturally-occurring data.

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Building Rapport in BELF Communication: Solidarity Strategies in Business Emails[1]

Abstract
In the globalized market, business professionals use emails to communicate with customers, suppliers, and even colleagues who may be based in any part of the world, employing English as a business lingua franca (BELF). Despite the goal-oriented nature of business communication, rapport is "an essential element in the building and maintenance of strong work relations" (Pullin 2010, 456), and the achievement of business goals may be "dependent to some extent on the establishment of relations" (Pullin 2010, 458). However, nurturing interpersonal relationships may be difficult in intercultural business interactions (Spencer-Oatey and Xing 2003), especially in the case of business emailing, whose main aim is the rapid fulfillment of the task at hand.
Based on a corpus of business email exchanges amongst BELF users of different L1s, this paper proposes a classification of 'solidarity strategies' (Köster 2006) aimed at building and nurturing rapport in email communication despite the pressure of getting the job done. It is argued that being less concerned with issues of accuracy in the target language, BELF email writers seem to pay more attention to the pragmatic needs of business communication, including that of building trust and common ground.

1. Introduction

In all contexts of verbal communication, language is used to perform a variety of functions, from the mere transfer of information through to the definition of our attitudes and emotions, and the shaping of relations. This is also true in the context of business communication, which entails both a transactional and an interactional dimension (Köster 2006; 2010; Planken 2005). In fact, in business-oriented communication, language does not only allow the accomplishment of concrete objectives relating to the task at hand,

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but also plays an important role in the establishment of a working relationship between business interlocutors, performing what Spencer-Oatey (2000a; 2000b; 2005) has termed 'rapport management', namely, the management of "the relative harmony and smoothness of relations between people" (Spencer-Oatey 2005, 96). Indeed, as Pullin (2010, 458) suggests, transactional and interactional functions in business communication are intrinsically linked, since "all goal-oriented talk is dependent to some extent on the establishment of relations". To put it in Hollman and Kleiner's (1997, 194) words, "rapport [...] is a business tool which helps in all transactions."

Given the global nature of today's business, and the unquestionable status of English as *the* global lingua franca of the 21st century, most business communication is now carried out in increasingly intercultural settings, where English functions as *the* common working language (e.g. Charles 2008; Ehrenreich 2010; Evans 2013). This has sparked a new strand of research within the English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) paradigm, namely research on the use of English as a/the Lingua Franca of Business (BELF) (Lohuiala-Salminen, Charles and Kankaanranta 2005; Gerritsen and Nickerson 2009; Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2013). Several aspects of the verbal behaviour of ELF speakers in business contexts have been investigated, many of which relating to the pragmatic strategies adopted in BELF spoken interactions (e.g. Poncini 2007; Wolfartsberger 2009; Cogo 2016; Franceschi 2017). Still, Kalocsai (2011, 113) has remarked that "the interpersonal function [of the observed forms of ELF communication] has received comparatively less attention than the communicative function", maybe because English as a business lingua franca is often looked at as 'one tool in a business toolkit' (Charles 2008), that is, 'language for communication' rather than 'language for identification' (Hüllen 1992).

The aim of the present study is to highlight the multiple functions of the linguistic choices made by ELF users in written business interactions. It is claimed that a cooperative and mutually supportive attitude may contribute not only to the process of meaning-making for the fulfillment of the business task at hand (Köster 2010), but also to "[1] simultaneously create a 'feeling of shared satisfaction' (Hülmbauer 2007, 10), [2] express solidarity (e.g. Cogo 2007, 2009) and [3] establish rapport (Kordon 2006)" (Kalocsai 2011, 114).

2.Relational talk in BELF spoken interactions

Amongst the studies focusing on BELF spoken interactions, some have foregrounded the importance of creating and maintaining rapport in situations where a lingua franca is used. Many of these studies have their roots in pragmatics, and more specifically in Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and the notion of 'facework' (Scollon and Scollon 2001). Spencer-Oatey (2000a; 2000b) has proposed a more comprehensive framework to describe relational management in spoken interactions, and the factors that may have an influence on it. These include not only merely linguistic features, but also elements more specifically concerned with the dynamics of interaction, like the sequencing of interactional content, turn-taking, the choice of register, as well as non-verbal elements of communication, such as proxemics, gestures, and even the physical setting in which the interaction takes place. Köster's (2006) notion of 'solidarity' also suggests a framework of analysis that goes beyond politeness, in that it refers to "the affective dimension of interpersonal relations, and involves the expression of mutuality and common ground" (Köster 2006, 62). In other words, solidarity and the related notion of rapport are associated with the wish to build and maintain good working relations through the construction of close ties between business interlocutors, which, in turn, is of direct relevance to the achievement of business goals.

Spencer-Oatey and Xing (2003) have explored the management of rapport in intercultural welcome-meetings, and confirmed Fraser and Nolan's (1981) view that "no sentence of linguistic construction is inherently polite or impolite" since communication "is not simply a matter of linguistic encoding and decoding" (Spencer-Oatey and Xing 2003, 44), but involves a number of elements whose 'perception' lies in the hands of the interlocutors.

Planken (2005) has analysed rapport management in sales negotiations carried out by both professional and aspiring negotiators using English as a lingua franca. Besides considering the occurrence of 'safe talk' in the different phases of the negotiation process, Planken has investigated the role played by mere linguistic items, namely personal pronouns, and shown how their use can contribute to establishing solidarity (inclusive 'we'), other-orientedness ('you'), self-orientedness ('I') and professional distance (exclusive 'we') in the negotiator relationship (Ibid., 393). Pullin (2010) has explored the role of small talk in the construction of rapport and solidarity in BELF settings by analysing data drawn from three meetings in a multilingual Swiss company. Her conclusions seem to support the claim that the ability to build solidarity and intercultural understanding is of the utmost importance for the establishment of smooth working relations in lingua franca settings, in that it contributes to forging a sense of group identity. This reflects Planken's (2005, 397) claim that interculturalness is a 'safe-talk' topic in its own right, as "by pointing out and acknowledging cultural differences, participants try to create a temporary[2] in-group of (fellow) non-natives, whose common ground is the fact that they differ culturally", which, in turn, is "clearly aimed at rapport-building". That small talk can effectively fulfill the purpose of building and maintaining rapport has been claimed also by studies (e.g. Holmes 2000;Köster 2006, 2010) showing that, rather than being peripheral to the workplace, 'relational talk' provides a space for business interlocutors to liaise not only professionally, but also socially and linguistically, thus contributing to the success of the business. In Köster's (2010, 97-98) words, "relational talk is far too prevalent to be considered marginal in the workplace. [...] Even relational talk which may seem quite extraneous to the business at hand, may ultimately serve transactional goals". On a merely linguistic level, it has been shown (e.g. Kordon 2006) that strong agreement tokens (such as *of course*, *exactly*) can also have an affective function, and that the use of personal pronouns, specialized lexis and evaluative language can create a sense of group identity and build positive relationships (e.g. Poncini 2007). Also phatic expressions (e.g. *Have a nice day*) do contribute to the establishment, maintenance and management of human bonding (e.g. Köster 2010).

3. Rapport building in BELF email exchanges

If the interpersonal dimension of BELF communication has been investigated in relation to spoken interactions, comparatively less has been done with specific reference to the role that written exchanges, and in particular emails, may have on rapport building (Ho 2014). Emails are now integrated into business routines and are undoubtedly the most frequently used means of communication in professional settings for both internal and external exchanges (e.g. Guffey 2010). They have become a widespread working tool in the modern workplace, most of the times even replacing other popular forms of business communication —both face-to-face interactions, like meetings, and more synchronous exchanges, such as telephone calls (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011), whereby its hybrid nature as 'written speech' has often been highlighted (e.g. Maynor 1994; Baron 2003). The ubiquity of emails has increased their potential to affect relational exchanges, especially in cross-cultural business settings (Roshid 2012), where "employees of all rank and order are charged with the

[2] The 'fleeting' nature of BELF interactions has been highlighted by Pitzl (2019), who has suggested a complementing framework to the Community of Practice approach for the study of BELF contexts, namely that of Transient International Group (TIG).

task of maintaining frequent communication with business partners, often originating from significantly different cultural and linguistic backgrounds whilst having to use English as a business lingua franca" (Li 2016, 64). In highly connected cross-cultural business settings, not only are business emails increasingly 'multifunctional' (Zummo 2018), but their authors are also expected to carry out multiple tasks that go far beyond the simple transmission of information (Skovholt 2015). In email-exchanges, BELF email-writers are faced with a number of challenges (e.g. Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2012), from the use of a language other than their own, to the clarity of the content they are conveying, up to the need to be aware of pragmatic variation across languages and cultures (Poppi 2012), something they are not usually trained in through traditional Business-English training (Caleffi and Poppi 2019). Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2011) claim that, alongside clarity and directness, politeness – that is, a "positive, friendly and constructive" (Ibid., 256) attitude – is a vital factor for effective BELF communication, and that traditional small talk and the use of greetings are essential in the establishment of personal contact. In fact, when different linguacultures are involved, email-writers need to take into account that even greetings, closings, titles and addressing terms "become part of a politeness formula to maintain relations" (Zummo 2018, 49). Moreover, some linguistic indicators like register and degree of formality/informality are particularly important in intercultural email communication, in that the same speech act may be performed following different politeness strategies (e.g. directness vs indirecteness) according to culture (Bargiela-Chiappini and Kádár, 2011).

In comparison with face-to-face interaction and other channels of synchronous communication currently available in the business world (e.g. video-conferencing), investigation into the interactional dimension of business communication via email can only be carried out based on the analysis of purely linguistic features, as paralinguistic, proxemic or other non-verbal and contextual cues are not (or only partially)[3] available. As Skovholt (2015, 108) maintains, "analysing language usage coincides with discovering how social relations are constructed". Crook and Booth (1997), for example, have explored the importance of word choices in business email communication for the development of a 'common language' amongst the participants in the communicative event. Their study is based on Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) (Giles 1973) as a framework to explain the relationship between the author and the reader of a

[3] Emoticons or unorthodox use of capitalisation may be used to provide prosodic and/or emotional information (Skovholt 2015), although they can be perceived as unprofessional (e.g. Zummo 2018).

written message. Although originally developed to describe the communicative behaviour of participants in oral interactions, CAT has been expanded to other modes of interaction (Giles and Ogay 2007), including technology or computer-mediated communication, without changing its primary goal, namely that of addressing interpersonal communication issues. Drawing on the notion of 'convergence' (Giles 1973), Crook and Booth (1997, 6) maintain that one dimension of diversity between individuals is their preference for one of the three main sensory systems (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic). The preferred sensory system is reflected in language use through words like *see*, *clear* (visual style), *hear*, *sound* (auditory style), and *feel*, *grasp* (kinaesthetic style). In their study, the individuals who received emails which matched their preferred representational system reported more rapport, that is, "a trusting, harmonious relationship" (Ibid., 6) with the sender than those who received emails that did not match their preferred style.

Incelli's (2013) study of business email interactions between a British and an Italian company seems to support the claim that speakers using a lingua franca also express their cultural identity in the language (e.g. Meierkord 2000). Drawing on politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987) and intercultural communication (Spencer-Oatey 2000a) theories, Incelli's study reveals that the business emails written by British native speakers tended to be highly informational rather than relational. As she says, "[a]lthough the UK participants took into account the recipient and aimed to maintain social relations, e.g. *We understand*; *I trust this clarifies the matter*, at the same time they were detached and distant, in keeping with standard business letters" (Incelli 2013, 526). On the contrary, her Italian writers appeared to be more oriented towards relational discourse, which is "reflected in the use of private verbs, such as *wonder*, *hope*, the use of personal pronouns (*I*, *me*) and emphasisers, e.g. *I really need the material urgently*" (Ibid., 526), as well as in the use of emphatic particles expressing opinion and emotion, e.g. *only*, *so much*, *so*, *also*. According to this study, then, Italian emailers seem to be more concerned with building rapport if compared with their British counterparts.

Broadening the range of analytical frameworks that can be employed for the study of rapport management, Ho (2014) has explored how the authors of workplace request email construct the discourse of request grounders with language of evaluation for the purpose of rapport management. Ho's study draws on Appraisal Theory (Martin and White 2005), which allows "to identify the lexicogrammatical resources used by individuals in realizing affect and involvement" (Ho 2014, 74) in the use of evaluative language. Ho's analysis reveals that professionals make use of various lexicogrammatical resources realizing the rapport management function from the three main categories of which evaluative language is comprised, namely attitude, engagement, and graduation and their relative subcategories (affect, judgment, appreciation; dialogic expansion and dialogic contraction; focus and force). For example, attitude is realized in the writer's expressions of feelings (e. g. *I am glad*), judgments (e.g. *early enough*) and appreciations (*It seems unacceptable*); engagement in the use of dialogic expansion (*It seems*) and dialogic contraction (*The user cannot enter the system*); graduation in the use of focus (*It will be tightly scrutinized*).

4. The study

The present study was carried out based on a self-compiled corpus of 198 business emails written in BELF contexts.[4] In these emails, I sought to identify examples of language use showing the writers' wish to build and/or maintain rapport with their interlocutors. Not all the collected emails were suitable for the analysis, as some of them were only 'one-way', that is, they were not part of an exchange. I therefore selected only emails constituting part of a thread made up by at least two messages (from A to B, and back from B to A). In this way, I identified 50 different exchanges, with an average number of 2 to 3 emails each.

For the analysis, I elaborated a tentative classification based on which the selected examples could be organized. The classification corresponds to a number of speech acts (Austin 1962) which, despite their different illocutionary force, seem to be performed, in the data, with the common goal of building and/or maintaining rapport, thus functioning as 'solidarity strategies' that go beyond politeness (Köster 2006). The selected examples of language items illustrated below did not play a specific informative role in the exchanges in which they were used. Neither did they add anything to the content of the message. This seems to suggest that in the emailers' intention their function was primarily that of establishing and/or maintaining some form of rapport. Indeed, they appeared to have been employed to create a sense of smoothness and solidarity with the addressee(s), performing the same phatic function as that of small talk in face-to-face communication. Hence, as will be illustrated in the following section, I deemed it as reasonable to assume that the senders' concern when using certain expressions was to create a friendly environment in which to get the recipient

[4] The corpus was compiled for analysis as part of a broader PRIN project (see 'Acknowledgements').

to perform a certain task, or even simply for the sake of present and future relationships.

The collected emails were part of exchanges between business interlocutors of different L1s, namely Italian, Swedish, German, French, and English. To ensure anonymity, the data was edited by substituting all proper names with random attribution of letters of the alphabet, and sensitive business information was replaced by "xxx". The only piece of information about the authors of the emails that was retained was the assumed L1 of the interlocutors, which was attributed based on the country where the company for which they worked was located.[5]A written consent for the use of the emails for research purposes was obtained by the companies that accepted to participate in the study.

The following table (Table 1) shows the speech acts that were identified in the corpus with one example each from the data.[6]

Speech act	Example
Wishing	*Have a nice evening!*
Appreciating	*Thanks a lot for your feedback, much appreciated.*
Offering availability/ help	*I am always available for a call.*
Apologizing	*Sorry for confusing you.*
Providing an explanation	*For us, xxx euros is a lot, considering all the crazy costs we are already covering.*
Thanking	*Many thanks in advance.*
Chit-chatting[7]	*I am good just two days before the Christmas holidays*
Self-blaming	*I missed to tell the complete truth.*
Cooperating (suggesting a solution)	*Do you think you can send them today in order I receive them this Friday?*
Expressing feelings	*Fantastic! I am glad the issue is solved!*

Table 1. Speech acts functioning as 'solidarity strategies'.

To show how the identified speech acts functioned as 'solidarity strategies', some examples are illustrated in the next section. The examples are extracts from exchanges selected from the data. In each extract, bold is used for the

[5] This seemed a reasonable assumption, although it offers no certainty about the actual L1s of the writers.
[6] All Extracts from the data are verbatim.
[7] I used this expression to refer to 'small-talk'.

identified speech act(s), and information about which of the speech acts from Table 1 is exemplified is provided in square brackets. Underlining is used for expressions or lexical items which also play a role in the construction of the relationship within the exchange.

5. Findings[8]

Exchange No.1
Interlocutors' L1s: Italian/German

In this exchange, the Italian writer needs some details about the delivery of catalogues. The exchange follows a telephone conversation between the two interlocutors. At the end of the email from which the Extract is taken, the Italian writer provides an explanation for having recapped the whole content of the call:

<u>Extract 1</u>

I am always available [offering availability] *for a call, <u>just</u> need to get all of these details in an email for future reference.*

The explanation sounds as the writer's attempt to be proactive about any possible annoyance the recap may cause to her interlocutor. The use of the degree adverb *just* as a marker of dialogic contraction seems to support this assumption.
A few days later, having received no reply, the Italian writer contacts her German interlocutor again.

<u>Extract 2</u>

Hi A.,
I hope you're well. [wishing]
Any news for <u>us</u>? Will <u>we</u> be able to get the FR catalogues for XX?
Thanks, [thanking]

Before making her direct request, the Italian writer addresses the interlocutor with phatic language (*I hope you're well*). The first-person singular subject of the 'wish'–which conveys a sense of personal involvement– is replaced with *we* when it comes to the actual request: the writer seems concerned to detach herself from the possible threatening of her interlocutor's negative face: she is making the request in the name of the company.

[8]Bold and underlining are mine.

Exchange No. 2
Interlocutors' L1s: Italian/German

In Extract 3, the German interlocutor is responding to his Italian counterpart's signalling of a possible misunderstanding. The first concern of the German partner is that of apologizing. Then he confirms that the Italian interlocutor has correctly understood the message, and provides an explanation for what seems to have caused the 'confusion':

Extract 3

Dear M.,
Sorry for confusing you. [apologizing] *What you said is also what I meant. The additional information (which confused you) was that we always need to print two languages @ same quantities together to get this price.*

The Italian counterpart replies by showing appreciation for the explanation:

Extract 4

Hi, M.,
Thank you *for the conditions* [thanking] *that* ***you've kindly explained*** [appreciating] *in your email.*

Exchange No. 3
Interlocutors' L1s: Italian/German

In this exchange, the Italian interlocutor comments on the price estimate submitted by the German supplier and provides an explanation for her comment, which anticipates her request to send the file:

Extract 5

We are thinking about printing 200 copies, but xxx for this is a lot, we could get better rate from our local agency, ***especially considering all the crazy costs we're covering with this additional exhibition.*** [providing an explanation] *Would you be open in sending us the file for us to manage?*

The German interlocutor seems concerned with maintaining a smooth relationship with the customer, and shows willingness to cooperate by explaining the reasons for the cost, at the same time taking on the responsibility for not having provided enough information. With reference to the Italian interlocutor's indirect hint that they might decide to contact the local agent, the German counterpart shows availability but at the same time concern for the consequences this might have on the client's image:

Extract 6

Dear M.,
When I informed you about the cost, ***I missed to tell the complete truth.*** [self-blaming]
Since <u>I</u> forgot to inform you about **[...]*****, <u>we</u> will take the responsibility for this cost.*** [providing an explanation; cooperating (suggesting a solution)]
Regarding printing, ***<u>we</u> can accept*** [offering availability] *that you print locally, <u>but</u>* ***<u>we</u> do not recommend as we would like to maintain appearance.*** [providing an explanation] *However, you* ***<u>shall not</u> compromise in paper and print quality*** [providing an explanation] *as well as appearance.*

The German writer takes on himself the 'blame' for not having told "the complete truth", and shifts the willingness to cooperate onto the company he represents (*we*). *We* is also the subject of the 'acceptance' and of the 'recommendation', which is justified and explained. The high deontic modality of the modal expression "you shall not" does not seem to be to interpret in its literal meaning of prohibition, but may rather be a strong suggestion, further explaining why the 'local printing' is 'not recommended'.

Exchange No. 4
Interlocutors' L1s: Italian/German

In this exchange, the Italian interlocutor is suggesting a possible cooperation for the production of a catalogue. Before making the suggestion, she starts with a wish, and then accompanies the suggestion with an explicit expression of her feelings (affect):

<u>Extract 7</u>

Hi M.,
I hope you're well. [wishing]
Any plans to produce the xxx catalogue in Italian?
<u>We</u> are waiting for it since a long time, ***<u>I</u> would be 100% happy to help*** [expressing feelings; offering help] *translating if you wish.*
Many thanks. [thanking]

In his reply, the German interlocutor is also very friendly: he both opens and closes his reply with expressions of affect:

<u>Extract 8</u>

Hi M.,
Thanks I am good just two days before the Christmas holidays [chit-chatting] – ***I hope you as well.*** [wishing]
[...]
I wish you nice and relaxing Christmas holidays and a good start of 2019! [wishing]

Exchange No. 5
Interlocutors' L1s: Italian/Swedish

In this exchange, the Swedish writer contacts his Italian counterpart to ask for help with some new software. Before making his request, he uses phatic language, accompanied by a friendly emoticon, to refer back to the Italian business partner's recent trip to Sweden, and only afterwards he moves on to the business task:

<u>Extract 9</u>

Hi M.,
How are things with you? Did you miss Sweden yet? ☺[chit-chatting]
I need your help with.
[...]

The Italian interlocutor replies accordingly, by responding to his counterpart's wish to start the communicative event in the friendliest way, although maybe not aware of a possible threatening act towards the Swedish partner's positive face in underlining his feeling "pretty fine" with being in Italy (thus implicitly suggesting he did not like Sweden that much). The use of the dots would seem to make this 'dislike' a possible implicature:

<u>Extract 10</u>

Hi A.,
Not missing Sweden yet...☺ I feel pretty fine here down in Italy... [chit-chatting]
About your questions, it depends:
[...]

Exchange No. 6
Interlocutors' L1s: Italian/Swedish

In this exchange, the Italian interlocutor contacts his Swedish counterpart to inform her that he has not been emailed the feedback he was expecting to receive. The message sounds somehow face threatening, including the final 'thanking':

<u>Extract 11</u>

Hi S.,
I haven't received yet your complete feedback for the demo session provided to xxx at the beginning of this month.
I was expecting to receive the email you shared during the call with the feedback of all the topics, as agreed.

Thanks. [thanking]

The Swedish writer's reply does not sound particularly friendly, although mitigated by a marker of dialogic expansion (*I am not sure*):

Extract 12

Hi M.
I am not sure I understand [self-blaming] *what you need. After the demo, X sent you the minutes containing the items from my note for both PP an DQM.*
Is there anything that you need from us?

At this point, the Italian counterpart tries to re-establish 'smoothness' by taking on the responsibility for the inconvenience:

Extract 13

Hi S.,
Maybe I lost it somewhere [self-blaming], *could you please forward it to me again?*
Thanks. [thanking]

Exchange No. 7

Interlocutors' L1s: Italian/English

In this exchange, the Italian writer contacts his English counterpart to ask for help with the consultation of a price list from which a product seems to be missing. He asks his English business partner to make the product available for selection, and thanks the partner in advance by using an expression (*Many thanks in advance*) which is commonly used in business Italian, but maybe does not sound particularly polite in English:

Extract 14

Dear A,
I write you about what I mentioned during the call with Z, regarding the missing product with code xxx. I attach you the screenshot of the list of products that appears as I create an opportunity. The figure related to our product xxx is missing.
Is possible to make it [the product] *available for selection?*
Many thanks in advance. [thanking]

The expression *Many thanks in advance* may be a face-threatening act as it takes it for granted that the addressee will do the thing he/she is being thanked for. The English counterpart, however, does not sound annoyed, and maintains rapport by ensuring his availability through quite a standard formula in business English:

Extract 15

Hello B.,
You appear to be using the incorrect Price book, please use Price Book February 2019. [...].
If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to ask. [offering availability]

The Italian writer's reply is much more emphatic and personalized, with the Italian counterpart sounding less formal and expressing his feelings and gratitude:

Extract 16

Hello A.,
super, [expressing feelings] *I see different figures on the product list now.* ***Now it's way better***. [appreciating]
Thank you so much [thanking] *for your* ***prompt support***. [appreciating]

At this point, also the English interlocutor shifts to more informality:

Extract 17

Hello B.,
Fantastic, I am glad the issue is solved! [expressing feelings]

Exchange No. 8
Interlocutors' L1s: Italian / French

This exchange is an example of the first contacts between and Italian and a French company. The Italian writer suggests a possible meeting during a trade fair that will take place in the next weeks. The tone is quite formal, still the Italian interlocutor tries to establish some form of common ground (the fair in which both parts are assumed to be interested):

Extract 18

We inform that we'll be visiting the fair xxx on7th February and we wonder if you are also planning to go there. If yes, would you be available to meet us and make our acquaintance? This could be a good opportunity to show you our quality and explain our services.
I look forward to your kind reply.

The evaluative language used here (*good opportunity*; *kind reply*) sounds more like standard business-English formulae than personalized solutions adopted by the Italian writer to build rapport. Still, though by means of professional distance (use of the exclusive *we*) the Italian writer seems to be 'preparing the ground' for a possible future cooperation between the two partners. After receiving a reply from the prospective French customer informing the Italian counterpart of their impossibility to be at the fair, the Italian emailer changes her register by making her text slightly more personalized, in particular by expressing her feelings:

<u>Extract 19</u>

Thank you [thanking] *for your* ***kind reply****.* [appreciating] ***It's a pity we can't meet!*** [expressing feelings]

Exchange No. 9
Interlocutors' L1s: Italian/French

In this exchange, the French interlocutor contacts the Italian partner to inform her that some material is missing from the consignment they have just received. The French writer does not sound annoyed by the inconvenience and, instead of complaining, he suggests a possible solution using a polite indirect request:

<u>Extract 20</u>

Hello A., We received the order today <u>but</u> I have a problem, cardboards are missing. ***Do you think you can send them today*** [suggesting a solution] *in order I receive them this Friday?*

The Italian counterpart seems worried that the inconvenience might jeopardize the relationships with the customer. Her reply is quite complex: while trying to preserve the image of her company, she apologises twice, provides an explanation for what has happened, and also shows cooperation by proposing a discount on the next order:

<u>Extract 21</u>

Good morning,
I am very sorry *for this inconvenience.* [apologizing]
We sent the cardboard yesterday but ***we have a new worker and she has a lot to improve.*** [providing an explanation; self-blaming] *To the next order,* ***you will receive a discount*** [cooperating (suggesting a solution)] ***because usually we are better.*** [providing an explanation]

I ***hope that this inconvenience does not change your idea*** [wishing; expressing feelings].
Sorry. [apologizing]
Have a nice day. [wishing]

6. Discussion of findings

The examples illustrated in the previous section provide instances of how business professionals seek to build and maintain a smooth working relationship with each other while communicating via email in their daily routine. For the BELF email writers participating in this study one of the most frequent ways to build and/or maintain a friendly relationship with their interlocutors was the direct expression of their feelings (e.g. *Fantastic! I am glad this issue is solved!*), which in terms of evaluative language is what Martin and White (2005) have defined as 'affect', that is, the use of lexicogrammatical resources "being concerned with positive and negative feelings" (Martin and White's 2005, 42, quoted in Ho 2014, 65). Another frequent speech act serving the aim of creating and/or maintaining rapport was the provision of an explanation, sometimes even a detailed one (e.g. *We sent the cardboard yesterday but we have a new worker and she has a lot to improve. To the next order, you will receive a discount because usually we are better*). This is in line with Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta's (2011, 255) claim that one of the vital factors for successful communication is "supporting facts with explanations". Appreciating has also proven to be an effective way of maintaining smooth relationships in business (Spencer-Oatey and Xing 2003); this seems to be confirmed by the examples in the present study, where appreciation of the counterpart's contribution to the achievement of the business purpose (e.g. *Now it's way better*), or simply of the specific task (e.g. *Thank you so much for your prompt support*) is often explicitly expressed. The need for business professionals to maintain smooth relations was shown in the examples also by a high degree of cooperation, for instance through the suggestion of concrete solutions to a problem (e.g. *Do you think you can send them today in order I receive them this Friday?*), by blaming oneself for the occurrence of an inconvenience *(I missed to tell the complete truth*), by apologizing (e.g. *Sorry for confusing you*), or by offering help/availability (*I am always available for a call*). Wishing (e.g. *Have a nice evening!*) and thanking (e.g. *Thanks in advance*) were the speech acts where more conventional expressions were used, but still with examples of positively-perceived culture-bound formulae (e.g. *Thanks in advance*). Finally, it is worth observing that, though with a limited number of occurrences, also due to the limited amount of data available, chit-chatting (e.g. *How are things with you? Did you miss Sweden yet?*☺) seemed to have some space in business 'written speech' (despite the urge of 'getting the job done'), serving the same interactional function as that of small talk in business oral interactions.

7. Conclusions

This study has sought to show that, though mainly exchanged 'to get the job done', business emails, as the most popular means of communication amongst business professionals, have become a space for social relationships to be developed and maintained in the increasingly multilingual and multicultural workplace (Roshid, Webb, and Chowdhury 2018). The examples illustrated in this study seem to suggest that, while communicating via email with their counterparts abroad to carry out their business tasks, business professionals are also concerned with maintaining harmony, smoothness and warmth (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin 2009) in interpersonal relationship. As said in the previous sections, BELF email-writers are faced with a number of challenges, from the use of a language other than their own, to the clarity of the content they are conveying, up to the need to be aware of pragmatic variation across languages and cultures (e.g. Kankaanranta, and Louhiala-Salminen 2012). With regard to the language issue, several studies (e.g. Kankaanranta and Planken 2010; Ehrenreich 2010) have revealed that the success of BELF communication is largely independent of the interlocutors' approximation to native competence. It has also been shown (e.g. Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2010; Deterding 2013) that misunderstanding rarely happens between BELF professionals, and BELF-based interactions are often reported to be successful, "the reasons for this being the high degree of cooperation and the collaborative practices that can be observed among speakers in business context" (Ehrenreich 2016, 138). In the present study, no occurrences of metalinguistic comments or other hints in the emails were found which may suggest that the writers were concerned with (standard) language when emailing each other. On the contrary, the illustrated examples appear to show that the writers of the emails were aware of the importance of pragmatic aspects, like that of maintaining a 'friendly' communicative environment. This seems to support the claim that relational talk and rapport "are perceived to be an integral and highly relevant part of BELF competence, even though the relational mode is often felt to be more challenging than business-related or specialized talk" (Ibid., 138).

As a concluding remark, it may be relevant to observe that the "pragmatic attitude" (Ehrenreich 2010, 417) that BELF professionals show in their emailing activity seems to be the result of their personal involvement in the business rather than that of formal training. In the data examined for this study, few occurrences of conventional expressions (e.g. *Thanks for your understanding*) were found, whereas many of the examples showed the writers' creativity in 'personalizing' their pragmatic formulae (e.g. *I hope that this inconvenience does not change your idea*) to make them sound clearer and more effective (at least in the writers' intentions). It would seem, therefore, that a "pragmatic attitude" leading, for example, to the establishment of good relationships between business partners, is easier to acquire directly in the workplace through the active (and effective) cooperation within the community of practice of business professionals. Yet, training programmes fostering awareness of such "pragmatic attitude" and providing tips on how to develop it could only help business professionals meet "the challenges posed by global business interaction" (Ehrenreich 2016, 138). In this perspective, empirical research on BELF should probably focus more than it has done so far on how business professionals using English as a Business Lingua Franca cope with pragmatic needs. As discussed above, building rapport and common ground is crucial for business relationships, in that interactional goals may ultimately serve transactional goals.

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A critical review of 'English' in China's English education: how far can Chinese teachers embrace ELF?

Abstract

While ELF research offers implications for English pedagogy in non-native English contexts, research needs to be done to understand the feasibility of ELF-oriented classroom practices in specific local contexts to concretise a proposal for ELF pedagogy. We consider classroom teaching in the educational context where language policy interacts with language perceptions and practices, seeking to understand the extent to which Chinese teachers can embrace ELF. With a focus on teacher agency, the study explores language policy, classroom practice and teacher perspectives on English as a subject matter of English education. The findings point to the discussion of the interaction between teacher agency and policy constraints. The article ends with the suggestion that the approach to English in China's education policy should be reconsidered and that the debates on ELF in relation to Chinese speakers are necessary for possible changes in education policy.

1. Introduction

Along with the spread of English around the world, research on English as a lingua franca (ELF) has foregrounded the changing nature of English and the changing role of English for non-native English speakers (NNESs), illuminating the limitations of the treatment of English as a foreign language (EFL) with reference to English used by native English speakers (NESs) in the changing context today (e.g. Jenkins 2000; 2006; 2007; 2015; Mauranen 2012; Seidlhofer 2004; 2011). As Widdowson's (1994) question to the ownership of English reminds us, the spread of English urges the re/consideration of the right to be creative in the use of English by NNESs and the power relations between NESs and NNESs. The concept of ELF accepts NNESs' rights of being creative and respects their needs and wants to variate from established norms, the norms that are often established on the use of English in native English-speaking communities. On the contrary, the notion of EFL stresses the norms and rules established among native English speakers, leaving no space to non-native English speakers' agentive needs and associating NNESs' variations from established norms with errors. Given the context that NNESs greatly outnumber NESs, the research on ELF has implications for the reconsideration of English pedagogy in NNES contexts (e.g. Dewey 2012; Jenkins 2006; Seidlhofer 2011).

China has a vast population of learning and using English. In the context of globalisation and internationalisation, the nation witnesses an increasing need for intercultural communication at different levels. As a result, the use of ELF- as opposed to English as a foreign language (EFL)- is increasingly becoming relevant to Chinese speakers and learners of English. China is thus in a situation where the new role of English encounters the traditional practice of English teaching. On the one hand, the new role of English is conceptualised through the framework of ELF (see Jenkins 2000; 2007; 2014; 2015; Mauranen 2012; 2018; Seidlhofer 2011; 2018), which differentiate ELF itself from EFL or English as a native language (ENL). While ELF focuses on the global ownership of English (Seidlhofer 2004), EFL or ENL reinforces the exclusive ownership of English by NESs, or more concisely, a small number of elite NESs, whose use of English tends to be associated with Standard native Englishes (Widdowson 1994; 2003). On the other hand, traditional English language teaching tends to model Standard British English or Standard American English. As Wen (2012) points out, English education continues to be oriented towards native English norms, which provide references to users of EFL, in China. The contrast between the rising role of ELF and the existing English teaching practice urges us to explore the possibility for ELF to be reflected in English education in China.

Inevitably, language acquisition planning is an essential part of language policy in a community (Ricento 2000). The reconsideration of English pedagogy in non-native English-speaking contexts thus befits from the understanding of English language education policy in relevant contexts. In terms of China, in particular, research shows that EFL education has often been associated with national agendas and educational policies (Adamson 2004; Pan 2014). The consideration of the relevance of ELF for English education in China is thus necessary to be conducted within the framework of language policy.

Research has shown the importance of teachers' initiatives of bringing ELF into English language teaching, with the focus on teacher awareness of ELF (e.g. Dewey 2012; Sifakis 2014; 2017). A fundamental concern is that teachers are agents who work with the subject matter of English and support students through the learning of English. Teachers' awareness of ELF thus shapes their ways of approaching English and helping students address issues with English. For instance, how to treat 'errors' can be different on an ELF perspective and an EFL perspective respectively. Apparently, the concept of agency reminds us of the social environment where teachers are situated. Brown (2012) sees teachers as stakeholders of language policy, who react to language policy and decide the extent to which language policy is successfully implemented. Therefore, teachers not only perform according to what education policy requires them to do but also take into consideration what they hope their students to take away from the process of learning English. For this reason, this paper seeks to explore Chinese teachers' perspectives on the relevance of ELF for English education in Chinese universities and to understand how Chinese teachers perceive the interaction between the new role of ELF and the current teaching practice in Chinese higher education.

We draw on Spolsky's (2012) framework of language management, seeking to understand the approach to English in respect of language education policy, language education practice and ideologies about English in English education.

The purpose of the research is, firstly, to contribute to the ELF research in terms of the application of the ELF concept to local education and, secondly, to evaluate the extent to which the role of ELF is exploited in Chinese higher education to serve different internationalisation initiatives of China.

