

## English as a lingua franca and globalization: an interconnected perspective

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It is increasingly acknowledged in applied linguistics that non-native speakers of English outnumber native speakers. This article reflects on the continued momentum of the debate regarding English as a lingua franca (ELF) with a view to situating the discussion within a broader framework than has been the case hitherto. The article considers the current situation in light of theoretical positions on globalization, aligning the key voices in ELF with current views on the sociopolitical world order as embodied by various means of conceptualizing globalization. The discussion proposes that adopting a *transformationalist* perspective – within which the current epoch is best defined as a period of significant social, political and cultural transformations – is of most relevance to a consideration of the arguments and findings of ELF research.

*Keywords:* English as a lingua franca, globalization, interconnectedness, transformationalist framework/perspective, English language teaching

En la lingüística aplicada se reconoce cada vez más que el número de personas que no hablan inglés como idioma materno excede al número de hablantes nativos de esta lengua. Este artículo es una reflexión sobre el continuo y creciente ímpetu de la discusión con respecto a ELF (inglés como lingua franca) y tiene por objeto situar esta discusión dentro de un marco más amplio que el utilizado hasta ahora. El artículo considera la situación actual según diversas posiciones teóricas sobre la globalización y relaciona los conceptos clave en ELF con opiniones actuales sobre el orden sociopolítico del mundo según lo representan distintas formas de conceptualizar la globalización. La discusión propone que el adoptar una perspectiva *transformacionalista* – dentro de la cual se define la época actual como período de transformaciones sociales, políticas y culturales significativas – es de suma importancia para una consideración de las discusiones y conclusiones de la investigación sobre ELF.

*Palabras clave:* Inglés como lingua franca, globalización, interconectividad, transformacionalista, marco/perspectiva, enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera

### Introduction: English in the world

“Globalization may be thought of initially as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary

social life" (Held et al. 1999: 2). This description indicates the extent to which the world is structured at an international level: the contemporary world order is globally constituted as much in the social and cultural realms as it is in politics and economics. Acknowledging this inevitably involves consideration of the linguistic situation globally. A wider, deeper, accelerated interconnectedness has far-reaching implications regarding languages, especially one so often described as a lingua franca. English is like no other language in its current role internationally, indeed like no other at any moment in history. Although there are, and have previously been, other international languages, the case of English is different in fundamental ways: for the extent of its diffusion geographically; for the enormous cultural diversity of the speakers who use it; and for the infinitely varied domains in which it is found and purposes it serves.

It has for some time now been widely acknowledged in applied linguistics that non-native speakers have come to outnumber native speakers, that in fact most interactions in English take place in the absence of the latter (e.g. Graddol 1997, 2006). There have been numerous papers and book-length treatments on the implications of the spread of English, including issues such as the question of ownership (Widdowson 1994, 2003), the normative model in second language pedagogy (Cook 1999; Parakrama 1995), and reconsiderations of the nature of communicative competence (Alpetkin 2002; Leung 2005). Indeed, an entire body of literature has emerged, ranging from linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 1999), through to critical applied linguistics and pedagogy (Canagarajah 1999; Pennycook 1994, 2001), leading ultimately to English as a lingua franca (ELF) as an established field in its own right (e.g. Gnutzmann and Intermann 2005; Knapp and Meierkord 2002). In addition, reviews of ELF research have begun to appear in academic papers, including considerations of ELF findings for language teaching (e.g. Jenkins 2006a; Seidlhofer 2004).

There have been to date numerous empirical studies in ELF, and a growth in emerging bodies of work specifically addressing lingua franca interaction (e.g. Kasper 1998 in pragmatics, and Jenkins 2000 in phonology). Seidlhofer (2001) makes a strong case in calling for systematic empirical ELF research, at once welcoming the growth in meta-level discussions but lamenting the 'conceptual gap' between applied linguistic discourse, which has produced significant debate on the globalization of English, and current practice in English language teaching (ELT), which either ignores or remains largely unaware of the developments. The argument that we need to go beyond a conceptualization of ELF to conduct large-scale systematic studies is a very compelling one. This has now led to the establishment of several corpora, including ELFA (English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings, Mauranen 2003) and VOICE (The Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English, [www.univie.ac.at/voice](http://www.univie.ac.at/voice)). In addition to these macro-level projects there is an increasing number of more micro-oriented, qualitative investigations

into lingua franca communication (e.g. Cogo 2005; Cogo and Dewey 2006; Dewey 2007).

This recent paradigm shift and emergence of empirical data notwithstanding, it seems necessary to situate the argument for a description of ELF within a still broader conceptual framework. This should involve viewing ELF from a more interconnected perspective by relating the key issues to a theoretical position on globalization. The purpose of this article is to take account of the fuller context within which debates about the spread of English occur, and thus consider the relevance to ELF of current views regarding the social and political world order.

## Globalization and ELF

Held et al. (1999) identify three principal means of conceptualizing globalization: *hyperglobalist*, *sceptical*, and *transformationalist*. Although there are significant differences in the theoretical interpretations of individual thinkers, these positions can be summarized according to sets of shared principles, and characterized by the following key precepts. For the hyperglobalizer, globalization is the key defining force of the current epoch, an era where traditional nation states have given way to a global market economy in which most networks are transnational, and where globalization is driving a construction of new economic, social, and political world orders, leading ultimately to greater overall homogeneity (e.g. Ohmae 1995). The sceptics, on the other hand, maintain that the current level of interdependence has precedence in earlier periods of (usually imperially oriented) internationalization (e.g. Hirst 1997). Their argument holds that national governments retain the power to regulate trade, commerce and politics, and that any interdependence operates only at surface level. In contrast, the transformationalist defines the current epoch as a period of significant and rapid economic, social and political change, where globalization is regarded as the driving force responsible for fundamental sociopolitical transformations (e.g. Giddens 2002).

