

The English as a Lingua Franca Discourse

Yasemin Bayyurt - Hakan Şentürk
Boğaziçi University

ELF Discourse

In this presentation, we will be presenting the topic of “ELF Discourse” in four parts:

1. Variability in ELF
2. Pragmatics in ELF
3. Pronunciation in ELF
4. Misunderstandings in ELF

Variability in ELF

(adapted from Osimk-Teasdale, 2017)

“ELF is characterized by “hybridity and dynamism, fluidity and flexibility... heightened by **variability** and a premium on mutual accommodation”

(Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 110)

What does variability in ELF mean?

- Using the forms and functions in language that are not in line with standard language or NS use of English

Variability in ELF

- Variability in language is actually a prerequisite for it to be used as a means of interaction
- Variability exists in any language

However,

variability is especially noticeable in **ELF** because:

- To bridge language- and culture-related gaps among speakers from different language communities, specific **linguistic flexibility** is required

(Widowson, 2016: 35-36)

Variability in ELF

Therefore,

English gets continually **appropriated** and **refashioned** by its speakers

(Seidlehofer, 2011: 111)

This **refashioning of English in ELF** requires using linguistic resources other than English and an adaptation of these for communicative purposes

Variability in ELF

ELF interactions are “temporary relationships with speaker constellations frequently being tied and untied anew for each emerging interaction”

(Hülmbauer, 2009: 325)

Variability in ELF

Variability can occur on many **linguistic levels**:

- Phonology
- Lexis
- Morphosyntax
- Pragmatics

Examples:

- Zero-realization of third-person singular
- Word coinages
- Chunks
- Idioms
- Phrasal verbs

ACTIVITY 2

Examine the list of **linguistic forms** in the previous slide:

1. Are there any ***examples*** that you can give from your ELF interactions where such variability occurred?
2. Did they occur just for one time? If yes, why?
3. Do they happen all the time?
4. ***How*** and ***why*** do you think those variabilities happened?

Click the **link** under the video to share your views

ELF Pragmatics

(adapted from Cogo & House, 2017)

Watch the video below and answer the following questions:



Source: Hay Levels (2014, November 11). *ENGLISH LANG: Pragmatics - David Crystal*.

Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/0xc0KUD1umw>

ACTIVITY 3

1. According to David Crystal, **what is pragmatics?**
2. What is the most important question to be asked when studying pragmatics?
3. What *aspects of the language* will the answer to this question reveal?
4. How are all of the above *related to ELF*? Can you *give examples from your own context*?

Click the **link** under the video to share your views

ELF Pragmatics

We will examine pragmatics in ELF in 3 sections:

1. Negotiation of meaning
2. Use of interactional elements
3. Multilingual resources

ELF Pragmatics

Negotiation of Meaning

How is **meaning negotiated** in **natural talk**?

- There are strategies used to establish meaning and solve situations where meaning cannot be constructed
 - Pre-emption signals:
 - Repetition
 - Paraphrasing
 - Self-initiated repair
 - Co-construction of utterances

ACTIVITY 4

Watch the video below and try to locate the **strategies used to negotiate meaning**:



Click the **link** under the video to share your views

Source: Zupef. (2009, October 15). Negotitation of Meaning. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/OjAGANuA9qE>

ELF Pragmatics

Use of Interactional Elements

Management of Interaction

- **Discourse markers**
(display meanings of information management and show interpersonal relations between speakers)
- **Back-channeling**
(brief verbal and non-verbal signals given to speaker to show that s/he can continue speaking)

ELF Pragmatics

Discourse Markers

ELF speakers do not only use different discourse markers but they also give them different functions
(House, 2009)

Example: *'you know'* a) is not used for interpersonal reasons or expressing common knowledge but for self-reference when emphasizing formulation difficulties and coherence matters in the speaker's own turns

ELF Pragmatics

'you know'

b) used in ELF speech as a relational phrase for indicating addition, contrast, opposition, concession and cause without using *and*, *but*, or *because*

c) Used when the speaker is “incoherent”, searches for the correct form, and tries to correct her mistake using *'you know'* as a signal to show problems in planning

ELF Pragmatics

Back-channeling

According to Baumgarten and House (2010a), there is a difference between:

Yes (Agreement marker)

Yeah (presentation marker)

?

Yeah:

Beginning of utterance: Face-keeping device to display attentiveness and save time

End of utterance: positive final emphasis

ELF Pragmatics

Multi-lingual Resources

ELF-talk is not only in English but might also include items from the speakers' native languages:

- Happens when interlocutors share L1
- Happens in routinized parts:
 - Small talk, opening and closing phrases, topic boundaries

ELF Pragmatics

Multi-lingual strategies are used to:

- Share of a sense of non-nativeness
- Collaboratively construct meaning
- Create a sense of intercultural community-membership or identity

ELF Pronunciation

There are many varieties in English but what is generally taught all over the world is **Standard English**, which is basically a written language.