2. ELF, ELT and education

Widdowson (2003) maintains that English educators should deliberate what the subject matter of English language teaching entails. A considerable body of literature has contributed to the knowledge of ELF and offered implications for the ELT practice (e.g. Baker 2015; Cogo and Dewey 2012; Grazzi 2015; Hynninen 2016; Jenkins 2006; Mauranen 2012; Pitzl 2012;

Seidlhofer 2011). Informed by the literature, we can summarise a few points that contribute to an ELF-oriented approach to the English subject. First, the target language should not be taken for granted to regard as native speaker English. Second, the target community should not be taken for granted to regard as native English-speaking community. Third, while English users are more than native English speakers, the cultures associated with English users should not be taken for granted to regard as native English speakers' cultures. Fourth, the pursuit of English learning achievement should not be taken for granted to be the mastery of a set of fixed codes or established norms. Instead, accommodation is essential for successful communication. Teachers should not focus on forms but functions, meanings and strategies of communication. Fifth, students should be encouraged to pursue the appropriateness of language, which is based on the interactive events where they are situated, instead of the correctness of language, which is based on established norms prior to their entry to the interactive events. In short, a top-down policy that prescribes the forms presumably used by NESs to be learned and taught in NNES classrooms does not help teachers and students to address real-life encounters with English much.

Education is a critical mechanism in language policy (Shohamy 2006). However, education should not be simplistically viewed as the tool of implementing language policy, as education is also a place where language policy interacts with education participants' ideologies about language. That is, education participants, including both teachers and students, have agencies, which, however, work in relation to various structural factors (Giddens 1984), in their processing of language policies and requirements. While language policy seeks to affect language practice, the success or failure of language policy is not only related to ideologies but also projected into language practice (Recinto 2006; Spolsky 2012). It is therefore constructive to review Spolsky's (2012) framework of language policy, which explains the relationships among language practice, language ideologies and language management.

Language management, which is one component in Spolsky's (2012) framework, entails the process of planning and taking measures to impose certain forms of language or enforce the change of language in a particular way. As Spolsky (2012, 5) notes, those in authority would have the power to make some forms legitimate but could not guarantee the 'observance' of the legitimate use of language by all those who are managed. The observance or failure to observe relates to another two components in Spolsky's framework, as discussed in what follows.

According to Spolsky (2012), language practice involves not only deliberate language behaviours and choices but also those behaviours and choices of which language users are not aware. That is, language users might not be aware of their conformity or non-conformity to language requirements in real-life practice. In the same vein, Shohamy (2006) refers to language practice as de facto language policy, namely, the situation that language policy is actually realised among language users, though there is often a gap between language policy and de facto language policy. This reminds us of Kachru's (1986) discussion of Indian English users' attitudes where some Indian English users do not acknowledge their English as 'Indian English' but assume their English to British English.

Language ideology is a complicated concept (Blommaert 2006; Silverstein 1998; Kroskrity 2004). In Spolsky's (2012) framework of language policy, language ideologies refer to values attached to languages. While language policymakers ascribe values to specific languages and promote the values, language users might accept the top-down prescription or resist by attaching different values to specific languages. While Spolsky (2012) focuses on values of languages, it is constructive to adopt a broad sense of language ideologies, which refer to ideas, beliefs, attitudes, interpretations and representations of languages. In the language ideologies scholarship, language ideologies are unanimously regarded as a battlefield for power struggle (e.g. Kroskrity 2004). In this sense, the process of implementing language policies involves the process of promoting dominant language ideologies and marginalising minority language ideologies. Nonetheless, research (e.g. Kroskrity 2004) often shows that minority language ideologies do not necessarily die out but sometimes co-exist with dominant language ideologies or become hidden. The competition between different language ideologies thus has impacts on the process of language management.

In short, the interactions among language management, language practice and language ideologies suggest a two-way process in language policy implementation, that is, a top-down process, where efforts are made to deliver policies, and a bottom-up process, where language users perceive languages and practise languages. In this sense, the investigation of policy requirements, language users' practice and perceptions of language will help to understand the extent to which certain language forms and norms are to be maintained or challenged. It follows that we would benefit from Spolsky's

(2012) framework in understanding the possibility of ELF to be reflected in English education in China.

3. Methodology

This paper is based on three sets of data retrieved through three research tools respectively. The three instruments were used in parallel, without particular design for the sequence. The first data set includes various documents issued by the Ministry of Education in China for national guidance on ELT and those circulated within universities for institutional use. In particular, the former group of documents entails the College English Teaching Requirements (Ministry of Education, 2007) and the Examination Syllabus for CET Level 4 and Level 6 (College English Test Committee, 2016). The latter group is comprised of university website information, profile documents of English-related modules and handbooks, and other visual materials that serve to guide teaching and learning activities. The second data set consists of 23 periods of classroom teaching and learning. Each period was defined on the basis of the universities' timetables. In general, each period lasted 90 minutes, which include two sessions. There were times when one period lasted more than two sessions, due to students' particular disciplinary arrangements. In order to avoid any interruption of the class teaching and show respect to the teachers, the observer stayed in classrooms for entire periods arranged for particular teaching loads instead of selecting a fixed period of time for each observation event. The third data set comprises interviews with 21 English language teachers working in three universities in the same city in southern China. Interview with each teacher participant lasted around 45 minutes in general. Two teachers were met twice for whole interviews because of the interrupts during the interviews. Mandarin Chinese was used as the medium of communication during interviews. The analysis of interviews was conducted in Mandarin Chinese and translated into English during the process of writing up the paper.

The participants were recruited in departments of English in three universities. Some teachers were teaching content-oriented English classes, such as business English and western culture, while others were focused on the teaching of English language skills, for instance, writing and interpretation (see appendix). All participants defined themselves as English teachers during the process of recruitment. The purpose of the research was to examine teachers' perceptions of English, which is the subject of teaching and learning. In light of this, no distinction was made between different teachers.

4. Data analysis

The data were coded with the purpose to answer the central question of the article how far English teachers can embrace ELF. With Spolsky's framework in mind, three data sets were analysed individually. Document analysis serves to find out how English is approached in language policy; classroom observation offers insights into how English is approached in teaching practice; teacher interviews allow for the understanding of how teachers perceive English for pedagogic purposes. A coding system is thus established on the basis of these research objectives. More specifically, we are interested in whether English is perceived or approached as a foreign language for Chinese speakers or a lingua franca for them and how teachers consider the possibility of 'teaching ELF'. Admittedly, a lot more themes were found to emerge in the data than we report here. The findings we report here serve the purpose of the article to contribute to the discussion of the feasibility of teaching ELF in China.

After the analysis of different sets of data, we were able to see a holistic picture of attitudes towards English in China's English education, which help to answer the question how far Chinese teachers can embrace ELF. As seen in what follows, data analysis reveals a cleavage between policy requirements and classroom practice, a blurring boundary between ELF and EFL within classrooms, and a diversity of views on the feasibility of 'teaching ELF'.

4.1 Document analysis

Given the space of the article, it is not possible to provide an extensive analysis of documents we examined. The focus here is on the illustration of the top-down policy process, which contrasts with the bottom-up reactions that we are to discuss in section 4.2. In general, the data did not present a clear prescription of the target language of learning in English education in China. Occasionally, however, 'British English' or 'American English' is mentioned in different documents to offer a reference or to give examples of reference Englishes. The requirements for accuracy, correctness and conformity to 'English-speaking' peoples' use of English is frequently and explicitly expressed across different documents being examined.

Notably, language education policy in China's English education not only designates what to teach and learn in language classrooms but also how to teach and learn in teacher-student engagement. Prominent evidence is the provision of uniform lecture slides equipped with textbooks. The slides highlight the points that textbook writers expect teachers to spend time going through in class time, with the content focusing on vocabulary and grammar. Extract 1 records the content on a slide, which offers a typical example of uniform lecture slides put in use to guide teachers' classroom practice.

Extract 1

Detailed Text Analysis

Fit *vi. & vt. (never progressive)*

- *i. be the size or shape of sth.*
- *ii. be suitable or similar enough to belong to a group*
- *iii. to be the truth, or to be same as what sb. describes*

1. *The book is small enough to* ***fit into*** *your pocket.*
2. *His writing did not* ***fit into*** *any traditional literary category.*
3. *Their policies did not* ***fit with*** *the ideals of democratic government.*

Extract 1 shows how texts are expected to be engaged in language classrooms. The word 'fit' is picked up from a text for 'detailed analysis'. The presentation looks like an entry in a dictionary, with the speech part of 'fit' together with three definitions and meanings as well as three full sentences illustrating the three meanings of the word 'fit'. Presumably, the slide highlights what teachers and students are expected to note. The prescription makes it explicit that the word 'fit' can 'never' be 'progressive'. Although the word 'fit' is presumably identified in a text for analysis, the illustration of the word is not connected to the textual context where the word is based. The process of learning the text is thus rule-driven and de-contextualised, suggesting that the process of teaching and learning is the one that embraces established norms of English, which are likely to be native English norms.

The top-down language policy is thus visible in the process where teachers are expected to use the uniform slides to support their teaching of language within classrooms. While no guidelines and requirements relate to the target language of learning, the exclusive focus on native English norms, which are illustrative of British English and American English, is telling.

4.2 Classroom observation

Classroom observation data were analysed in terms of what to teach and how to teach. The 'what' question points to the subject matter of language education within classrooms, while the 'how' question relates to ways of dealing with the subject matter. The general picture of classroom observation data reveals an intriguing and widespread phenomenon that teachers use ELF to teach EFL.

Regarding the subject matter of language teaching, teachers are observed to focus on grammar teaching and spend time illustrating the rules and norms of native Englishes presented in the textbooks. It was common to observe teachers' emphasis on the idiomaticity of native Englishes across different classrooms in different universities. The following quotes- which are included in one extract for the ease of presentation- are sourced from different teachers' engagements with students on the idiomaticity of English, pointing to the reproduction of native English ideology.

Extract 2

T1: This is an idiomatic phrase, a regular collocation that you have to remember... (*16/11/2016, Academic Writing*)

T2: It cannot be explained with linguistic knowledge. They speak in this way... (*07/11/2016, Interpreting*)

T3: Fixed expression cannot be explained logically. There is no other way around but to memorize... (*27/10/2016, English Listening & Speaking*)

T4: You did it wrong because you chose the answer in the reference of regular grammatical rules. Generally, you are right, this is good...but this one is an idiomatic phrase. (*14/11/2016, Communicative English*)

All the above teachers emphasise the 'must' of conforming to the idiomatic use of English and explicitly prohibit any challenge to it. The word choices in the teachers' discourses unanimously point to the absoluteness in memorising idiomatic usages. In particular, teacher 1 uses the model verb 'have to' to indicate what must be followed, while T2 and T3 use the model verb 'cannot' to indicate what must not be violated. Teacher 4 appears to be more considerate and conducts some reasoning with the student to whom she talks, though she indirectly makes the point that memorising is helpful in terms of idiomatic usages, while reasoning is not.

In contrast with the adherence to English as a foreign language in teaching the subject matter, teachers' engagement with the subject matter, however, shows the application of ELF strategies in full swing. Previous work on ELF practice helps to identify a number of communicative strategies that ELF users adopt in various communicative events (e.g. Cogo and Dewey 2012; Mauranen 2012). In the observed classrooms in the current study, 'errors' and ELF strategies were found to be adopted in the teaching of grammar and native Englishes. In particular, three strategies were able to be easily identified in the observation data, which are to be illustrated with examples in what follows.

The most commonly used strategy can be summarised with Cogo's (2008) notion that 'form follows function'. All classroom teachers focused on meaning-conveying and tended to let go 'errors' in their own English-medium instruction on native English usages. For example, when making comments on a student's presentation, T5 was observed to focus on the message that she intended to deliver and used some forms which could be identified as 'errors' with reference to Standard Englishes.

Extract 3

T5: Well-structured speech. But a quick suggestion. Next time, try not to bring a piece of paper and read it. It'll increase your nerves, and remind you all to rely on the paper. You will forget some of the pronunciations. You've got your points, speak out with your own words, the ones you are familiar with, it will be more fluency. (*01/11/2016, Business English 1*)

Extract 3 presents examples of T5's use of English, which is different from Standard English. The string *It'll increase your nerves and remind you all to rely on the paper* well illustrates the creativity that bears traces of Chinese language expression. In the context of instruction that the teacher was offering feedback on student performance, it was not difficult to understand what the teacher meant to say. The shared culture between the teacher and the student certainly helps to make the communication easier.

Translanguaging is another commonly used strategy observed in classroom teaching. Teachers use images, gestures, and transgress boundaries between English and Chinese in their teaching activities. This is not a surprising finding, as similar phenomena have been reported or described in the literature. For example, García and Li (2014) have illustrated how Spanish teachers blur the boundaries between Spanish and English in teaching Spanish students. Extract 4 seeks to offer a flavour of Chinese teachers' translanguaging practice in classrooms.

Extract 4

T6: Ok guys, I see er some of you is reading, is reading right now, er, so let's, let's adjust our reading strategies, 调整一下阅读策略 (adjust our reading strategies), Ok? (*17/10/2016, Educational English*)

T7: Your line manager, someone above your position, on the top of you. 就是我们平时说的什么呀，顶头上司，对，顶头上司 (How do we call it in our daily life? Supervisor, right, supervisor)。(*18/10/2016, Business English 2*)

In Extract 4, T6 is clarifying her point and makes sure that her message can effectively be delivered by repeating and mixing codes. The mixed codes have delivered the same message to have an effect of emphasising and enhancing understanding. T7 is explaining the meaning of line managers in the analysis of a text. After explaining in English, she switched from English to Chinese to check student understanding and bring up an equivalent expression in Chinese, that is, supervisor. The mixing of codes has an effect of reinforcing understanding.

While different cultures form valuable cultural repertoires that ELF users bring with them in ELF communication, teachers in observed classrooms were observed to draw on Chinese expressions and cultural practices in order to teach cultural practices in native English-speaking contexts. Many teachers were observed to have strong interests in how native English speakers behave and tend to spend time illustrating their behaviours for learning purposes. In analysing a text, for example, teacher 8 draws students' attention to the practice of walking barefoot in an American home.

Extract 5

T8: This is...for example, in China, when we are visiting our friends, we will change our shoes' but we won't walk bare feet. However, in the United States... (*20/10/2016, Academic English*)

T8 extends from the description of a character's behaviour to an assumption that people living in the United States like to walk barefoot at home. By referring to some Chinese people's practice of being guests, T8 has delivered a message that it is a cultural practice in the United States that people tend to walk barefoot at home or when being guests. Although it is hard to judge whether the assumption is appropriate, what is interesting is that T8 is trying to activate students' Chinese culture repertoires when teaching American culture.

In a nutshell, the subject matter of English language classrooms is in remarkable contrast with the medium of instruction in English language classrooms. While the former aligns with English as a foreign language for Chinese speakers, the latter appears to resemble the nature of English as a lingua franca. That is, teachers tend to explicitly align with nativespeakerism by defending the approximation to NESs' use of English on the one hand; they turn to ELF-related strategies to give instructions and deliver lectures in English. The data thus reveal a striking discrepancy between what teachers aspire and how they behave in terms of the use of English.

4.3 Teacher interviews

Teacher interviews show a complicated picture of attitudes revolving around ELF, allowing for our understanding of the extent to which ELF awareness is available among teachers and the extent to which English can be reconsidered as a subject of matter in English education. Apart from the 'digging out' of teachers' ideas, the interviews provided opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching experience and their prior understandings of English. As a result, interviewed teachers were found to provide inconsistent comments on English and show conflicts in their own arguments or claims. Despite the complexity, a few predominant themes were identified with the focus on what teachers' ideas of ELF are and what implications their ideas can offer for English education.

It is common to see in the data that teachers have little awareness of ELF in terms of how ELF researchers interpret ELF. A few teachers appeared to be confused with the notion of ELF, conceiving it as the same as EFL or ENL. Another few teachers responded to the notion of ELF by making a link to different varieties of English, who, however, tend to discuss varieties in principle and see no implications for Chinese speakers' creativities. Among those who claimed to know about ELF, the notion of ELF in the data stands as a label for the phenomenon that English is a widely used language in the world by people from different L1 backgrounds. For the interviewed teachers, the spread of English around the world does not invoke any reconsideration of the ownership of English by NESs exclusively and any re-evaluation of creative use of English in international communication by NNESs. Those interviewed teachers tend to associate ELF with the use of English that is less good, less effective and lack of official recognition.

In the very minority showing some awareness of ELF, one teacher was able to explain the disconnection between English and its original home but was cautious about the sensitivity of ELF in terms of its incompatibility in China's education system.

Extract 6

Interviewer: Have you heard of English as a lingua franca? Would you mind sharing your opinions?

T12: In my own opinion, an emphasis on (the link between) language and identity will defocus the role of place in defining a language, the only benefit (of the emphasising) is to encourage them (i.e. Chinese speakers) to use Chinese English. It is not easy to say yes, we want Standard English or no, we shouldn't (want Standard English). ELT in China should be guided by mainstream English rather than the royal English, especially in college English teaching classes. I strongly believe in it. I think your "lingua franca" should be interpreted differently in the context of the UK and China. Because it is entirely political, it is different from traditional means of language teaching.

Interviewer: Can you explain what you mean by defocusing the place of a language?

T12: Well, there is just no need to claim the legal status, for example, Chinese English. It can only bring about critics as the majority are refusing it.

Sixteen teachers have explicitly or implicitly indicated the idea that ELF is less good than mother-tongue English. T4, for example, was explicit on this point:

Extract 7

T4: It is quite difficult for us (to learn English) ... I mean we lack opportunities for practising and using English in reality.

Interviewer: Do you mean practising English with native speakers? How about non-native speakers?

T4: Oh? This is quite unexpected! I always think only speaking English with native speakers can improve our language abilities.

Interviewer: Why? What's wrong with non-native speakers' English?

T4: Er ... What's wrong? Obviously, mother-tongue speakers are better than other language speakers.

In response to the interviewer's question whether they (i.e. those who T4 referred to) use English to communicate with NNESs, T4 showed his surprise by reacting with a short question 'oh?', which is then followed by a claim that practising English with NNESs cannot serve the purpose of improving English. With the interviewer's question into why, T4 shows a taken-for-granted answer that mother-tongue speakers are better than non-mother tongue speakers. T4's responses to the interviewer twice imply that he is naturalised with the idea that mother-tongue speakers are better than non-mother tongue speakers. The naturalisation is visible in his surprise with the interviewer's questions and his word choices of 'unexpected' and 'obviously', both of which emphasise common sense ideas.

Six teachers show some concerns with the uncertainty of the communicative effectiveness of ELF. For them, the use of established Englishes is a precondition for effective communication. While standard native speaker English is associated with the guarantee for effective communication, ELF is not. T9, for example, explicates the importance of the conformity to rules and grammar for communication.

Extract 8

T9: There is a problem if you don't have a standard…your aim is communication, but based on what can you tell that this is effective communication? Don't you need a standard to tell? Like how much percentage of your speech is delivered.

Interviewer: Do you mean we need a common ground? Something we all accept and follow?

T9: Yeah, it is difficult to do without Standard English. Especially under the environment of globalization. If an Italian is talking to a Chinese, how can you ensure that we can understand each other if we are all influenced by our L1?

For T9, the judgement of 'an effective communication' is based on 'a standard' instead of the communication itself. This is a myth that many ELF researchers have pointed out. First, ELF has been proved to serve the purpose of communication effectively (e.g. Cogo and Dewey 2012; Mauranen 2012). Second, the conformity to particular norms and rules does not guarantee the effectiveness of communication, but the accommodation to particular communicative events is key to effective communication (e.g. Jenkins 2015, Seidlhofer 2011). The effectiveness of communication needs to be judged in terms of the result of communication, that is, whether the interlocutors can manage to get meaning across or get the job done (e.g. Seidlhofer 2011). Third, the pursuit for particular forms sets a limitation on linguistic choices suiting the function of English and thus side lines ELF. The relationship between form and function has been discussed widely in a body of research on ELF. Cogo (2008) argues that 'form follows function'. That is, linguistic forms should serve the function of language. Overlooking the role of ELF in communication would lead to bias against the role of NNESs in the development of English and reproduce Standard English ideology in China.

Associated with the ideas that ELF is less good and less effective than NESs' English, the idea of teaching ELF is criticised as 'unprofessional' and low quality of teaching. A few teachers, explicitly or implicitly, associated teaching ENL with a high-end objective and teaching ELF with underachievement. For example, T11, a writing teacher, was implicit on this point.

Extract 9

T11:[...] Well, students nowadays, they are, their assignments are always full of grammatical errors. I really don't want to read [their assignments]

Interviewer: So, have you ever considered not to evaluate their assignments by referring to native [English] norms?

T11: If you do not expect them to meet the high requirement, how can you guarantee the quality of teaching? They are not native, not that you can teach them writing, only teach writing skills, they are not that level, so, if you teach creative writing, you can have some room for interesting stuff to be brought (into teaching), this [i.e. teaching writing in general] is REALLY boring.

Extract 9 offers a vivid explanation of how the conformity to ENL is the top priority in English education. T11 was not happy with her students' performance in writing and complained that those students make a lot of grammatical errors. The conversation with the interviewer implies that T11 tends to focus on grammatical issues during teaching. She compares teaching in general with creative writing and finds the latter more interesting than the former. She makes it explicit that the teaching of creative writing gives her the room to bring interesting stuff to engage with, implying that the teaching of writing, in general, has to focus on students' language skills because those students are not advanced enough for her to talk about writing skills. The focus on language issues points to a preference to native English norms, which she connects with high requirement and quality teaching. Apparently, she prioritises language forms over other aspects of writing, which include writing skills and content.

However, the interviewer's invitation for the interviewed teachers to consider the implications of the spread of English for English education seems to have motivated a few teachers to reconsider English. In this direction, four teachers changed their attitudes from negativity to positivity through the interviews. They turned to welcome the idea of bringing ELF into classrooms in response to the interviewer' challenge to traditional thinking about English. An extreme example is T3, who welcomed the idea of

ELF, showed his/her intention to introduce the idea to the students, and asked the interviewer to recommend some literature:

Extract 10

T3: I found this (the concept of ELF) is interesting. If (.) ah (.) we could all benefit from it. Both teachers and students. I'm actually considering to introduce this to my students in the class. It is also a good research area. Can you recommend some literature for me?

Another interviewed teacher, T4, has reflected on the interviewer's brief introduction of ELF and started to critically evaluate the under-representation of NNES in textbooks, which provide references for learning and use of English.

Extract 11

Interviewer: Well, I noticed that in the textbooks, and some classroom teaching materials, conversations between characters often have native speakers of English present. How about non-native speakers of English (except for Chinese)?

T4: Indeed. This is a part we have missed. We usually choose what is considered as authoritative or native English. We used to have conversations among speakers of Chinese and UK or US people. But now-

Interviewer: -used to?

T4: Yeah, before the revision of our textbook. Right, you have reminded me of it. I didn't pay attention to it. I think you are right, they (non-native speakers) should be considered, it is globalization now.

Twelve teachers were hesitant upon the idea of teaching ELF, despite their willingness to take the interviewer's point that ELF can be an alternative for the subject matter of English education. Two concerns arise to explain their hesitation. One concerns with the global power structure where NESs and NNESs are situated. T8, one of the two teachers who have explicitly explained their reasons for hesitation, stresses that the integration of ELF into English classrooms would not happen overnight and owes the development of ELF in China to the development of Chinese speakers in the power structure revolving around English in the world.

Extract 12

Interviewer: As non-English speakers, we are using English, we are changing English. Do you think we have the right to change?

T8: Your language can deliver your thought. As for whether it is Chinese English or Cantonese or native or non-native like, it doesn't matter. Your thoughts matter, your research matters. But it will be a process.

Interviewer: A process of what?

T8: Power and influence. If you have the strong power, you can change the language in your own way. (…) Chinese English will be the next lingua franca. Back to the old times, Great Britain has the power, so we learn British English, but now we write articles of science and technology is in the reference of American English. After our Chinese…when our Chinese people's publication has increased, because they need to learn our research, they have to accept our Chinese English.

In response to the interviewer's question whether NNESs 'have the right to change' English, T8 conveyed the message that language forms serve ideas and meanings before he indicated a conservative position on the issue of the right to change. His further explanation of his position shows a belief that the right to change is related to the power to change and the influence of variations. As a teacher of academic writing, he focuses on the use of English in academia and points out that the influence of Chinese researchers in international academia could help to increase the recognition of Chinese speakers' way of writing English, which he labels as Chinese English, in international communities.

Another concern relates to the local power structure where institutions set requirements that Chinese teachers and students are expected to meet. Nine teachers see the concept of ELF as incompatible with current education policy and appear to be reluctant to treat ELF seriously. Language education policy provides a reference for teachers and students to decide what makes acceptable English that should be taught and learned. By contrast, ELF is not known as a legitimate form of English in language education in China. T4 is one of the nine teachers and her reflection on the interviewer's brief introduction of ELF offers an example of those teachers' views:

Extract 13

T4: I think your research brings a new perspective, and it is a really good idea. Save a lot of time and effort for students. But…you have to be prepared with difficulties, unless the policy orientation has been changed, it would be really hard to change the situation.

T3 was one of the very few teachers who were excited with the concept of ELF and tried to take the idea of ELF into the classroom. She shared her frustration with the interviewer in the second round of interview with her.

Extract 14

T3: After our meeting last time, I told my students in the class that there existed a lot of Englishes except that what we usually referred to, like British and American English. I also selected NNS Englishes as listening materials for them to do practices.

Interviewer: And how do they react?

T3: They complained that the material was pirated.

T3 admitted that she was inspired by the concept of ELF, which the interviewer introduced when recruiting participants and briefing about the research project. While she tried to integrate ELF into teaching practice, the students reacted to her changes by complaining about the materials that T3 took to the class. The materials, which included ELF elements and set NNESs as models of learning, were regarded as 'pirated' materials. The 'pirated' stuff is often related to something that does not have official recognition in China. The complaint reflects a rejection of teaching materials that are not recognised by the authority in English education in China. Although the materials were adopted by T3, who as the teacher has some authority in classroom teaching, the students complained about the materials, showing disbelief in the role of NNESs as references of English and subsequently a rejection to T3's idea of ELF.

To sum up, teacher interviews reveal teachers' engagement with the idea of ELF and the views of the spread of English in relation to ELF. Although they are all teachers in the disciplinary of English studies and linguistics, a very few teachers can make sense of the idea of ELF, though they remain to be uncertain about the feasibility of ELF in the educational context in China. The data show an outdated view of English, which emphasises the authority and superiority of NESs in English, and, subsequently, a changed view following the co-construction of meaning between interviewees and the interviewer. The change indicates, to some extent, emerging ELF awareness, which takes place after the engagement with the discussion of the spread of English and the concept of ELF. Nevertheless, the emerging positivity towards ELF is often frustrated by the concerns for the global power structure and the local power structure, both of which set NESs as the references for English and ascribe unrecognised status to NNESs' creativities and non-conformities to NESs' English.

5. Conclusion

The current research shows the implications of language education for understandings of English and views of English. It supports Wang's (2015) report on the impacts of language education on Chinese students. While this study focuses on teachers, the impacts of language education policy remain predominant, given the top-down policy requirement which teachers are expected to follow. What has been found to influence Chinese students in

Wang's (2015) study consolidates the findings in this project. What has been taught in classrooms have limits on choices of English forms and identity choices associated with English available to Chinese students, disconnected from the sociolinguistic reality of English (Wang 2015).

The current study provides explanations for the limitations of English teaching from the teacher perspective. Chinese teachers follow English policy and emphasise a monolingual native English variety, which is well-known as British English or American English. Despite that Chinese teachers use ELF for instruction themselves, teachers overlook the mismatch between what is idealised and what is actualised in real-life situations. Chinese teachers tend to use the uniform teaching materials and even lecture slides, which are designed to deliver course content in the ways that textbook developers intend, who are indeed working within the framework of language policy at the national level. The implementation of education policy seeks to regulate teachers' practice of teaching and thus limits teachers' creativity in engaging with the course materials. Teacher identity is strongly affected. Even though teachers would like to make changes, students who are affected by language policy join the language policy to question teachers. Chinese teachers are in a situation where their professional identities are contradicted by language policy and education environment. The adherence to prescribed teaching material and prescribed teaching process shows a lack of agency in teaching practice. While the uniform lecture slides can serve as a part of teaching resources, it might be problematic that Chinese teachers are offered with them as the exclusive resources or the authoritative resources.

However, teacher agency is seen when they came across the concept of ELF during the conversations with the interviewer. Notably, an emerging number of teachers attempted to try to integrate the idea of ELF in classroom teaching. Another number of teachers show the awareness of the conflicts between their agency and power structure where they are situated. While it is hard to say that teachers choose to follow the power structure, those teachers who explicitly commented on the conflicts show their willingness or wish to bring the issue up. In a sense, the willingness to engage with the conflicts between new ideas of English and existing education policy suggests a good start to debate the feasibility of teaching ELF. Therefore, it would be constructive to communicate with teachers to increase teacher awareness of ELF and enable them to reflect on the current teaching practice that endorses a monolingual native English speaker norm.

Nevertheless, more needs to be done to engage with language policy in China. It has become clear that engagement with education policy is necessary to raise ELF awareness in the Chinese context. It might be limited to conduct teacher training to increase teacher awareness of ELF when education policy remains to embrace a monolingual native speaker model of English. In Spolsky's (2012) framework, language management, language ideology and language practice form a circle and interact with each other. Language policy is dynamic but not unchanged but interacts with language ideology and language practice. While the use of ELF is predominant among Chinese speakers including those Chinese teachers of English in the current study, the pursuit for standard native Englishes is common. The discrepancy between the actualised practice and the idealised practice requires a reconsideration of whether the actualised practice needs to be changed or the idealised practice needs to be changed. ELF research provides theoretical foundations and empirical evidence that an idealised model of English based on monolingual native speakers' use of English is not realistic and unnecessary (Cogo and Dewey 2012; Jenkins 2007; 2014, Mauranen 2012; Seidlhofer 2011). Wang (2012; 2018; 2020) proposes the concept of Chinese English as a lingua franca (ChELF) to suggest that Chinese speakers use English for their own purpose of engaging in intercultural communication while seeking to maintain connections with an imagined Chinese community. That is, the connection between English and China associated with Chinese speakers can be strengthened by accepting Chinese speakers' own way of using English. It is therefore not the actual practice that needs to be criticised but the idealised model of standard native Englishes that needs to be reconsidered. As debates are necessary for language ideologies process (Blommaert 1999), open the debates on ELF in relation to Chinese speakers will open possibilities for education policy revolving around English to embrace ELF.

Appendix: Teachers' profiles

Teacher	Gender	Courses they teach
T1	M	Academic Writing
T2	F	Interpreting
T3	M	English Listening & Speaking
T4	F	Communicative English
T5	F	Business English 1

T6	F	Educational English
T7	F	Business English 2
T8	M	Academic English
T9	F	English Audio-Visual
T10	F	Communicative English
T11	F	Writing
T12	F	Translation
T13	F	College English 3
T14	M	Advanced English
T15	F	Interpreting
T16	F	College English 1
T17	F	Comprehensive English
T18	F	English Audio-Visual
T19	M	Comprehensive English
T20	F	Western literature
T21	M	Introduction to Linguistics

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ELF *feito no Brasil*: expanding theoretical notions, reframing educational policies

Abstract
ELF studies have long established itself as a solid field of inquiry much as a response to the pioneering work of scholars such as Jenkins (2000; 2007; 2009; 2015) and Seidlhofer (2001; 2005; 2011). Its ripple effect in the last decades is made present mainly among European scholars who have highly contributed to the consolidation of the area. By embracing the decolonial notion of epistemic pluralism (Sousa Santos, 2007; 2018), this paper wishes to turn knowledge production on ELF of the global South visible. In doing so, we present a brief state-of-the-art on recent ELF research in Brazil, followed by an analysis on how such theoretical framework echoes in the recently launched Brazilian National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC) (Brasil 2017). As a country deeply forged under colonialism, coloniality traces are still strongly present in Brazil. By departing from decolonial studies (Castro Gómez 2007; Quijano 2007; Mignolo 2000; 2007; 2009a; 2009b; Walsh 2018), the expression *ELF feito no Brasil* (Duboc 2019) attempts to stress the expanding notion of ELF by contemporary Brazilian scholars who have put greater emphasis on the critical and political nature of English. Along with the increase in ELF studies in Brazil comes the need to analyze the place of ELF within the aforementioned BNCC, in particular, the very epistemological conflict that emerges from a standardized, top-down curriculum framed by a more fluid notion of language (Duboc 2019). In line with Bakhtinian thought, which acknowledges the dialogical and heteroglot nature of language, this paper advocates in favor of such epistemological conflicts, be them within the ELF research field or in ELF-based educational policies.
Keywords: ELF; ELF *feito no Brasil*; Brazilian National Common Core Curriculum; Decoloniality; Epistemologies of the South.

1. Introduction

'We'd rather have the iceberg than the ship
although it meant the end of travel.
Será a América o iceberg do mundo?
Partimos marcha ao oeste acelerando o Titanic
Are you aware an iceberg takes repose with you, and when it wakes may pasture on your snow?
Quem sobreviverá ao choque com essa montanha de gelo América?
Icebergs behoove the soul.'
"Iceberg Bishop" by Domingos Guimaraens (2008)[1]

Icebergs and ships. Americas, the west, and the *Titanic*. Shock and the soul. Ah, the soul! Whose souls? Brazilian poet Guimaraens' painstaking and pungent verses are worth to become the epigraph of this paper as it somehow echoes our very purposes, that is to say, the urgent need to understand English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) under decolonial lenses in the exercise of acknowledgement of a growing and solid knowledge production on the topic in the so-called global South, the place where we the authors send our voices from.

The poem that opens up the text is representative of a recent translanguaging poetry movement among the youngest generation of Brazilian post-globalization and post-dictatorship writers whose Portuguese mingles gently – or sometimes fiercely – with English. As Vilela (2012) explains, more than simply attesting the high influence of television, movie, and music industry in which English has long played the role of a lingua franca, the newly *languaging* experiences among this new generation actually retrieves and reframes two important Brazilian cultural movements: the avant-garde modernist period in the early years of the 20th century and the *Tropicalia* in the late 1960s. While the former was marked by the avoidance of essentialisms and the welcoming of cultural mix and hybridity in the so-called "anthropophagic literature", the latter was a successful attempt to create radical, aesthetic experiences out of Brazilian indigenous elements. The common ground between both cultural movements is their affirmative nature (rather than a defensive posture) in relation to intercultural

[1] Brazilian poet, writer, musician, and composer.

encounters under an ontological and epistemological orientation that seems in tune with the more recent debate on decoloniality (Mignolo and Escobar 2010). And it is exactly from such affirmative nature that a few lessons might be learned by those involved with ELF research in different parts of the world.

Guimaraens' poetry reframes American writer Elizabeth Bishop's[2] original verses by transforming her *Imaginary Iceberg* into a very real America. By wondering *Será a América o iceberg do mundo?* amid diachronically references ranging from the expeditions to the West in colonial times to the tragic British RMS Titanic, we might think of this New World called America in its continental size and all its richness being transformed into an end of those travels – and those ends sadly and cruelly did justify those means in the perspective of the colonizer – as it became highly disputed among former European nation-states, in particular, the titanic British Empire. In the last verses lies the poignantly reminder of the imminent shock between soulless America-iceberg and the one on the ship, willing to disembark to either assimilate, expel, or exterminate.

Along with this interpretation, which sees the iceberg as the American continent, we would like to share Vilela's interesting viewpoint as she claims that Guimaraens' last verses turn Bishop herself into the haunting iceberg. In other words, the young and prominent Brazilian poet abdicates his historical condition of subalternization and speaks back to the well-known American poet. As a matter of fact, Vilela's interpretation gains momentum when one considers that Bishop lived in Brazil for a decade and half, and, at a certain point in her life, seemed to have supported the Brazilian military dictatorship in the 1960s. Not for nothing, has controversy broken out as Bishop was chosen to be the honored author of the 2020 FLIP (*Festa Literária Internacional de Paraty*), the most important Brazilian literary festival. In these ultra-rightist days in Brazil, the timing for this could not be worse. *Icebergs do behoove a soul.*

By starting with contemporary Brazilian translanguaging poetry followed by slightly long comments of interpretive nature, the reader might question about the connections to be made between icebergs and ELF. In our viewpoint, the hermeneutics of our epigraph was made necessary as words

[2] Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979), 1956 *Pulitzer Prize* for Poetry, upon receiving a substantial traveling fellowship from Bryn Mawr College in 1951, set off to circumnavigate South America by boat, arriving in Brazil in November of that year. For what she experienced in the tropics, an expected two-week stay was turned into 15 years living in the country.

never exist in a vacuum. In this respect, Bakthin (1981[1975], 292) claims that "discourse lives, as it were, beyond itself, in a living impulse [*napravlennost'*] toward the object; if we detach ourselves completely from this impulse all we have left is the naked corpse of the word, from which we can learn nothing at all about the social situation or the fate of a given word in life."