These three positions can be mapped onto current perspectives regarding ELF. In a hyperglobalist framework can be situated discussions of linguistic imperialism and notions of the hegemony of English internationally (e.g. Phillipson 1992), while the sceptical framework would apply to mainstream ELT, where English continues to be taught according to native-speaker norms and no need for significant change is perceived (e.g. Mollin 2006; Prodromou 2007). The emerging ELF literature (including e.g. Knapp and Meierkord 2002; Jenkins 2000, 2007; Mauranen 2003, 2006; Seidlhofer 2001, 2004) can be situated in the transformationalist framework, as these scholars perceive the need to address the considerable reshaping that movements in the sociopolitical world order have produced. Theorists working from a transformationalist perspective (influential among which are Giddens 1990,

2002; Hoogvelt 1997; Nierop 1994; and Rosenau 1990, 1997) have most to say that is of relevance to empirical work in ELF. Such a perspective provides most support to ELF research, and is essential for any attempt to further theorize lingua franca communication.

### The transformationalist perspective

From a transformationalist perspective, globalization represents something other than straightforward Americanization or Westernization. While it is essential to acknowledge the obvious imbalance of power and inequality in the share of world resources, it is also possible to overstate the extent of the economic, political and cultural influence of Western powers. To encapsulate this argument, Giddens (2002) observes that the United States is undoubtedly the most dominant and influential force in the world: most of the largest companies worldwide are American; the wealthiest few countries entirely dominate international agencies, such as the G8, World Bank, IMF, and UN. Nevertheless, he also claims that globalization cannot be uniquely geared towards American interests, nor indeed simply towards the interests of other wealthy nations. Although the USA is the driving force of the world economy, affecting almost every other economy on the planet, it is also true that neither the USA, nor the West more generally, can control global economics.

Giddens in fact argues that the overall geopolitical influence of the United States is less than it was before the break up of the Soviet Union, that despite increased moves towards unilateralism by the G.W. Bush administration, American influence has become more diffuse. The world has become more polycentric since the end of the Cold War, with the EU, Japan, Korea and now China and India having all developed significantly in their geopolitical influence. This has resulted in more direct involvement of non-Western states in international organizations and treaties, such as the International criminal court and the Kyoto protocol. Even a book-length treatment of American political dominance, Chomsky's (2003) critical evaluation of foreign policy since 9/11, acknowledges that the nation's influence has in certain arenas begun to wane, and resistance to American hegemony to increase. He observes that American control of the world's wealth, a key measure of its power, is estimated to have shrunk from a high of 50% to around half that figure as the global economy moves towards a *tripolar* order. Chomsky cites as an example the ultimate refusal of Turkey to allow American troops to enter Iraq from Turkish territory in the 2003 war – despite strong warnings by the American State Department of the likely consequences.

This all has important implications linguistically. In discussions about the current status and future development of English, the significance of the native speaker can be similarly overstated, especially if we take account of Graddol's (1999) projected trajectory in "The decline of the native speaker",

in which he argues that by 2050 speakers of nativized Englishes will far outnumber speakers of native English, that English will be used primarily as a second language in multilingual contexts. The impact of globalization in terms of cultural factors, which is more evidently connected with the conceptualization of ELF, is also something other than unilateral Americanization. UNESCO's *World Culture Report* (2000) poignantly observes that human beings have since pre-history continually invented and exchanged cultural elements, that the flow of cultural inventiveness cannot be halted, that "no limits can be placed on people's creativity and capacity to alter their ways of being" (Arizpe et al. 2000: 24). Fears of homogeneity and cultural uniformity are thus largely unfounded, and human cultural diversity (although clearly met with significant challenges) remains in good health. Information flows are far more enmeshed than many proclaim, and although icons of American culture are omnipresent and intrusively visible, such are the complexities of the processes involved that cultural impact is much more intricate and sophisticated than a straightforward proliferation of Western interests.

Clifford (1997) similarly comments that intercultural connection has long been a normal state of affairs, and likewise questions the assumption that globalization results in homogenizing processes. He observes that late modernity is very much characterized by increased interconnectedness but that the result (as with the performance of language) is far from homogenous cultural output, since performance of culture "involves processes of identification and antagonism that cannot be fully contained, that overflow national and transnational structures" (1997: 9). In a similar light, Held et al. (1999: 374) observe:

The cultural context of production and transmission must always in the end encounter an already existing frame of reference in the eyes of the consumer or receiver. The latter involves a process of great complexity – simple notions of homogenization, ideological hegemony or imperialism fail to register properly the nature of these encounters and the interplay, interaction and cultural creativity they produce.

Clearly, the impact of globalization is profound and far-reaching, but it is also multifactorial. From a transformationalist perspective, globalization affects almost every aspect of our lives, bringing about significant alterations in the sociocultural fabric. Yet these processes no longer originate exclusively in Western countries. Giddens (2002) observes that globalization tends to be understood as a force that emanates outward, projecting away from local communities into the global arena. Acknowledging this effect, the transformationalists also maintain that globalization can, however, simultaneously engender contrary consequences, creating renewed pressures for local autonomy and increased regionalism. Enhanced interdependence has led to reinforcement and extension of international ties at a local and

regional level as well as globally. Regions operate under international treaties (the most consolidated of which is the EU). These organisations have a global presence, but they are more relevant locally than globally, with the effect that the world is in part more polycentric.

Global transmissions are locally consumed, and in their consumption are remodeled, reconstituted, transformed. Linked to this, there is an increasing sense of 'borderlessness' acknowledged in a good number of related fields and disciplines (cf. Clifford 1997 for a challenge to received notions of field in ethnographic research on grounds that in complex, dynamic societies this can no longer be spatialized in a conventional sense; cf. Street 2005 and the implications of adopting a social practice approach to literacies). This all has fundamental consequences for how we view language models and practices.