Regardless of any interpretive differences, Guimaraens's poem is rich and full of potential for us, ELF researchers and practitioners, to critically question the icebergs within the field. Or, is it the ship that needs to be questioned? Metaphors apart, this paper wants to address some concerns from the perspective of decolonial studies. ELF studies have long established itself as a solid field of inquiry much as a response to the pioneering work of scholars such as Jenkins (2000; 2007; 2009) and Seidlhofer (2001; 2005; 2011). Its ripple effects in the last decades are made present mainly among European scholars who have highly and consistently contributed to the expansion and consolidation of the area. By embracing the decolonial notion of epistemic pluralism or the co-presence of different and competing epistemologies (Sousa Santos 2007; 2018), this paper, in a nutshell, wishes to turn knowledge production on ELF of the global South visible. As decoloniality denies essentialist views of culture, language, and knowledge by embracing heterogeneity, fluidity, hibridity – *an iceberg takes repose with you, and when it wakes may pasture on your snow* – it provides us with a set of lessons that might help us answer Guimaraens' sharp question - *Quem sobreviverá ao choque com essa montanha de gelo América?*

As this article was collaboratively conceived and written by two Brazilian scholars, our decolonial lenses will be zooming in and out the ELF research carried out in Brazil along with a brief analysis on the place of ELF in recent public educational policies. With respect to ELF research, as coloniality traces are still strongly present in Brazil, the expression *ELF feito no Brasil* (Duboc 2019) attempts to stress the expanding notion of ELF by contemporary Brazilian scholars who have put greater emphasis on the critical and political nature of English and the process of learning and teaching the language in the Brazilian context. Concerning the analysis of educational policies, this paper seeks to analyze the place of ELF within the recently approved Brazilian Common Core Curriculum[3] (Brasil 2017, henceforth BNCC), in particular, the very epistemological conflict that emerges from a standardized, top-down curriculum framed by a more fluid notion of language (Duboc 2019). In line

[3] In Portuguese: *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (BNCC).

with Bakhtinian thought, which acknowledges the dialogical and heteroglot nature of language, the paper concludes by advocating in favor of such epistemological conflicts, be them within the ELF research field or in ELF-based educational policies.

2. ELF studies in need of decoloniality

As a society deeply forged under colonialism, coloniality[4] traces are still strongly present in Brazilian language policies and practices, be them related to Portuguese, the main official language in the country, or to the field of foreign language teaching, in particular, English. As Espírito Santo and Santos (2018) explain, Brazilian language policies have historically contributed to the invention of a monolingual ideology that served the purposes of the colonial project, that is, the erasure of indigenous languages and the establishment of Portuguese as the national language under the premise "one language-one nation-one culture" as pre-condition for the creation of a supposedly homogenous nation-State. As literature has extensively shown (Blommaert 2010; Canagarajah 2017; Makoni and Pennycook 2007, to name a few), what lies behind the myth of monolingualism is a pernicious understanding of language, culture, and identity still ingrained in aspirations for purity, stability, and standardization that neglects the very complex, hybrid, and fluid nature of languages in meaning-making processes.

By addressing Sociolinguistics under more real-life, ethnographic lenses, Blommaert (2010) asserts that if once Sociolinguistics used to view code-switching as basically the study of "abnormal" forms of language, contemporary language studies from the late 1990s on have contributed to a paradigm shift in which "language had to be looked at not from an idea of purity and closeness but from an idea of impurity, if you wish, of blending, mixing dynamics, change, and so forth, as a default while the pure and standardized variety was assumed as an exceptional one" (Duboc and Fortes 2019, 8). In line with Blommaert (2010), Canagarajah (2017) has highly contributed to the discussion by advocating in favor of translingual practices that deny the monolingual myth. The call brought by these authors relates, at a broad sense, to a necessary disinvention of the so-called "named languages" (Makoni and Pennycook 2007).

[4] According to Maldonado-Torres (2007, 243), "coloniality refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism. [...] Coloniality survives colonialism." The concept emerged "not in the academia, but in the public sphere, in the field in which dependency theory, theology of liberation, and philosophy of liberation were coming, that is, social thought in Latin America" (Mignolo in interview to López-Calvo 2014, 177).

The very constructs with which contemporary language studies have wrestled – that is, purity, stability, and standardization - have long marked the EFL teaching in Brazil. Since the Imperial times (1822-1889), English classes in the early years of Brazilian Higher Education programs used to be in the hands of native speakers of English. Not any native speaker, but only those coming from England, whose pure and standard Received Pronunciation (RP) made any pedagogical expertise unnecessary. In our viewpoint, the movement was the starting point of a prejudicial native-speakerism ideology in subsequent ELT programs in Brazil (Campos 2019) which still sadly echoes in today's discourses whenever one finds a Brazilian English language user willing to "sound like a native" in her/his constant attempts to try her/his tongue in the process of learning this "*l/anguish, anguish, a foreign anguish is english.*"[5]

Indeed, organization moves such as the "Statement on Nonnative Speakers of English and Hiring Practices" (TESOL 1992 as cited in Kumaravadivelu 2016) as well as the "Position Statement Against Discrimination of Nonnative Speakers of English in the Field of TESOL" (TESOL 2006 as cited in Kumaravadivelu 2016) did open a fruitful anti-imperialist discussion in attempts to unveil the damage behind Western-centered research development, curriculum design, and textbook industry. Nonetheless, as Kumaravadivelu (2016) states, such moves do not seem to suffice as they until today depart from a privileged locus which still keeps imperialisms of all kinds intact.

Influenced by decolonial studies, the author (Ibid.: 80-81) insists that the solution to dismantle hegemonic power has to come from the subalternized[6] people themselves. Such endeavor lies in the exercise of jettisoning any traces of self-marginalization, followed by an awakening of our agency:

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[5] Taken from the famous poem *She Tries Her Tongue – Her Silence Softly Breaks* written by Tobago-born poet Marlene Norbese Philip. The book of the same title was originally published in Cuba as Philip won the prestigious "Casa de las Americas" prize for the manuscript version of the work in 1988. It was first published in North America in 1989.

[6] We opt for the use of the term "subalternized" in place of "subaltern" as while the former stresses the passive role of those marginalized peoples in a deliberate subalternization process by the dominant countries, the latter might lead to a naturalization of such a condition.

In order to begin to effect this rupture, the subaltern community has to unfreeze and activate its latent agentive capacity, and strive to derive a set of concerted, coordinated, and collective actions based not on the logic of coloniality but on a *grammar of decoloniality*. [...] A grammar of decoloniality, if it is to be useful and useable, has to be formulated and implemented by local players who are knowledgeable about, and sensitive to, local conditions.

Local action. Here is the greatest tenet of decoloniality which aims at going beyond the rhetoric and defeating the supposedly inefficiency in a type of academic research that still keeps itself comfortably cloistered in strictly discursive, theory-based discussions. This is exactly from where we wish to depart in the exercise of thinking and doing ELF research otherwise.

Broadly speaking, decoloniality is a recent concept that emerged from an intellectual movement among Latin American scholars in the 1990's that came to be known as the Modernity/Coloniality School. Whereas postcolonial studies arise from diasporic movements from the Middle East and Asian scholars and aimed at problematizing subaltern lives as cultural products from the 19th and 20th centuries, decolonial studies is geographically located in Latin America and target earlier European incursions back in the 15th century, with a clear emphasis on the dark side of modernity/colonialism against indigenous and African-enslaved peoples.

According to Colombian philosopher Castro-Gómez (2007), Modern Europe proudly placed itself as the starting point with regards to civilizing processes and knowledge production, thus his reference to it as the "zero point hubris". By taking itself as the knower and the observer of the world, Modern Europe assumed, with pride, an epistemic zero point position whose "unquestionable" sovereignty established its own norms and values, generating an abyssal line (Sousa Santos 2007) which has divided the world into two parts: the civilized, the superior, the literate, the white, and the human on one side; the barbarian, the inferior, the illiterate, the black, the subhuman on the other side. This goes hand in hand with what Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (2007, 95) explains: "la colonialidad/modernidad eurocéntrica es una concepción de humanidad, según la cual la población del mundo se diferencia en inferiores y superiores, irracionales y racionales, primitivos y civilizados, tradicionales y modernos."[7]

[7] Eurocentric coloniality/modernity is a conception of humanity according to which the peoples of the world are divided into inferior and superior, irrational and rational, primitive and civilized, traditional and modern.

The intrinsic relationship between modernity and coloniality is explained as the Modern project aimed at civilization, progress, and development would certainly succumb without the notion of "colonial difference". In the words of Argentinian semiotician Mignolo (2009b, 109), "if coloniality is engendered by modernity, there cannot be modernity without coloniality; and there would be no coloniality without modernity. To end coloniality it is necessary to end the fictions of modernity."

Under this prism, decoloniality, then, seeks to problematize the still-ingrained epistemes, constructs, and imaginaries which, despite the official and legal end of colonialism, still persist in the form of three types of coloniality, that is to say, coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge, and coloniality of being, synthetized by Puerto Rican philosopher Maldonado-Torres (2007, 130) as follows:

> If the coloniality of power refers to the interrelation between modern forms of exploitation and domination, and the coloniality of knowledge has to do with the role of epistemology and its influence of knowledge production in the reproduction of colonial thought regimes, the coloniality of being refers, then, to the lived experience of colonization and its impact on language[8].

Decoloniality, thus, implies a critical and genealogical exercise that acknowledges the material, economic influences – not only cultural ones as postcolonial, cultural studies would have wanted – in the construction of those colonial narratives. In doing so, decoloniality seeks to unveil the dark side of modernity/coloniality and, simultaneously, turn "invisible knowledge production" visible. In Sousa Santos's terms (2007), this would consequently lead to the acknowledgement of a co-presence of epistemologies that commits itself to the necessary cognitive justice against the epistemicide historically engendered by Modern Europe.

One might wonder which procedural mechanisms are made available in decolonial studies. Apart from a recipe-like manifesto and attempting to pay justice to the importance of praxis, decolonial scholars have addressed the following orientations if one wishes to embrace a decolonial project: i) fostering epistemic disobedience and de-linking, that is, the exercise of

[8] From the original "si la colonialidad del poder se refiere a la interrelación entre formas modernas de explotación y dominación, y la colonialidad del saber tiene que ver con el rol de la epistemología y las tareas generales de la producción del conocimiento en la reproducción de regímenes de pensamiento coloniales, la colonialidad del ser se refiere, entonces, a la experiencia vivida de la colonización y su impacto en el lenguaje."

making noise in the well-established Western modes of knowing towards our detachment from the ties of Western-based ideas; ii) thinking and doing otherwise, that is, developing constant and vigilant analysis of what is known and, mainly, who knows in attempts to change not only the content of the conversation but also and the terms of the conversation; iii) decolonizing between the cracks: brought by Ecuador-based intellectual Catherine Walsh (2018), the praxis of crack or fissure as a strategy to the decolonial project refers to disobeying, interrupting, and counter acting in ways to push the limits of laws and regulations; iv) *andar preguntando*: inspired by Mexican Maya-people Tojolabal cosmology, Puerto Rican sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel (Montoya and Busso 2007) proposes the motto "keep questioning" in place of "keep preaching" as pre-condition towards a genuine horizontal dialogue in which multiple perspectives are ethically acknowledged.

In view of these four orientations, we ponder: What lessons can be learned by ELF scholars in their encounter with decolonial thinking? How might we address ELF issues in the light of such ideas?

As a way to be consistent with the last orientation, which advocates in favor of questions rather than answers, we would like to share some concerns in the form of questions that somehow resonate the three other orientations which might serve as the starting point for researchers who wish to approach ELF issues under decolonial lenses: i) What is known in relation to ELF studies being recently made outside mainstream European academic sites? ii) To what extent do ELF scholars from different parts around the world read each other? iii) To what extent do mainstream European ELF researchers involve themselves in truly horizontal and collaborative research work as a way to tackle the problem of the zero point hubris? iv) How much of ELF's main literature circulating in the academic realm is representative of multiple and dissent voices ranging different loci of enunciation? v) Are global south ELF scholars aware of the colonial matrix of power in knowledge production? If so, to what extent do they truly wish to epistemically and politically de-link? vi) How many ELF scholars under the still-ingrained label "non-native speakers of English" have already had their English corrected in peer reviewing processes in accordance to standard English? vii) Do global south ELF researchers truly acknowledge the value of the cracks or fissures in attempting to dismantle gatekeeping mechanisms and knowledge control in mainstream academic centers and publishing houses? viii) How many times have ELF conferences been held in countries other than those located in

Europe?[9] How many global south ELF scholars have been invited to be keynote speakers in ELF conferences?; ix) To what extent are global south ELF researchers truly committed to disposing of their historical self-marginalization with regards to their own command of English and research products? x) To what extent are global south ELF researchers engaged in disobeying, disrupting, and transforming the status of ELF research and practice?

Those are some of the questions as a result of our encounter with decolonial studies. The theoretical rupture with long-established ontological and epistemological assumptions is followed by an urgent call for action as current ELF research scope and range seem to be stretching far beyond mainstream European boundaries. The following section aims at describing what has been called "ELF *feito no Brasil*" (Duboc 2019) as a way to voice our own way to reframe ELF studies with two great inspiring concepts: the decolonial project and the critical pedagogy.

3. "ELF feito no Brasil": decolonizing ELF research in Freire's homeland

As for Expanding Circle countries from the global South where there has been an increasing interest and development in ELF research, Brazil certainly occupies a leading position. Due to its relevant position in the world economy, Brazil's development has been strongly tied to global flows with English playing an important role in the country's political and strategic goals (Gimenez, El Kadri and Calvo 2018a).

At an earlier stage, the diffusion of ELF studies in Brazil followed the same path as in other parts of the world, with the work of the field's 'founding mothers,' Jenkins and Seidlhofer, reverberating findings, developments and reflections from what Jenkins (2015) came to label as Phases 1 (documentation, codification, form, etc.) and 2 (ELF users, diversity, fluidity, variability, ELF as social practice, etc.).

Broadly speaking, ELF was conceived of as a contact language used among non-mother tongue speakers (Jenkins, 2000) – a language with no native speakers, so to speak (Seidlhofer, 2001, 2005), and has undergone distinct evolutionary phases over the last decades. As mentioned above,

[9] In this respect, it is worth to stress that the only ELF Conference held in South America was the one organized in Medellín, Colombia, at the Universidad de Antioquia, in July, 2019.

Jenkins (2015) argues that from a form-oriented phase aimed at documentation, codification, and corpus-compilation back in the 1980s, ELF research moved towards a function-oriented phase marked by concerns with communities of practice and variability in the early 2000s. With that in mind, Jenkins (2015) then claims for further reconceptualizations which could lead to a third ELF phase *vis-à-vis* the growing demands in contemporary multilingual societies.

As part of the inherent dynamics of any scientific area, ELF has gone through a great deal of criticism, which, in many ways, has contributed to its conceptual evolution. One of the most pungent criticisms was O'Regan's (2014) claim concerning the supposedly reification of a homogenous ELF and the insistence on a still highly descriptive way of doing research.

In Brazil, ELF has also gotten its share of criticism. On these lands, and in line with O'Regan's argument, possibly due to a predominant EFL orientation in the ubiquitous ELT business, ELF was initially frowned upon by some Brazilian researchers and practitioners, as it had been conceived as a normative and homogenizing project (Duboc 2019). An example of this position comes, for instance, from Tagata (2017) who, echoing the restricted connotation of the term 'lingua franca', understood ELF as a communicative 'free trade' zone where neutral and de-cultured interactions take place in a sort of decaffeinated language (Siqueira 2018a).

Despite the conceptual and other controversies, especially related to ELF implications to the general ELT classroom and English teacher education, Brazilian scholars began to bring to surface ELF-oriented research work anchored in premises related to the phenomenon such as: ELF is a function of the English language, not a variety, ELF questions and challenges NS hegemonic norms, it legitimizes variation, it belongs to all those who use it in daily interactions, it is not inextricably linked to a national culture, it encompasses both native and non-native users from the most diverse linguacultural backgrounds.

Based on this, we can say that a more systematic Brazilian academic production in the area began to gain ground as of the year of 2005, although alternative terms like English as an International Language (EIL), English as a Global Language (EGL), World Englishes (WE) or English as a Multinational Language (EML) other than ELF were the ones en vogue. Authors like Calvo and El Kadri (2011) and Bordini and Gimenez (2014) mapped out the initial works produced in Brazil analyzing theses and dissertations[10] hosted in the database of the Brazilian Authority for Development of Personnel in Higher Education (CAPES), articles in local qualified journals, and related material in *Google Scholar*. From 2005 to 2012, 67 works (45 articles, 13 book chapters, 7 dissertations, and 3 theses) were identified in the investigation, being relevant to mention that in the absence of empirical research related to interactions involving Brazilians, teacher education in the country at the time had basically international literature as the main theoretical support (Bordini and Gimenez 2014).

A more recent investigation by Grano (2016 as cited in Gimenez, El Kadri and Calvo 2018a) reviewed the Brazilian production in the later period of 2012-2015 searching CAPES' *Database of Journals* and *Google Scholar*. Out of the analysis of the material surveyed, the author reached the conclusion that the works basically emphasized ELF as a reconceptualization of English and its teaching that covered issues of culture, phonology, intelligibility, and instructional materials. Despite all this, Gimenez, El Kadri and Calvo (2018b) in their chapter "ELF in Brazil – recent development and further directions" for the Routledge Handbook of English as a Lingua Franca (Jenkins, Baker, and Dewey 2018), argue that "while there is a plethora of recent publications addressing language policies in the English language in Brazil, only a few problematize what is meant by ELF in the classroom" (179). It is then that aiming to address such issue in order to fill up this gap, the authors, who had already put together the volume English as a lingua franca: teaching and learning and teacher education[11] in 2011, edited, as part of De Grutyer Mouton's DELF series, the book English as a lingua franca in teacher education – A Brazilian perspective, in 2018. All the chapters were written by Brazilian ELF scholars and researchers.

Compared to previous publications, this 2018 edited book brings together several works that conceive of ELF potentially inspired by the work of

[10] The first MA dissertation in the country that overtly used the term ELF was El Kadri's (2010) work entitled "Attitudes towards English as a Lingua Franca in a pre-service teacher education course" (In Portuguese: *Atitudes sobre o estatuto do inglês como língua franca em um curso de formação inicial de professores*). The work showed that this early academic production centered around themes like teacher education (pre-service), teacher beliefs and attitudes, ELT curriculum, English and globalization, English as a global/international language, global spread of English, ELT and technology, ELF and identity, ELF and intelligibility, teaching materials, and English teaching under an ELF perspective (Bordini 2013).

[11] In Portuguese: *Inglês como língua franca: Ensino-Aprendizagem e Formação de professores*.

famous pedagogue Paulo Freire along with the contributions from decolonial studies, leading us to assert that ELF knowledge production in Brazil has considerably changed towards a more critical and political orientation in the past three years. And this is exactly the body of knowledge that has been referred here as 'ELF *feito no Brasil*' (Duboc, 2019), as they not only distance themselves from previous mainstream ELF discussions, but also and mostly resist against mainstream European ELF research.

With respect to Freire, a significant number of ELF investigations, both at MA and PhD levels, has been oriented towards two main aspects proposed by the patron of the Brazilian education, that is, his Critical Pedagogy (Freire 2014[1968]) and his notion of education as a political practice (Freire 2001[1992]). Critical Pedagogy (CP) is a pedagogical practice that questions the universal truths and the notion of reality as a given. By acknowledging that reality is socially constructed, CP aims at unveiling vested interests and ideologies within discourses. As for the notion of politicity of education, this departs from Freire's well-known statement (Freire 1983, 11) which attests that "reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world." For Freire, once awareness- raising is built among the oppressed – what he called "conscientização" – empowerment and social transformation are made possible.

As a dynamic and emergent field, ELF studies in Brazil have become an important arena of criticality in different instances, fomented by scholars and other stakeholders who conceive language pedagogy as an eminently political enterprise, especially at this moment when ultraconservative forces have declared war on Education in the country, including open attacks to Paulo Freire's renowned legacy. As Guilherme (2002, 33) reminds us, the brilliancy of his work is in the fact that he "moved, physically and intellectually, across class, cultural and national borders which made his theories very contemporary, flexible, and usable in *any educational setting*" (our emphasis).

Bearing this in mind, and aligned with of the premises of the decolonial thinking and the so-called epistemologies of the South (Sousa Santos 2007), which brings criticality and locality to the center of the debate as it calls for an epistemic disobedience and de-linking in relation to Western-centered views, we envision that "ELF *feito no Brasil*" holds a great potential to go beyond ELF's third phase of development which is characterized by a reconceptualization of ELF as a multilingual practice (Jenkins 2015).

We believe that "*ELF feito no Brasil*" actually reframes the third phase as many of our ELF studies have departed from the premise of monolingualism as a myth, followed by an urgent need for disinventing the so-called "named languages". And this has nothing to do with a technical removal of "E" in ELF studies in place of an illogical notion of ELF as a multilingual franca for this notion seems to still echo a monolingual mindset, made evident when Jenkins (2015, 78) states that "in ELF communication, monolingual speakers are disadvantaged relative to multilingual speakers, and need to learn other languages so as to be able to participate fully in ELF". As a matter of fact, Duboc (2019) sees this reconceptualization proposed by Jenkins (2015) as a discursive maneuver to update the studies in the light of the recent theorizations on language, mobility, and translingualism. For her, it is not clear whether this envisioned expansion will succeed or not in international research production, "once it is certainly tributary of an ontological and epistemological rupture" (Duboc 2019, 12). Back to Bakhtinian thought – in particular, his concept of heteroglossia[12] – until contemporary discussions (Blommaert 2010; Canagarajah 2017; Makoni and Pennycook 2007), language studies have given special attention to the fluidity and heterogeneity in language repertoire building. In this sense, no one is monolingual.

In many ways, although there is still great influence of initial orientations in the academic production in Brazil concerning ELF, especially Phase 2, this prominent criticism in recent ELF Brazilian studies is a consequence of a constant dialogue with areas like Critical Applied Linguistics and Critical Literacy[13], Critical Pedagogy, and, more recently, Decoloniality studies. This dialogue has brought to surface and consolidated an indigenous scholarship, at both theoretical and practical levels, founded on other ontological and epistemological grounds, which has addressed issues like the intrinsic relationship between language, politics, and power, themes involving subject, identity, culture, subaltern cosmopolitanism, colonialism, coloniality, imperialism, translanguaging/translingual practices, transnational literacies, among others. As Duboc (2019) argues, what is peculiar about this whole movement in "ELF *feito no* Brasil" is the fact that it opens a very important

[12] In his critical comparison between poetry and novel, Bakhtin (1981[1975]) defies the privileges of poetry by acknowledging the richness in novels with regards to language uses. He, then, shows the reader how a novel is able to evidence the dialogical and multiple nature of language, in which divergent forces operate: while some wish to preserve the canon, others seek to distance themselves from normativity. Language, so to speak, is always heterogeneous, marked by multiple (*hetero*) voices (*glossia*).

[13] The distinction between Critical Literacy and Critical Pedagogy has been extensively discussed by contemporary Brazilian scholars. See, for example, the works of Duboc, and Ferraz (2018); Jordão (2013); Menezes de Souza (2011); Monte Mór (2015).

stream of dialogue with the epistemologies of the South, hence our proposal to bridge ELF and decoloniality. As a token of illustration, for example, we have the work by Jordão, and Marques (2018) which heavily criticizes the supposed neutrality attributed to ELF interactions, as if those interactions were immune to the political and ideological implications of the phenomenon. Based on this, it is advocated by the authors a continuous exercise of decolonization of ELF both in ELT and English teacher education.

Referring once again to the poem that opens the paper, if ELF and its intricacies are to be taken as the iceberg that lies ahead, "ELF *feito no Brasil*" seems to be getting ready not to deviate from it or simply break it apart (we are not the ship), but to explore it the best way in order to make visible all the possibilities that are especially down deep below the waterline. By exploring better ways towards thinking and doing ELF otherwise, we actually face the challenge of preventing ourselves from getting to the traps of purity since, in the very process of reframing the terms, epistemological conflicts might occur, as illustrated in the subsequent section.

4. ELF in Brazilian educational policies: from local curricula towards the Common Core

Drawing from Duboc's publication on the matter (Duboc 2019), this section presents how ELF has emerged in recent Brazilian educational policies under very conflicting views and how such conflict might, indeed, be fruitful. In doing so, Bakhtinian thought seems to be very insightful, in particular, the notion of refraction, heteroglossia, and dialogism in language.

Changing the terms of the conversation, as Mignolo (2007) proposes, is not an easy task as the process of reframing those terms comes along with well-established conventional constructs. In place of disapproving of any clash in the encounter between the new and the old, we seek support in Derrida (1978[1967], 250) when the post-structuralist philosopher states that:

> We have no language – no syntax and no lexicon – which is foreign to (...) history; we can pronounce not a single destructive proposition which has not already had to slip into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest.

The very evolution in ELF studies seems to attest these tensions and ambiguities between contesting views, as the emergence of new theoretical assumptions inevitably mingle with old ones until they establish themselves as novel ways of addressing a common issue. Contamination, so to speak, is inescapable. And here lies another contribution by the French-Algerian post-structuralist philosopher: to what extent would contamination be a negative phenomenon?

If ELF theorizations along the way do show different understandings and misunderstandings – which, as a matter of fact, explains the mushrooming of publications among well-known ELF scholars that vehemently explain what ELF is and what ELF is not in desperate attempts to tame the ELF sign – similar tensions are to be found when ELF meets the curriculum and the classroom. For the purposes of this paper, very broadly, we will be discussing how these tensions operate in the so-called BNCC, Brazilian National Common Core Curriculum (Brasil 2017).

Launched in 2017, the competence-based BNCC is the first *Common Core Curriculum* ever established in Brazil[14]. Each curricular component starts with considerations on its specificities, followed by the determination of a set specific competences to be achieved by the students. The "common core" nature is strongly marked by the pre-established contents and abilities to be taught each year as they are displayed in well-organized tables[15].

With regards to the English curricular component, the introduction dedicates special attention to the social and political status of English as a way to distance itself from instrumental, structuralist, utilitarian orientations to language. The text mentions the changing nature of English *vis-à-vis* globalization and its deterritorialization, addressing the need to move beyond the buzz around nativespeakerism and think the teaching of English otherwise, that is, no longer dictated by notions such as correction, accuracy, and proficiency.

As a matter of fact, when one reads the introduction as part of the BNCC English curricular component, one cannot deny that its theoretical principles positively echo what has been discussed in contemporary ELT theories worldwide. Considering that the teaching of EFL in regular Brazilian

[14] Before BNCC, Brazilian educational systems were regulated by several important curricular guidelines under the principles established in the 1988 Brazilian Constitution and, in particular, by the Law of Basic Tenets and Guidelines of National Education (LDB, Brasil 1996).

[15] The BNCC is available at http://basenacionalcomum.mec.gov.br. Retrieved: 30 Jan 2020.

education has long been taken as a fallacious project[16] – attested in common sense beliefs such as "I barely know Portuguese let alone English," "Nobody learns English at schools," "If you want to learn real English, either study abroad or take a course at a specialized language school," "the only thing one can learn at schools is the verb *To Be*" – having a national curriculum framed under an ELF perspective represents an important threshold for two main reasons: firstly, since ELF embraces notions such as fluidity and hybridity in meaning making processes, having an ELF-framed curriculum might help Brazilian learners to better cope with their self-esteem in the process of learning this "*l/anguish, anguish, a foreign anguish is english*" (Phillip 1989); secondly, we believe that the presence of ELF within the BNCC might leverage the interest in ELF studies and, consequently, ELF research nationwide.

According to Duboc (2019), if on the one hand, the presence of ELF within the BNCC brings the aforementioned positive aspects, on the other, a critical analysis over the document's underlying principles shows an epistemological conflict. Such a conflict is evident when one considers the co-presence of, on one side, a standardized, top-down curriculum, and, on the other, a fluid and hybrid notion of language. In fact, as Duboc (ibid.) reassures, in spite of all the efforts in turning the introductory text updated and relevant, what lies behind the BNCC English curricular component is, in fact, a still linear and normative way of teaching English when one reaches the language content tables neatly displayed for each school year. Below is an example taken by Gimenez, and Siqueira (forthcoming) related to the grammar content to be taught for 8th graders in which the authors identify a mismatch between the reference to pre-established standard English contents and the document attempts to introduce the notion of *intelligibility*:

8th grade

Grammar Verbs to indicate the future	(EF08LI14) Use verbal forms of the future to describe plans and expectations and to do forecasts.
Comparatives and superlatives	(EF08LI15) Use**, intelligibly**, the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives to compare qualities and quantities.

[16] Several Brazilian scholars have discussed this matter. See, for example, Assis-Peterson and Cox 2013; Duboc 2018; Duboc, Garcia and Rodrigues 2018; Siqueira and Dos Anjos 2012; Siqueira 2018b, among others.

Quantifiers	(EF08LI16) Use, **intelligibly, correctly**, 'some', 'any', 'many', 'much'.
Relative pronouns	(EF08LI17) Employ, **intelligibly,** relative pronouns (who, which, that, whose) to construct subordinate clauses.

Source: Edited translated sections of BNCC (Brasil 2017: 248-262) in Gimenez, and Siqueira (forthcoming)

It is true that some of the language contents and abilities are more open and flexible than others. Nonetheless, the contradictions are evident in cases such as the one mentioned by Duboc (2019, 18)

As stated in the introduction, fluid notions such as the concept of intelligibility – as opposed to the idea of proficiency – appear, contradictorily, alongside the concept of correction as displayed in some of the skills within the axis "Linguistic Knowledge". If we take into consideration that English as a lingua franca is to emerge -from communicative situations within the instructional setting, as defended in the introductory text, language contents (*some, any, many, much*) (...) could not be previously determined if one denies the notion of ELF as a system or variation.[17]

In view of that, we then wonder: how do we deal with such epistemological conflict? At first, one could read the conflict negatively, pointing the finger at the document's authors for a somehow "nonsensical eclecticism". Nonetheless, Duboc (2019) advocates in favor of a welcoming attitude towards such a conflict as out of this emerges the English teacher's agentive capacity in transforming and potentially rethinking mainstream ELT orientations. In practical terms, if English school teachers pay justice to the introductory part of the official document – and if they have the chance to learn about the recent ELF theorizations, especially those addressed by what we would call the "ELF *feito no Brasil*" movement – they could put into practice new ways of teaching English that would favor a decolonial perspective in the English classroom. However, if they stick to the rest of the document, in which some language contents are linearly and objectively

[17] Original in Portuguese: A apropriação discursiva mais fluida prometida na introdução – como o conceito de inteligibilidade em oposição à ideia de proficiência – aparece, contraditoriamente, ao lado do conceito de correção em algumas habilidades do eixo Conhecimentos Linguísticos. Ora, se levado a cabo o status do inglês em sua condição como língua franca nas situações comunicativas no espaço escolar como quer o texto introdutório, conteúdos linguísticos dispostos no quadro (como *some*, *any*, *many*, *much*) (...) não poderiam ser delimitados previamente sob uma compreensão do ILF que o distancia de sistema ou variação.

displayed in tables and charts, then, they might end up teaching English in conventional ways. In other words, teachers will basically remain "safe" within the limits of traditional EFL practices and orientations. As Gimenez, and Siqueira (forthcoming) would remind us, there is indeed reason to celebrate the explicit introduction of ELF in the BNCC, nevertheless, there is still a long way to translate it into a core curriculum.

Bearing this in mind, which factor, then, determines the path an English teacher might take? Following a Bakhtinian view of language, what determines the path – either one of transformation or one of preservation – is the meaning attributed to ELF as, for Bakhtin (1981[1975), meanings are never out there, residing silently in words, but rather, rise out of the encounter between subject and sign, that is, the English teacher-subject and the ELF sign (Duboc, ibid.). By privileging enunciation to the detriment of a reified word – Bakhtin (1997[1979]) postulates his concept of dialogic sign, that is, meanings are never fixed nor neutral; rather, they rely on the subject and the way they relate themselves to reality. This implies that instead of reflecting a given reality, meanings are likely to refract in multiple and dynamic ways.

This is the lively movement of languages and meaning making processes. "ELF *feito no Brasil*," we contend, is an example of such move, as it has surely refracted some of consolidated ELF theorizations. As for the meanings of ELF within the BNCC and the way implementation will occur at schools, this would demand local ethnographic fieldwork in order to investigate whether English teachers are epistemically disobeying the status quo in attempts to teach English otherwise.

5. Concluding remarks

As the title of the paper clearly denotes, our goal with the discussions posed here was to propose a real and necessary expansion of the ELF concept under the perspective of critical pedagogy and decolonial studies anchored in the development and consolidation of the so-called epistemologies of the South in foreign language teaching and learning. Considering Jenkins' (2015) reflections on the phases ELF has gone through so far, especially when she argues for ELF research to respond to the condition of English as a multilingua franca, mainly due to the current intense global mobility, we set to introduce a critical movement we have named "ELF *feito no Brasil*", in an attempt to grant visibility to local research work and theoretical elaborations within the prism of epistemic pluralism.

As we all know, ELT grounds and practices have dogmatically emanated from the global North, consolidating premises and orientations that, along the years, have remained practically unrivaled. With the advent of ELF research and the deeper involvement of scholars from the global South, fully aware of the necessity to embrace alternative epistemologies that could account for the different sociolinguistic landscapes in which English would penetrate and interact with, new ways of critically and politically interpreting the phenomenon and its political and pedagogical consequences have begun to emerge.

In other words, under the innovative and libertarian nature of ELF, in the case of Brazil, overtly alluding to the work of Paulo Freire, scholars have for some time already been working towards a project which seeks to consolidate a decolonial way of "doing ELF" at all levels. For sure, this may take some time to be incorporated by practitioners, still so much EFL-oriented, but having ELF been considered in the recently launched National Common Core Curriculum, although in a conflicting way, opens up important avenues to create important autochthonous forums of discussion and knowledge production that will certainly echo throughout all the ELT settings in the country and, expectedly, abroad.

All in all, this text is about expanding and reframing. As the poem that opens it indicates, navigating today's 'brave open sea' of English is indeed a matter of ships and icebergs. Who or what is the ship? Who or what is the iceberg? Or, as it commonly happens in these endeavors, sometimes we are the ship, sometimes the iceberg. From a decolonial perspective, we have a clear idea that ELT, still firmly enrooted in EFL grounds, has in many ways become an iceberg not be destroyed, but re-carved and greatly reshaped. EIL, World Englishes, and more recently, global North ELF, have indeed pioneered an important political research agenda towards such a move. "ELF *feito no Brasil*", and potentially, others from the global South, acknowledges such a previous deed, but it envisions to go beyond, creating the conditions to investigate, teach, and learn English under more real-life and meaningful lenses, in an effort to, among other things, disobey epistemically, de-link from mainstream Eurocentric perspectives and combat the abyssal line of knowledge production by turning our global south voices visible/audible between the cracks or fissures of ELF research field. For us, the future of ELF research and practice lies exactly in this possibility of expanding and reframing if one wishes to think ELF otherwise. So, who is the ship?; Who is the iceberg? *Quem sobreviverá ao choque?* We will keep ourselves relentlessly questioning. In critical terms. In political terms. As Freire would have wanted us.

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PLURELF: A project implementing plurilingualism and English as a Lingua Franca in English language teaching at university[1]

Abstract
This paper presents a study on the implementation of a Business English university course aimed at promoting plurilingualism and English as a Lingua Franca (PLURELF). The course is inspired by research on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and the works on language diversity and plurilingual uses, such as those published by Creese, and Blackledge (2010; 2014), May (2013), and Pennycook, and Otsuji (2015), and by the literature claiming the need to incorporate a plurilingual or translanguaging perspective in education (e.g. Cenoz and Gorter 2013; 2015; García 2009; García and Li 2014; Kramsch 2012; Levine 2011).
The PLURELF project relies on the hypothesis that the adoption of a plurilingual approach in English language teaching produces more positive results with regard to language development, intercultural awareness, and learners' attitudes than traditional monolingual approaches, thus challenging the idea, deeply rooted in the theory and practice of ELT, that a monolingual native-based perspective is needed in order to effectively teach the language.
This paper looks at the goals and methodology of the project and provides some of its key results.