### Increased interconnectedness and linguistic diversity

Modern communications technology continues to spread at every level – locally, regionally and globally – with greater diffusion of information transmitted with greater intensity and velocity. As a result, the geographically local might appear less familiar, more alienating than images projected via satellite from across the globe. The local thus often becomes defamiliarized and the global familiarized, blurring the boundaries between what is local and global, leading to what Robertson (1995) terms 'glocalization'. Heightened interconnectedness in many senses leads to greater pluralism and diversity – interaction increasingly transcends regions and borders, substantially altering the context within which cultural projects develop. This represents significant challenges to any homogenization hypothesis, including claims about linguistic imperialism. Rather than view the intensity of interconnectedness as a root cause of cultural dominance, new infrastructures and innovative channels of communication in fact make censorship and oppression of local identities more difficult to maintain. International movements have greatly benefited from the possibility of virtual communities, cultural networks that link the ideas and practices of different groups across vast distances. On a political level, transnational organizations permit the flow of information to such an extent that it is easier to forge the necessary ties to enable ideas to be better mobilized through a common frame of reference, thus providing greater voice to the marginalized.

Bhagwati (2004) comments on how peripheral cultures have gained some prominence on the world stage, raising their profile globally, even if only temporarily. Bhagwati cites as an example Guatemalan Nobel Prize winner Rigberto Menchu, claiming that accusations about the threat of globalization are overly simplistic. After all, without transnational organizations or the mobility afforded by modern technology, it is unlikely that the situation of indigenous peoples in Guatemala would have been articulated globally.

There are many examples of similar minority groups now able to reach large audiences by presenting their case on the world stage. The EZLN (Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional/Zapatista Army of National Liberation) in Mexico has, as well as a local radio station, a website on which visitors can pledge donations and read about the movement not only in Spanish and English, but also French, German, and Portuguese ([www.ezln.org](http://www.ezln.org)). As Appadurai and Stenou (2000) comment, an increasing number of groups live in a global diaspora – cultural groups such as Kashmiris, Kurds, Sikhs, Tamils who are able to express a counter-nationalism through global networks, and who are active transnationally by expressing via electronic means of communication a non-geographic citizenship based on shared culture and experience rather than borders or geopolitical boundaries. A good case in point is IWGIA (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs), whose aims and activities are very much globally defined and carried out. There is thus a plurality in the impacts of globalization: on the one hand, free-market trading and economic interconnectedness may have led to increased migration and displacement, but it is the technologies of globalization that enable the expression and empowerment of displaced communities, allowing dispersed groups to maintain old ancestral/cultural links and create new emerging ones.

All this inevitably entails significant consequences for the way we look at culture, among which we can consider factors that influence patterns of language use and linguistic norms. There has, for example, been a steady growth and renewed interest in many minority languages, such as Euskera (Basque), Frisian, Welsh (with numerous online learning resources currently available), of which there is now greater international awareness. There is also a continuing move by member states of the Council of Europe to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. This trend towards increased acceptance of linguistic diversity has coincided with a growth in the description and discussion of localized varieties of English, culminating in publications as substantial and wide-ranging as *The Handbook of World Englishes* (Kachru, Kachru and Nelson 2006).

Multilateralism is not always acknowledged, however. Despite descriptions of localized varieties, in discourse on linguistic imperialism the inner circle<sup>1</sup> nations are sometimes regarded as the sole agents of language spread. This one-sided view of agency represents for Brutt-Griffler (2002) a particularly limited account of the situation, as it fails to acknowledge the role that non-inner circle countries have played in the development of English globally. Instead, a reconceived theoretical framework should for Brutt-Griffler recognize the centrality of the conventionally 'peripheral' in the emergence of English as a world language. Thus we can apply more specifically to language what commentators such as Giddens (2002), Hoogvelt (1997), and Rosenau (1997) have described more generally. In short, enhanced interconnectedness is indexical in late modernity, and must therefore be incorporated into any development of analytic frameworks for

describing and understanding the diverse use of English in international communications.

With this in mind, I turn now to a discussion of the nature of ELF spoken discourse, drawing on a small-scale corpus of naturally occurring lingua franca talk.<sup>2</sup> The empirical evidence presented below is especially representative of the kinds of transformation in cultural resources which are currently occurring through globalization.

## **ELF and the transformation of linguistic resources**

The growing body of ELF empirical data has begun to shed light on the patterns of change currently emerging in the way English is transformed in lingua franca interaction. These patterns of innovation are presented here as examples of the ways in which global phenomena are locally variable, and are thus given as evidence in support of the transformationalist hypothesis. In this section I report some of the more prominent linguistic features found in naturally occurring ELF talk. Many of the features reported below have been described previously in Cogo and Dewey (2006), and a number are also presented here as further corroboration of the findings so far reported by researchers working with other ELF corpora, most notably the VOICE corpus (e.g. see Breiteneder 2005 on redundancy and 3rd person *s*; and cf. Seidlhofer 2004 for a summary of similar findings).

In light of their relevance to the globalization debate, these features are perhaps best understood in relation to the underlying processes that motivate innovation. These processes can be described as *exploiting redundancy, enhancing prominence, increasing explicitness, and reinforcement of proposition* (see also Dewey and Jenkins forthcoming), all of which reflect not so much conscious decisions on the part of ELF speakers but rather a natural tendency for effective communication to involve enhanced salience and efficiency. They are also not by any means the only motivating forces that give rise to linguistic innovation, but they are particularly important characteristics of ELF. These processes, a number of which are exemplified below, may also prove to be endemic of lingua francas more generally, but this will require further empirical research and more thorough theorizing of ELF than has so far taken place. What can be said with some certainty, however, is that in each case the innovative feature signals a modification of linguistic resources and is illustrative of the transformative properties of globalization.