1. Introduction: Plurilingualism and internationalisation in higher education

In this paper, we intend to provide a brief account of a four-year project (PLURELF) on the implementation of a Business English course inspired by a plurilingual and English as a lingua franca perspective. The project was carried out by the two authors, together with other researchers[2] at the *Cercle*

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de Lingüística Aplicada (CLA[3]) of the Universitat de Lleida.

The PLURELF project was the natural development of work conducted at CLA in the past 15 years, which has focused on three main lines of research: (a) educational policies and pedagogical practices focused on the management and promotion of multilingualism (Cots, et al. 2010; Llurda and Lasagabaster 2010) (b) the impact of mobility programs on the multilingual learning process and the development of intercultural competence (Cots, et al. 2016; Llurda, et al. 2016) and (c) the adoption of English as a lingua franca in the process of internationalization (Llurda, et al. 2013).

The group worked in the description of the individual and collective synergies that are created as part of the process of university 'multilingualisation', which is often driven by specific institutional policies. Research was geared towards intervention in the institutional dynamics of higher education in promoting multilingualism, focusing on how the inclusion of English in the curriculum was applied and with what consequences. In this sense, a central aim of the CLA is to develop specific pedagogical proposals to make the process of internationalization of higher education as efficient and effective as possible and, at the same time, to safeguard equity between the ecology of local languages vis-à-vis linguistic diversity and their speakers before the institution and the world.

In view of this objective, the CLA concentrates its efforts on two lines of work focused on how the university promotes the presence of English through, on the one hand, its use as a vehicular language and, on the other hand, as a curricular subject. In each of these lines, the CLA aims to situate itself in a perspective that integrates the macro- and micro-analyses of the social, economic, political and educational aspects of higher education. Thus, while analysing specific educational and socio-interactive processes that take place in the classroom, through ethnographic approaches, the CLA also examines sociolinguistic data related to the institutional discourses and the attitudes of the main agents involved such as policy makers, teaching staff, and students, following up with what the group had already learnt.

As stated above, in this paper we will discuss a project, which is already nearing its completion, conducted by members of the CLA. The project focuses on developing and assessing the implementation of a plurilingual approach in teaching English as a lingua franca in the context of a university's ESP course.

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2. Towards a plurilingual approach in teaching English as a lingua franca at university

This particular project is framed within the larger research programme of the CLA outlined above, and follows previous research conducted on multilingualism, interculturality, as well as second and foreign language learning and teaching. The project aims to bring together two research strands in applied linguistics that need to be further explored in a combined manner and with special relevance in our particular educational context: (a) multilingual language acquisition, and (b) English as a lingua franca. Originating from different theoretical backgrounds, these two lines constitute two of the main current challenges posed to established practices in the teaching of English, since they question the traditionally dominant model based on the authority of the monolingual native speaker. The study of bi/multilingualism has brought along the concept of *translanguaging* (Li 2018), which legitimizes simultaneous use of different languages, to the point that transitions from one language to another are promoted in order to maximize all the linguistic resources available by participants in the interaction. In fact, the notion of language as a separate entity is called into question and the language classroom is regarded as a place where participants can use all their communicative resources beyond the artificially established limits of traditional standard languages (García 2009). The second strand of research in applied linguistics at the core of this project is the study of English as a lingua franca (ELF). ELF challenges the native speaker's authority and brings the non-native speaker the opportunity to legitimately break with established norms (Seidlhofer 2011, Mauranen 2012). Following Jenkins' (2015) positioning of ELF within studies of multilingualism, this project brings these two areas of study together, aiming at contributing to a substantial change in the principles that support language teaching in general, and English language teaching at universities in particular.

2.1 Background

Globalization and a remarkable upsurge in international mobility have increased the visibility of language diversity, particularly in urban contexts (e.g., Creese and Blackledge 2010; 2014; Otsuji and Pennycook 2010; Pennycook and Otsuji 2015). Such language diversity is not reflected in how languages are treated in education, which remains strongly centred on a monolingual model of language teaching, oblivious to the diversity of linguistic resources possessed by students (Hélot 2012), and thus opposed to the use of students' L1s in the L2 classroom. In contrast with the idea that L2 interaction should be maximized to guarantee sufficient exposure to the target language, recent studies point to the positive aspects of using multilingual resources, both in terms of its effects in L2 development and its coherence with the increasingly multilingual environment in educational settings (e.g. Cenoz and Gorter 2013; 2015; Creese and Blackledge 2010; 2014; García 2009; García and Li 2014; Kramsch 2012; Li and Zhu 2013; May 2013). Undoubtedly, Cook's (1992; 2008) development of the notion of multicompetence and the interplay between L1 and L2 in language learning and teaching (Cook, 2001; 2003) have been key in establishing this line of research.

Along similar principles, Kramsch and Huffmaster (2015) hold that globalization has modified the expectations of foreign language learners, who are required to be ready to communicate in transcultural and translingual situations. This is clearly a challenge for language teachers who have been trained to teach the language following the principles of monolingual immersion and using a communicative pedagogy based on the ideal native speaker model. An innovative approach to language teaching, taking the learner's complete plurilingual repertoire into account, is framed within sociocultural (Lantolf and Thorne 2006; Swain and Lapkin 2000), ecological (van Lier 2004) and intercultural frameworks (Byram 1997). The sociocultural approach suggests that learning is a process that takes place within social interaction. In plurilingual educational contexts, the different languages spoken by learners will inevitably be used. This plurilingual repertoire should be viewed as a resource that may benefit both learners and teachers, rather than as a handicap that may hinder learning (Cenoz and Gorter 2013). Finally, the intercultural framework is at the heart of any attempt to include the notion of ELF in language teaching. As proposed by Grazzi (2018), an ELF approach in ELT is intertwined with the development of intercultural communicative competence.

In the particular case of English language instruction in Expanding Circle countries (Kachru 1985), Cenoz and Gorter (2013; 2015) propose the adoption of a plurilingual perspective, arguing that a monolingual approach ultimately promotes monolingual native speaker competence as a goal. This is incompatible with the actual outcome of foreign language instruction, which is plurilingual, multicompetent speakers. Apart from the many reasons for a learner not to be willing to mirror a NS accent, there is a great deal of research demonstrating that aiming at achieving NS competence and accent is unrealistic (Derwing and Munro 2009), and so it makes no sense having it as a goal in the ELT curriculum. The goal should be to achieve proficiency in the L2 – enough to accomplish any communication tasks that the speaker wants to complete – and that will vary depending on the individual. There is a need for recognition in all SLA circles that learners' communicative needs should be the goal – not some idealized notion of a NS.

Cenoz and Gorter (2013) maintain that adopting a plurilingual perspective has the following implications for English teachers:

1. Establishing realistic goals. To become plurilingual speakers means abandoning the unrealistic goal of 'becoming' a native speaker.
2. Using plurilingual competence. Plurilingual repertoires may be an extraordinary source of knowledge for developing language and discourse skills and language awareness.
3. Implementing an integrated programme. Teachers of different languages need to coordinate themselves and, by way of example, simultaneously work on similar texts, communicative events, or grammatical structures, even at different levels of competence.
4. Designing resources and activities that require the use of different language codes. The use of a variety of codes is a common practice among plurilingual speakers that is often ignored in the classrooms.

Levine (2011) further argues that a plurilingual approach must be structured and that students should participate in the co-construction of multilingual norms in the classroom, together with the teacher, in order to reflect upon the multilingual practices that are present in everyday human interactions, as well as in communication in the classroom context.

One possible way to introduce the students' plurilingual repertoire is through translanguaging practices. We see translanguaging (García 2009; Creese and Blackledge 2010; García and Li 2014) as based on the constructivist approach that allows students to learn their target language with the support of scaffolding in their previously known languages, thus placing the learner at the centre stage of their learning process. We consider that the adoption of a 'tranlanguaging approach' also legitimizes the construct of a multilingual and multicultural identity for the learner (Li and Zhu 2013). Canagarajah (2011) warns us of the need to apply the constructivist approach critically, which means that it cannot be equated with a random use of a diversity of languages. Instead, the use of the different languages must be carefully planned and implemented.

Although several attempts have been made at the theoretical level as to how to develop multilingual competence among learners, there is a shortage of tools to guide teachers regarding the implementation of a translanguaging-inspired university curriculum in a structured and coherent way. This project aims to overcome this deficit by means of the design and implementation of a didactic model based on a plurilingual approach that is applicable to English language teaching and learning at universities in an Expanding Circle context.

2.2 Goals

One of the paradoxes in language education is that whereas in real communicative situations, plurilingual speakers combine the languages at their disposal, in educational institutions, languages are taught in completely separate compartments. Thus, the English teacher is expected to exclusively use this language as a medium of instruction and avoid any reference to comparison with other languages already spoken by their students. However, an increasing number of applied linguists have expressed the need for a change in perspective that leads to a holistic and plurilingual vision of the language teaching methodology, with the goal of enhancing the learning process efficiency by means of the incorporation of plurilingual resources already available to the learners (Canagarajah 2011; Cenoz and Gorter 2015; Creese and Blackledge 2014; Garcia and Li 2014).

This project is innovative because it starts with the hypothesis that the adoption of a plurilingual approach in English language teaching produces more positive results with regard to language development, intercultural awareness, and learners' attitudes than traditional monolingual approaches. Thus, the project aims to challenge the rather generalized idea that a monolingual native-based perspective is needed in order to effectively teach the language. A plurilingual approach such as the one proposed relies on the constructivist notion that new knowledge is constructed from previously acquired knowledge. It also avoids falling into the native speaker fallacy (Phillipson 1992) by recognising non-native speakers as competent users of English as a lingua franca rather than relegating them to mere learners permanently dependent on the authority of the native speaker (Cook 2002; Llurda 2016).

Taking the initial hypothesis into account, this project intended to carry out a study with the following general goals:

(a) To design teaching materials inspired by a plurilingual + ELF (henceforth, PLURELF) approach.

(b) To implement such materials in a university ESP course.

(c) To compare the results with a control group based on standard ESP practice.

(d) To explore the applicability of the model behind the materials to other ELT contexts.

More specifically, this project had the following specific goals:

(1) To explore the institutional and classroom contexts where the pedagogical intervention had to take place, taking into account students' beliefs about English language teaching and learning and their response to the classroom practices they had previously experienced.

(2) To design the syllabus and materials for a semester in an ESP course.

(3) To implement the syllabus and materials and to analyse the process with the support of qualitative and quantitative indicators.

(4) To investigate the effects of the pedagogical intervention regarding language development, intercultural awareness, language attitudes and students' level of satisfaction.

(5) To develop a pedagogical model that could be adapted to other educational contexts, based on a plurilingual approach to ELT.

2.3 Methodology

In this project, we examined the impact of the application of a PLURELF approach to the teaching of English in a bilingual university in Catalonia. In order to do so, two comparable groups of the first year of Business Administration degree (30-40 students each) underwent two different pedagogical treatments: the experimental group was subject to teaching following a PLURELF approach, whereas the control group followed a monolingual methodology following the standard parameters in ESP teaching.

Data was collected and analysed using a mixed-methods approach (Riazi and Candlin 2014). A quantitative perspective was required to measure the effects of the implementation of the materials statistically with regard to (1) the improvement of learners' language skills, and (2) their attitudes towards English and towards the course. Such measurements were made with an English placement test and a previously piloted questionnaire. The qualitative research approach rested on the assumption that the analysis of language use in everyday interactions can inform researchers of the cultural and social patterns in meaning making. The qualitative perspective was inspired by interactional sociolinguistics and discourse analysis, with the goal of combining emic and ethic perspectives, that is, the participants' vision of the context in which they are immersed combined with the researcher's knowledge of such contexts (Gumperz 1982; Rampton 2006). Both methodological approaches interacted at different stages of the project. Thus, the analysis of the learning process relied on qualitative data to understand the learning process as it takes place in the classroom and on quantitative data to measure the learning outcomes for statistical comparisons between different times during the pedagogical intervention and between the experimental and the control group. In this paper, we are presenting a brief account of the main outcomes of the project so far, and will not refer to classroom interactions, which are still under analysis. Thus, we will refer to the results obtained with the help of five different instruments. Three were used in order to measure language gains: a standard language placement test, a spontaneous oral production consisting in recording a 2-minute sales pitch presenting a given product to a potential customer, and a written commercial letter following the given instructions. Both the sales pitch and the commercial letter were assessed by an expert examiner that usually acts as evaluator for a major English testing organization. The fourth instrument was a questionnaire specifically designed for the occasion and conveniently piloted. Finally, we will report on the outcomes of a set of group interviews conducted with participants in both classes: PLURELF and monolingual.

2.4 Main results of the project

The PLURELF project has been fruitful in gathering evidence for the beneficial effects of teaching English with a plurilingual vision that emphasises the lingua franca uses of the language and incorporates the L1s of the learners, as well as other languages more or less known to them, as useful tools for the development of English competence in the performance of specific communicative tasks.

We will here provide some relevant results obtained with the use of three of the above-mentioned data collection methods: the language tests, the attitude questionnaire, and the group interviews.

- The language assessment instruments

Out of the three types of language assessment instruments used to compare the two groups of students in the study and to measure the progression for each group (standard placement test, oral production task and commercial letter), only one (the 'sales pitch' oral production task) yielded statistically significant differences between the two groups that are worth reporting here. Differences pointed to a beneficial effect of the PLURELF (experimental) group in the 'sales pitch' oral production task. No statistically significant differences appeared either in the placement test or in the letter. We also looked for signs of progression between the beginning and the end of the semester and no significant differences were found at all. It must be said here that the experiment lasted for only one semester, which in practice means less than four months of class time, and classes were 90-minute long and took place twice a week. With this type of implementation, we could not be very optimistic with regard to the impact of any kind of methodology on either language development or attitudinal changes, as we would probably need a longer period in order for progression to be made visible. So, we expected some differences to appear as we were confident that the PLURELF approach would have a beneficial effect (or, at least, would not have negative effect) among learners, but we were realistically aware of the difficulty in finding statistically significant differences, more so when the size of the two groups in the study was relatively small: less than 40 students per group at the beginning of the study, and a smaller number at the end, after we decided to include in the final comparison data from students who had attended at least 60% of the sessions and data from students with lower attendance records were separated from the sample. The final sample, thus, with only the students who had attended at least 60% of the classes, consisted of 35 students in the PLURELF group and 16 in the traditional monolingual group. The number of 60% was decided arbitrarily. Most students attended more than 60% of classes but this threshold was established because it was considered that a 60% attendance implied the minimal sufficient exposure to the language teaching materials and methodology to consider they had the potential of having an effect on students' performance.

The sales pitch oral production task consisted of a short improvised oral text produced by students individually after having been shown an image with a product that they, as sales representative of a manufacturing company, had to promote to a store owner so that they would include it in their product catalogue. They were assigned a product out of eight different options, and the product they had to sell at the end of the semester was the same as the one they had been assigned at the beginning of the semester in an identical task. The audio recordings with the students' voices were sent to an expert rater with experience as evaluator of oral tests carried out as part of an internationally well-established English exam. The evaluator used a 20-point rubric that included the following categories: grammar and vocabulary; discourse management; pronunciation and intonation; and global achievement.

An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used in order to compare the results of the two groups at the end of the semester controlling for the effects of the students' results at the beginning of the semester as covariate. Such analysis yielded a significant difference in favour of the PLURELF group, which performed better than the monolingual group with a score of 14.86, compared to the score of 11.31 of the latter.

The remaining two tests (a placement test and a written commercial letter) did not offer any different results between the two groups, which – together with the more positive result of PLURELF students in the sales pitch task– allows us to claim that not only the PLURELF methodology, which relies on the use of students L1 in class, does not affect students negatively, but quite the opposite, it enhances their performance in comparison with students following a monolingual native-oriented approach.

- The attitudes questionnaire

The attitudes questionnaire was responded by students at the beginning and at the end of the semester. Students had to rate from 1 to 5 the degree of agreement or disagreement with a set of statements. The numerical results were treated statistically for the sake of comparison between groups.

Two types of statements elicited students' attitudes towards the two central elements in this project, namely (i) nativeness and the use of native or non-native voices in classroom materials, and (ii) the systematic use of the students' L1 as a scaffolding strategy towards achieving the goal of L2 learning.

The following four statements dealt with the theme of nativeness:

1. My goal with English is to be able to speak it like a native speaker.
2. I would like to speak English like a native speaker.
3. I feel more comfortable speaking English with other non-native speakers than with natives.
4. English used in international trade should be the same as English spoken by native speakers.

And the theme of translanguaging and L1 use was presented in the following five statements:

5. It annoys me when people speak in one language and mix words from another language.
6. It annoys me when people write in a language and mix words from another language.
7. In speaking a language, those who don't use words from other languages are better speakers.
8. I like it when the English teacher tries to explain grammar or vocabulary without using Catalan/Spanish and keeps trying until s/he succeeds.
9. Many times I didn't understand classroom instructions in English in the Business English II course.

The analysis of the results at the end of the semester offered significant differences between the two groups in three of the above statements. First, in relation to the theme of nativeness, statements 1 and 3 were responded differently by the two groups of students. In statement 1, the PLURELF group had a mean result of 3.85, whereas the monolingual group mean rose up to 4.33, indicating a clearly superior support for the statement among students in the monolingual group. In other words, the monolingual approach reinforced students' enthrallment with the native speaker myth (Davies 2003) or fallacy (Phillipson 1992), which sustains that the goal of a language learner is to become undistinguishable to a native speaker, in spite of its potential for generating frustration among learners who will never reach such unrealistic goal. Statement 3, on the other hand, yields a greater support on the part of the students in the PLURELF group (M=3.75) vs. the monolingual group (M=3.0). Such result confirms the idea that PLURELF students hold a more positive attitude towards the increasing use of English as a lingua franca among non-native speakers.

With regard to translanguaging and the use of the students L1 as a means to promote the learning of English, only question 8, out of the five questions referring to this issue, yielded significant differences between the two groups of students. Students in the monolingual group were more supportive of the teacher's strictly monolingual practice (M=4.13), whereas the PLURELF group showed a more neutral attitude (though slightly positive, as well) towards it (M=3.73). No other differences were found, which shows that attitudes towards using other languages apart from English were not greatly affected by the different experiences of both groups during the semester, which may suggest that the beliefs and attitudes towards this practice are more rigidly embedded into the learners' sets of beliefs. In the following section, we will see how students verbalise their resistance towards the use of their L1 in the English classroom, and how this practice challenges all their previously acquired system of beliefs with regard to second language development.

- The group interviews

Two groups of 8 students were selected, one from each of the two classes involved in the project, and they were invited to participate in two separate group interviews at the beginning of the semester, and again at the end of it. The groups included students with different profiles in connection with the level of their communicative skills in English as well as their academic performance. We video recorded and transcribed the four resulting group interviews. The subsequent analysis of the transcripts revealed a natural acceptance of ELF and non-native speaker models but a resistance to the use of the L1 in class and in the learning materials.

In relation to the use of non-native forms and models in class, some students openly stated they positively valued the fact that some of the speakers in the listening tasks were non-native speakers of English. By way of example, one student in the PLURELF group said[4]: "It's good, because it's a good thing for us to get used to it, as we will not always find English people on the street. (...) And one may speak in one way and another in a different way, and we must try to understand them all". To which one of the

[4] All the interviews were conducted in Catalan, and so the extracts presented here are my own translations.

researchers asked: "And did you sometimes find it difficult?". The answer is provided by a different student, who simply says: "Sometimes easier".

In the interview that took place at the end of the semester with the monolingual group students, the researchers explained to them that in their class all listening tasks involved native speakers, whereas in the other class some non-native speakers were also used as speakers. In response to this information, one of the students stated that this was a good idea as "it is good for us to listen to people from other countries speaking in English", and another student added "and because you will not always speak to native speakers", to which the first student concluded by remarking: "Exactly. In the world, there are all kinds of people".

The use of L1 in class was more contentious, as students in both groups objected to it. In particular, we expected PLURELF students to be more willing to embrace its use after having experienced it in class, but they seemed to hold on to their previous conceptions of what English language teaching should be like, possibly based on their previous experience as English learners all along their primary and secondary education, as well as any private lessons they may have attended (some had and some others had not attended to private extracurricular language classes in their previous years). In the initial interview with the PLURELF group, to the question formulated by one of the researchers asking whether they would prefer that the class was conducted exclusively in English, one student said that "at this level, yes" and "Catalan is useful to learn English at the beginning, (...) but now all in English would better", to which several other students voiced their agreement, one of them adding that "if the teacher speaks to you in Catalan, you do not make any effort". And another affirms: "and if you do not understand anything, you will have to make the effort to understand it. (...) I prefer it all in English because I think I learn more... more vocabulary, more...". At the end of the semester, the same PLURELF group voiced their criticism of L1 use in class. One student declared: "I don't see the point, (...) I think that if you don't know English you have to make an effort", and the same student later states: "I like it better all in English, because, ok, you have to make a bigger effort, and it's clear that you can switch off if you don't understand something, but if it is in Spanish, it is like I am not learning, because I read and I understand it". Finally, in the monolingual group, at the end of the semester, one student declared: "What I like the most of my teacher is that she didn't let me speak in Catalan, and when I had to explain something I had to do it in English, and that's a lot of work for me, but at least...". The researchers insisted on this point: “So, the fact that she forced you to speak in English, did you like this?”, and different students voiced their approval: “yes, it is fine”, “I think so”.

3. Conclusions

In this brief account of the research project on the teaching of English at university level with an ELF and plurilingual perspective developed by members of the *Cercle de Lingüística Aplicada*, we have presented the ideas that support the project, its methodological implementation, and main outcomes. The combined results obtained through different methodological instruments provide a comprehensive picture of the beneficial effects as well as the complexity of such an innovative teaching approach, that relies on cutting edge advances in applied linguistics, such as the study of ELF and multilingualism, with its more radical take on translanguaging. The beneficial effects of such a teaching approach can be observed by looking at the results obtained by the PLURELF group in tasks designed to measure language development, since they are either equal to those obtained by the monolingual group, or (as in the case of the sales pitch task) even higher. This is combined with attitudes that are only slightly affected by the experience, and complemented by the realisation of an easy attitude of acceptance to non-native models but a frontal resistance to the incorporation of the L1 in the classroom as a valid learning tool.

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The Status of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and Implications for the Teaching of English in Japan

Abstract

This article begins with background information on English language attitudes and education in the Japanese context, from both an historical and a present-day perspective. It then considers the value of ELF-informed views for the Japanese context: both from educational and business/professional perspectives. From the educational aspect, existing efforts to promote ELF-informed programs are investigated, with analysis of their success and future prospects for growth. Areas of continued resistance to ELF and other pluralistic paradigms in Japan are also explored. From a professional standpoint, the article will outline the actual need for ELF among Japanese working people, and the extent to which ELF comes into play in actual interactions, both in Japan and overseas. I will conclude with a consideration of challenges which remain to be faced for ELF in Japan.[1]

1. Introduction

This article considers the status of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in Japan and its relevance for the teaching and using of English in that context. For the general reader who has not as yet delved into the ELF paradigm, it is important to realize that ELF is an extension of the various efforts to view English from a pluralistic point of view since the late 1970s, including work on English as an International Language (Smith 1983; McKay 2002) and World Englishes (Kachru 1985). A pluralistic view of English implies that

[1] Sections of this paper appeared in the author's chapter in: D'Angelo, James. 2018. "The Status of ELF in Japan." In The Routledge Handbook of English as a Lingua Franca, edited by Jennifer Jenkins, Will Baker and Martin Dewey, 165-175. London: Routledge. The author expresses his gratitude to the lead editor of that volume, J. Jenkins, for permission to reprint parts of that paper.

English is no longer primarily owned by the native speaker countries, that there may be multiple 'standard' Englishes, and that in learning and using English, our teachers and interlocutors may not be mainly native speakers—and hence the model for our English, and the cultures we consider when learning English, are also not necessarily those of the native contexts. The article is hence more a survey on the status of ELF in Japan. For those interested in more empirical data on ELF usage in Japan, Konakahara and Tsuchiya (2020) is a new edited volume (for which the author contributed the Foreword, see D'Angelo 2020) which provides many empirically-oriented chapters on ELF practice in Japan.

Part I of this article begins with background information on English language attitudes and education in the Japanese context, from a historical and present-day perspective. Part II outlines the potential value of ELF-informed views to this context, in contrast to a more traditional native speakerist-informed paradigm—primarily in societal domains (Houghton and Rivers 2013). Parts III and IV then investigate actual efforts to document and describe ELF in Japan. Part III looks at several research-related initiatives—including work on the Japan component of the Asia Corpus of English (ACE) project led by the author, and work underway at Waseda University under the direction of Professor Kumiko Murata (2016). Part IV touches briefly on several ELT-related efforts, both at the institutional level, and by individual professors and practitioners. Part V considers challenges which lie ahead regarding ELF in Japan, in an attempt to evaluate the long-term impact which ELF may have on the Japanese context, especially in light of future demographic changes in Japan's population composition and increasing need for English in various domains, in spite of Japan's position as an expanding circle context. The article closes with a Conclusion, and suggestions for further reading.

2. Background on English in Japan

This section provides an introduction to historical and present-day attitudes towards English and English language education/teaching (henceforth ELT) in the Japanese context, especially with regard to how these attitudes may lend perspective to the relevance of the English as a Lingua Franca (henceforth ELF) paradigm for Japan.

English came to Japan at various points during the era of exploration, but the major influence of English on the archipelago came with the opening of the country by Commodore Perry and his "black ships" at the beginning of the Meiji Era, in 1868. At this time Dutch was already influential, and German was widely studied for medical and scientific purposes. Mori Arinori, the first Japanese ambassador to the United States (1871-1873) and later Minister of Education, proposed abandoning the Japanese language in favor of English, and was an advocate of Westernization (Hall 1973). In general, Japanese people are known for valuing authenticity and perfectionism—that there is a certain "correct" way of doing most things[2]—and this has extended to their privileging of native, 'Inner Circle' English varieties and the resulting prescriptivist view of English: an entrenched influence which continues to this day (Reischauer 1995; Honna and Takeshita 1998; D'Angelo 2011).

Since English education has been compulsory in Japan at the secondary level since the early postwar era, and has been extended progressively into lower levels of elementary school since 2007 (first as an "activity"—not to be evaluated on the student's report card), with it becoming a compulsory subject from fifth grade in 2011 (The Guardian), there has also long been an active ELT research community in Japan. For example, the bimonthly Japanese magazine 英語教育 (English Education), is in 2020 in its 72nd volume, dating back to 1951! As a result, in spite of the mainly native orientation towards English, due to the widespread activities of the large research community one can find Japanese scholars working in every area of linguistics, applied linguistics, and English pedagogy.

Japan was thus one of the first Expanding Circle countries to be open to world Englishes (hereafter WE) and other pluralistic views (English as an International Language~EIL) of the English language, which are precursors to the ELF paradigm. WE is primarily concerned with documenting the linguistic and pragmatic features of new indigenized varieties of English, mainly in former colonial contexts such as India, Singapore and Nigeria, and how and in what domains English is used intranational in those contexts. ELF by contrast, reflects that English is now the most widely used common language across the globe, and is more concerned with how users from a wide

[2] Whether this be the tea ceremony, flower arranging, judo, archery, auto production, or speaking English.

range of countries and first language backgrounds manage to negotiate meaning between their varieties.

While the majority of Japanese scholars were influenced by mainstream cognitivist Second Language Acquisition Theory (Long 1990; Mackey and Gass 2005), those with an outward-looking attitude who attended international conferences and interacted with international scholars, inevitably became interested in less native-centric approaches to ELT. One of the first of these was Suzuki Takao (Suzuki 1973) who rejected placing America English 'on a pedestal' (Suzuki 2003), and he was soon followed by Yasukata Yano (2001), Sanzo Sakai (2005), Nobuyuki Honna (2008), Hiroshi Yoshikawa (2005), Nobuyuki Hino (1988), Aya Matsuda (2017), Paul Matsuda (2005), and others. Several of these scholars studied in the 1970s with EIL founder Larry Smith at the East/West Center at the University of Hawaii/Manoa, and after his alignment with Braj Kachru in the mid-1980s, began to spread interest in WE in Japan.[3] This paper argues that having this key nucleus of WE/EIL/ELF-informed[4] domestic scholars provides the support mechanism for further growth in ELF research and its application in the Japanese context. Indeed, the majority of these scholars who have attended the World Englishes conference over the years are now regular attendees and presenters at ELF conferences. The reason for this is that while the World Englishes paradigm questions the primacy of the native speaker, it does not provide a rationale for how English is used in the non-post-colonial settings such as Japan. The ELF paradigm by contrast, addresses the kinds of issues faced by those who use English mainly in diverse international contexts.

2.1 Potential value of ELF-informed views for Japan

Many of the central concepts of ELF are well-suited to the Japanese context. As Japan is in the Kachruvian "Expanding Circle" (Kachru 1985), which includes countries which were never colonized, where English has no official status, and is used in comparatively few internal domains (i.e. media, government, judicial, education, commerce), there is less reason to claim an

[3] The 2nd, 6th and 12th IAWE Conferences were all held in Japan, between 1995 and 2012.
[4] While early work on ELF may have been more features-oriented and less cross-cultural communication oriented that traditional work in EIL, for the purposes of this paper they are considered very close in meaning. ELF does however, have the advantage of established corpora, and a more robust and evolving research agenda.

indigenized variety of Japanese English (D'Angelo 2013), as there might be in Singapore, India or Nigeria. Since English is used to a very limited degree among Japanese when no non-Japanese are present, it is mainly used in situations in Japan which are multinational in nature, or in a wide range of overseas encounters. Thus, rather than focus on documenting the features of Japanese English (or looking at outdated WE-informed concepts such as 'international intelligibility' (Nelson 2011) which tends to look only at recorded one-way interaction, and mainly phonological aspects of communication), pluricentric-leaning scholars in Japan—those already having interest in WE—have for the past 10 years begun to show more interest in ELF as the most useful paradigm.

ELF is centrally concerned with how users of English from different international backgrounds, each using their own idiolect (individual variety) of English, come together to negotiate meaning and accommodate to one another to reach mutual understanding. As Widdowson has posited (2014), when ELF users interact there is no common idiom, and Gricean maxims do not apply. As a result, the interlocutors are "languaging" or "idiomatizing" in a real-time fashion, developing a common idiom to reach common ground. Research findings have shown (Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2009; 2011) that ELF users are eager to meet their interlocutors halfway (even perhaps more than halfway!) and have a strong ability to comprehend and interpret the intentions of other ELF users—mainly non-native speakers (NNS). Considering this reality, it is illogical to teach an American English model and an American idiom in Japan, since it is well-documented that NNS outnumber NS today (Graddol 2006; Crystal 2007; Eberhard et al 2019), and Japanese English speakers are more likely to come into contact with Chinese, Indians, Vietnamese and Germans than with Americans, Brits, or Canadians.

For Japanese users, the true key to proficiency in English is not having a high TOEFL or TOEIC score, but in developing a new kind of proficiency that draws on ELF and EIL as well. It is important to note, that whereas at one point EIL scholars drew a clear distinction between EIL and ELF (Sharifian 2009), there is today less claim of fundamental differences between the concepts of EIL and ELF. Even scholars such as Aya Matsuda (2017), doing work primarily on Japan, were initially somewhat ske ptical of ELF—as were other WE scholars who tended to place too much emphasis on ELF claims of the future development of LFE (Lingua Franca English) as a *variety,* rather than a *function* of language, and it is true that ELF is mainly dealing with how English is used functionally in ELF settings. Yet more recently, Matsuda has attended ELF conferences, and was part of a panel devoted to ELF at the 21st IAWE Conference in Istanbul, organized by Turkish scholar Yasemin Bayyurt. This further strengthens the evidence that for Expanding Circle scholars, ELF is arguably the most relevant paradigm

While in its early years ELF was mainly focused on syntactic modifications of ELF-speakers (e.g. Breiteneder's 2005 work on the "dropping" of the 3rd person singular 's'), it increasingly looks at cultural factors—which has been a more prominent focus in EIL work—as well. EIL scholar Sharifian (2009) stresses that we each have our own "Cultural conceptualizations", and that "Intercultural, or *meta*-cultural, competence needs to be viewed as a core element of proficiency in English used for intercultural communication" (2009, 249). To over-rely on grammatical accuracy (based on abstract NS norms), and to teach American or British pronunciation and culture, is to do a disservice to the real needs of Japanese ELF users, and in fact ELF users from any non-native context. As Widdowson (2011; 2012) perceptively points out, the speech and writing of most users of English around the world today will be filled with what he terms "non-conformities."[5] These are not errors *per se*, but forms of English that are influenced by a different reality from that of NS users. They have a different L1 and come from multilingual backgrounds. Their L1, their culture, their experiences all contribute to a new idiom.

My own doctoral thesis supports the complexity seen in this reality (D'Angelo 2016). Forty-four graduates of the Chukyo University College of World Englishes (CWE), graduating between 2006 and 2014, responded to a lengthy open-ended questionnaire, and confirmed that in their business and personal "transnational" interactions in English, they regularly come into contact with Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Singaporeans, Koreans, Chinese, Sri Lankans, Zambians, Germans, Brazilians, Italians, Australians and Indonesians. They expressed that grammatical accuracy is not vital, exposure to many varieties is essential, and that learning how to negotiate with people from other cultures is a crucial skill. One student mentioned how hard it is, in her job with a major Japanese spark-plug manufacturer, to deal effectively with German and French customers. They are forceful, and she has needed to learn how to stand her ground with them.

We live in an ELF world today, and the sooner Japan recognizes this, the better. A detailed investigation of the many ELT implications of this reality is

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5 This term is perhaps more useful that the WE efforts to define non-native usages, such as 'deviations', 'diversions', etc.

not within the scope of this article (please see D'Angelo 2012; Bayyurt and Akcan 2015; Matsuda 2017), yet in brief, an ELF approach to ELT would involve a refocusing of the priorities of language learning away from mastery of native-like 'accuracy' in pronunciation, grammar, and idiom, and towards an ability to have mutual intelligibility and the skills needed to negotiate meaning among a wide array of interlocutors, coming from an equally wide range of L1 and cultural backgrounds. Creating opportunities through SKYPE and other online vehicles to interact with non-native speakers (and at times natives as well) on a regular basis, can go far towards realizing this goal. Taking advantage of something such as the EU-based ENRICH Project (Enrich 2020), which is supported by ELF scholars Nicos Safakis, Yasemin Bayyurt and others, is an excellent example.

3. Efforts to document, describe, and promote ELF in Japan

ELF was originally developed as a paradigm by various scholars in Europe. While we are all familiar with the work of Jenkins (2007), Seidlhofer (2009), Mauranen (2012), Cogo (2012), Ehrenreich (2009), Dewey (2009), Pitzl (2009) and others, as early as the mid-1990s scholars such as Firth (1996), Jenkins (1996) and Meierkord (1998) were beginning to use the term. At a panel which looked at ELF at the 2009 IAWE Conference in Cebu (the Philippines) Kingsley Bolton[6] suggested why this may have been so. He indicated that there was an attempt to import the WE paradigm to Europe in the 1990s and it didn't fit the sociolinguistic context, where there was not significant need for *intra*-national use of English. Additionally, he pointed out that after September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, it became much more difficult to obtain student visas in the U.S., and there was a shift in international students from the U.S. to the U.K. and other European countries that offered EMI programs. Other factors, including the increase in cross-border students brought about by establishment of the EU, and the increase in Chinese students around the world thanks to their government's easing of travel restrictions in the early 2000s, may have further drawn attention to the need for research into ELF interaction. A similar phenomenon (on a smaller scale) occurred decades earlier for Larry Smith—when he first noticed Asians from 20 different

[6] Bolton, Kingsley, discussant. IAWE 2009 Panel: Lingua Franca Communication in World Englishes. Parklane Hotel, Cebu Island, Philippines. October 24, 2009.

countries interacting in English in Hawaii at the East/West Center—when first hand exposure provided the impetus for his pioneering work on EIL.

As use of English spread further into various domains around the world, scholars in Asia also began to show interest in ELF. Kirkpatrick (2010) was the key player in this effort. Through his work in Australia and at the Hong Kong Institute of Education, he came into contact with Japanese Professor N. Honna, one of the leading proponents of a pluralistic/multicultural approach to English in Asia. Honna developed wide-ranging contacts in the region among scholars in India, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Russia. He was also involved with important ELT-related organizations within Asia, such as RELC—the Regional Language Centre (RELC 2020). Set up by ASEAN's Ministers of Education Group (known as SEAMEO) in Singapore, with the blessing of Lee Kuan Yew. RELC remains an important icon for a non-native view of English for Asia—a confidence that an NNS context could provide expertise in English. Many early WE scholars such as Edwin Thumboo (2001), M.L. Tickoo (1988), and Anne Pakir (1991) provided a valuable forum via their contributions to the RELC Journal.

Honna was prescient in many ways; while a proponent of world Englishes, his main focus has been on 'English as a Multicultural Language' and he has served as past-President of the IAICS—The International Association of Intercultural Communication Studies. Like Hino, who has always portrayed himself as an EIL scholar more than a WE scholar (Hino 2018, 3-4), Honna (2008) also foresaw that for Japan, a paradigm such as ELF is a model which more closely portrays the international/intercultural uses of English which are important to the Japanese context.

Kirkpatrick majored in Chinese as an undergraduate, and his familiarity with Asia made him a logical choice to compile a corpus of English in Asia (Kirkpatrick 2010). The usefulness and prominence of the E.U.-focused VOICE project headed up by Seidlhofer at the University of Vienna led to a similar project for Asia. Originally entitled ELFiA (ELF in Asia), it was later renamed to "ACE": The Asian Corpus of English (ACE 2020). ACE is composed of groups who gathered data in 10 different Asian contexts, with 10 hours of recorded interaction from each context. Kirkpatrick asked me to head up the Japanese component of the ACE corpus. The ten hours of recording has almost been completed as of this writing, but ACE Japan lags behind the other contexts in that only roughly two hours of the recording have been transcribed.

The ACE corpus itself came online in 2014, and is a valuable resource for scholars looking to research ELF across Asia. While the Japan component may never be brought online, we are fortunate that there are Japanese participants in the recordings from other contexts, such as Brunei and the Philippines. Yet ultimately, to gain a deeper understanding of Japanese participants' behavior and handling of ELF interactions, it is necessary to bring online a significant amount of Japan-based recordings. From its inception, ELF has been corpus-driven, and having a corpus of actual ELF usage is a great advantage which ELF holds over EIL research, and one of the reasons for ELF's growth and interest: ELF usage is well-documented and its data can be studied from syntactic, phonetic, lexical, pragmatic, discourse, and intercultural perspectives to truly demonstrate linguistic practices across boundaries.

A more recent important development is the formation by Murata of Waseda University, of an ELF Special Interest Group (SIG) within JACET: The Japan Association of College English Teachers. (JACET 2016) JACET currently has over 2,700 members and has a huge reach and influence within Japan. Whereas it is commendable that the above-mentioned JAFAE is completely dedicated to a pluralistic view of English, its reach is limited, with only 100~125 active members, and average attendance of only 35 participants at its two annual conferences. JACET by contrast, is a mainstream organization, and its impact is high. Every university in Japan has several members who belong to JACET. JACET has 60 different special interest groups[7], which makes for much competition for members' attention. Still, every SIG meeting is advertised by e-mail to all JACET members, so the awareness-raising ability of a SIG is high. To demonstrate this, as host of the July 2016 ELF SIG meeting, I received inquiries from dozens of colleagues who are not normally in touch. The ELF SIG already has 50 members, and shows the potential to have an important impact on increasing ELF efforts in Japan.

Prior to this development, Murata has been the recipient of several ongoing major ELF-focused research grants by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), Grants in Aid for Scientific Research, Foundation B. She has hosted an annual "ELF International Workshop" the

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7 It is perhaps a small triumph that ELF is JACET's 57th SIG, while one dedicated to CEFR (which might be considered less ELF-friendly, or more oriented towards "standard" English?) is the 58th.

past seven years, which had been attended by the major founding figures of ELF including Jenkins, Seidlhofer, Widdowson, Pitzl and others.

These workshops are well-attended and further help to develop local scholars in Japan who are interested in conducting research into ELF topics. Again, starting with the April 2019 academic year, Murata has been awarded another multi-year JSPS grant, on which the author is a team-member. As part of this grant, the team is planning to record actual ELF interaction with Japanese business and professional participants in international settings, which may at last provide the type of corpus data used in the ACE corpus mentioned above. The research group sponsored a visit and special lecture by Dr. Suzanne Ehrenreich of Dortmund in July 2019, in which she also met with grant-team members the following day, and stressed the importance of having actual interaction data as a key to studying the processes of how ELF interlocutors engage in, and negotiate meaning in, ELF. (Ehrenreich 2009) In addition, Professor Murata is retiring in March 2020, and a special *festschrift* volume with Palgrave is to be published that month, entitled *English as a Lingua Franca in Japan - Towards Multilingual Practices* with contributions from 18 leading ELF scholars based in Japan, plus several international ELF scholars. The volume promises to help further spread interest in ELF in Japan (Konakahara and Tsuchiya 2020).

In addition, in Murata's own PhD program, she has helped to develop an increasing number of PhD recipients whose main focus is ELF. It should be noted as well that Hino at Osaka University is co-founder of the ELF SIG, and has also developed a growing cadre of EFL/EIL-focused scholars. The CWE at Chukyo University currently only offers a masters' program but has also developed several young scholars who wrote their theses on ELF, and who are now teaching in local area high schools and universities.

The ELF SIG, formed at the beginning of 2016, has not yet outlined its full research agenda, but promises to be the best vehicle to increase understanding of, appreciation for, and implementation of ELF-informed ideas across Japan in coming years. One of the research foci mentioned in the original proposal to create the SIG was the importance of the "Global 30" project (now renamed as the 'Top Global University Project')—an effort to create a network of world-class universities in Japan which also offer certain majors of study in English. English as a Medium of Instruction (heretofore EMI) is a challenge in Japan higher education since it is difficult to have enough Japanese students of a sufficiently high English proficiency level to interact in the classroom with toe-to-toe with international students from various backgrounds (Murata and Iino 2014; D'Angelo 2019). EMI goes hand in hand with ELF in today's global education sector (Jenkins 2014), and ELF research can provide important insights into how Japanese university students can better cope with the reality of sharing an interactive, discussion-based classroom with an internationally-diverse student population. Japanese students are extremely reticent to speak out in front to others, and this is intensified when the others may have better English skills.

A final note on the importance of the SIG is that JACET also has several recent SIGs whose interests may dovetail with ELF. SIG #26 is on World Englishes and Cross-cultural Understanding (founded by former CWE Dean Hiroshi Yoshikawa), SIG #41 is on English Education in East Asia, and SIG #54 is devoted to English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Collaborative efforts among these SIGs could further strengthen the impact of ELF in Japan. While JACET membership is predominantly Japanese nationals, another large organization, The Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT), has a mainly native-speaker membership and also boasts nearly three thousand members (JALT 2016). With its heavy NS orientation, JALT does not currently have SIGs on world Englishes, EIL or ELF, but has in the recent years hosted ELF-aware scholars such as A. Matsuda, N. Hino and S Canagarajah as plenary speakers, so there is a trend towards openness to pluralism in JALT, and the timing is right for an ELF scholar to step in to fill this role.

4. ELT-related initiative vis-à-vis the reality in Japan

4.1 ELF in Education

Regarding ELT efforts informed by ELF research and insights, there are several programs in place. In 2002 Chukyo University established the CWE as referenced above, with a goal of making students more aware of varieties of English around the world, and having less of a native speaker orientation. The CWE hosted a weekend workshop in cooperation with JAFAE in 2003 with talks by Larry Smith, Nobuyuki Hino and Nobuyuki Honna, Sanzo Sakai, Takao Suzuki, Yuko Takeshita, Paroo Nihalani, and Braj and Yamuna Kachru. The CWE also hosted the 2006 IAWE Conference, part of which was a special panel dedicated to the work on EIL by Larry Smith. Over the years since then, the CWE has also hosted a series of annual lectures for students by leading WEs/EIL/ELF researchers including Shirley Dita, Isabel Pefianco Martin, Enric Llurda, Danilo Dayag, and Ahmar Mahboob. While the concept of EIL or ELF is not integral to the entire curriculum, all students take an Introduction to World Englishes class (the last three weeks of which covers ELF and EIL) as first-year students, and are required to visit Singapore for a 3-week study tour. These undergraduate students do not acquire a deep understanding of ELF, but their raised awareness makes the reality of ELF sink in later, either when they do a year abroad in Italy, Finland or Korea, or when they venture into the global working world (D'Angelo 2016). It is interesting to note that even when bound for the U.S., CWE year-abroad students find most of their friends are from Korea, Turkey and Brazil. Many CWE students expressed that they now see the reality of "world Englishes."

Hino has also made significant efforts at Osaka University to introduce ELF/EIL to his undergraduate and graduate students (Hino 2018). With his graduate students especially, they are mixed with a significant percentage of international students thanks to Osaka U. being one of the highly competitive imperial universities. In his classes in Osaka, he has developed the concept of CELFIL (Content and ELF Integrated Learning) whereby ELF and CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) are combined in an innovative way. His methodology shows ELF being truly integrated into other widely adopted approaches.

Thanks to the Top Global University Project, Keio University, Waseda University, Hiroshima University, Nagoya University and others are wrestling with introducing EMI programs to their curriculum, where ELF issues are an everyday reality. One of the concerns for expanding ELF in such settings is the reluctance of many Japanese faculty members, in spite of their ability to write and deliver academic papers in English, to actually use English in the classroom. A foreign professor at Hiroshima University has administered an extensive questionnaire on attitudes of Japanese faculty towards teaching in English, and found considerable resistance to lecturing in English (Sponseller 2014) mainly due to the Japanese professors feeling that they did not have 'native like' English. Being exposed to ELF research could help such faculty overcome this native-centric view.

In one effort specifically given the ELF moniker, Masaki Oda at Tamagawa University has created a Center for English as a Lingua Franca. The Center has an office area and open space for teachers and students to use. While Tamagawa does not have an actual English major or EMI program, Oda has made an effort to bring in teachers with an ELF research background or from non-native contexts such as the Philippines. The Center is a resource for mainly part-time teachers who teach required English skills classes for other departments, but does not have a mandate to conduct teacher training in ELF-informed methods, so its impact may still be limited at this point. Oda currently serves on the Board of Asia TEFL, a very large ELT organization in this region, and his influence among Japanese academics could help to spread ELF efforts to other universities around Japan.

One final area in education to address is secondary education. While Japan is still very grammar and test-oriented at the secondary level, change is beginning to occur. Official English language textbooks are showing an increase in the number of characters who come from, and topics which relate to, non-native backgrounds (Kawashima 2009). There is also increased interest in "Active Learning" as teachers attempt to introduce more communicative methods into their classrooms. For over 27 years the JET program (Japanese English Teachers) has existed, which has imported mainly NS recent college graduates to Japan to serve as "assistant language teachers" at Japanese secondary schools, to give the students a feel for "living English". Although this program has often been criticized as reinforcing an NS-bias (Kawami 2020), the number of NNS JETs has increased over the decades (Kawashima 2009), including those from Africa, the Bahamas, Singapore, The Philippines and India/Pakistan. In one recent example of the kind of grassroots change which is possible, an American former international student at CWE, now working as a JET, invited the author to give a keynote at the annual JET workshop held in Shizuoka, Japan in November 2016—an event to be attended by over 1,000 JETs and local teachers. This is the type of rare opportunity to reach a broader audience which can only occur once a critical mass of smaller efforts by individual ELF-aware scholars is made. I hope to see more such opportunities in the future.

4.1.1. ELF and the CEFR

In a recent effort, the author, with his co-researcher Alexander Imig, has received a JSPS grant to investigate the implications of the academic writing descriptors of the Common European Frame of Reference (CEFR), in the Japanese context. CEFR is widely applied in Europe as well as increasingly across the globe. Imig is a scholar from Germany who has worked closely over the past 10 years in conjunction with important Japanese scholars, on applying the CEFR to Japan. While some feel that the CEFR is a prescriptive type of influence, one must also note that references to native speakers have been largely eliminated in the CEFR Companion volume (CEFR 2018), and while descriptors related to academic writing are quite limited, the new introduction of the section related to language mediation provides an opportunity to investigate how Japanese writers of English mediate between their native language, and their English writing. For the 2018 and 2019 academic years, Imig has joined my 4th year seminar in which students write their graduation thesis. All students upload their work and various reflections on their writing to Chukyo's *Manabo* learning management system (LMS), which provides a wealth of data on the writing process, with students actively considering how they handle the process of language mediation. The outcome of this study could have a significant impact on providing a bridge between ELF and CEFR, resulting in a broader application of ELF into the written domain, which has to date been under-researched. Let us now look at an important sector which is dependent on the education sector, but involves a much wider and more high-stakes use of ELF.

4.2 ELF in Business

ELF is the reality for Japanese business people around the world today. While at one time much of Japanese trade was conducted with America and the West, Y. Kachru pointed out as early as 2003 that data from the Japanese Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Communications indicated that Japan's trade with non-Inner Circle countries "far exceeded that with native English speaking areas of the world." (Kachru 2003, 40) This trend has only increased, and Japanese business people have to be prepared to interact in English with ELF users from all over the world on a regular basis (D'Angelo 2016). Educational programs at the secondary and university level should be preparing students for this reality, but it requires a consistent and sustained effort. Developments such as international discount clothing maker UNIQLO to make English its official language for all meetings, even among all Japanese participants, and the use of English as the official language at Nissan/Renault, show an increased commitment to ELF in business. It remains to be seen whether this trend will increase, but it should be followed with interest.

The role of JICA – The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA 2016) should also not be underplayed, as Japan is one of the largest providers of international aid projects, and there is a strong need for ELF among JICA representatives.

Yamami (2015) demonstrates that among parents with work experience in Singapore and elsewhere in Asia, and also among those with higher levels of English proficiency, there is much more appreciation of ELF, and less of an NS proclivity. One positive sign of an increased openness to the reality of ELF in Japan among business people is the recent demand for books on Indian and other varieties of English in Japanese bookstore chains. Professor Enokizono of CWE, a fluent Hindi and Urdu speaker, and expert on the subcontinent, has authored a recent book on developing listening comprehension skills for Indian English (Enokizono 2016), which is selling briskly, indicating that Japanese business people are eager to adapt to ELF-like settings.

5. Future challenges for ELF in Japan

ELF faces a more difficult context in Japan (and elsewhere in Asia) than in EU countries. English is certainly used widely in business in Asia, but the majority of Japanese may still believe that the goal of studying English is to reach native-like proficiency. Japan does not possess the depth of penetration of internationalization of its population as one might find in Europe, and on university campuses in Austria, The Netherlands, Sweden and even Italy and France.

Whereas in Europe a large percentage of research is conducted in English, in Japan almost every field of inquiry still has much of its fundamental research written in Japanese—even if later, key studies are then published in English. Japan has powerful translation abilities, and most of the best known texts in various fields are translated in Japanese. In contrast, the University of Helsinki project "WRELFA": The Written Corpus of Academic ELF (WRELFA 2015), draws on 372,000 words of academic research blogs, 330 PhD examiner reports in English, and a Scientific ELF Corpus of 759,000 total words with writers from 10 different first language backgrounds. This fascinating compilation of ELF data would be unconscionable in Japan.

An important step to increase the status of ELF in Japan would be for the small but growing ranks of academics committed to ELF to join hands with leading business professionals who see the need for ELF, to launch projects to promote understanding of the paradigm. For example, the inadequacy of traditional measures of testing English proficiency, such as the TOEIC or TOEFL, has been repeatedly pointed out by EIL and ELF scholars (Shohamy 2014; Lowenberg 2012). In terms of business leaders, K. Ito, a CWE professor who was formerly managing director of Toyota India, in a recent plenary address (Ito 2016) mentioned that for personnel officers in Japan, the TOEIC test is not a good indicator of an employee's ability to succeed when sent overseas to Delhi. Perhaps such scholars and business leaders could join together to develop a more valuable form of testing.

6. Conclusion

ELF has made rapid inroads into Japan over just the past five years, demonstrating the great vitality and usefulness of the paradigm. ELF makes more sense for Japan than world Englishes, since in Japan the main uses of English are in international, rather than intra-national domains. ELF can provide Japanese users with more confidence in their English-medium interactions, since it does not privilege native speakers, and can raise awareness that each user's unique "idiolect" is what they naturally bring to any ELF situation. ELF can be a significant help to implementing a more effective ELT in Japan, as well as a paradigm to help Japanese business/science/medical professionals be more effective in their use of English.

While Japan is not yet as fertile a ground for ELF as continental Europe, efforts such as the "Top Global University Project" have brought young scholars from Nigeria, Uganda, Indonesia, Vietnam and countless other contexts to the campuses of the top Japanese graduate programs. In addition, efforts of JICA to help developing nations, Japan's increased focus on business in Asia and South Asia, and its role in ASEAN plus 3 (ASEAN plus Japan, Korea and China), all make it beneficial for Japanese users of English to become effective ELF users. The status of ELF is rising in Japan, but the progress of this increase in status requires considerable effort from the ELF-committed academic community to take full advantage of what ELF has to offer, lest Japan revert to more NS, prescriptivist paradigms.

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Nobody Takes Us Canadians Seriousl-eh! Linguistic and visual characterisation of Canadians in *South Park*

Abstract
This article seeks to investigate the linguistic, cultural and visual representation of Canadian characters in one of the most popular and "impolite" American animated sitcoms, *South Park*. References are made to Culpeper's model of impoliteness, Grice's Cooperative Principles, and the use of stereotyping as a means of characterisation in audiovisual products. A tendency towards oversimplifying everything that is attached to Canada and exaggerating the differences between American and Canadian characters has been found in all the episodes analysed, from a visual and linguistic perspective.

1. *Introduction*

Non-standard accents and dialects are often used in audiovisual products to convey social and geographical features of fictional speakers. Ranzato (2018a, b) has analysed the use of British accents as a way of representing (among other things) negative characters in contrast with positive characters, which are often portrayed with American accents. This work intends to contribute by investigating the use of the fictional Canadian accent in the series *South Park*. In audiovisual products, Canadian characters have often been portrayed as bizarre people who are linguistically and culturally differentiated from and contrasted with their American neighbours. *The Simpsons*, *Corner Gas*, *Brother Bear*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *The Great White North*, *Zootopia* are just some examples of audiovisual products representing stereotyped Canadian characters. *South Park* has been selected for its consistency in portraying such characters. A corpus of six episodes and a full-length film will be considered:

- *Terrance and Phillip: not without my anus* (S2E1);

- *It's Christmas in Canada* (S7E15);
- *Canada on strike* (S12E4);
- *Royal Pudding* (S15E3);
- *Freemium isn't free* (S18E6);
- *Where my country gone?* (S19E2);
- *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut* (film).

The episodes have been singled out for their particularly significant contribution to the representation of Canadian characters. This article seeks to compare the sociolinguistic features of Standard Canadian English with their ficto-linguistic representation in the American sitcom. References will be made to Culpeper's model of impoliteness, Grice's Cooperative Principles, and the use of stereotyping as a means of characterisation in audiovisual dialogues. More precisely, this work focuses on ethnic or national stereotypes threatening Canadians' social identity face (Spencer-Oatey, 2002), taking into account the stereotypical Canadian accent, as well as several cultural and visual references.

2. Stereotypes

The term "stereotype" is a neoclassical compound deriving from the Greek words *stereos* (firm, solid) and *typos* (impression), "solid impression". Baker (2008) declares that stereotyping implies exaggerating the differences between the two poles of a binary system, and reducing to a few traits the behaviour, speech and other characteristics of all the members belonging to the weakest pole. He adds that stereotyping occurs where there are significant inequalities of power. According to Giddens (2006), stereotypes are preconceived opinions of the members of a group towards the members of another group; they are very often unfounded and resistant to change, even when they are denied by the direct experience. He adds that most of the stereotypes originate from a psychological mechanism known as "displacement", where an emotion or impulse is redirected from its original object to another. Schachter et al. (2014) define stereotyping as a process through which people make inferences about other individuals on the basis of their knowledge of the categories the others belong to. Although this is a fundamental process in everyday life – where past experience and mental schemata are of the utmost importance – it might turn into a negative process if stereotypes are inaccurate, overused, automatic and self-perpetuating. Labov (1972) states that stereotypes are socially marked forms, part of the general knowledge of adult members of the society. They are deeply rooted and hardly eradicable. Along similar lines, Hamilton and Sherman (1994) define stereotypes as a set of beliefs stored in memory as a cognitive structure, and Andersen et al. (1990) as "highly organised social categories that have the properties of schemata" (192). The latter add that stereotypes might not conform to any set of objective facts, and that they emerge from forms that have become the overt object of social comment, and have eventually disappeared.

Lippi-Green (2012) is of the opinion that media play an important role in reinforcing linguistic stereotypes and stigmatizing non-standard accents and dialects. According to Gross (1991), the use of stereotypes is a common practice in the process of media characterisation, since fictional characters are meant to be easily recognisable by the audience. Another scholar who has investigated the use of stereotypes in audiovisual products is Hall (1999), who maintains that

> stereotypes get hold of the few simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized characteristics about a person, reduce everything about the person to those traits, exaggerate and simplify them, and fix them without change or development to eternity. (258)

The selective nature of stereotyping is also at the basis of the process of representation; Ranzato and Zanotti (2018) declare that "representation is always the result of an act of selection of traits and features, both visual and verbal" (1). Hall (1997) ends up defining stereotyping as a "representational practice" (277). It is, thus, a shortcut geared towards easy characterisation. Kozloff (2000), a leading voice in the study of audiovisual dialogues, states that fictional speech is ruled by "issues of power and dominance, of empathy and intimacy, of class, ethnicity, and gender" (26). She adds that non-standard varieties are "ideologically potent", and "are used onscreen to sketch in a character's past and cultural heritage, to locate each person in terms of his or her financial standing, education level, geographical background, or ethnic group" (81).

3. South Park

South Park is an American satirical animated sitcom created by Trey Parker and Matt Stone in 1997. The series revolves around four boys – Stan Marsh, Kyle Broflovski, Eric Cartman, and Kenny McCormick – and their adventures in and around the Colorado town, South Park. Despite its appearance, *South Park* is not a cartoon series for children. The show has often been criticised for its profanity and dark humour that satirises a wide range of topics, such as the clash between Americans and Canadians. Lindsay Coleman (2008) argues that "*South Park*'s inclusion of offensive material functions as a means of satirically criticizing the real-life phenomena that this material signifies", and that the creators "satirize the racism that still pervades American social life" (132). In a meta-cinematic play, in *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut*, a vulgar television show starred by two fictitious Canadian actors – Terrance and Phillip – is broadcast in the imaginary American city, South Park. Two American spectators degrade all Canadians on the basis of Terrance and Phillip's vulgar show, which is believed to have a negative influence on American children's behaviour:

AMERICAN WOMAN: What garbage!
AMERICAN MAN: Well, what do you expect? They're Canadian.
AMERICAN WOMAN: It seems that everything's gone wrong since Canada came along!

Boyd et al. (2008) declare that "the idea of blaming the corruption of America's youth on another country (especially Canada, long under the cultural dominance of the United States) is comically absurd" (62).

The series has been criticised for its "impoliteness", which in this work acquires a technical connotation. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), linguistic impoliteness stems from Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). People have an identity face that they tend to preserve and promote in their social relations. Impoliteness originates when at least one FTA is used to attack people's face. Criticism generally threatens people's positive face (the want to be approved of), whereas requests threaten negative face (the want to be unimpeded). Culpeper – who has applied the model of impoliteness to the study of dramatic language – defines impoliteness as "a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts" (2011, 254); he adds that impoliteness comes about when the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, and the hearer perceives the FTA as intentionally face-attacking. Therefore, intentionality is fundamental in distinguishing intentional cases of impoliteness – where somebody intends to offend with full awareness – from cases where somebody accidentally causes offence. Identity face referring to a group – e.g. ethnic, religious, nationality groups – has been called social identity face (Spencer-Oatey, 2002), and involves any group that a person is a member of and is concerned about. The aforementioned dialogue between the two American spectators is a clear example of an FTA threatening social identity face; Terrance and Phillip's vulgarity is extended to all the Canadians by flouting Grice's maxim of quality – "try to make your contribution one that is true" (1975, 36). As is consistently shown in Culpeper's (2011) book on Impoliteness, Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principles are generally flouted when speakers perform FTAs, since they intentionally decide not to cooperate with their hearers. All the instances provided in the following sections are examples of intentional FTAs affecting Canadians' social identity face, both from a visual and linguistic perspective. Culpeper's (2005) definitions of positive and negative impoliteness are not mere negations of Brown and Levinson's positive and negative politeness. Positive impoliteness is rather defined as "the use of strategies designed to [...] ignore the other, exclude the other from an activity, be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic, use inappropriate identity markers, [...] seek disagreement, use taboo words" (41). Negative impoliteness is defined as "the use of strategies designed to [...] scorn or ridicule, be contemptuous, do not treat the other seriously, belittle the other, invade the other's space, explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect" (41). Furthermore, using Culpeper's terminology, FTAs addressed to Canadians are "bald on record" – they are performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way – and "without redressive actions" – they do not pay the least attention to the other's face.

4. Visual code

Straight lines and rectangular shapes characterise everything that is related to Canada, from people's bodies, to animals, flowers, cars and objects that are round by definition (e.g. wheels). Everything is oversimplified in Canada, even the roads. In *It's Christmas in Canada* (S7E15), Canada is said to have one road – *The Only Road* – going all over the country from East to West. In all the episodes and the film, American characters have human features, whereas Canadians are portrayed in a more simplistic way, with two black dots instead of realistic eyes, and Pac-Man-like, square heads cut at the level of the mouth. In *Terrance and Phillip: behind the blow* (S5E5), while Terrance and Phillip are performing, an American woman in the audience asks her American husband:

AMERICAN WOMAN: Oh my God, what's wrong with their heads?!
AMERICAN MAN: It's alright, darling, they're just Canadian.

Furthermore, in *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut*, the American founder of the movement "Mothers Against Canada" declares:

You Canadians are all the same. With your beady little eyes and flapping heads. You're trash! Blame Canada! With all their beady little eyes and flappin' heads so full o' lies! Canadians want to fight us, because we won't tolerate their potty-mouths.

As in the example analysed before, in these two instances Canadians' social face is threatened by flouting Grice's maxim of quality. Moreover, in the latter examples, also Grice's maxim of relevance is flouted – "be relevant" (46) – since there is no relevant connection between the shape of Canadians' heads and their nationality. The mere physical appearance is used to disparage Canadians, who "are all the same". There is no physical differentiation among Canadians, and they are – allegedly – of an inferior ethnicity when compared to Americans; they are "trash". In an interview, Trey Parker and Matt Stone, the producers of *South Park*, declared that during a trip to Toronto they decided to differentiate American from Canadian characters because "that's just the way they (Canadians) all look up there" (2014). In *Terrance and Phillip: Not Without My Anus* (S2E1), Ugly Bob, a Canadian character who is believed to be ugly and wears a paper bag on his head to hide his countenance, introduces himself to Saddam Hussein, the new Canadian Prime Minister, in the following way:

UGLY BOB: I'm Bob. But my friends call me Ugly Bob, because I have the features of a deformed burn victim.
SADDAM HUSSEIN: Really? I thought all Canadians looked alike.

Not only can Americans spot Canadians, but also Canadians themselves are able to recognise other Canadians on the basis of stereotypical and unfounded physical features. Therefore, Canadians are not only the object of derision, but they are also portrayed as self-mocking characters. In *Royal Pudding* (S15E3), Ugly Bob and Ike, both Canadians living in South Park, leave the US to reach Canada to fight for their endangered nation. They recognise each other as Canadians because of their physical aspect. Ugly Bob explains that he used to be called Ugly when he was in Canada, where he was considered as such, but in the US his ugliness corresponds to his nationality. Ugliness – a negative physical feature – is associated with (all) Canadians' physical aspect.

UGLY BOB: Hey. Hey there. *[Ike turns his head to look back at Bob]* You going to Canada too? *[leaves his seat and moves over to Kyle]* What am I saying? Of course you're going to Canada. You're Canadian, sure enough. [...] I'm from Toronto originally, but everywhere I went people were terrified by my disfigurement. I have to wear this bag on my head because I'm hideously ugly. Had to move here to the United States. Here, people don't think I look ugly. They just think I look Canadian.

In the episodes showing Canadian characters, "pseudo-satire depicts real-world motifs in arbitrary, apparently meaningless ways" (Frim, 2014: 155). The visual representation of Canada and Canadians bears no connection to real-life Canada. The use of rectangular shapes as a means of portraying Canadian objects, landscape and human beings is completely unfounded.

5. Linguistic code

The linguistic variety that is analysed in this article is a fictional representation of the Canadian accent. Ferguson (1998) has coined the term *ficto-linguistics* to describe how languages function within literary texts:

by ficto-linguistics I mean the systems of language that appear in novels and both deviate from accepted or expected socio-linguistic patterns and indicate identifiable alternative patterns congruent to other aspects of the fictional world. (3)

Hodson adds that "the terms ficto-linguistics can be extended to include the study of language varieties in all works of fiction, including narrative poetry, film and television" (2014, 14). Pavesi (2015) maintains that audiovisual speech is non-spontaneous and pre-fabricated; it is inauthentic orality, a mere imitation of spontaneous spoken language. Audiovisual dialogue is an "inaccurate" imitation of natural conversation, which has been

scripted, written and rewritten, censored, polished, rehearsed, and performed. The actual hesitations, repetitions, digressions, grunts, interruptions, and mutterings of everyday speech have either been pruned away, or, if not, deliberately included" (Kozloff, 2000: 18).

Every pejorative element attached to the fictional Canadian accent is to be seen as a way of mocking fictional Canadian characters, in light of *South Park*'s American-centrism. In the sitcom, American English is portrayed as a "nobler" variety of English, and the Canadian accent as an odd way of pronouncing it.

5.1 Rhoticity vs Non-rhoticity

In *South Park*, Canadians speak with a different accent when compared to American characters. The term *accent* should be differentiated from *dialect*: the former "simply refers to pronunciation; [...] (the latter), on the other hand, has to do also with the grammatical forms that you use, as well, perhaps, as any regional vocabulary that you employ" (Trudgill, 1994: 7). The main feature that stands out is the non-rhotic realisation of postvocalic and final /r/. The producers declared that Terrance and Phillip, the first Canadian characters of the series, "weren't necessarily Canadian. We thought Terrance and Phillip were probably like, British or something, and then they just became Canadian out of necessity" (2014). Their British accent started being associated with Canada, revitalising the stereotype according to which Standard Canadian English (SCE) is closer to Standard British English (SBE) than Standard American English (SAE), which is, of course, an oversimplification. Boberg (2010) maintains that

> in addition to its colonial and post-colonial relations with Britain, Canada has naturally had a close relationship throughout its history with the US. As Canada's historical ties to Britain have weakened, those to the US have become stronger (30).

He adds that despite Canada's former status as a British colony and member of the British Commonwealth, SCE is influenced by extensive exposure to SAE, which arises from the geographical position of Canada in the top half of North America, and the many historical, cultural and economic ties between Canada and the US. Trudgill (2006) has foregrounded dialect mixing resulting from different combinations of American and British input as a crucial component in the crystallization of Canadian English, but the influence SAE is having on SCE because of the geographical proximity, travel, business, television and popular culture is undeniable. Despite this, almost all the Canadian characters in the series are portrayed with a British accent, which further simplifies Canadians, who lack an individual linguistic differentiation. What linguists call idiolects – the speech of one person – of Canadian characters are eclipsed by their stereotyped "community speech". The non-rhotic accent is a false reproduction of SCE, which is a rhotic variety of the English language. Both SCE and SAE differentiate themselves from the other main World Englishes of the Southern Hemisphere – Australian, New Zealand and South-African Englishes – mainly in the realisation of postvocalic and final /r/. North American varieties and those of the Southern Hemisphere have been influenced by SBE in different centuries. In the US and Canada, /r/ is always preserved in postvocalic (e.g. farm /fɑrm/) and final positions (e.g. car /kɑr/), whereas in non-rhotic varieties in the Southern Hemisphere, and in SBE it is not retained. According to Beal (2010), the loss of rhoticity in English can be traced back to eighteenth-century London English, where it was perceived as a vulgarism until the first decade of the twentieth century, when it was recognised as a feature of RP. In the early twenty-first century, the rhotic pronunciations started being marked as non-standard in England. According to Deterding (2010) the pronunciation that is found in the different anglophone areas can to a certain extent be predicted on the basis of two factors: when the settlers left Britain, and where they came from. Therefore, most speakers in the US and Canada have a rhotic accent because the original settlers left England at a time when rhoticity was the norm throughout most of the country; furthermore, many of the early immigrants came from the west of England, Scotland and Ireland, which still have mainly rhotic accents. In contrast, migration to the Southern Hemisphere took place later, mostly in the nineteenth century, by which time the standard pronunciation in England was nonrhotic, and most of the settlers were from the south-east of England, especially London, where rhoticity is not generally found.

5.2 Canadian Raising

The most evident feature of the accent of Canadian characters is Canadian Raising. SCE differs from SBE and SAE in the pronunciation of the diphthongs [ou] and [ay] when preceding a voiceless consonant. The former, in words like "house" and "out", is not pronounced as /aʊ/, with an open front unrounded vowel, but as /ʌʊ/, with an open-mid back unrounded vowel; the latter, in words like "wife" and "type", is not pronounced as /aɪ/, but as /ʌɪ/. This phenomenon originated in the sixteenth century, when the first British settlers arrived in Canada, and significant changes were still occurring in the English vowel system. A similar tendency has been found in Scottish English, and many scholars agree with the fact that Canadian Raising is due to the influence that Scottish immigrants had on the Canadian variety. Trudgill (2006), for instance, is of the opinion that Canadian Raising originated in the primordial mix of transplanted dialects in the early history of Canadian English, while Bailey (1982) considers it to be a distinctive Canadian development.

In *South Park*, this linguistic feature is exaggerated in line with the stereotype according to which Canadians apparently say /əˈbu:t/ ("aboot", with a close back rounded vowel) instead of /əˈbaʊt/ ("about"), which is true up to a certain extent. Stereotyped forms are based on a divorce from the forms which are actually used in speech (Labov, 1972), that is on forms that no longer occur in real-life language use. Canadian Raising is not a consistent feature of Canadian English as the series shows, yet it "continues to be the basis of the most popular American stereotype of Canadian speech, at least as it applies to /aw/" (Labov, 2005). Canadian Raising characterises the speech of only certain areas of Canada, and is certainly disappearing among the youngest generations. In *Canada on strike* (S12E4), the president of the World Canadian Bureau, Stephen Abootman (note his surname, reproducing the pronunciation of the diphthong [ou]), after realising that no one cares about Canada, announces a national strike to seek more international attention. Among the banners showed during the strike, some say "It's aboot time!", where the peculiar pronunciation is put down in black and white. This is an example of what Hodson (2014) calls *semi-phonetic respelling*, which is a literary technique that authors use to reproduce non-standard accents. According to Hodson, the representation of different varieties of English in fictional texts is approached through three levels: sound, vocabulary and grammar. She adds that sound is the most significant feature of dialect representation. Semi-phonetic respelling attempts to respell a word in a non-standard pronunciation so that when reading that word, it sounds non-standard. Another common technique is *eye-dialect*, which is a "dialect to the eye but not to the ear; [...] it gives the impression of being dialectal when the reader looks at it" (Hodson, 2014: 95). The word "enouf", for instance, is eye-dialect for "enough" because it does not change the pronunciation but hints at the fact that the speaker has a non-standard accent. According to Preston (1985, 328), this technique is used "to denigrate the speaker so represented by making him or her appear boorish, uneducated, rustic, gangsterish, and so on". In *South Park*, there are only few visual representations of non-standard pronunciations, which tend to be semi-phonetic respellings.

In the sitcom, Canadian Raising occurs every time a Canadian character speaks, but it is in *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut* that this linguistic feature is overtly ridiculed. The Canadian ambassador is mocked by the American ambassador for his pronunciation of the word "about":

AMERICAN AMBASSADOR: We don't know what all the fuss is about.
CANADIAN AMBASSADOR: The fuss is aboot taking our citizens. It's aboot not censoring our art. It's aboot... *[the American delegation begins to crack up]* It's aboot... *[scans the room]* What's so God-damned funny?
AMERICAN AMBASSADOR: *[recovering]* N-nothing, nothing. Uh, could you tell us again what your argument is all about?
CANADIAN AMBASSADOR: This is not aboot diplomacy, this is aboot dignity... *[the American delegates chuckle]* This is aboot respect. This is aboot realizing that humor is... *[the American delegation cracks up again]*

In the previous dialogue, the American ambassador performs an FTA threatening the Canadian ambassador's social face; it is an example of what Culpeper (2005) calls "negative impoliteness", since it is designed to "ridicule, be contemptuous, do not treat the other seriously, belittle the other" (41). The American ambassador cracks up and chuckles at the Canadian's pronunciation of the word "about", and he even asks the Canadian ambassador to repeat what he has just said with the mere purpose of making fun of his accent.