### **Enhancing prominence**

Article use is a particularly salient linguistic area with which speakers show innovation as the result of this motivating factor. Innovative article use to enhance prominence can be seen in the following extract, which occurs in an

interaction between participants who are discussing whether it is better for children to be raised in a city or the countryside.

Extract 1

S1: because they they know how to play (,) they know how to survive in the nature or in the society (,) instinct- un- unconsciously because they're children

S2: yeah (,) they are very (xxx)

S1: flexible

S2: yeah (,) they can catch up with the person who are edu- well educated in the city I think (,) they can catch up with them

S1 uses the definite article with two abstract nouns where reference is generic – the uncountable noun *nature* and the abstract noun *society*. One likely hypothesis to explain these uses lies in the relative importance attached to the noun. Where abstract and plural nouns occur with the definite article and the reference is generic, in a number of cases the 'keyness' of the word in question seems to have an effect on article selection. This becomes apparent with a closer look at other examples of abstract nouns used with a definite article. A concordance for *the* conducted on the corpus reveals numerous generally referring abstract nouns preceded by the definite article, including words such as *abortion*, *euthanasia*, *nature*, *pollution*. Investigation of the contexts in which these occur suggests compelling inclinations in the functional use of the article. The following concordance, for example, lists all of the occurrences of the word *abortion* that are found in one conversation.

Concordance

- 1 video? some doc – documentary about *abortion* hm hm hm yeah and . . . it
- 2 yes and . . . and you know if you have an *abortion* in the future you, you might not
- 3 it's an immoral yes immoral because er *abortion* means anyway they kill a baby
- 4 no no no, I mean – er you mean that *abortion* is immoral and we shouldn't kill
- 5 which one is first? . . . the *abortion* eh yes? . . . what do you think,
- 6 – the reason that I er I'm against the *abortion* . . . when I was at school mh I
- 7 very hard for the government. If er the *abortion* is not permitted and they will
- 8 abortion? eh yes? . . . what do you think, *abortion* is an immoral act or not? hmm,

In three of the above instances the definite article is used, and in each case contextual analysis shows that the speaker is referring to the concept in general terms rather than to a particular case of abortion. It is also significant that using the KeyWords tool in *Oxford WordSmith* reveals that *abortion* is a key word in the conversation. That it is, it is relatively important in the text to the extent that it characterizes the conversation to some degree – it is unusually frequent when compared to appropriate baseline data.<sup>3</sup>

If a word is especially characteristic of the discourse, there is often an increased likelihood in ELF for the definite article to be used with this function. Conversely, there are also many cases in the corpus where a speaker elects to use the zero article in contexts where the preferred English as a native language (ENL) pattern would involve the definite article. This is often the case where an ENL norm for definite article use involves a degree of idiomaticity and/or redundancy, such as ordinals (*the first, the second* etc.) or superlative adjectives (*the best, the most*) where the definite article is communicatively redundant due to the semantic value of words like *first* and *best*, which inherently express uniqueness.<sup>4</sup>

These emerging patterns involve a shift away from a distinction between specific and generic reference. A more significant factor determining article selection involves the relative level of importance attached to a noun or noun phrase in a given stretch of discourse. If an item is deemed particularly important it is often preceded by the definite article, while if the item is relatively unimportant the zero article is often used. Therefore, a primary function of *the* is to provide additional emphasis and signify increased importance relative to the discourse. This suggests that patterns of article use in ELF are more context dependent and meaning driven than they are in ENL. In particular, the formal rules handed down through idiomatic use in ENL have little or no value in lingua franca settings. It is simply not the case in ELF that the selection of an article will depend on the nature of a noun in terms of any inherent qualities, such as level of specificity, uniqueness and so on. It is instead a resource which is variably used as a means of giving additional prominence to a referent.

These findings are based on a relatively small-scale corpus, and so it is essential that closer, similarly qualitative investigations be undertaken with large-scale ELF corpora to determine whether and to what extent the above cases are typical of ELF discourse more generally. Nevertheless, the underlying motives that lead to these innovative uses of *the* are very telling. It need not matter whether use of the definite article for general reference in combinations such as *the pollution, the society* is especially typical of all ELF interaction – what is important here is the illustrative value of these cases of linguistic innovation to demonstrate the flexible nature of English. They are evidence of the virtual nature of the language (cf. Widdowson 2003), which in light of the transformative forces of globalization is best seen as a dynamic set of non-determinable resources which can be manipulated by its innumerable speakers to suit the many varied communicative purposes it fulfills.

The innovations described here are entirely in line with a number of other uses of *the* which in existing ENL patterns of use can also be employed to give additional emphasis or convey prominence.<sup>5</sup> The point is that in ELF settings a linguistic resource is being exploited for one of its functions in a more productive manner than is customary in standard ENL varieties. This relates closely to what Aitchison (2001) describes as language being

predisposed to change in certain ways, a predisposition which seems often to be enhanced during ELF interaction. It is as if certain areas of the language are well suited to perform particular types of function, and that with the added freedom for variation and change that lingua franca communication provides, these functions can be more fully explored.

### Explicitness and clarity of proposition

A telling characteristic of the data is use of repetition, synonymy, rephrasing, and so on, which occur with notable frequency. There appears to be a widely held perception among ELF speakers that a certain amount of repetition is important for effectiveness and reliability of communication. There are numerous attested cases in the corpus where an element in a clause is given additional prominence, thereby providing emphasis to the intended message. Most often this seems to occur in the interest of minimizing ambiguity or vagueness, to thus ensure clarity of proposition.

This phenomenon is illustrated in the following transcription, where the speaker uses various means to reinforce her point. The extract is taken from a dissertation presentation given at King's College London in which a postgraduate student elaborates on her initial plans, early reading and data collection. The speaker describes her investigation into the attitudes of Taiwanese teachers towards the notion of English as an international language (EIL). The underlining shows where linguistic resources have been used to give added prominence.

#### Extract 2

1 hm today I'm going to discuss – talk about my dissertation and my  
 2 topic is something about er EIL in Taiwanese context and er (,) you can  
 3 look at m:y title erm (,) right now actually I've got the data already the  
 4 basic data about EIL and er (,) I c:carry out an investigation to a group of  
 5 Taiwanese English in service teacher (,) and er and er I want to know their  
 6 erm (,) w- er let me say something about why I want to study at this  
 7 because erm we L2 speakers and users we usually speak English with our  
 8 OWN characteristics and er hh sometimes when I was in class it's really  
 9 hard for me to decide whether: if I do r- need to correct some errors and (,)   
 10 will this really cause communication problem? and according to Kachru's  
 11 three er circles model er erm the the biggest number of English users  
 12 Chinese and er erm the fact in Taiwan is that English is in the national-  
 13 English this subject is in the national curriculum and it's likely taught  
 14 learned and used every day and er erm according to Widdowson he's  
 15 mentioned that er (,) basically the se- expanding circle where the Taiwan  
 16 belong to is er- the role of English there is should be a means of  
 17 international communication (,) so er basically this is WHY I want to

18 study this and er: erm I- the investigation that I carry out is that I want to  
 19 know that my- the teachers the English teacher local English teacher in  
 20 Taiwan and what do they think about (,) English . . .

In line 2 the speaker combines *topic* and *about*, where the preposition adds to the meaning being communicated by the noun, reinforcing the message through its own semantic properties, i.e. 'subject/topic'. In line 3 she refers to the fact that at the time of the presentation she has already collected her data, emphasizing this with the words *right now actually*. Similarly, later in the same presentation the time is emphasized as *I right now got two ideas in my mind*. In line 7 there are several devices used to give emphasis. Firstly, the speaker is very explicit when referring to the subject *L2 speakers*, including herself as part of this group by stating *we* at the beginning, and emphasizing her point further with the synonym *users*. Secondly, her membership of this group of language users is reinforced further by placement of additional stress on *OWN* (capital letters signify emphatic stress). There are occasions where reference is made very explicitly, as in line 12–13: *English is in the national- English this subject is in the national curriculum*. The speaker repeats *English*, adding *this subject* to show that she is referring specifically here to English as a school subject, thus ensuring that her intended meaning is clear. Additional explicitness is also achieved through the use of a subject pronoun together with a subject that has already been stated, as in line 14, where she says *Widdowson he's mentioned*, using the pronoun in conjunction with a named subject.<sup>6</sup>

Repetition of this kind is both frequent and salient in the data. It probably occurs as the result of a listener-oriented strategy, where the speaker highlights the subject to ensure clarity and facilitate communication. In addition, the speaker later uses a striking syntactical arrangement, with the adjective *interesting* used as a post-modifier rather than pre-modifier, the noun *issue* having been fronted and thus given extra prominence. This feature also occurs with some frequency in the corpus, with a wide range of items being made more prominent via a forward shift in the syntax. Listener orientations of this kind provide evidence of ELF speakers accommodating towards their interlocutors. Speakers in ELF situations seem particularly aware of their listeners, and will thus adjust how they express an idea to maximise the effectiveness of communication (cf. Jenkins 2006a).

It is also notable that none of these features is exclusive to ELF communication. Placement of additional stress is very commonly used in ENL to give emphasis to a particular element in a clause, as is repetition of the subject through use of a subject pronoun in spontaneous, unrehearsed spoken discourse (see Carter and McCarthy 1997). The extent to which these features are used, however, does seem specific to ELF interactions. The combining of the subject and a subject pronoun is characteristic of the corpus generally, and is especially frequent in the above speech event: in approximately 20 minutes of discourse, there are very few occasions where

the speaker uses a full-noun subject without then combining this with a pronoun. There are also a number of instances where a speaker combines the relative pronoun *which* with a subject pronoun for anaphoric reference, as in "I mean you can buy only *those books which you think they're* really useful". Combining a relative and subject pronoun, unlike the other cases described so far, does not occur in standard ENL varieties.

Once again it seems the potential for linguistic resources to be used in a particular way exists in both ENL and ELF, but in the case of the latter there are fewer restrictions regarding the extent to which this can occur. In ENL a subject pronoun can be used in tandem with an explicitly stated subject to reinforce the proposition, but this is not permitted when the linguistic context includes a relative clause. This restriction does not apply in ELF settings, where there is greater freedom to use repetition as a means to help orient the listener, and in doing so ensure optimal clarity of expression. Such flexibility is paramount for successful ELF interaction, which has particular resonance for the selection of language norms in pedagogical practice. This flexibility is also evidence of the process of 'glocalization' (Robertson 1995, and see p. 337 above). Both extracts quoted in this section, in common with other descriptions of ELF data, are testament to the accelerated cultural changes that are currently taking place worldwide. The virtual resources of English are integral to processes of globalization. The diversity and innovativeness with which these resources are currently employed in lingua franca communication further validates the transformationalist position.

### **Globalization, multidimensionality, and ELT**

The implications of globalization in language pedagogy are substantial and far reaching, and several books have now explicitly begun to address this (see especially Block and Cameron 2002). Through globalizing forces, information exchanges can become more democratized and made less hierarchical, or more 'levelled' (Canagarajah 2005). Instead of viewing globalization as the imposition of the global onto the local, increased interconnectedness and the technologies that facilitate this can enable pedagogical norms and practices to be more locally defined and regionally interchanged, becoming less dependent on a single unitary (L1 English) centre. Affirmations of pluralism should facilitate the establishment of language varieties that are no longer centre dependent, either for validity or as a normative model. However, in ELT the normative model is often incongruously homogenized: at an institutional level there continues to be insufficient opposition to the current status quo, with little tolerance, let alone affirmation, of pluralism. Approaching the matter from within a transformationalist framework in my view provides additional support to the critique provided both by ELF and World Englishes scholars on the uniformity of language models.