5.3 Eh?

According to Gold and Tremblay (2006), the pragmatic particle "eh?" is "a marker of both the Canadian English dialect and of Canadian national identity". Orkin (1973, 35) declares that

> *eh?* rhymes with hay. The great Canajan[1] monosyllable and shibboleth, "eh?", is all things to all men. Other nations may boast their interjections and interrogative expletives - such as the Mare Can[2] "huh?", the Briddish[3] "what?", the French "hein?" - but none of them can claim the range and scope of meaning that are encompassed by the simple Canajan "eh?". Interrogation, assertion, surprise, bewilderment, disbelief, contempt — these are only the beginning of "eh?" and already we have passed beyond the limitations of "huh?", "what?" and "hein?" and their pallid analogues.

This expression became popular in Canada in the 1980s thanks to a television series called *The Great White North*, with its protagonists Bob and Doug McKenzie, who sprinkled their dialogues with eh's. Although this expression is also common in some British varieties, some specific uses of it can be found only in Canada. The different nuances of "eh?" depend on the intonation with which it is uttered. Gibson (1998, 30-31) has classified eight different types of eh? (Table 1):

Function	**Sample Sentence**
Reversed polarity	That should be okay, eh? (= shouldn't it?)
Constant polarity	A: He said "eh" twice. B: Oh, he said "eh", eh? (= did he?)
Imperative	Look at that, eh!
Exclamation	What a drag, eh?
Polar interrogative	(Did) you see the game last night, eh?
Wh- question	What are you trying to say, eh?
Pardon	Eh?
Anecdotal (narrative eh)	He went from building, eh, to building.

Table 1 Gibson's eight types of "eh?" (1977)

Wright (2006) has added (Table 2):

[1] Canajan > Canadian
[2] Mare Can > American
[3] Briddish > British

Insult	You're a real snob, eh!
Accusation	You took the last piece, eh!
Fixed expression	Thanks, eh! / I know, eh!

Table 2 Wright's additions (2006)

Apparently, French-Canadian people tend to use "eh?" mostly with the "pardon" function. This might be due to the influence that the French expression "hein?" has on them. Furthermore, "eh?" is stereotypically associated with male, uneducated, working-class speakers.

In *Canada on Strike* (S12E4), a Canadian woodcutter declares "it's like the world doesn't respect Canada at all, eh?", a banner says "honk for Canada eh!", where "eh" is used with its exclamative function. In addition to this, an ice hockey player affirms "nobody takes us Canadians seriousleh!", where the expression "eh" becomes a suffix replacing the morpheme -ly used for adverbs. In linguistics, grammatical morphemes are stronger than lexical morphemes, and changes in grammar are infinitely slower than in vocabulary. The replacement of the grammatical suffix -ly with -eh is a good representation of the strength of linguistic stereotypes. In *It's Christmas in Canada* (S7E15), Steve, a fisherman from Newfoundland – allegedly, all the people living in Newfoundland are fishermen – speaks slowly and with many pitch changes, which make his accent very melodious. Note the significant repetition of the expression "eh?":

STEVE: Oh yeah, the Prime Minister, eh? He sure has screwed up things for Newfoundland. Life just hasn't been the same since he made sodomy illegal. [...]
STEVE: We could always take my boat, eh? [...]
STEVE: We gave it our best, but our best wasn't good enough, eh?

The fisherman from Newfoundland, furthermore, uses the possessive adjective "me" instead of "my", as is common in Ireland, Scotland and the dialects in the North and West of England, where most of the first settlers came from:

STEVE: I can sodomize me boys again.

Besides, in *Royal Wedding* (S15E3), after the princess of Canada is kidnapped during the Royal Wedding, Canadians organise demonstrations to get her back. A banner is shown with "Come back to us, eh!" written on it, where "eh" is used with its imperative function.

5.4 French-Canadian speakers

In 1535 the French explorer Jacques Cartier reached St. Lawrence river and sailed upriver, discovering an indigenous village in what is now Montréal. A century later, French explorers returned to Canada under the leading of Samuel de Champlain, and decided to settle in what was called Acadia, the current Maritime Provinces. Montréal was founded in 1642, and the area corresponding to Québec was called Nouvelle France.

In *It's Christmas in Canada* (S7E15), several Canadian areas are shown from West to East. Québec is the most bizarre of all of them. Typical French folk music is played, and French and Québécois stereotypes are attached to people: they are mimes, painters wearing berets and having moustaches, people playing accordions, and ice hockey players. Furthermore, shops' signs are written in French, such as "Patisserie" and "Berets". As can be seen in the following dialogue, French-Canadians are often depicted as patriotic and independentists. They believe Québec is the real Canada, "za bezt Canada in ze land". From a linguistic point of view, French influences English pronunciation and vocabulary:

FRENCH-CANADIANS: *[Before them, lots of French Canadians cavort like it's Euro Disney, with circus performers of all stripes doing what they do best.]* There'z no Canada like French Canada, it'z za bezt Canada in ze land. Ze ozer Canada is hardly Canada. If you lived here for a day, you'd understand.
MIME: Honh honh honnnh! Welcome to French Canada.
ICE HOCKEY PLAYER: We have everyzing your heart could desire. Trapezes. Trampolines. And lots and lots of cheese.
PAINTER: *[takes off his mustache]* Would you like a moustache?
RICK : Just stay calm, boys. French Canadians are a little… odd.
MIME: You cannot pass through French Canada unless you take zat phone call! Ring-ring. Ring-ring.
KYLE: Hello?
MIME: Allo. If you are going to see za new Prime Minister, then I want to go with you. He has passed a new law forbidding us French Canadians to drink wine.
PAINTER: How can ze French not drink wine?? Travestie!

The voiceless and voiced dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ do not exist in French. They are generally pronounced as /z/ by French speakers, such as in [ze] for "the", [ozer] for "other", [zat] for "that". The voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ as well is often pronounced as a voiced alveolar fricative /z/, as it happens in French ([bezt] for "best"). The word "wine" is slightly nasalised, and the term “moustache” is pronounced with a French accent, [mu’staʃ]. In addition to this, when the mime answers the phone, he says “âllo” instead of “hello”, which is the French expression used when picking up the receiver. Moreover, in *Canada on strike* (S12E4), the Canadian President has a French accent and mispronounces the alveolar trill /r/ as a voiced labial-velar approximant /w/ (pwesident, fwend), as does the minister of mobile gaming in *Freemium isn’t free* (S18E6), who says “oh, it’s tewific”, and pronounces the name Phillip with the accent on the last vowel, as in French. [w] is the visual representation of the French voiced uvular fricative /ʁ/.

It is worth noticing that not only does the discrimination against Canada originate in the US – as is shown explicitly in *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut*, where an American man declares “They’re not even a real country anyway! – but also within Canada itself, between French Canadians and anglophone Canadians, as well as between Canadians and First Nations, the predominant indigenous peoples in Canada. They are reproduced as wearing hides, furs, using spears to haunt, and writing on animals’ skin using mysterious symbols. The hatred between Canadians and First Nations is reciprocated: the former consider First Nations as primitive, uncivilised, whereas the latter see Canadians as a threat to their survival; they also see themselves as the authentic Canadians, living in Canada since before the arrival of the civilised Europeans.

CANADIAN MAN: God-damned Native Canadians! Think they run the world. […] Before the noble white man arrived, Canada was populated with these snow monkeys!
UGLY BOB: He (the native Canadian) says Eskimos do hate us Canadians.

Note that First Nations are depicted as “monkeys”, which represent the human preceding evolutionary stage, whereas Canadians are believed to descend from the “noble white man”. In this case, in the binary system Canadians-First Nations, the former represent the more powerful pole; therefore, the Canadian man threatens First Nations’ social face “explicitly associat(ing) the other with a negative aspect” (Culpeper, 2005: 41).

5.5 Merger of /or/ and /owr/

A further feature that differentiates SCE from SAE is the pronunciation of words like *sorry*, *tomorrow*, which are not pronounced as /ˈsɑri/ and

/təˈmɑroʊ/, with an open back unrounded vowel /ɑ/as it happens in SAE, but as /ˈsɔri/ and /tuˈmɔroʊ/, with an open-mid back rounded vowel /ɔ /. According to Boberg (2010), the merger of /or/ and /owr/ in "sorry" and "sore" is virtually complete in Canada, and saying "sore-ry" for "sorry" is a true Canadianism. Rhoticity has caused several mergers having a significant effect on the sound of SCE. Mergers happen mainly in ambisyllabic /r/ environments, where /r/ occupies both the coda of the preceding syllable and the onset of the following syllable (e.g. soR-Ry).

Although in *South Park* this linguistic item is less consistent than the other features analysed in the previous sections, a clear reference to it is made in *Where my country gone?* (S19E2). A Canadian girl is talking to his American boyfriend to apologise for her father's bad attitude towards him:

CANADIAN GIRL: I'm sore-y.
AMERICAN BOY: What's sore-y?
CANADIAN GIRL: Well, that's what Canadians say to express remorse.

The American boy does not recognise as English the standard term "sorry" because of his girlfriend's Canadian pronunciation. The way the girl explains the meaning of the word resembles the kind of explanation that is generally given to foreign words. At the end of the episode, the American boy appropriates his Canadian girlfriend's accent to ape her pronunciation:

AMERICAN BOY: You don't have to be sore-y. It's me who should be sore-y.

6. Conclusions

Much research has been done on the use of fictional, non-standard varieties in audiovisual products, with particular attention to British and American accents and dialects (i.e. Lippi-Green, 1997; Bruti et al., 2016; Ranzato, 2018a, b). This paper has sought to contribute by investigating the way SCE is used as a mean of linguistic characterisation in one of the most popular American sitcoms. As has been mentioned in the Introduction, many are the films and series where the Canadian accent is used. Nevertheless, *South Park* has been selected for its popularity and consistency in representing the linguistic, cultural and visual clash between Canadian and American characters. The fact that *South Park* is an American sitcom, produced by Americans is not to be forgotten. In the series, Americans distance themselves from Canadians by representing them as linguistically, culturally and visually different people. Referring to *South Park*, Keyes declares that "Canada is a place peopled by a race with distinguishing facial features, a penchant for scatological humour, vaguely British accent, and European names" (2009: 150). The representation of Canadians is not free from stereotypes, as well as a superiority complex shown by Americans. In *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut*, an American man declares that Canada is "not even a real country anyway". This is not surprising given the satirical vein of the sitcom, always deriding anything and anyone. In a binary system, Americans represent the positive pole, whereas Canadians the negative one, which implies a power imbalance where the negative pole is the one that becomes focused on (Baker, 2008).

South Park is well known and much criticised for its impoliteness, which has acquired a more technical connotation in this article. The impoliteness model, mainly developed by Culpeper in the investigation of dramatic language, has been adapted to this study to retrace the strategies that have been used to mock Canadian characters. This model is strictly linked with Grice's Cooperative Principles, whose maxims of quantity and relevance are consistently flouted to threaten Canadians' social identity face. Linguistically, it should be borne in mind that fictional languages are not faithful representations of how linguistic varieties are spoken in real life. As has been explained in the previous sections, there is a clear difference between sociolinguistic and ficto-linguistic representations of a language. Besides, it should be remembered that what this article has investigated is the accent (and not the dialect) of Canadian characters, that is the pronunciation they are portrayed with. In *South Park*, the sociolinguistic features of SCE have gone through a process of stereotyping, which implies either exaggerating or oversimplifying SCE features. SCE as represented in *South Park* is a parody of it, where linguistic features such as Canadian Raising, the pragmatic particle "eh?" – currently receding amongst young speakers – and the merger of /or/ and /owr/ are overused to differentiate the variety from SAE and make it immediately recognisable by the audience. Canadian Raising is also represented in the written language with what Hodson (2014) defines *semi-phonetic respelling*, a fictional technique used to respell a standard word according to its non-standard pronunciation. SCE shares many features with SAE, especially at the level of pronunciation; both varieties, for instance, are rhotic, which is not the case in *South Park*, where SCE is represented as a non-rhotic variety, a strategy used to further distance Americans from Canadians.

Oversimplification also affects the visual representation of Canadian characters, the elements of the landscape, the objects. It has been shown that the visual representation of Canada is completely unfounded, bearing no connection to real-life Canada. Unlike Americans, Canadians are not portrayed as human beings but as people with two black dots instead of realistic eyes, square heads cut at the level of their mouths that flap up and down whenever they speak. Furthermore, they are not represented as individuals with their own personalities, but as social types: they are ice hockey players, woodcutters, fishermen, First Nations and French mimes. In addition to this, not only does the "ghettoisation" of Canadian characters originate from the attitude Americans have towards their Northern neighbours, but also among Canadians themselves. The American creators have portrayed Canadian characters reiterating the same stereotypes that are generally attached to them. They are represented as self-mocking characters, as is the case with Ugly Bob and Ike who recognise themselves as Canadians because of their physical aspect. This strategy seems to further belittle the way Canadian characters are represented in the sitcom.

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statusQuaestionis
language text culture

Andrea Rondini

Le sceneggiature della scrittura. Emmanuel Carrère e il cinema

Abstract
L'articolo studia la presenza dell'immaginario cinematografico nell'opera letteraria di Emmanuel Carrère. Nei libri dello scrittore l'universo filmico si presenta in modo reiterato come serie di immagini e repertorio di situazioni che inevitabilmente si presentano durante l'atto di scrittura: il cinema si configura così come 'tentazione' cui l'autore cerca nondimeno di resistere per non cedere al rischio di dare al proprio testo una struttura declinata sugli stereotipi collaudati dello spettacolo e interessata unicamente alle ragioni della finzione. Tale problematica assume una elaborazione articolata e tocca alcune ragioni profonde della poetica dello scrittore: infatti essa sembra rimandare alla paura-ossessione di sprofondare in universi paralleli e falsi dove si generano deliri e aberrazioni.

Un dato che emerge con chiarezza dalle opere di Emmanuel Carrère è la rilevante quantità di riferimenti cinematografici. Come noto, lo scrittore ha iniziato la sua carriera intellettuale come critico per una importante rivista di cinema (*Positif*) e con una monografia su Werner Herzog;[1] è stato in seguito regista,[2] autore di soggetti e sceneggiatore[3] (da alcuni suoi testi, inoltre, sono stati tratti film).[4] La presenza dell'immaginario filmico, irreale per eccellenza, non è però un generico e inerziale riflesso di interessi personali e professionali ma si configura come importante elemento di poetica; esso infatti riguarda da vicino le scelte enunciative dello scrittore, in modo ancora più significativo se si pensa che Carrère appartiene, soprattutto dopo *L'Avversario* [*L'Adversaire*], al perimetro delle scritture ibride che si muovono tra

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[1] Carrère 1982; alcune recensioni pubblicate su *Positif* sono state riproposte in Chatrian e Persico 2015.
[2] Carrère ha diretto: *L'amore sospetto* [*La Moustache*] (tratto da Carrère 1987); *Retour à Kotelnitch* (2003); *Le Quai de Ouistreham* 2020 (tratto da Aubenas 2010).
[3] *Lingua straniera* [*Langue étrangère*] e *Transfert* [*Transfert*] (in Carrère 2020a); *Je suis hereux que ma mère soit vivante* (2009), regia di Claude e Nathan Miller.
[4] *L'Avversario* [*L'Adversaire*], 2002, regia di N. Garcia (da Carrère 2013 [I ed. 2000]); *Tutti i nostri desideri* [*Toutes nos envies*], 2012, regia di Ph. Lioret (da Carrère 2011); *La classe dei neige*, 1998, regia di C. Miller (da Carrère 2014 [I ed. 1995]).

narrazione, non-fiction e auto-fiction,[5] quindi molto sensibili ai rapporti tra verosimigliante adesione al reale e istanze dell'invenzione creativa, tanto che le opere dello scrittore francese possono anche inglobare alcune tecniche tipiche del film-documentario[6] (peraltro su queste tematiche l'accordo non è totale: Fastelli 2019 ridimensiona la natura non-fiction del capolavoro carreriano). Altamente indicativa in proposito la riflessione presente in *Io sono vivo, voi siete morti* [*Je suis vivant et vous êtes morts*] in relazione a una piccola porzione (due settimane) della vita di Philip Dick che per assenza di testimonianze risulta pressoché impossibile da ricostruire ("Non voglio abbandonarmi alle congetture. Certo, se stessi scrivendo un romanzo, lo farei senza tanti scrupoli"; Carrère 2016, 223). Parallelamente, in *Limonov* [*Limonov*] lo scrittore sottolinea con una certa insofferenza quanto siano spesso vincolanti le regole della narrazione e 'costringano' la realtà in schemi: "Ho l'impressione di avere già scritto questa scena. In una storia inventata, bisogna scegliere: il protagonista può toccare il fondo una volta, anzi è consigliabile, ma due è troppo, si rischia di ripetersi" (Carrère 2012, 147). Nel primo caso quindi si rifiuta la libera congettura, nel secondo si sottolineano le scelte obbligate imposte dalle grammatiche finzionali: quindi o si è falsi per libera scelta, o perché 'costretti': cambia il movente ma il risultato è lo stesso.

Se negli esempi appena citati il termine di relazione è letterario, molto spesso è invece cinematografico. Infatti, una volta scelta definitivamente una modalità di rappresentazione, Carrère sente la necessità di mostrare quali alternative narrative di derivazione filmica, basate su procedimenti e convenzioni tipiche del cinema, avrebbe potuto preferire. Particolarmente significativo il passo di *Vite che non sono la mia* [*D'autres vies que la mienne*] in cui il giudice Étienne legge una sentenza che conferma esattamente le sue idee e che potrebbe portare a un cambiamento, da lui fortemente auspicato, della concezione giuridica del sovraindebitamento. Una volta terminata la lettura, Étienne sottopone il testo alla collega Juliette che conduce la medesima battaglia: "In un film la scoperta di queste righe da parte dell'eroina sarebbe accompagnata da una musica fortemente drammatica. Vedremmo le sue labbra muoversi man mano che avanza nella lettura, il suo viso esprimere prima perplessità, poi incredulità, infine meraviglia. L'eroina alzerebbe lo sguardo verso l'eroe balbettando qualcosa come: ma allora...vuol dire che...Controcampo su di lui, calmo, intenso: hai letto bene" (Carrère

[5] Si veda Castellana 2019.
[6] Gabriel 2019.

2011, 175).[7] La citazione chiarisce che le alternative pensate e scartate sono spesso strutture diegetiche consolidate, 'da manuale', professionali ma ormai usurate. I rimandi mediali-cinematografici sono quelli che 'non possono non venire in mente' a Carrère nonché, forse, allo stesso fruitore; si tratta di un immaginario ormai incistato nell'orizzonte d'attesa del pubblico, abituato a situazioni standard codificate dalle narrazioni del cinema,[8] sia esso *mainstream* o classico, che si configurano come una tentazione, una sorta di 'avversario' culturale per lo stesso Carrère. Si legga ancora nel *Regno* [*Le Royaume*] il passo a commento della scoperta da parte del narratore del "misero tugurio", la piccola e folle stanza in cui vive Jamie Ottomanelli: "In un film tratto da un romanzo di Stephen King, la musica diventerebbe sempre più angosciosa, noi vorremmo gridare all'incauto visitatore di tagliare la corda invece di tirare la tenda come, chiaramente sta per fare, come faccio" (Carrère 2015, 70).[9] Anche dimensioni esperienziali come l'arrivo a New York rimandano 'inevitabilmente' alla memoria filmica, quasi che siano diventate naturali: "Un francese che veda New York per la prima volta non rimane stupito, caso mai si stupisce del fatto che la città somigli così tanto a quella che ha visto nei film. [...] Passare da Mosca a New York è come passare da un film in bianco e nero a un film a colori" (Carrère 2012, 107). Una sorta di culmine della pervasività dell'immaginario filmico e della sua natura immersiva può essere considerato il soggiorno di Carrère in un hotel canadese che è l'esatta replica dell'Overlook Hotel di *Shining* [*The Shining*] di Kubrick: lo scrittore cammina lungo i corridoi con l'incubica moquette arancio-marrone fino a ritrovarsi davanti, esattamente come il piccolo 'Doc', alla stanza 237 (Carrère 2020b, 145-146).

Tale procedimento viene speso per singoli personaggi, scene, intere vicende (metodo che si potrebbe, con ulteriore ricerca apposita, collegare all'impatto del cinema come riferimento strutturale soprattutto per quanto riguarda la natura ibrida dei testi di Carrère).[10] A livello attanziale, quando

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[7] Il passo è commentato anche in Gabriel 2019, 100-101.
[8] "l'uomo moderno legge e commenta romanzi avendo già sperimentato e assimilato il processo di fruizione cinematografica", tanto che si pensa al cinema e alle sue tecniche espressive anche leggendo romanzi ottocenteschi (Ivaldi 2011, 41).
[9] Il meccanismo si ripresenta con una certa continuità; si veda anche: "Ci seguono con lo sguardo, spaventati, e il nostro comportamento in quel frangente è così assurdo da disinnescare qualunque aggressività. In un film, gli eroi se la darebbero a gambe nel preciso istante in cui, esaurito l'effetto ipnotico, l'orda si precipita su di loro per ridurli in polpette" (Carrère 2009, 30).
[10] "Quella di giustapporre materiali eterogenei è una caratteristica che ritrovo anche nel cinema di Chris Marker" (Carrère in Gimmelli 2015).

Luca e gli altri discepoli di Paolo arrivano a Gerusalemme, al cipriota Mansone che li ospita a casa e fa loro da guida in una città che non conoscono Carrère darebbe la fisionomia del fotografo di *Un anno vissuto pericolosamente* [*The Year of Living Dangerously*] di Weir (Carrère 2015, 214);[11] il giornalista Paul Klebnikov ha il medesimo aspetto del Mel Gibson sempre di *Un anno vissuto pericolosamente* [*The Year of Living Dangerously*] (Carrère 2012, 249); Sacharov alla sua morte viene in televisione paragonato, tra gli altri, a Obi-Wan Kenobi di *Star Wars* [*Star Wars*] (Ibid., 212); vi sono momenti in cui tale pratica assimilativa assurge anche a indicazione più intrinsecamente identitaria come nell'analogia stabilita tra Limonov e *Aguirre furore di dio* [*Aguirre, Der Zorn Gottes*] di Herzog (*Limonov* 255). A livello microstrutturale, un momento umanamente toccante del soggiorno di Philip Dick presso il centro di disintossicazione di X-Kalay viene accostato ad *Anna dei miracoli* [*The Miracle Worker*] di Penn (Carrère 2016, 228); una cena in cui ad un certo punto cresce la tensione tra i commensali assomiglia a quelle di film tipo *Scarface* [*Scarface*] di De Palma (Carrère 2012, 199).[12] A livello invece macrostrutturale, Martin Scorsese viene considerato la migliore opzione per rappresentare le vite dei nuovi ricchi russi o di imprenditori di successo nella nuova economia di mercato – selvaggia, esaltante e pericolosa – apertasi dopo la caduta del comunismo (Carrère 2012, 250; non si menziona nessun film in particolare ma lo scrittore potrebbe pensare a titoli come *Quei bravi ragazzi* [*Goodfellas*] o *Casinò* [*Casino*]). Un personaggio e una situazione reale possiedono quindi 'sempre' un'ombra, un alter ego di celluloide che immette i referenti in una zona di intersezione tra reale e fittizio (e si noti che tale quantità di rimandi cinematografici è qui presentata per difetto: si potrebbe infatti proseguire).[13]

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[11] "In un film o in una serie televisiva cercherei di fare di questa comparsa un personaggio sul tipo del fotografo nano e sessualmente ambiguo che in *Un anno vissuto pericolosamente* accoglie a Giacarta il giovane giornalista interpretato da Mel Gibson".

[12] "I commensali si alzano spingendo rumorosamente indietro le sedie, i tirapiedi si fanno avanti, la faccenda sembra debba finire come nei film di cui il giovane recita le battute cult" (il giovane è uno dei diversi collaboratori dell'editore russo presso il quale nel 1989 Limonov pubblica i suoi libri nell'allora Unione Sovietica e che ha il mito di *Scarface*, di cui recita scene a memoria). Immaginiamo che il riferimento sia al film (1983) di De Palma (invece *Scarface* [*Scarface, Shame of a Nation*] di Hawks esce nel 1932).

[13] Così l'esposizione durante il trionfo di Tito del bottino depredato al Tempio è paragonata alla sfilata ecclesiastica di *Roma* di Fellini (Carrère 2015, 364) mentre Steven (in *Limonov*) "quando beve diventa sentimentale come il riccone con il cappello a cilindro di *Luci della città*" di Chaplin [*City Lights*] (Carrère 2012, 152).

Per certi versi questa pratica culmina (perché tocca un topos rilevante della poetica dello scrittore, quello dell'uomo-che-vuole-diventare-re) nell'episodio della guarigione da parte di Paolo di un paralitico a Listra, evento prodigioso che trasforma Paolo agli occhi degli spettatori in una divinità: "Quando ho letto questo passaggio, mi è venuto in mente il meraviglioso racconto di Rudyard Kipling *L'uomo che volle farsi re*, e il film che ne ha tratto John Houston" [*The Man Who Would Be King*] (Carrère 2015, 133); la similarità tra la due vicende riguarda un uomo creduto un idolo che poi, una volta scoperto o rivelatosi nella sua mera umanità, viene ucciso (come nel caso di Kipling/Houston, in cui il protagonista aveva scientemente tradito la buona fede dei nativi) o lapidato (nel caso di Paolo). Al di là però della somiglianza delle due vicende, marcata da Carrère,[14] quello che qui si sottolinea è come, in ultima analisi, il narratore del *Regno* [*Le Royaume*] non riesca a non pensare a Paolo – almeno in questo episodio – dandogli la fisionomia di Sean Connery; o meglio, proprio la forte affinità delle situazioni non è che la patina del fenomeno per cui l'immagine di Sean Connery si impone nel momento in cui il prodigio di Paolo viene narrato: è l'icona Connery, ancor prima della storia che incarna, ad ammaliare e a tentare la scrittura. Il nesso si ripresenta anche laddove sia evocato in modo più generico: i film del regista greco Anghelopulos possono sostenere l'ideale di Carrère di immaginazione plausibile perché, "lenti" e "brumosi", sono pressoché perfetti per rappresentarsi "quella Grecia settentrionale balcanica" (Ibid., p. 137) in cui ha vissuto Luca. Il cinema offre qui una sponda realistica alla parola ma in ogni caso lo scrittore pensa sempre il reale prima in chiave filmica e cerca poi di neutralizzare questa spinta cercando ancoraggi referenziali (in tal senso è significativa la discrepanza di valutazioni, richiamata all'inizio del saggio, circa la natura non-finzionale de l'*Avversario*).

Si può dire che il procedimento per cui una scena scritta venga in prima istanza pensata in chiave filmica appartenga *da sempre* a Carrère: il protagonista di *Baffi* [*La moustache*] si comporta come il suo autore quando immagina la propria compagna Agnès nelle vesti della ragazzina de l'*Esorcista* [*The Exorcist*] di Friedkin (Carrère 1987, 86),[15] sovrapponendo così al reale (o a quello che lui ritiene plausibilmente tale: crede infatti che la donna sia

[14] A Paolo "interessavano solo le loro anime, non le loro ricchezze. Ma ha conosciuto la vertigine di Sean Connery, con la folla in ginocchio ai suoi piedi, e l'ira di quella stessa folla quando scopre che colui che venerava era soltanto un uomo" (Carrère 2015, 134).
[15] "Agnès […] lo aspettava con un sorriso di trionfo demoniaco, la bava alla bocca, come la bambina ossessa del film *L'Esorcista*".

pazza) una figura cinematografica. Peraltro egli applica il medesimo schema pure a se stesso: sempre più convinto di essere vittima di un complotto teso a farlo creder pazzo, reputa che Agnès e amici si comportino con lui come avviene in alcuni film come *Piano... piano, dolce Carlotta* [*Hush...Hush, Sweet Charlotte*] di Aldrich e soprattutto *I diabolici* [*Les diaboliques*] di Clouzot (Ibid., 104-108), due pellicole nelle quali si dipana un inganno ordito da una coppia a danno di una terza persona. Si noti che il cinema è associato, soprattutto nei due ultimi titoli, a un'idea di trappola, inganno più o meno subdolo.

Il rapporto con questo immaginario è problematico e conflittuale. Il cinema potrebbe infatti produrre una narrazione falsa e standardizzata in quanto veicolo di due pericoli, quello dell'artificio non ancorato a una forma di plausibilità e la natura omologata di tale espediente. Molto significativa la riflessione sull'arrivo di Paolo, che si sta dirigendo a Roma, a Pozzuoli; mentre i sacerdoti si recano nell'Urbe con tutti gli onori, Paolo deve camminare, per di più incatenato: "Se questo fosse un film, non resisteremmo alla tentazione di mostrare il fango che schizza al passaggio del convoglio diplomatico inzaccherando una fila di forzati - tra i quali riconosceremmo Paolo. La barba lunga, il viso solcato da rughe profonde, con addosso da sei mesi lo stesso mantello ormai lercio, Paolo alza la testa e segue con lo sguardo il corteo che si allontana" (Carrère 2015, 303; Carrère non la cita espressamente ma una scena simile si trova all'inizio del celebre film *Papillon* [*Papillon*] di Schaffner). Anche altre pagine dello scrittore si soffermano in modo ancor più netto sulla medesima problematica, quando per esempio sottolineano la conclusione convenzionale, di tipo sentimentale, di un film pur apprezzato come *Ricomincio da capo*[16] [*Groundhog Day*] di Ramis oppure discutono delle storie horror nelle quali il ribaltamento finale – con il ritorno all'ordine che sembra suggellare definitamente la conclusione della vicenda – "è solo apparente. Come sanno gli spettatori più accorti, il regista, se conosce il suo mestiere, tiene in serbo un atroce colpo di scena, un'ultima inquadratura destinata a ribaltare di nuovo la situazione e a inchiodarli alla sedia" (Carrère 2016, 136), una consuetudine cui, sul piano letterario, non si sottrae nemmeno l'amatissimo Philip Dick nel finale de *Le tre stimmate di Palmer Eldritch* [*The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*] (Ibid., 137). L'avversario rappresentato dalla finzionalizzazione è un demone cui si cerca di resistere, un latente antagonista che però si ripresenta

[16] Carrère 2017, 196.

continuamente. Ancora quando intende delineare i provocatori che si recano dai Galati, così si esprime lo scrittore francese: "Questi provocatori me li immagino muoversi sempre in coppia, come [...] i killer dei film polizieschi. Vengono da lontano, i loro abiti scuri sono impolverati, i loro volti seri" (Carrère 2015, 169), come vuole la tipologia attanziale del noir classico e delle sue riformulazioni postmoderne, da *I gangsters* [*The Killers*] di Siodmak a *Pulp Fiction* [*Pulp Fiction*] di Tarantino.

Del resto lo scrittore ricorda le "tonnellate di fiction" (Carrère 2017, 393) che hanno narrato l'incontro tra Ponzio Pilato e Gesù e che hanno quindi sceneggiato tale evento; lo storytelling non deve far dimenticare che in ogni caso ci si trova davanti a un fatto realmente avvenuto: si può quindi immaginare la scena, pensarne i contorni e le dinamiche, insomma inventarla, ma all'interno della consapevolezza che quell'episodio è un fatto e non è, alla sua origine, fiction (Ibid).

Il passaggio da una grammatica semplicemente spettacolare ad una in cui i codici stereotipati diventano ideologicamente connotati è breve. Lo si vede bene nel mondo russo con un film come *Sole ingannatore* [*Utomljënnoe solnze*] di Michalkov: qui Carrère, che esplicita il proprio gradimento del film, lascia però a Limonov il rigetto della pellicola che nel mostrare gli orrori del comunismo – in linea con la fase postgorbacioviana della politica russa – è nientemeno che "staliniana al contrario" (Carrère 2012) con le sue famiglie felici che vivono nel sole e sono portate alla rovina da luciferini emissari del Partito. Non è un caso che Limonov nutra una certa diffidenza (al limite del disprezzo) verso lo spettacolo filmico: durante il periodo di detenzione s'impone la regola di "guardare la televisione soltanto per i notiziari, *mai per un film* o un varietà, che per lui sono l'inizio del rammollimento" (Ibid., 319);[17] similmente, non sopporta la piatta dicotomia male-bene delle pellicole poliziesche (Ibid., 328-329); ma è opportuno sottolineare che *Limonov*, come si vedrà, occupa una posizione particolare perché è, tra le opere di Carrère, quella forse più esposta da un punto di vista cinematografico. Probabilmente è per tutti questi motivi che nel recentissimo *Yoga* lo scrittore si augura che i suoi progetti letterari o cinematografici si discostino, nella loro realizzazione finale, da come li aveva pensati e schematizzati in origine e assumano forme e contenuti imprevisti, vale a dire che scartino rispetto alle premesse (Carrère 2020b, 374). Si noti che tali dichiarazioni di poetica si esplicano entro riferimenti tutti cinematografici ("Entre l'idée qu'on s'en faisait avant de le

[17] Corsivo nostro.

commencer et le résultat final, il y a plus ou moins d'écart : s'il y en a peu le film est réussi, s'il y en a beaucoup il est raté. Ainsi pensent les artistes du contrôle, les démiurges qui, comme Hitchcock ou Kubrick, entendent plier le réel à leur volonté et à leur rêve. D'autres, parmi lesquels je me compte, c'est l'inverse : moins le film ou le livre ressemble à ce qu'ils avaient imaginé, plus long et capricieux se révèle le chemin entre le point de départ et celui d'arrivée, plus le résultat les surprend, plus ils sont contents", Ibid.).

La riflessione sulle codifiche rappresentative prosegue nel *Regno* [*Le Royaume*] come un corpo a corpo che ne scandisce le pagine e la questione viene ripresa da angolatura diversa ma concettualmente simile, come di chi sta rimuginando sempre sopra lo stesso pensiero, quando lo scrittore si chiede come sia possibile che il passaggio alla finzionalizzazione – che invade sempre, con il suo fascino seduttivo, la mente dell'artista – non si sia automaticamente verificato, vale a dire come mai alcuni importanti episodi degli *Atti degli Apostoli* non siano entrati nei regimi della fiction per una delle porte iconiche più usuali nella storia culturale precinematografica, vale a dire la pittura,[18] arte capace di 'sceneggiare' un testo prima del cinema e di diffonderne e replicarne le immagini con una pratica proto-spettacolare e transmediale (la sensibilità artistica era già presente in modo spiccato in un grande nome della critica cinematografica, nonché direttore di *Positif*, Michel Ciment).[19] E allora è Carrère stesso a 'girare' in forma narrativa – un vero e proprio ibrido testuale – la scena di un evento importante, anzi capitale: Paolo detta a Timoteo la sua prima lettera:

> La scena si svolge a Corinto, nel laboratorio di Priscilla e Aquila, una di quelle botteghe che si vedono ancora nei quartieri poveri delle città mediterranee: in una stanza che dà sulla strada si lavora e si ricevono i clienti, mentre in una stanza senza finestre sul retro dorme tutta la famiglia. Calvo e barbuto, la fronte solcata da rughe, Paolo è curvo sul telaio. Penombra. Raggio di luce sotto la porta. Il giovante Timoteo, che non si è ancora tolto la polvere del viaggio, finisce il racconto della sua missione a Tessalonica. Paolo

[18] "come mai un fervente lettore della Bibbia quale Rembrandt non ha dipinto una *Circoncisione di Timoteo*, un *Paolo caccia il demone dalla Pizia* o una *Conversione del carceriere di Filippi*? Come mai nessun artista prerinascimentale italiano o fiammingo ha inserito in un verdeggiante paesaggio arcadico le figurine di *Lidia e le sue compagne mentre ascoltano Paolo sulla riva del fiume*? Come mai al Musée d'Orsay non troviamo un quadro d'accademia che raffiguri Paolo e Barnaba scambiati per divinità dai Licaoni, né al Louvre il capolavoro che sarebbe stato ispirato a Géricault dal passaggio in cui *I tessalonicesi piangono i loro primi morti*? Corpi gonfi e lividi di pescatori annegati, dipinti dal vero sulla base di qualche cadavere trafugato all'obitorio, braccia contorte che si alzano verso un cielo di pece lacerato da un temporale" (Carrère 2015, 163).
[19] E. Carrère, prefazione a Ciment 2015.

decide di scrivere ai tessalonicesi. [...] Con la tavoletta sulle ginocchia, Timoteo si è seduto a gambe incrociate ai piedi di Paolo – se li ha dipinti Caravaggio, i piedi sono sporchi. L'apostolo ha lasciato la spola. Leva lo sguardo al cielo e inizia a dettare. Il Nuovo Testamento comincia qui (Carrère 2015, 164).