While decentralized normative models and acceptance of plurality may be good arguments in principle, acceptability and prestige are entirely different matters. Popular beliefs about language standards seem widespread and deep rooted (cf. Milroy and Milroy 1999 on the pervasive power of standard language ideology), such that a centralized model often continues to be favoured as the only desirable learning goal regardless of context. Regrettably, seldom is awareness of linguistic pluralism found in the cultural diversity of those involved in the teaching of English as a Second/Additional Language. The mission of many of the institutions of ELT – including materials publishers, and organizations such as Cambridge ESOL who sanction good practice and models of learning and teaching – seems geared towards exactly the kind of homogenizing cultural transmission the antiglobalization movement fears. The most prominent institutions that fashion language teaching and teacher education, such as the British Council, can be understood as remnants of what Hall (1997) describes as the ‘modernist globalization’ which occurred during periods of Western colonization, characterized by unilateral exertion of influence from centre to periphery. While UK- and US-based institutions do not by any means “run the show” globally, they continue to be disproportionately influential.

By contrast, Hall defines contemporary internationalization as ‘postmodern globalization’, characterized by more complex, multilateral forces, which is thus entirely compatible with a transformationalist account of the diversity involved in the many varied local realizations of global resources. It is common to view cultural diversity in terms of majority and minority cultures, of mainstream and marginal. The spread of English internationally has led the source majority cultures of the inner circle to become the new minority, and vice versa. This is the case numerically but not always conceptually: the mainstream culture continues to be that of the old majority, while the new expanding circle majority does not enjoy mainstream status. Within the framework of ELT institutions, non-native speakers are still regarded as the ‘other’, marginalized and in some senses dispossessed (see Lin et al. 2005 on the ‘othering’ of language learners, and on increased investment in English achieved through appropriation and ownership of the language). Therefore, any attempt to implement a normative model derived beyond the inner circle will inevitably need to address these perceptions and may well meet with a good deal of reluctance from learners, teachers, and teacher educators, who at least to some extent seem to be influenced by a hyperglobalist position (see Jenkins 2007 for a thorough treatment of attitudes towards ELF among ELT practitioners).

Apaddurai and Stenou (2000) warn against the danger of assuming that by subscribing to cultural diversity we are able to address issues of inequality. Although Western nations increasingly possess large, longstanding immigrant communities and are in essence multi-ethnic, multiculturalism mostly extends only as far as the private sphere. At the level of public spheres any nation state, no matter how powerful, will have limited resources

available for employment, housing, education and so on. As Appadurai and Stenou observe, minority groups gaining access to public spaces for expression of cultural identity place the state/institution under additional strain. Claims by new communities on institutional resources require a shift in the makeup of power and economic distribution at the expense of the currently favoured group. New claimants need therefore to be kept to a minimum, and the embrace of multiculturalism restricted to private spheres where cultural expression can be maintained but access to institutional resources limited. This is precisely the motif of organisations such as English First (see Crawford 1992, 2000) who, fearful of a decline in the dominance of English, campaign for its status to be made official in the US constitution.

There is arguably a current parallel in language teaching, where linguistic heritage determines language competence, and where stakeholders remain largely in thrall to L1 models. This gives disproportionate cultural expression to the native speaker, the maintenance of whose norms and practices is in part a similar reaction, as this helps safeguard institutional resources for centre communities. One of the challenges facing ELF researchers is the extent to which ELT practitioners are accustomed to working with a more statically defined set of resources tied to one or other sociocultural group (i.e. standard British and American English). Many teachers and learners undoubtedly regard language norms as essentially fixed, predetermined, tied to a restricted number of geographic centres. However, the globalization of English leads to the very heart of our understanding of language, in turn leading to fundamental concerns regarding language norms. In light of the increased linguistic and cultural diversity that ELF entails, we need to reassess current practice in relation to the selection of language teaching materials, methods, and approaches to testing. What is required is a more flexible view of language, a more pluralistic approach to competence (see Leung 2005), and an understanding of the need for multiple proficiencies in the communication of linguistic resources – or perhaps a ‘multi-norm’, ‘post-method’ approach (Canagarajah 2005).

These represent the kind of paradigmatic shifts which fit very well into a transformationalist perspective. Yet, ultimately the task of how best to move from meta-level discussions to implementation of even minor pedagogical change is a complex one. It requires a level of policy making and planning which will necessarily involve substantial restructuring of the dominant paradigm. I would suggest that ELT, at least as practiced in the UK, USA and within Western traditions of language teaching, is currently underpinned by neo-conservatism, similar in kind to that described in Crowley (1999). Attempts to intervene in current practice may well be regarded as unwanted, and the motives of those seeking intervention might be approached with suspicion rather than an openness to engage in debate.

Nevertheless, despite obvious challenges, we already have some movement in significantly new directions. Ferguson (2006), in a thorough account of

language policy and planning in education, provides an overview of the implications of ELF research to the selection of language teaching models. Seidlhofer, Breiteneder and Pitzl (2006) observe how the teaching of general language awareness, with the objective of raising awareness of how different languages operate in communities, has in some contexts begun to be put into practice. Approaches of this kind are particularly important, as a move away from a focus on individual languages in isolation can be instrumental in advancing better understanding of the social complexities of language use. There is much to be gained regarding perceptions of language varieties if language learners and teachers develop better awareness of multilingualism. Such a focus in language education is an important step towards any reconsideration of language models or reassessment of the concept of standardization in language teaching.