Importante osservare come la natura quotidiana di questa scena corrisponda al gusto 'realistico' (di un'immaginazione tenuta a freno, ancorata al reale) dello stesso Luca, alter ego del narratore: Luca rappresenta anche un modello non solo letterario ma anche 'registico': "Luca non era portato per i discorsi astratti. [...] Gli piaceva che un tizio perdonasse un altro che lo aveva offeso, che un cane samaritano vivesse più onestamente di un fariseo tutto fiero della sua virtù. [...] Quello che a Luca piaceva più di tutto nei racconti di Filippo erano i particolari concreti: i due tizi che tornano a casa avviliti, la polvere della strada, la distanza esatta del loro villaggio da Gerusalemme e la porta da cui si usciva per andarci" (Ibid., 238). La scena della dettatura da parte di Paolo della prima Lettera sembra affine alla tipologia di storie concrete e vissute tipiche di Luca (non a caso coagulate attorno al cronotopo della strada). Carrère si pone sulla stessa lunghezza d'onda: "Il piccolo esattore Zaccheo che si arrampica sul sicomoro, gli uomini che fanno un buco nel tetto per calare il loro amico paralitico nella casa del guaritore, la moglie dell'amministratore di Erode che aiuta il guru e il suo gruppo di nascosto dal marito sono tutte cose che suonano autentiche e vengono riportate semplicemente perché sono vere" (Ibid., 273). Si potrebbe allora dire che Luca faccia idealmente propria una nozione della teologia paolina, quella di *katéchon*, il freno, non più dell'Anticristo[20] ma di quel suo doppio che è la deriva finzionale.

In altri casi il riferimento cinematografico appare meno 'pericoloso' ed anzi un modello del proprio reportage, della propria struttura narrativa. Carrère si sofferma sulla figura di Giovanni-Marco, il secondo testimone, dopo Filippo, incontrato da Luca:

m'immagino [...] che Luca l'abbia incontrato [Giovanni-Marco] tramite il primo, Filippo, perché è in questo modo che si sviluppa un'inchiesta: si conosce per caso una persona, che ve ne presenta una seconda, che vi parla della terza, e così via. Come in *Quarto potere* o *Rashomon*, queste persone dicono cose contraddittorie, con le quali bisogna sbrogliarsela tenendo bene a mente che non c'è una verità, ma che essa è fuori dalla nostra portata e nonostante tutto bisogna cercarla, a tentoni" (Ibid., 254).

[20] "E ora sapete ciò che impedisce [*to katéchon*] la sua manifestazione [dell'Anticristo], che avverrà nella sua ora" (2 *Ts*, 2, 6-7).

È un passaggio importante, suffragato anche dalla citazione di un aforisma di Kafka: "Certo, io sono ignorante, ciò non toglie che la verità esiste" (Ibid). Il modello di inchiesta a catena, transitivo, rappresentato da *Quarto potere* [*Citizen Kane*] di Welles e *Rashomon* [*Rashomon*] di Kurosawa è in effetti implicitamente attivo nel *Regno* perché Luca è un personaggio che raccoglie testimonianze, o almeno così si può congetturare, per esempio nel caso in cui – forse, appunto – ascolta Zaccheo che gli narra di quando si è arrampicato su un sicomoro per vedere Gesù (Ibid., 259); non è un caso che questo particolare – non provabile – appare comunque plausibile al narratore del *Regno*, a conferma del fatto che alcuni modelli cinematografici sono ritenuti adatti al proprio discorso e non derealizzanti. Infatti è qui attivo un dispositivo di verità, una *quest* orientata fin dove possibile al raggiungimento di un sapere almeno verosimigliante: Carrère non è un nichilista, una verità parziale malgrado tutto (l'espressione sopra utilizzata dallo scrittore sembra ricalcare il titolo di un noto libro di Didi-Hubermann, *Immagini malgrado tutto* [*Images malgré tout*]) è possibile, o comunque vale la pena di cercarla e non defenestrarla attraverso quote estreme di invenzione.

Carrère cerca di ancorare la propria immaginazione a referenti plausibili e guarda a quelle opere di finzione in cui è possibile vedere la convivenza di *fictio* e realtà. Particolarmente importante in proposito la riflessione su un capolavoro della pittura, il *Corteo dei Magi* (1459) di Benozzo Gozzoli, nel quale sia i personaggi della cerchia dei Medici sia i popolani sono ritratti dal vero – anzi, per la precisione, a conferma del ripresentarsi del cronotopo della strada, "il volgo è formato da passanti presi dalla strada" (Carrère 2015, 267)[21] – mentre angeli e santi presentano tratti decisamente più stereotipati, vale a dire derealizzano i referenti a favore di schemi rappresentativi standard. Ma la presenza della pittura è altresì importante perché consente di proporre un ulteriore tassello al discorso. Infatti Carrère afferma che se fosse stato pittore avrebbe dato alla Madonna, ispirandosi a Caravaggio, il volto, il corpo e le movenze di un'attrice porno (i cui video lo scrittore guarda in rete):[22] corroborata dall'*exemplum* caravaggesco, l'affermazione veicola una pressoché ortodossa concezione realistica dell'arte e della letteratura nel senso teoretico di *Mimesis* di Auerbach, vale a dire dell'oggetto poetico alto e

[21] L'affresco di Gozzoli ritorna anche, con considerazioni del tutto simili, in Carrère 2017, 386-387.

[22] "se facessi il pittore e mi avessero chiesto di dipingere una Madonna […] mi sarei divertito come Caravaggio a far posare la bruna dai due orgasmi" (Carrère 2015, 272).

nobile calato nella dimensione quotidiano-prosaica. Il nesso sublime-triviale, a stringere un circolo ermeneutico letterario-mediale, è del resto riportato anche a una matrice cinematografica:

> mi piacevano molto i film di Skolimowski, trovo sia un regista che avrebbe meritato più fortuna. C'è una grande libertà nelle sue opere, una capacità di accostare immagini apparentemente lontane fra loro che anch'io cerco di avere quando scrivo, inserendo elementi incongrui, che non dovrebbero essere lì. Ne *Il Regno* [*Le Royaume*], ad esempio, nel bel mezzo di una riflessione sull'iconografia mariana ho infilato una digressione su un video porno. E in qualche modo le due cose mi sembrano legate, anche se in apparenza può sembrare il contrario. Del resto, non è così la vita? Leggiamo Didi-Huberman e poi navighiamo su *Youporn*: il sublime e il triviale (Carrère in Gimmelli 2015).[23]

In questa prospettiva lo scrittore indica i particolari di determinati episodi che gli sembrano veritieri distinguendoli da quelli agiografico-miracolosi, cioè finzionali; così la narrazione dell'arresto di Gesù sul Monte degli Ulivi da parte di Luca e Giovanni: Carrère ritiene realistico che per difendere Gesù venga mozzato un orecchio a un soldato di nome Malco (il nome stesso è in qualche modo garanzia di verosimiglianza; Carrère 2017, 394) mente rigetta il miracolo (in Luca) dell'orecchio riattaccato per miracolo. Si potrebbe forse però, almeno *en passant*, notare come la breve narrazione dell'episodio da parte di Carrère, sia in qualche modo, pur senza esagerazione, lievemente drammatizzata in senso avventuroso (e contenga riferimenti alle tonalità di Tintoretto e Caravaggio): "C'è uno squadrone della morte che di notte, con un colpo di mano, va ad arrestare un guerrigliero. Lanterne cieche, manganelli, penombra: l'atmosfera è quella del Tintoretto, o del Caravaggio. Uno degli uomini del guerrigliero cerca di opporre resistenza. Tira fuori il coltello e, quasi alla cieca, mozza l'orecchio a un soldato" (Ibid., 393-394).

Ai limiti del paradosso, gli stessi *Atti degli Apostoli* – "pieni di avventure e miracoli" (Carrère 2015, 148) – sono meno realistici di un romanzo feuilleton come *Quo vadis*, che rende bene l'idea della capacità di perdono dei primi cristiani (Ibid., 147-148), tipologia di vicenda assente negli Atti. In effetti alcune sequenze avventurose degli *Atti*, per esempio i capitoli che narrano viaggi per mare, sembrano già presentarsi come *storylines* cinematografiche: "piccolo cabotaggio, poi mare aperto, tempeste, naufragio, svernamento a Malta, ammutinamento dell'equipaggio, fame e sete" (Ibid.,

[23] Di Skolimovsky, Carrère recensisce *L'australiano* [*The Shout*]: Chatrian e Persico 2015, 82-89.

301) (e Carrère non manca di sottolineare come tali dispositivi diegetici gli risultino noiosi; Ibid.).

Eppure, sebbene su un versante critico, si ripropone il corpo a corpo, la lotta con l'angelo di biblica memoria, con l'invasione dell'immaginario. E questa situazione non può non ripresentarsi perché sempre lo scrittore pensa per situazioni e 'vede' attraverso 'schermi' seduttivi e perturbanti (lo si nota anche in un'altra scena 'girata' in *La vita come un romanzo russo* [*Un roman russe*]: il narratore rievoca mentalmente il nonno materno in metropolitana che quasi si vergogna davanti alla piccola figlia per la vita grama e di stenti che conducono; la scena, di contenuto drammatico, rischia di scivolare nel melodrammatico, nella retorica della povertà che si ritrova nei "romanzi lacrimosi"; Carrère 2009, 69). Si può dare a questa situazione anche un profilo culturalmente ontogenetico a partire dall'osservazione carreriana che Luca non ha nessuno che lo aspetti come Penelope (Carrère 2015, 350). Infatti l'antichità ha conosciuto una sua particolarissima forma di racconto di successo che, nella interpretazione di Carrère, si presta ad essere considerato un'anticipazione di una certa logica mediale visto che mostra due caratteristiche tra loro intrecciate: la rappresentazione di una vita inverosimile; personaggi che sono all'origine di tipi codificati. Questo racconto è l'*Odissea* e la situazione ideale che manifesta le due caratteristiche è l'episodio di Ulisse e Calipso, in cui la ninfa incarna il progetto di una vita inverosimile (nella quale la morte non esiste) e di uno stereotipo, la *femme fatale* o, se si preferisce, la *vamp*. Calipso, in altri termini, è l'esemplificazione, il simbolo di una tipologia di racconto, di un genere di narrazione spettacolare e standardizzato. Per questo lo scrittore non teme, *apertis verbis*, di presentare l'episodio in chiave fortemente attualizzante e ironica, sottolineando tutte le componenti di una sceneggiatura già perfetta per l'industria cinematografica e culturale a venire e ricorrendo tra l'altro, non a caso, a un lessico cinematografico.[24] Anche Carrère segue a livello narrativo il

[24] "Trasponiamo, sceneggiamo, non dobbiamo aver paura di darci dentro. Calipso è il prototipo della bionda, quella che ogni uomo vorrebbe farsi ma non necessariamente sposare, quella che apre il gas o ingoia un tubetto di sonniferi la notte di Capodanno mentre l'amante festeggia in famiglia, e per trattenere Ulisse Calipso ha un atout più potente delle sue lacrime, della sua tenerezza, e persino del vello ricciuto fra le sue cosce. Lei può offrirgli quello che tutti sognano. Che cosa? L'eternità. Nientemeno. Se Ulisse resta con lei, non morirà mai. Loro due non si ammaleranno mai. [...] Passeranno la vita eterna a scopare, fare la pennichella al sole, nuotare nel mare azzurro, bere vino senza patirne i postumi il giorno dopo, scopare ancora e non averne mai abbastanza, leggere poesie se ne hanno voglia, e – perché no? – scriverne" (Carrère 2015, 201).

modello-Ulisse, quello della vita vera, mentre rifiuta la sceneggiatura mitologica e non-umana approntata da Calipso.

Risulta allora paradigmatico dell'analisi fin qui svolta e quasi una sua *mise en abyme* un pregnante passo di *Vite che non sono la mia* [*D'autres vie que la mienne*] in cui il narratore sceglie di narrare una vicenda che non corrisponde affatto alla categoria di storia interessante e con contenuto garantito di appeal. Così infatti gli si rivolge la compagna in questo dialogo che sembra colloquiale ed è invece metanarrativo: "Non conosco nessun altro capace di pensare che l'amicizia tra due giudici zoppi e malati di cancro intenti a spulciare cause di sovraindebitamento [...] sia un soggetto d'oro. Per di più non vanno neanche a letto insieme e alla fine lei muore. Ho riassunto bene? È questa la storia? Ho confermato: è questa" (Carrère 2011, 81). Per combattere il suo Avversario finzionale lo scrittore adotta la soluzione contraria rispetto all'usuale orizzonte delle aspettative e alle scelte di 'mestiere'.

1. Il patto con il lettore e l'immaginazione possibile

Si inserisce in tale quadro epistemologico la strategia più volte adottata da Carrère di avvertire sempre il lettore (e se stessi) delle libertà inventive che vengono prese, distinguendo ciò che è vero da ciò che è inventato (falso); inventare è quindi – fino a un certo punto – possibile, in ogni caso occorre dichiararlo, mostrando al fruitore le proprie scelte in modo che i termini della distinzione tra certezza e *fictio* siano evidenti. Altrimenti si cade nell'errore di chi formula congetture senza però specificare che tali, ed esclusivamente tali, sono (Carrère 2015, 329). In tal senso rimane allora assolutamente virtuoso un paradigma di tipo positivistico (il Renan della *Vita di Gesù* [*Vie de Jesus*] e soprattutto della *Storia delle origini del Cristianesimo* [*Histoire des Origines du Christianisme*]) che diventa un modello epistemologico ed espressivo: "sono libero d'inventare a patto di dire che invento e di segnalare con lo stesso scrupolo di Renan cosa è certo, cosa è probabile, cosa è possibile e, prima di arrivare a cos'è categoricamente escluso, cosa non è impossibile, territorio in cui si muove gran parte di questo libro» (Ibid.).[25] Così si precisa che le modalità dell'incontro tra Luca e Paolo sono state immaginate ma l'incontro si è svolto realmente (Ibid., 236), si postula, proprio perché possibile, l'incontro tra Maria (la madre di Gesù) e Luca (Ibid., 273); similmente si dichiara di collocare Luca a piacimento nel momento storico che più si ritiene funzionale alla narrazione: "Visto che devo riportare Luca a

[25] Si veda anche Carrère 2015, 128-129.

Roma, mi piacerebbe che il momento fosse il giugno del 71, per farlo assistere con tutta la città al trionfo di Tito che torna da Gerusalemme" (Ibid., 363); in questa affermazione convivono il dato storico (Luca ritorna effettivamente a Roma, dove scriverà il suo Vangelo) e il dato inventivo.

Pur entro certi limiti, è quindi lecito immaginare. Immaginare è verbo feticcio del *Regno* e Carrère è, pur cercando di controllarne gli esiti, sempre in uno stato immaginativo (l'Avversario è sempre in agguato…). Il verbo immaginare è largamente presente nel libro e una schedatura completa delle sue occorrenze, ravvisabili in tutto il volume, risulterebbe stucchevole; basterà citarne qualche esempio per dare conto della sua importante funzione: "Immagino che [Luca] abbia paura di essere notato" (Ibid., 115); "M'immagino Mnasone il cipriota raccontare a Luca questa storia" (Ibid., 219); "Cerco di immaginare i loro discorsi [tra Filippo e Luca] (Ibid., 233); "Prima della partenza [Luca] me lo immagino con un volto un po' slavato" (Ibid., 350). Vi è un passo che vale come dichiarazione di tale poetica: "il Luca che immagino io […] è un personaggio di fantasia, solo che, secondo me, è una fantasia plausibile" (Ibid., 317): si tratta di una formazione di compromesso, si potrebbe forse dire che comunque la 'fantasia plausibile' è dichiarata un po' unilateralmente e in ultima analisi, plausibile o no, è pur sempre fantasia. Carrère sceneggia allora con parsimonia l'incontro a Gerusalemme tra Paolo e Giacomo; quando quest'ultimo gli riassume (rinfaccia) modi e contenuti della sua predicazione "Paolo, immaginiamo, ascolta senza fiatare: è tutto vero" (Ibid., 209); e quando gli propone (ordina) di tenere un comportamento *politically correct* "Paolo deglutisce a fatica" (Ibid., 210), con piccola concessione alle convenzioni cinematografiche standard prima stigmatizzate.

Come si vede anche dall'ultima citazione, la dialettica verità-immaginazione sembra instabile. La stessa insistenza sull'equilibrio vero-falso è in qualche modo fin troppo esibita e ricorrente, quasi a voler esorcizzare una spinta, quella inventiva, che è la prima e naturale disposizione della scrittura: si inventa sempre e comunque perché fantasticare è la facoltà più naturale ed intrinseca; del resto la descrizione del sopra citato trionfo di Tito, ripresa da Giuseppe Flavio, risulta piuttosto cinematografica, con i suoi imponenti scenari mobili che trasportano i prigionieri e il corteo di navi.

La convivenza precaria degli elementi della poetica carreriana si riscontra anche nel tratteggiare la figura di Luca, del proprio alter ego. Si è detto che Luca è autore amante di scene verosimili. La prima fisionomia autoriale dell'evangelista è quella del cronista, che svolge un'inchiesta il più possibile veritiera su quello che deve scrivere, attenendosi a un metodo 'scientifico' di raccolta di fonti e testimoni autorevoli (secondo l'*exemplum* di Tucidide; Ibid., 226). Più volte in questa prospettiva si evoca la situazione-feticcio dell'essere presenti, autentica mitologia di tutte le estetiche contemporanee che si propongono come 'vere'. Detto questo, però, Carrère si incarica di mostrare le scelte strettamente narrative di Luca, il cui vangelo, nella prima parte dedicata a Zaccaria ed Elisabetta, è un 'romanzo' (Ibid., 380). Inoltre l'evangelista si inventa di sana pianta la parentela (cugini) tra Gesù e Giovanni per pure esigenze di racconto[26] e spesso cede a esigenze narrative: è il caso della dura reprimenda di Gesù al fariseo che lo ha invitato a pranzo,[27] uno degli episodi in cui il Messia appare estremamente nervoso e ingiusto; la creazione di questo episodio sembra derivare – almeno così interpreta Carrère – dal fatto che Luca abbia già pronta una serie di discorsi simili e che per utilizzarli inventi a bella posta il raccontino dell'invito a pranzo (una porzione testuale quindi del tutto inventata; Carrère 2015, 396); così tale episodio assolve all'esigenza, tipicamente 'letteraria', di aumentare l'intensità del climax, rendendo Gesù sempre più intrattabile quanto più si avvicina a Gerusalemme e i suoi nemici, qui i farisei, sempre più pericolosi (Ibid.). In modo simile, viene sapientemente preparata l'entrata in scena del protagonista degli Atti, Paolo, presentandolo – quando ancora si chiamava Saulo – in modo marginale in un episodio drammatico ("con un'abilità narrativa [...] straordinaria"; Ibid., 230) e poi sorprendendo il lettore che ritrova quella comparsa come protagonista (qui, prima della conversione, in veste di persecutore di cristiani).

Luca inoltre duplica gli exempla che più gli stanno a cuore, vale a dire ne scrive il *remake* (termine utilizzato da Carrère), come per le storie degli scocciatori instancabili (Carrère 2015, 395)[28] e per la vicenda della moneta perduta,[29] appunto remake della parabola della pecorella smarrita (Carrère 2015, 401);[30] del resto anche della conversione di Paolo sulla via di Damasco gli *Atti* forniscono tre versioni calibrate per diverse tipologie di pubblico (Ibid.,

[26] "Luca aveva davanti una scaletta che gli imponeva di parlare in primo luogo della nascita verginale di Gesù, e in secondo luogo del personaggio di Giovanni, di cui non sapeva bene cosa fare. Era a letto, o alle terme, o stava passeggiando sul campo di Marte quando gli è balenata l'idea: e s Gesù e Giovanni fossero cugini? Così avrebbe risolto i suoi problemi di narratore!" (Ibid., 383).
[27] Lc 11, 37-54.
[28] Con riferimento a Lc 11, 5-13 e Lc 18, 1-8.
[29] Lc 15, 8-10.
[30] Carrère aveva già sottolineato le "decine di variazioni" (197) cui Luca aveva sottoposto il topos della pecorella smarrita.

222). Una sensibilità letteraria è da ravvisare anche in alcuni probabili effetti intertestuali, per esempio laddove Luca sembra "richiamare di proposito" (Ibid., 207) l'analogia tra l'ostinata volontà di Paolo di recarsi a Gerusalemme (*Atti*) e l'altrettanto testarda decisione di Gesù di recarsi nella medesima città (narrata appunto nel Vangelo di Luca). Se Carrère distingue per il lettore contemporaneo il falso dal vero al contempo indica, soprattutto, che una quota di *fictio* è comunque inevitabile.

La poetica del vero porta lo scrittore quasi a scalzare dalla sua posizione centrale Luca, che finisce in una sorta di terra di nessuno gnoseologica, troppo ancorato ai fatti per essere scrittore, troppo scrittore per essere veramente fededegno; il fascino esercitato dal crudo pessimismo del Vangelo di Marco appare allora evidente:

> è la storia di un guaritore di campagna che pratica esorcismi e viene preso per uno stregone. Nel deserto l'uomo parla con il diavolo. La sua famiglia vorrebbe farlo rinchiudere. Il guaritore si circonda di sfaccendati che terrorizza con predizioni fosche ed enigmatiche, e quelli tagliano la corda appena lui viene arrestato. La sua avventura, durata meno di tre anni, si conclude con un processo lampo e una squallida esecuzione in un'atmosfera di sconforto, abbandono e spavento. Marco non dice niente per abbellire il suo resoconto o rendere più simpatici i personaggi. Leggendo questo brutale fatto di cronaca, si ha la sensazione di essere quanto mai vicini all'orizzonte per sempre irraggiungibile di ciò che è realmente avvenuto (Ibid., 377; tra l'altro la parte finale del *Regno* [*Le Royaume*] accentua, con una certa simpateticità, i toni sfiduciati del messaggio di Gesù, focalizzato su una concezione cupa e disperata della vita).

Ma ancora una volta: che cos'è quella appena menzionata se non un trattamento, l'abbozzo di una sceneggiatura?

2. L'incubo di sprofondare nel falso e il delirio dell'uomo-re

La dialettica vero-falso assume una rilevanza centrale nei libri di Carrère perché non ha solo portata teoretica ma appartiene alle radici profonde dell'opera letteraria dello scrittore francese. La sua produzione è fin dalle prime prove focalizzata su personaggi che sprofondano in un mondo irreale, sull'incubo di vedere, in modo subitaneo e senza spiegazioni, la propria vita – fino a quel momento ritenuta un dato certo, ancorata a precise sicurezze sociali e personali – catapultata in un perimetro totalmente altro e assolutamente incomprensibile; si consideri naturalmente *Baffi* [*La moustache*], ma anche trattamenti cinematografici come *Lingua straniera*

[*Langue étrangère*] e *Transfert* [*Transfert*]. Tali elementi che definiscono in profondità i libri di autori essenziali per Carrère come Ph.K. Dick (ma che si ritrovano pure in testi molto apprezzati come *Epepe* [*Epepe*] di Ferenc Karinthy, la storia di uno studioso di linguistica che si ritrova in un paese che parla una lingua assolutamente sconosciuta, fuori dal novero delle lingue note).[31] *Baffi* [*La moustache*] e Dick si possono ritenere tasselli di quella robusta nervatura fantascientifica che attraversa l'opera di Carrère. Il romanzo, la vicenda dell'uomo che improvvisamente da tutti non viene più riconosciuto per come ha sempre creduto – e continua a credere – di essere e al quale i suoi interlocutori restituiscono un'identità molto diversa da quella che fondatamente riteneva la sua, ha proprio un antecedente nell'universo letterario di Dick. Ne è esempio un romanzo come *Scorrete lacrime, disse il poliziotto* [*Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said*], così sintetizzato dallo stesso Carrère:

il celebre conduttore televisivo Jason Taverner si sveglia una mattina in una camera sconosciuta, condannato improvvisamente all'anonimato. Tutt'a un tratto nessuno ha mai sentito parlare del suo show, seguito fino al giorno precedente da trenta milioni di americani. Nessuno riconosce la sua faccia, che una settimana prima era sulla copertina di 'Time'. La sua amante, il suo agente e la sua segretaria gli voltano le spalle. Non ha più documenti, non c'è più traccia di lui né negli archivi della polizia né nella memoria dei contemporanei (Carrère 2016, 215-216).

Ci si trova in effetti all'interno di quel genere della fantascienza che viene denominato ucronia, basato sull'esistenza di mondi paralleli; mondi in ogni caso non appannaggio esclusivo delle sole scritture ortodossamente fantascientifiche e che infatti lo stesso Carrère rinviene (a conferma dell'importanza quasi ossessiva del tema) in libri come *Il cavaliere svedese* [*Der schwedische Reiter*] di Leo Perutz, in cui si viene appunto trascinati "in un universo strano, senza punti di riferimento, più vicino alla fantascienza che al romanzo storico" (Carrère 2017, 120). Lo scrittore ha dedicato nel 1986 un saggio al genere ucronico, *Le Dètroit de Behring* (Carrère 1986), una data molto significativa perché in posizione inaugurale: il paradigma ucronico è un enzima originario, fondativo, della poetica dello scrittore; il saggio sottolinea

[31] Situazione narrativa che presenta similarità e differenze con la vicenda di András Toma narrata in Carrère 2009; i punti di contatto e le diversità sono evidenziate da Carrère 2017, 194-196.

come i personaggi ucronici vivono in uno stato di perenne elastico tra mondo reale e mondo irreale, in un andirivieni consapevole e nondimeno 'folle' tra queste due polarità. Tale situazione è definita dall'"equilibre impossible des forces, le mouvement pendulaire qui fait successivement épouser l'une e l'autre, le réel, la lubie, sans pouvoir jamais s'arrêter à aucune" (Ibid., 38). Il "va-et-vient" (Ibid.) ucronico già preannuncia la dialettica del *Regno* [*Le Royaume*], la dicotomia storia/invenzione ma lo stesso bipolarismo di Romand nell'*Avversario*, sterminatore della propria famiglia: forme diverse di un'unica origine, la soppressione della realtà e il suo essere sostituita e divorata da universi fittizi. E il cerchio si può chiudere: non a caso in film amati da Carrère in cui vige la compresenza di universi paralleli, i protagonisti uccidono o intendono uccidere la propria famiglia: così accade in *Shining* [*The Shining*] di Kubrick e in *Scanners* [*Scanners*] di Cronenberg.[32] Jack Torrance viene risucchiato dall'Overlook Hotel a cui ha sempre appartenuto e gli stessi scanners, individui dotati di potentissimi e distruttivi poteri telepatici, costituiscono un vero e proprio mondo a parte rispetto a quello dei normali esseri umani.

Sulle medesime coordinate qui tracciate si situa il forte interesse mostrato per pellicole strutturate sulla dicotomia realtà-sogno (che ripete la polarità vero-falso), a partire dall'Hitchcock de *La donna che visse due volte* [*Vertigo*], lungo una linea che comprende titoli come *I racconti della luna pallida d'agosto* [*Ugetsu Monogatari*] di Mizoguchi e *Providence* [*Providence*] di Resnais (Carrère 1977 e 1981b).

Questa situazione si intreccia con una tematica-feticcio di Carrère, quella dell'uomo che vuole-farsi-re (l'appena citato Jack Torrance, il 're' dell'Overlook Hotel, ne è già esemplificazione): voler diventare un re vuol dire infatti costruirsi e sprofondare in un universo parallelo, vivere in un mondo alternativo che può dare due esiti: entrare in una vera e propria avventura e lasciare la realtà consueta e ordinaria (*L'uomo che volle farsi re* [*The Man Who Would Be King*]) imbarcandosi in progetti avventati e superiori alle proprie capacità (come in un film molto amato dallo scrittore francese, *Il re dei giardini di Marvin* [*The King of Marvin Gardens*] di Rafelson[33], in cui il protagonista Jason sogna, non avendo né mezzi finanziari né capacità temperamentali, di costruire un villaggio turistico alle Hawaii: l'esito del suo rischiosissimo progetto sarà addirittura tragico); far convivere le

[32] I film compaiono in un elenco dei film preferiti stilato da Carrère: Chatrian e Persico 2015, 128.
[33] Carrère 1981a.

due realtà, quella usuale e normale e quella fittizia in cui ci si è costruita un'identità abnorme: è il caso dell'*Avversario*, in cui il protagonista Jean-Claude Romand si spaccia presso famigliari e amici per un importante medico dell'Organizzazione Mondiale della Sanità (mentre non era neppure laureato): in virtù di tale falsa posizione viene ritenuto uno scienziato di rilevanza internazionale e addirittura gli vengono affidati considerevoli patrimoni familiari da gestire. In tal modo si trovano forzosamente e inconsapevolmente gettati in una vita falsa anche le vittime del delirio dell'uomo-re: tali sono i congiunti di Romand ma lo sono anche i personaggi di film centrali nell'officina di Carrère come i già citati *I diabolici* [*Les diaboliques*] e *Piano...piano dolce Carlotta* [*Hush...Hush, Sweet Charlotte*]. Nel primo i tre attanti principali sono marito e moglie e una loro collega (dirigono un istituto scolastico): al fine di impossessarsi della ricca eredità della consorte, l'uomo mette in scena insieme alla collega-amante un falso omicidio e si finge morto per poi 'resuscitare' davanti alla moglie cardiopatica provocandone la morte (ma l'inganno è più complesso perché l'amante compie il falso omicidio con la complicità della moglie, poiché il marito si era a bella posta reso particolarmente odioso e sadico: il gesto porta la donna in uno stato di cronico esaurimento nervoso e delirio). Anche nel film di Aldrich l'anziana protagonista, già psichicamente instabile perché perseguitata da un terribile senso di colpa (crede di aver ucciso in gioventù il fidanzato), viene sistematicamente ingannata dalla cugina e dal suo partner, che alimentano le sue ossessioni per farla definitivamente impazzire (ed entrare in possesso di un considerevole patrimonio).

Ma le pagine carreriane pullulano di uomini-re: oltre a Romand, Gesù (uomo-re per eccellenza), S. Paolo, che si pone a capo della religione cattolica, Limonov (che avrebbe voluto anche "fondare una religione"; Carrère 2012, 354). Da un punto di vista cinematografico, oltre al film di Houston, va assolutamente ricordato anche *Quarto potere* [*Citizen Kane*], la vicenda del magnate dell'editoria Charles Foster Kane e del suo delirio di onnipotenza (non a caso nel cinegiornale che apre il film la sua enorme e sontuosa reggia di Xanadu è paragonata a quella di un imperatore e di un faraone). Non sono nemmeno da sottovalutare in questa ottica i riferimenti a *La gente mormora* [*People Will Talk*] in *Baffi* [*La moustache*]. Nel film di Mankiewicz il protagonista, un medico, viene (ingiustamente) accusato di essersi spacciato per guaritore al fine di trarne vantaggio (Carrère 1987, 45), vale a dire di essersi considerato e di farsi considerare una semi-divinità; in tal modo viene inoltre accusato di essere finto, di avere una doppia vita fondata sull'inganno. Il motivo della doppia vita e della doppia personalità del resto si può infatti rintracciare nei libri e nei film preferiti di Carrère. In *Crimini e misfatti*[34] [*Crimes and Misdemeanors*] di Woody Allen, uno stimato e affermato oftalmologo, Jude Rosenthal, conduce una doppia esistenza: sposato, ha infatti da tempo un'amante, Dolores. Non solo: la vicenda ha un esito tragico perché di fronte alle minacce della donna – sempre meno disposta ad accettare il suo ruolo subordinato – di rivelare tutto alla moglie, il dottore la fa ammazzare: una situazione in qualche modo simile a quella dell'*Avversario* [*L'Adversaire*], visto che anche nel film un uomo dalla duplice esistenza uccide, non l'intero gruppo familiare ma in ogni caso una persona con cui ha una relazione (e la pellicola di Allen andrebbe considerata anche per quanto riguarda la dialettica vero-falso: "Lei guarda troppi film" dice alla fine Rosenthal al suo interlocutore – personaggio interpretato da Allen stesso – che crede alla punizione della colpa; nella realtà, invece, l'assassino Jude prospera). Lo stesso protagonista di *Je suis heureux que ma mère soit vivante* di C. e N. Miller, film tratto dalle pagine di Carrère (2017, 11-26), sdoppia la propria vita nel momento in cui ritrova la madre che lo aveva abbandonato.

Infine andrà osservato quanto il discorso di Carrère si coaguli attorno a pellicole che si confrontano in modo diretto con il tema dell'alterazione della realtà. Ecco perché risulta pertinente un film come l'*Invasione degli ultracorpi* [*Invasion of the Body Snatchers*] di Don Siegel (Carrère 2012, 219), in cui si mette in scena la sostituzione di esseri umani con individui clonati attraverso enormi baccelli, quindi persone reali sostituite da copie false, identiche nei connotati ma svuotate di ogni affettività e volontà. Il film si attaglia perfettamente alla situazione della Romania sotto Ceausescu, abitata da rumeni trasformati dalla dittatura nella brutta e incattivita copia dei rumeni reali (e non a caso Carrère cita poco dopo l'autore letterario che ha posto al centro della sua opera la sostituzione di un mondo falso a quello vero, vale a dire Ph.K. Dick, di cui viene richiamata, a proposito della mobilitazione dei minatori rumeni indotta da un mirato lavaggio del cervello, *La penultima verità* [*The Penultimate Truth*]; Ibid., 220). *L'invasione degli ultracorpi* [*Invasion of the Body Snatchers*] era del resto già stata evocata proprio nel libro su Dick, sempre a proposito di un oltrepassamento del perimetro del reale, gli esperimenti con l'LSD compiuti da Timothy Leary, psicologo e icona della controcultura psichedelica (Carrère 2016, 143). Appare altresì molto significativo che Dick abbia visto la saga del *Pianeta delle scimmie*

[34] Anche questo film compare nell'elenco presente in Chatrian e Persico 2015, 128.

[*Planet of the Apes*] di Schaffner (Ibid., 201), nel cui primo film il pianeta non è, come si sarebbe portati a credere, quello del titolo bensì, come si evince dal colpo di scena finale, la Terra, ridotta a landa desolata governata in modo autoritario da una ristrettissima oligarchia di scimmie dotate di intelligenza avanzata e che conosce la verità. Tutta la dialettica vero-falso ha certamente in Dick una fonte primaria e si declina nell'opera dello scrittore americano secondo un'articolata fenomenologia, che prevede personaggi che si trovano a vivere in un mondo ritenuto da loro erroneamente reale mentre è invece una costrizione/imposizione fasulla imposta da una ristretta cerchia di potere: "Ciò che tutte le persone sensate [...] considerano di comune accordo realtà non è che un'illusione, un simulacro creato da una minoranza per ingannare la maggioranza o da un'entità esterna per ingannare il mondo intero. Quella che chiamiamo realtà non è la realtà" (Ibid., 95).[35] In altri casi i soggetti decidono in modo relativamente autonomo (perché costretti dalle circostanze), e comunque consapevole, di trasferirsi in universi alternativi (*Labirinto di morte* [*Maze of Death*]; Ibid., 194); comunque si tratta sempre del conflitto tra originale e copia, secondo una dialettica di erosione dei confini che arriva a toccare la stessa identità umana, rendendo indistinguibile l'uomo dalla macchina (*Ma gli androidi sognano pecore elettriche?* [*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*]; celeberrima la trasposizione cinematografica: *Blade Runner* [*Blade Runner*] di R. Scott). Del resto Dick stesso immagina la realtà *sub specie* filmica, o più precisamente il cinema diviene la cifra, la miglior traduzione, della percezione paranoica che del mondo ha lo scrittore americano; così, quando pensa di essere controllato dalla polizia, ne trova conferma nel fatto che la sua abitazione sia in perfetto ordine: "bastava considerare con quale cura meticolosa erano state cancellate le tracce che altrimenti avrebbero [Dick e Donna, la sua compagna] trovato. Vedevano, come in un film, i poliziotti che estraevano tutti i cassetti dai mobili per verificare se c'era qualcosa appiccicato dietro" (Ibid., 210).