Notions of variability or dynamism are distinctly lacking from descriptions of Standard English in ELT resources, which usually provide conventional, restricted definitions (see e.g. Richards, Platt and Platt 1992). Crowley (2003) explores the etymology of the word *standard*, observing how historically it has involved two distinct but related meanings: (1) a military ensign, a rallying point and marker of authority around which armies and nations come together for a common purpose; (2) an exemplary unit of measure derived from the authority associated with the first meaning, and which involves a sense of evaluation. Standard English is thus regarded as both a value to be attained and a uniform set of practices. Crowley, however, makes the crucial observation that such is the variability of languages that any notion of uniformity can only exist at a very abstract level. Traditionally, Standard English has been regarded as “a form of language in any particular national geographic territory which lies beyond all the variability of usage in offering unity and coherence to what otherwise appears diverse and disunited” (Crowley 2003: 84).

In light of a transformationalist take on globalization, such definitions are no longer suitable. English transcends national geographic territories, with much of its communication taking place *between* rather than within communities. It is very diverse, but not entirely disunited. The success of any lingua franca depends on certain levels of stability, which must entail sufficient core areas of the grammar and lexis to serve the purposes of intercultural communication. ELF empirical data show that English in lingua franca settings is being used in diverse, dynamic ways. Speakers very adeptly display many of the qualities of spoken grammar and syntax as evidenced in ENL corpora, that is, they use language which is “well adapted to the circumstances of speaking” and which is “polypragmatic and multifunctional, responding to speakers’ needs to plan simultaneously as they go” (Cheshire 1999: 145). The dynamic nature of ELF interactions does not result in disunity however; rather, as they engage in online communication, speakers locally ‘transform’ linguistic resources and mutually construct a fairly broad set of common lexicogrammatical characteristics.

Joseph (2006) warns against attempting to codify New Englishes prematurely. He is referring to indigenized varieties, but the arguments are equally valid for ELF. He observes that while World Englishes can be conceived of as systems, it may be better to regard them as an *attitude*, especially because “the linguist who rushes in to systematise a New English prematurely runs a serious risk of misrepresenting as fixed what is actually still quite fluid” (2006: 145). This is a particularly valid point and Joseph is right to highlight the risk, but there also comes a time when systematizing must take place if this ‘attitude’ is to become a completely meaningful one. Ultimately, all systematizations of language are abstract constructs of a fluid phenomenon. The fluidity of ELF is more accelerated than inner circle and outer circle Englishes, but that does not mean to say we cannot describe in detail those features of usage that are most typically found in ELF interaction. The data presented above, and described in more detail in Dewey (2007), indicate very clearly that there are strong tendencies for certain processes to occur, and that these processes often result in widely shared patterns of linguistic features. This surely requires a detailed and long-term reconsideration of how we define language norms, and a reassessment of how we perceive and determine the term ‘standard’ as applied in ELT pedagogy.

## Conclusion

The appetite societies have for “seeking to freeze” their most treasured aspects of cultural heritage (Bhagwati 2004: 112) helps make sense of the kind of sentiment underlying the responses ELF research tends to provoke. Instead of aiming to preserve cultural/linguistic heritage, or idealized versions of it, contemporary society needs to reassess this in light of current influences. As language practitioners we must acknowledge the pluralism involved in language use, otherwise we face the risk of continually freezing English spatially and temporally. Unerring adherence to an essentially monolithic concept of language is counter to the diversification of English globally. By subscribing to a transformationalist view of globalization we are better able to move forward from conventional notions of language, variety and speech community. We are thus better able to comprehend, theorize and incorporate in practice the current heightened diversification of English.

Adversely, wherever globalization is associated with Westernization, pedagogic uniformity is more likely, and the idea of a locally derived model will remain controversial (see Jenkins 2006a, and Seidlhofer 2004 on the kind of empirical questions that need to be investigated if advances in the teaching of English for lingua franca purposes are to occur). Therefore, the hyperglobalist arguments contribute to the uniformity about which they are critical – by equating globalization with Westernization, language learners, teachers, and policy makers will continue to aspire to ENL models and methods, as these

are likely to be perceived as essential for gaining access to the international community.

Legitimising features of ELF as variants in their own right is polemical because they cannot be tied down to a single source – they are hybrid and therefore prone to be regarded as sub-standard (cf. Jenkins' 2006b critique of the failure in SLA to accept language forms which do not adhere to native-speaker norms). Approaching English as a set of virtual resources, however, makes it possible to untie the language from any geographical centre. English is in any case a hybridized language in the extreme, with a varied, complex trajectory of development. As well as undergoing significant grammatical shift of the kind described above, English has also continually borrowed from sources as varied as French, Greek and Japanese, incorporating lexis and transforming it phonologically or orthographically where needed. The language in its multitude of guises has at any stage in its history varied socially and geographically, and any notion that there has ever existed a uniform version is a fallacy.

As the world becomes more interconnected, our networks extend further, transcending national and regional boundaries and resulting in still more hybridization. This process is accelerated in modern societies, and expression of culture can be experienced practically simultaneously across the globe. Nevertheless, this always occurs in a local context and will be interpreted in a very different landscape in, say, Europe, East Asia or Latin America, whose interpretations actively transform resources. This is especially true for ELF interactions, which are epitomical of the role of local appropriation in globalization. It is thus neither possible nor desirable to attempt a description of a uniform ELF variety – this cannot be appropriate given the variability of lingua franca communication. Most sociolinguistic studies into variety have previously occurred in stable speech communities, native and non-native alike. ELF is fundamentally different for the fluid nature of the communities of practice (Wenger 1998) that use it, and for the flexibility displayed in the use of linguistic resources. Only by adopting a transformationalist perspective can we make full sense of this crucial difference.

Considering the various perspectives on globalization helps fit this fluidity into a theoretical frame. To discuss the various means of conceptualizing globalization is to better comprehend the World Englishes and ELF arguments, and better understand how the current transformations English is undergoing are part of far broader global trends. Acknowledging the increased cultural flows so prominent in the contemporary world order adds significant weight to any discussion of why and how innovative linguistic forms are emerging in ELF (see also Pennycook 2006 on the notion of 'transcultural flows'). The linguistic changes that corpora of international Englishes shed light on are examples of the kind of cultural manifestations that arise from our increasingly interconnected experiences that so characterize the current era. They make our penchant for dichotomic terms such as global/local, native/non-native look too simplistic and rigid, as they

suggest too much demarcation and stasis to reliably reflect the complexities involved in contemporary human interaction.

There is transformationalism in applied linguistics, although often a reduced one. In English language use there has been considerable transformation, but to date this is more widely accepted in L1 varieties and (more recently) indigenized Englishes. Homogenization where it does occur, such as continued promotion of centre-derived language norms, exists not as an inevitable condition of globalization but as anxious reaction to its processes, as attempts to perpetuate homogenized models to safeguard tradition. Considering different perspectives on globalization also suggests an explanation for the often emotive scepticism with which the ELF debate is greeted.

Finally, the globalization of English is simply the most recent stage in the continual (sometimes more gradual, sometimes more accelerated) transformational processes that have been present throughout the history of the language (see e.g. Baugh and Cable 2002). Periods of significant social change have indeed signalled periods of heightened linguistic change throughout the history of languages, particularly English. It is thus inevitable, given the pace and extent of change in geopolitics and communication technology, that linguistic changes such as those described here are occurring in ELF contexts. We are currently experiencing a period of heightened change in all manner of aspects of our existence, and ELF is a phenomenon which characterises much of the contemporary world.

## Notes

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1. While providing a useful frame of reference for describing the internationalisation of English, Kachru's model has been given important critical treatment in recent years. The metaphors of 'inner' and 'outer' imply, respectively, a sense of inclusion and exclusion, where native speakers are located at the centre and all others are at the periphery. Graddol (1997) has commented on the inappropriateness of locating the 'centre of gravity' in the domain of the native speaker, undermining attempts by L2 speakers to appropriate the language for their own purposes of expression and identity. Others have similarly highlighted the need to modify this model (including among others Modiano 1999, Seidlhofer 2002, Yano 2001) to reflect the growing debate and increased awareness of the sociopolitics of English use worldwide. However, in line with many scholars in World Englishes and ELF (cf. Jenkins 2006a), I refer to Kachru's framework primarily for ease of reference, and in the absence of widespread agreement over an alternative model.
2. The findings presented here are drawn from a small-scale corpus of spoken ELF communication, where the analytical focus is on innovations in the lexico-grammar. The corpus consists of recordings of mainly dyadic conversations and some

small-group interactions. The database comprises 42 different communicative events, ranging from informal, entirely unplanned conversations to semi-formal seminar presentations, with a heavy bias towards naturally occurring non-institutional interactions; 38 of these communicative events have been fully transcribed, totalling approximately 8 hours in duration. The participants number 55, and 17 first languages are represented.

3. To assess a text for key words, the corpus software compares two word lists, one created for the text in question, and one larger word list, which serves as a reference file. The reference file in this case was the ELF corpus as a whole, which was thus compared with this particular interaction in order to show which words were most characteristic.
4. The view expressed by Quirk et al. (1985) is in stark contrast to this notion of redundancy, however. In their *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, use of the definite article in such contexts is described in fact as “logical”. The term is used to describe cases where the uniqueness of a referent is not accounted for by world knowledge, as would be the case in *the earth, the moon, the sun*, but by what is described as “the logical interpretation of certain words” (Quirk et al. 1985: 270). This category consists of postdeterminers and adjectives where the meaning is intrinsically an expression of uniqueness, including ordinals, superlative adjectives, sequence-related words (e.g. *next, last*), as well as other expressions of singularity (e.g. *only, sole, same*). The discussion of these types of modifiers even goes as far as to describe as “absurd” the possibility of using them with the indefinite or zero articles. If anything, the use of *the* – a grammatical lexeme that primarily denotes specificity – together with a modifier whose meaning essentially serves this purpose already, is *pace* Quirk et al. “illogical”, as this involves a degree of reduplication and redundancy. The treatment of *the* in Quirk et al., as well as other similar appeals to logic that can be found in studies of English grammar, represents an important issue in light of the innovations found in ELF data.
5. The definite article can signal that a referent is somehow unique, as in phrases such as *the one and only, the be all and end all*, or can convey that the referent is somehow superior to all others, as in *the place, the person*, etc. where stressing the article acts as a way of describing the referent as the best of its kind.
6. This is comparable to the use of ‘heads’ or ‘themes’ as described in studies of ENL spoken corpora. McCarthy (1998) describes the use of heads as a structure that is especially characteristic of informal speech, commenting that it is a listener-oriented practice whereby the speaker fronts the topic in order to facilitate comprehension. This fronting serves to introduce and highlight the subject before the clause proper, which is arguably the same function performed in the ELF data by combining the subject pronoun with a named subject in the main clause.

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English as a Lingua Franca: Teachers' Discourses on Accent and Identity. MA Thesis Department of English University of Helsinki. October 2008 Silke Majanen. The concept of English as a lingua franca (ELF) has been a disputed matter among linguists for some time now, particularly in the fields of second language acquisition (SLA) and English language teaching (ELT). In these fields, the ultimate goal or standard has been the (unrealistic) ideal of a native speaker, and words such as interlanguage and fossilisation have been used to describe the speech of learners on their way towards that target. It concentrates on the societal aspects of English as a lingua franca; the perspective is that of seven nonnative English teachers in Finland in lower and upper secondary schools.