3. Il racconto del cinema

Quindi, pur con tutte le perplessità evidenziate, esiste un racconto del cinema, un suo contributo propositivo e epistemologicamente attivo. Si può

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35 La bibliografia su Dick è molto vasta: tra i contributi più recenti ci limitiamo a menzionare, anche per l'attenzione dedicata al rapporto con il cinema, Dunst e Schlensag 2015. Come noto, romanzi e racconti di Dick hanno avuto una considerevole ricezione cinematografica, diretta e indiretta, che comprende, per limitarci a qualche esempio, titoli come *Minority Report*, *Total Recall*, *The Truman Show*, *The Village*.

allora provare a considerare un testo come *Limonov* da questo punto di vista, come un libro in cui il cinema è, più che avversario tentatore, codice narrativo. Tuto il discorso del *Regno* [*Le Royaume*], attento a distinguere la verosimiglianza dall'invenzione, è da vedersi probabilmente alla luce del libro russo, in cui il paradigma filmico viene considerato più appropriato, vista la natura eccezionale del personaggio principale: poeta, intellettuale, uomo politico e d'azione, fasciocomunista, anarchico e rivoluzionario, un concentrato di contraddizioni superomistico-autodistruttive e un destino al contempo grandioso e misero (giusta ancora una volta la grammatica di Auerbach): il libro biblico-religioso si configura così come tentativo di ripristino di un equilibrio tra realtà e ucronia dopo lo sbilanciamento 'spettacolare' di *Limonov* [*Limonov*] e il suo modello può essere il film-reportage *Quarto potere* [*Citizen Kane*]*;* invece per le vicende dell'avventuriero ucraino il riferimento è *Aguirre, furore di Dio* [*Aguirre, Der Zorn Gottes*], addirittura affiancato, per la sua capacità di ritrarre esistenze visionarie, a *Cuore di tenebra* [*Heart of Darkness*] di Conrad (Carrère 2012, 255). Occorre notare che queste citazioni compaiono in un passo rilevante del libro che si sofferma, apparentemente *en passant*, su questioni legate alle modalità di racconto. Infatti Limonov ascolta un intellettuale, Dugin, narrare le gesta del barone von Ungern-Sternberg e ne rimane affascinato: "Gli piacerebbe che, un giorno, qualcuno raccontasse la sua vita a quel modo" (Ibid.); qualcuno (Carrère) in effetti sta narrando le gesta di Limonov e in tal senso *Aguirre* (e lo stesso romanzo di Conrad, modello, come noto, di un celebre film, *Apocalypse now* di Coppola) assume il valore esemplare di narrazione di riferimento. Naturalmente Aguirre e Kurtz presentano i tratti specifici dell'attante estremo ed eccessivo che sprofonda nel delirio d'irrealtà e si autoproclama re: Aguirre spodesta i comandanti della spedizione spagnola di cui fa parte (la vicenda è ambientata nel 1560) e prosegue con un manipolo di fedelissimi – che moriranno tutti – alla ricerca del mitico Eldorado; rimasto solo, cadrà in preda a un delirio senza ritorno. Anche *Cuore di tenebra* [*Heart of Darkness*] è focalizzato sulla personalità di un altro 're', Kurtz, inghiottito nell'abisso fluviale africano e venerato dalle tribù indigene.

Come il racconto di Kipling, sono titoli che confermano l'idea regolativa dell'universo carreriano, per la quale sprofondare in un mondo parallelo, e 'credersi re', è la norma. Occorre sottolineare che lo scrittore francese guarda alla vita di Limonov come a un film e a Limonov come eroe cinematografico. Già all'inizio della narrazione si parla del protagonista *sub specie* cinematografica: l'idea di diventare uno scrittore e soprattutto un rivoluzionario, coltivata fin dalla tarda gioventù, era "la sceneggiatura che Limonov raccontava a se stesso quando aveva trent'anni ed era un esule senza il becco di un quattrino scaricato sui marciapiedi di New York, ed ecco che trent'anni dopo quella sceneggiatura è diventata un film" (Ibid., 22); e quando Carrère glielo fa notare, Eduard concorda: " "'È vero' ammette. 'Nella vita ho realizzato il mio programma'" (Ibid.). La situazione si duplica nella parte finale del testo, in cui una specifica memoria letteraria viene reinterpretata come sceneggiatura. Limonov deve affrontare la detenzione in carcere:

> Eduard lo ha sognato per tutta la vita. Quando da piccolo leggeva *Il conte di Montecristo*. Quando una notte ha sentito suo padre [...] raccontare alla madre la storia di quel condannato a morte così coraggioso, così calmo, così composto che è diventato l'eroe della sua adolescenza. Per un uomo che vede se stesso come l'eroe di un romanzo, la prigione è un capitolo imprescindibile, e sono sicuro che, lungi dall'essere afflitto, Eduard si è goduto ogni istante, stavo per dire 'ogni inquadratura', di questo film visto cento volte: la consegna degli abiti civili e dei pochi effetti personali [...]; la divisa ricevuta in cambio [...]; la visita medica [...]; il percorso attraverso lo sterminato labirinto dei corridoi, con due guardie al fianco; la successione delle sbarre e dei portoni; infine la pesante porta di metallo che si apre e poi gli si richiude alle spalle (Ibid., 317).

Del resto accade a Limonov quello che *solo nei film* accade, quello che è tipico del cinema, per esempio essere ferito a una spalla ("nei film il protagonista viene sempre ferito alla spalla"; Ibid., 265). Certo, non manca in queste scene la concessione a una grammatica cinematografica codificata (per esempio la fenomenologia carceraria è in qualche modo un elenco paradigmatico, standard, di non pochi *prison movies*) tuttavia mai così sottolineata nella sua convenzionalità-falsità. In ogni caso il dispositivo filmico compare a ricordare che ci si trova di fronte a un libro-film; quando si rifugia sugli altipiani dell'Altaj, al confine con il Kazakistan, Limonov progetta di "tenere un corso di sopravvivenza, stile *Rambo*" [*First Blood*, di Kotcheff] (Ibid., 304), il cui protagonista (che, si noti, viene ferito a una spalla), una volta rifiutato dallo spazio sociale vive in un mondo alternativo (la foresta), di cui è sovrano, come lui stesso minacciosamente afferma. Pure una fidanzata di Limonov è un avatar filmico: assomiglia alla protagonista di *Nikita* [*Nikita*] di Besson. Ed è nell'Altaj che sembra prendere sempre più corpo la vocazione di Limonov a farsi liberatore delle popolazioni dai tiranni locali, a diventare il nuovo Lawrence d'Arabia di turkmeni, kazaki e tagiki (Ibid., 299; tra l'altro

Lawrence d'Arabia [*Lawrence of Arabia*] di Lean è un cult della storia del cinema).

La pervasività dell'immaginario cinematografico in *Limonov* deriva dall'indistinzione vero/falso e dalla consapevolezza, una sorta di resa, di non poter stabilire una linea di demarcazione: Limonov e il mondo russo 'aboliscono' tale confine. Sia il mondo totalitario che quello post totalitario sono accomunati da questa patologia. Così il "totalitarismo, che sotto questo aspetto decisivo l'Unione Sovietica ha portato ben oltre la Germania nazionalsocialista, consiste nel dire alle persone che quello che vedono nero è bianco, e nel costringerle non soltanto a ripeterlo ma, a lungo andare, né più né meno a crederlo" (Ibid., 181). A sua volta, la Russia disorientata postcomunista vede diverse classi sociali frastornate e prive di punti di riferimento: "come sapere, infatti, dov'è il bene e dov'è il male, chi sono gli eroi e chi i traditori, se ogni anno si commemora la Festa della rivoluzione continuando a ripetere che quella stessa rivoluzione è stata un delitto e una tragedia?" (Ibid., 251).

Soprattutto per quanto riguarda i regimi totalitari, Carrère conosce e recupera le teorie della più importante studiosa novecentesca delle tanatopolitiche, vale a dire Hannah Arendt: "Nel leggere Hannah Arendt, era stato molto colpito da un'idea: che lo scopo degli Stati totalitari fosse quello di tagliare fuori le persone dalla realtà, di farle vivere in un mondo fittizio" (Carrère 2016, 90). È un aspetto sul quale ritorna anche *Le Détroit de Behring* (Carrère 1986, 32): "L'histoire, dans les régimes totalitaires notamment, a parfois adoptè le mode uchronique" (per esempio eliminando Trotzski dalle foto in cui compariva accanto a Lenin).[36] Peraltro la stessa ascesa al potere di Putin ricalca per Carrère una trama filmica: "Come in un film di Mankiewicz, l'ufficiale scialbo e ossequioso si rivelerà un'implacabile macchina da guerra che eliminerà uno dopo l'altro quanti lo hanno fatto re" (Carrère 2012, 300; da notare che ritorna il topos fondamentale de *L'uomo che volle farsi re*). Il film potrebbe essere *Operazione Cicero* [*5 Fingers*], ma anche in *Eva contro Eva* [*All about Eve*] la timida assistente della diva si rivelerà assai diversa.

Il cinema torna nelle pagine conclusive di *Limonov* [*Limonov*]. Carrère intervista il suo personaggio, che dopo l'uscita dalla prigione ha perso in gran parte l'aura di eccezionalità ed è affondato in una zona grigia esistenziale e politica. L'avventuriero superuomo vissuto sempre al limite, lo scrittore maledetto è ora ridotto in un appartamento semivuoto con mobili e beni

[36] Si vedano anche le considerazioni sulle falsificazioni naziste in *Omaggio alla Catalogna* [*Homage to Catalonia*] di Orwell in Carrère 1986, 33-34.

pignorati a contare i like al suo profilo social. Ancora una volta scatta il meccanismo per cui una situazione narrativa è rapportata a un film: la vita post-eroica di Limonov viene così paragonata alle sequenze finali di *Toro scatenato* [*Raging Bull*] di Scorsese (Carrère 2012, 354):[37] un riferimento indicato – qui dal figlio di Carrère (montatore televisivo) – e però sostanzialmente rifiutato dal padre. Non sembra tanto la derealizzazione il punto in questione quanto l'eccesso del senso di sconfitta che una simile sceneggiatura narrativa conferirebbe al personaggio, inquadrato esclusivamente come un *loser*: il problema non è, quindi, togliere la patina filmica a un personaggio, bensì in quale 'sceneggiatura' collocarlo e che sigillo interpretativo dare alla sua vicenda. Tuttavia il meccanismo è quello già analizzato: il confronto con il cinema, anche laddove il riferimento filmico venga rifiutato, non può non avvenire. Il corpo a corpo con il cinema che pervaderà le pagine del *Regno* [*Le Royaume*] è già iniziato.

Il dialogo su Scorsese può in effetti rivestire un valore ricapitolativo del discorso globale sul cinema sviluppato da Carrère, la cui opera è paradigmatica della dialettica tra verosimiglianza e *fictio* che ha interessato larga parte della letteratura contemporanea. La riflessione sul dato filmico può inserire lo scrittore in uno spazio ipermoderno, che cerca di recuperare le istanze del reale malgrado tutto (per impiegare l'espressione di Didi-Huberman prima menzionata), malgrado la volatilità derealizzante insito nelle, pur amate, pratiche finzionali; ma forse la riserva piena d'attrazione sul cinema, la lunga fedeltà alla Calipso di celluloide è, oltre che di tipo epistemologico, anche di ordine morale: come insegna la storia di Jean-Claude Romand ne *L'Avversario* [*L'Adversaire*], aderire al mondo falso è il primo passo per sprofondare nel Male. In fondo, uno dei deliranti 're' del catalogo carreriano, il Jack Torrance di *Shining*, [*The Shining*] – prototipo dello stesso Romand – è stato l'incubo di Carrère ("*All work and no play make Jack a dull boy*. [...] Le terrifiant mantra du *Shining* m'a accompagné toute ma vie. Je me suis plus d'une fois identifié à son lamentable héros. J'ai connu sa sécheresse dirimante, son effroi, sa cruauté, sa folie morne et circulaire. Je me suis vu, dans les miroirs, faire les mêmes grimaces que lui"; Carrère 2020b,

[37] "Nell'ultima scena si vede il pugile interpretato da De Niro ormai alla frutta, sconfitto su tutti i fronti. Non ha più niente, né moglie, né amici, né casa, si è lasciato andare, è grasso, si guadagna da vivere facendo un numero comico in uno squallido night. Seduto davanti allo specchio del suo camerino, aspetta che lo chiamino in scena. Quando lo chiamano, si alza pesantemente dalla sedia. Poco prima di uscire dall'inquadratura, si guarda allo specchio, saltella da un piede all'altro, mima qualche colpo di boxe e lo si sente mormorare, piano piano, soltanto per se stesso: 'Sono il più forte, il più forte, il più forte'".

373). Ma, a differenza del protagonista del capolavoro di Kubrick, lo scrittore ha saputo affidarsi al potere rappresentativo e salvifico che, malgrado tutto, la parola letteraria ancora detiene.

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Biografia

Andrea Rondini insegna Forme della comunicazione letteraria presso il Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche, della Comunicazione e delle Relazioni Internazionali dell'Università di Macerata. Si occupa di narrativa contemporanea, rapporti tra letteratura e cinema, letteratura e giornalismo, teoria della letteratura; i suoi studi si sono concentrati in particolare su P. Levi, B. Fenoglio, N. Ginzburg, G. Celati, E. Trevi, D. Orecchio, W. G. Sebald. In riferimento alle tematiche letterario-cinematografiche ha recentemente pubblicato *Gianni Celati, il cinema di John Cassavetes e la distruzione dei dispositivi* in *La scrittura dello sguardo. Gianni Celati e le arti visive*, a cura di M. Martelli - M. Spunta, «Recherches», 24, 2020.

RECENSIONI

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Donatella Montini, *La stilistica inglese contemporanea. Teorie e metodi*. Roma, Carocci, 175 pp., € 18,00.

In Italia, la disciplina della stilistica è spesso marginalizzata, poco considerata e talvolta addirittura rifiutata da alcune frange del mondo accademico, sia da quei linguisti che ne criticano il carattere eclettico dei metodi e degli approcci, visti quindi come privi di rigore scientifico, sia da quei letterati che non accettano il taglio tecnico di analisi della lingua e delle sue strategie operative. In realtà, in altri contesti, come per esempio in Gran Bretagna, la stilistica è un campo vivace, rigoglioso e attento al progresso della ricerca, capace di dialogare con altri settori e arricchirsi di nuovi strumenti. Ne sono prova prestigiosa riviste accademiche come *Language and Literature*, il cui autorevole ruolo è riconosciuto a livello mondiale, l'associazione PALA (Poetics And Linguistics Association), che organizza convegni annuali sempre molto frequentatati da studiosi di tutto il mondo, e le frequenti pubblicazioni di matrice anglosassone, a cura di significativi studiosi come Paul Simpson, Elena Semino e Michael Toolan, a cui si affiancano anche testi di taglio introduttivo (si vedano Gibbons and Whiteley 2018, Jeffries and McIntyre 2010). Mentre in alcuni paesi europei vi sono tentativi di rilancio della disciplina (per esempio, in Francia con il testo di Sorlin, 2014), in Italia sono ancora pochi gli anglisti che si dedicano a questo genere di indagini e teorie. Tentando di colmare, o almeno attenuare questa lacuna, il volume di Donatella Montini appena uscito per i tipi di Carocci fornisce un quadro di insieme della poliedricità della stilistica contemporanea, offre spunti efficaci per la didattica e sottolinea il valore intrinseco della materia, al di là dei pregiudizi e rigidità di una parte dell'accademia. È pertanto un volume agile e preciso, che contribuisce a rinvigorire la produzione scientifica italiana sulla stilistica, purtroppo scarsa a parte alcune notevoli eccezioni come il testo di alcuni anni fa *Towards a Linguistic Theory of Foregrounding* di John Douthwaite (2000). Se la stilistica viene sommariamente associata a una limitata analisi linguistica, a una parziale introduzione alla retorica o a uno studio letterario in cui compare qualche elemento linguistico, il volume di

Montini invece dimostra come la disciplina non solo si nutre di una tradizione solida e radicata nella cultura umanistica, ma si articola ora attraverso metodi e procedure scientifiche, empiriche e precise per affrontare il concetto di stile, e di variazione dalla norma di lingua standard, in una molteplicità di contesti e generi, non solo letterari, ma anche e soprattutto non finzionali, spaziando dai discorsi politici e religiosi alla pubblicità, ai testi odeporici e alle forme multimodali della comunicazione in rete come blog e siti. L'Autrice quindi riafferma il carattere interdisciplinare della stilistica, ma ne evidenzia anche l'impianto preciso e meritevole di attenzione alla luce soprattutto dei suoi metodi scientifici, tradizionali e innovativi, che permettono di decrittare la lingua, smontare gli ingranaggi dell'ideologia o anche permettere una più ampia e consapevole riflessione sul testo, sul significato e sull'interazione fra autore e lettore.

Il volume è organizzato in due grandi parti, precedute da una Premessa (in cui si presenta brevemente la disciplina e le sue peculiarità) e una prima sezione introduttiva, dove sono ben delineati la definizione di stilistica, l'oggetto, il metodo e le svolte attuali a seguito di avanzamento in campi ad essa collegati, quali la *critical discourse analysis*, la pragmatica (anche nella sua dimensione storica) o gli studi di tipo cognitivo (che in tempi recenti hanno permesso lo sviluppo e la discussione su concetti quali *embodied metaphor* e *theory of the mind*). Quest'ultimo punto spiega perché Montini parla di una nuova direzione, che volge "dalla stilistica alle stilistiche" (ibid., 29), proprio per porre alla luce il ventaglio di discipline, influenze e benefici di analisi che attualmente riverberano nelle vene della materia. In particolare, la Premessa delinea la struttura del volume e l'organizzazione tematica, che ruota attorno a due grandi blocchi di concetti ed esempi testuali, rispettivamente legate a materiali di taglio *context-based* oppure *context-free*, "la cui dimensione comunicativa dipende o meno dalla situazione contestuale in cui essa si realizza" (ibid., 12). Tuttavia, l'Autrice stessa ammonisce sul fatto che tali macro-categorie non siano da intendersi come opposte e vicendevolmente escludenti, ma piuttosto con punti sovrapponibili e contigui. Inoltre, inserendo nella categoria *context-based* il genere drammatico e il registro non letterario, e nella categoria *context-free* il testo narrativo e il testo poetico, Montini ricorda come, anche se originariamente la stilistica si occupava dell'analisi di testi letterari, in particolare poetici e in prosa, in realtà il suo focus attuale è ampiamente diversificato, toccando e attingendo da varie discipline per trattare materiali di diversi tipologia, dai fumetti al discorso scientifico o il testo umoristico.

La sezione 2 viene dedicata al testo teatrale, il cui studio negli ultimi decenni è stato arricchito da concetti e strumenti di tipo semiotico (per esempio con il volume di Keir Elam *The Semiotics of Drama and Theatre*, 1980), in considerazione anche di tutti quei segni che marcano la rappresentazione sul palco, dai costumi alle luci, e quindi caratterizzano il rapporto fra attore e spettatore, e contribuiscono perciò alla negoziazione del significato. Il teatro in realtà dovrebbe essere inteso nella sua duplice veste: da un lato, il testo-scritto, cioè l'opera dell'autore da intendersi come base ideale di riferimento per la storia che si intende narrare, e dall'altro, il testo-scena, che concerne perciò la performance, in cui la parola si materializza in atti e movimenti. Il testo drammatico – che la stilistica tende a privilegiare in questo caso – si presta particolarmente alla discussione di alcuni elementi quali il formato dialogico, motore dell'azione e spina dorsale degli scambi fra i vari attori/personaggi. Qui la stilistica si avvicina e sovrappone all'area della pragmatica, che si interessa al significato della "componente attivata della formulazione linguistica, che assume significato in relazione a un preciso contesto e agli utenti" (ibid., 49), attraverso uno sguardo attento agli atti di parola, seguendo la tradizione di Austin, Searle e Grice. Con riferimento ad esempi tratti dal teatro elisabettiano, ma includendo anche elementi non finzionali quali citazioni dei discorsi di Obama, Montini riassume le diverse tipologie di *speech act* e il loro valore comunicativo legato all'implicatura, che emerge dalla successione e dall'incastro dei turni conversazionali. Nell'ambito della stilistica pragmatica (a cui anni fa Elizabeth Black dedicò una monografia), risulta particolarmente rilevante la nozione di faccia, cioè il senso del sé e dell'immagine pubblica che un individuo matura e cerca di mantenere, e le diverse strategie di interazione, incluso il senso di minaccia attraverso la cosiddetta *impoliteness*, che come ricorda l'Autrice può svolgere un ruolo centrale nella costruzione del testo, anche in chiave diacronica e storica, come per esempio dimostrato dai lavori di Culpeper o dal recente saggio di Bianca Del Villano *Using the Devil with Courtesy. Shakespeare and the Language of (Im)Politeness* (2018).

La sezione successiva ruota attorno al testo di tipo non letterario, e ribadisce il valore plurale della stilistica, che si occupa cioè di molti generi e formati testuali. Nel *journalese*, la lingua dei giornali, per esempio, la costruzione di una narrazione può essere studiata da una prospettiva narratologica, con una serie più o meno strutturata di fasi dello sviluppo diegetico, oppure ponendo attenzione a quei marcatori *foregrounded*, o che devianti rispetto la norma standard. Qui, Montini sottolinea la forza analitica di alcuni approcci, come per esempio la *critical discourse analysis* e la *critical metaphor analysis*, due schemi metodologici improntati allo svelamento dei significati ideologici e persuasivi nascosti nel testo e nella lingua. Se il nodo centrale chiaramente si rifà all'idea foucauldiana di *discours*, quale pratica comunicativa e di potere, bisogna ricordare come queste siano aree che si sono ampliate molto negli ultimi decenni, per esempio con i lavori di Fairclough e Wodak per quanto riguarda la *cda*, che offre strumenti utili per indagare come la lingua possa veicolare forme più o meno trasparenti di "potere, discriminazione, ineguaglianza" (ibid., 71). In un volume del 2010, Leslie Jeffries, muovendosi da una base teorica di tipo hallidayiano, dimostra come una serie di pratiche testuali (per esempio opposizione, esemplificazione, ed enumerazione) siano funzionali alla creazione e imposizione di visione ideologiche diffuse a livello sociale, che tuttavia possono essere individuate per merito della *critical stylistics*, cioè quella stilistica che si integra con le modalità della *cda*. Ugualmente importante in questa cornice è la considerazione indirizzata al contesto del materiale sottoposto ad analisi, cioè i processi di produzione, fruizione ed anche manipolazione del testo nella sua circolazione.

Il perno della nozione di *critical metaphor analysis*, invece, risiede nell'idea di metafora, reinterpretata non meramente come segno di abbellimento testuale ma piuttosto come struttura cognitiva, cioè alla base dell'uso della lingua e del nostro sistema di comprensione del mondo circostante, in una prospettiva che affianca e integra mente e corpo, grazie alle cosiddette *cognitive metaphors*, partendo dai pionieristici studi di Lakoff e Johnson degli anni '80 ai più recenti sviluppi del settore (si veda per l'esempio l'attività di ricerca del Metaphor lab di Amsterdam). Grazie all'apporto delle scienze cognitive, le metafore concettuali sono esaminate in relazione alla mappatura fra due domini, fonte e obiettivo, le cui realizzazioni linguistiche sono spesso spia di diffusione di visioni del mondo. Le diverse strutture figurative cognitive infatti, siano esse orientazionali, ontologiche o di altro tipo, mascherano messaggi ideologici e pertanto hanno ampio potere persuasivo nel lettore/ascoltatore. Gli strumenti di analisi menzionati in precedenza si applicano in particolare a quel ramo della disciplina che va sotto il nome di *political stylistics*, che vaglia nello specifico le diverse manifestazioni del linguaggio politico, e che "utilizza terreni diversi, da quello della scienza politica a quello della linguistica, della filosofia politica, della retorica" (ibid., 79). I discorsi politici dei grandi leader del passato e del presente, da Lincoln a Churchill, da Gandhi e Mandela a Trump, infatti si basano su molte risorse stilistiche finalizzate a massimizzare il fine persuasivo del testo, andando quindi pragmaticamente ad esercitare un effetto perlocutorio. Montini inoltre mette in risalto come la dimensione diacronica della lingua sia stato recentemente riconsiderata, alla luce della pragmatica storica, proprio per osservare i cambiamenti stilistici operati in un particolare genere, o da uno specifico autore. Grazie anche a nuovi sofisticati strumenti per interrogare corpora elettronici e banche date quali *The Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* o il *Early English Books Online* (EEBO), che rafforzano le analisi soprattutto a livello quantitativo, gli accademici hanno potuto verificare le caratteristiche di un grande patrimonio testuale, che include documenti legali, sermoni e lettere.

Il volume dà poi spazio ai testi *context-free*, cioè quei materiali che appaiono più slegati dal contesto di riferimento e le cui peculiarità sono interne a livello retorico e linguistico. Montini ricorda come il senso del narrare sia non solo potente strumento di comunicazione umana, ma anche e soprattutto filtro per la comprensione del sé, e che potremmo sintetizzare con la metafora cognitiva di Bruner LIFE IS A NARRATIVE. Le narrazioni infatti sono strutture culturali e cognitive che impieghiamo quotidianamente nei più svariati ambiti sociali, dalle *medical humanities*, che riguardano il "rapporto paziente-medico come parte della terapia stessa" (ibid., 92) alla narrativa aziendale, che si intreccia col marketing e con la valorizzazione di un prodotto attraverso una determinata strategia retorica. Com'è noto, il terreno della narratologia vanta radici antiche e illustri studiosi, dai grandi maestri della classicità con la categorizzazione di diegesi e mimesi, agli studi formalisti e del Circolo di Praga, alle indagini sulle fiabe, e Montini, facendo riferimento a brani provenienti da diverse fonti letterarie (anche in varie lingue), da *The Catcher in the Rye* di Salinger a Manzoni e Flaubert, si sofferma in particolare su due elementi centrali: il punto di vista e la distanza. Il primo concetto è responsabile di particolari effetti che andranno a emergere nella mente del lettore, tenendo presente i diversi tipi di focalizzazione, originariamente teorizzati da Genette per indicare la presenza di un narratore onnisciente, di un narratore interno che coincide con un personaggio della storia, o di un narratore esterno ma meno consapevole degli altri personaggi. Vale la pena comunque ricordare che la questione della focalizzazione può essere affrontata anche da altro angolo, per esempio in riferimento alla *schema theory*, cioè considerando gli schemi mentali che il narratore/personaggio impiega per la costruzione della storia e che il lettore deve decifrare per comprendere l'organicità di coerenza e coesione del testo: per esempio, se una persona che soffre di disturbi mentali, una bambina di cinque anni e un eremita che ha passato la maggior parte della sua vita lontano dal mondo moderno dovessero raccontare lo stesso aneddoto, in realtà questi soggetti plasmeranno il proprio punto di vista, e quindi le strutture linguistiche a cui fare ricorso, in maniera specifica, con il risultato che lo stesso racconto assumerà contorni totalmente diversi. L'analisi della costruzione di narrazioni pertanto deve individuare indicatori significativi quali le forme deittiche (per esempio tempo e spazio), le risorse della modalità (verbi modali lessicali, verbi modali ausiliari, avverbi modali) e i *verba sentiendi*, cioè di percezione e pensiero in riferimento al personaggio. La caratterizzazione modalità in particolare è stata affrontata da Fowler (1986) e poi ripresa e raffinata da Simpson (1993). Donatella Montini si sofferma anche sulle problematicità legate al senso di distanza dalla quale viene narrata la storia, che la scuola anglosassone proponeva attraverso i concetti di *showing* e *telling*. Per misurare la distanza, è essenziale vedere come viene articolato il discorso (o il pensiero) della voce narrante o del personaggio, nella forma diretta o indiretta, e nel doppio senso di legato (*tagged*, cioè riportato) oppure libero (*free*, cioè con "l'assimilazione tra parola e pensiero, chiaro indice di parola scritta e letterarietà", ibid,.109). Nel corso degli anni, diversi modelli esplicativi delle dinamiche del discorso diretto/indiretto (per esempio: Seymour 1978, Simpson 2004, Semino e Short 2004), testimoniano il grande interesse degli studiosi per le tecniche di verbalizzazione e rappresentazione degli eventi e delle storie, e Montini registra anche le revisioni di tali schemi, per esempio con le teorie di Ann Banfield, la quale "contesta il modello comunicativo tout court secondo il quale 'narrare è parlare'" (ibid., 112). Per concludere la sezione, l'Autrice si sposta poi al tema del tempo, esaminando quindi le nozioni di fabula e intreccio, che determinano l'ordine di presentazione delle sequenze della storia, e che quindi influenzano pesantemente la ricezione del testo. Se per raccontare la favola di Cappuccetto Rosso, iniziamo a rappresentare una scena in cui la protagonista e la Nonna (alias il Lupo cattivo) parlano e discutono, e poi attraverso un movimento di flashback definiamo cosa è avvenuto in precedenza, come reagirà il lettore? Lo smantellamento e la ricostruzione del *order* narrativo cronologico (A + B + C) manipola la comprensione della narrazione e genera interessa, rendendo forse meno lineare il racconto ma arricchendolo di suspense e incoraggiando quindi il lettore a prestare maggiore attenzione e a chiedere cosa e come è successo. Analessi e prolessi possono anche essere osservati da un'angolazione deittica, che tiene conto cioè dello slittamento dei marcatori deittici, attraverso i cosiddetti *push* e *pop* per cui il lettore accede, procede o abbandona i vari piani narrativi. Il concetto di tempo, per analogia sinonimica, si può anche estendere al tempo verbale (*tempus*), per indagare l'incisività di tempi ricorrenti. Citando Weinrich (1964), Montini fa riferimento ai "tempi commentativi, categoria alla quale appartengono il presente, il passato prossimo e il futuro; e i tempi narrativi, imperfetto, passato remoto, trapassato prossimo e remoto, condizionale presente e passato" (ibid., 120).

L'ultima grande tipologia che l'Autrice tocca nel volume riguarda il componimento poetico, che essendo un genere tradizionalmente esaminato dagli studiosi di stilistica viene qui presentato in maniera sintetica. In realtà, l'analisi di aspetti salienti del testo poetico, come per esempi tratti fonici e ritmici, si adatta agevolmente ad altri ambiti, come il mondo della pubblicità, dei testi delle canzoni o degli slogan politici. Lo stesso vale per altri livelli dell'analisi quali la dimensione grafologica, cioè la disposizione o il layout del testo (si pensi alla presentazione stravagante delle liriche dei poeti e poetesse tanto diversi a livello storico-culturale come George Herbert, e.e. cummings o Marlene Nourbese Philip), ma anche quella lessicale, sintattica e morfologica, per esempio grazie a innovativi neologismi, a collocazioni bizzarre o costruzioni grammaticali inusuali. Tuttavia, Donatella Montini avverte che, a fianco di approcci tradizionali e molto consolidati, sono disponibili nuovi e raffinati dispositivi analitici, in particolare quelli che traggono linfa vitale dalla psicologia cognitiva e dalle neuroscienze, e che mirano a investigare i processi di ricezione del testo e costruzione del significato, come negoziazione fra più forze (autore/lettore/contesto). In quest'ottica, soprattutto negli ambienti britannici, ha riscosso molto interesse la cosiddetta *Text World Theory*, che si interessa al lavoro cognitivo del lettore alle prese con un testo e la sua interazione con il contesto al fine di estrarne significato e consapevolezza. Questo modello, originariamente proposto da Paul Werth alla fine degli anni '90, è stato poi revisionato, ampliato e aggiornato da più accademici, i cui risultati sono opere come i volumi di Joanna Gavins (2007) o di Peter Stockwell (2009). Questo tipo di teoria sfrutta la metafora del mondo, per indicare 1) i mondi del discorso, cioè il contesto reale e fisico, in cui il lettore si trova, con la sua conoscenza della realtà, e 2) i mondi del testo, cioè gli scenari concettuali che il soggetto viene progressivamente a comporre attraverso le varie strutture linguistiche. In particolare, per un'analisi svolta attraverso la lente della *TWT* occorre prestare attenzione ai *world building elements* (gli elementi che contribuiscono alla costruzione del mondo attraverso tratti quali il tempo grammaticale o l'uso di nomi propri e pronomi per definire personaggi) e le *function advancing propositions* (cioè quei sintagmi verbali che conferiscono dinamicità al testo, attraverso la modificazione dello stato delle cose). Gli accenni che Donatella Montini fa a queste ed altre teorie di carattere cognitivo (per esempio la *Blending Theory* o la *Schema theory*) sono preziosi proprio perché avvertono il lettore italiano, spesso non uso a questi innovativi approcci, della gamma di nuovi sistemi per indagare gli effetti della lingua e la nostra reazione ed elaborazione di testi e discorsi. La TWT in particolare si dimostra utile chiave di accesso a testi particolarmente complessi o di difficile articolazione: si pensi, per esempio, alla rappresentazione poetica di desideri, sogni e incubi (a cui Marcello Giovanelli ha dedicato un volume nel 2013) o alla magmatica definizione di letteratura dell'assurdo, che Gavins esamina con rigore e precisione (2013).

La monografia termina poi con una nota conclusiva dal significativo titolo "Per una nuova stilistica", in cui il premodificatore della testa del sintagma nominale (nuova) incapsula il senso precipuo degli sviluppi attuali della materia, che come ribadito più volte confina e dialoga con molti altri campi del sapere e della ricerca scientifica. A tal proposito, Montini sostiene che "la stilistica non teme di essere definita una disciplina derivativa e da *bridge discipline* si è trasformata oggi in *interdisciplina* per eccellenza, o anche in disciplina *transgenerica*, strumento trasversale di analisi dei generi" (ibid., 140, enfasi nell'originale). Da qui, si giustifica la spinta propulsiva della stilistica che, nonostante la marginalizzazione che spesso deve subire in Italia, in realtà gode di ottima salute nel mondo, alimenta una produzione accademica ricca e sfaccettata, e punta a obiettivi non solo ambiziosi e importanti, ma anche eticamente e socialmente connotati, per una più consapevole lettura del mondo in cui viviamo e delle grandi, e costanti, sfide. Si pensi, fra gli altri, al rapporto fecondo con nuove linee di ricerca, come la *ecostylistics*, che ha come obiettivo lo studio della rappresentazione linguistica e narrativa dell'ambiente e dei suoi temi, nella più ampia cornice dell'*ecocriticism*, come evidenzia il volume curato da Douthwaite, Virdis e Zurru (2017), il cui titolo-chiasmo intreccia l'idea di paesaggio e di lingua, dispiegando poi una serie di capitoli che indagano le sfumature della scrittura dickensiana dedicata all'Italia, il tema della *agency* nel romanzo *The Hungry Tide* e la poesia di Edward Thomas.

Il volume di Donatella Montini, chiaramente nei limiti dello spazio previsto per questo tipo di pubblicazione, costituisce quindi un buon punto di partenza, una bussola di riferimento per l'esplorazione di un territorio vasto, le cui teorie e pratiche sono finalizzate alla comprensione delle forme linguistiche che usiamo per capire il senso della nostra esperienza umana. Poiché il volume può anche essere visto in chiave pedagogica, cioè come manuale di riferimento per la didattica (grazie anche a una scrittura precisa ma snella e chiara), è presente un'appendice in cui – seguendo gli esempi delle ben note *checklists* di Leech e Short (1981) – vengono suggeriti spunti di lavoro pratico, cioè una serie di concetti, nozioni e prospettive, per esempio la deissi, la cortesia linguistica e i parallelismi, da applicare all'investigazione di brani di opere come *Death of a Salesman* di Arthur Miller o *Persuasion* di Jane Austen. In questo modo, diventa quindi manuale di riferimento, anche grazie alla ricca e aggiornata bibliografia, ed eserciziario da utilizzare a lezione. La stilistica, in conclusione, nutre la speranza che la lettura e l'analisi dei testi (di qualsiasi natura) possano portare a una più raffinata comprensione della lingua, della cultura e in ultimo della nostra identità.

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