How about accents?

- British English
- General American English

BUT,

What if the millions of English learners around the world do not want to or cannot learn either of these accents?

ELF Pronunciation

Lingua Franca Core (LFC) by Jenkins (2000)

According to Jenkins (2000), teacher training courses reflect a **"native-speaker bias"** (p. 1) in promoting **unnecessary and unrealistic pronunciation targets for learners**. Jenkins' LFC is a list of more teachable and learnable pronunciation points and is based on her intelligibility research on errors among NNSs.

ELF Pronunciation

The guidelines in the Lingua Franca Core can be summarized as follows:

(adapted from EnglishGlobalCommunication)

1. Consonants:

- All of the English consonants need to be produced except /θ/ 'think' and /ð/ 'then'
- *ELF speakers need to correctly aspirate /p/, /t/ and /k/ at the beginning of stressed syllables like 'pin', 'ten' and 'kind'*

ELF Pronunciation

2. Consonant Cluster Simplification

- ELF intelligibility is compromised when a consonant from a cluster at the beginning of a word is deleted—deleting /s/ from ‘*Spain*’ will produce ‘*pain*’

3. Vowel Length

- ELF speakers need to establish different vowel lengths—they also need to shorten the vowels when they are followed by a voiceless consonant like in ‘ice’ and ‘eyes’

ELF Pronunciation

4. Sentence Stress

- When we speak, we speak in small block of words which are called ‘thought groups’—it is important to stress the one word in this thought group because listeners pay special attention to this word

ACTIVITY 5

Watch the video “**How to teach pronunciation for English as a Lingua Franca Use**” by Marek Kiczowski summarizing the previously mentioned points <https://youtu.be/hE-CK4yV6Ik>

- What **examples** for each item of the LFC does Marek give?
- Which **aspects of English pronunciation** do not pose **intelligibility** problems?
- How would you **teach** these in your classes?

Click the **link** under the video to share your views at the **Forum** of this section

Misunderstandings in ELF

(adapted from Pietikainen, 2018 and Gardiner & Deterding, 2017)

According to Oxford Dictionary, misunderstanding is the ‘failure to understand something correctly’

Whose fault is it?

- the speaker’s?
- the listener’s?

It is possible that the speaker was unsuccessful in communicating what s/he wanted to say or that the context or situation may have caused the hearer to misunderstand

Misunderstandings in ELF

Misunderstanding in ELF interactions:

1. According to Varonis and Gas (1985), NNSs and NSs have serious problems in communicating with each other while Beldad and Steehouder (2012) believe that communication problems among them is unavoidable
2. According to research, ELF speakers use **cooperative accommodation strategies** to establish a **shared ground and understanding**

Misunderstandings in ELF

Misunderstanding in ELF interactions:

3. ELF speakers **do not undervalue understanding** and hence 'work hard to achieve it' (Mauranen, 2006)
4. ELF speakers detect **potential problem sources** in their speech as they are about to happen and increase 'their efforts at keeping mutual understanding (Kaur, 2010) by **being explicit**

Misunderstandings in ELF

Misunderstanding in ELF interactions:

5. ELF speakers try to be **creative** in coming up with original expressions to deal with possible problems in communication
6. Misunderstandings may occur for reasons beyond pronunciation in ELF interactions. Intelligibility issues in ELF contexts need to be taken into consideration in relation to cultural factors as well as linguistic factors (Bayyurt, 2018)

Misunderstandings in ELF

However, when misunderstandings do happen:

1. According to Deterding (2013), the main reasons for misunderstandings are based on **lexical features: insufficient vocabulary and pronunciation issues**

Misunderstandings in ELF

2. According to House (1999):

- Interlocutors speak 'past each other'
- There is a lack of pragmatic competence
- Speakers use the 'let it pass' strategy

Misunderstandings in ELF

Items that cause misunderstanding according to Gardiner & Deterding (2017) in order of frequency:

1. Pronunciation
2. Lexis
3. Grammar
4. Code-switching
5. Miscellaneous

Misunderstandings in ELF

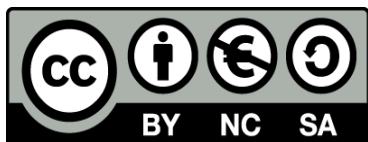
Pronunciation is a key factor:

- Simplifications in initial consonant clusters
 - **Not a problem:** omitting /r/ in '*brunei*' or '*from*'
 - **Problem:** omitting /r/ in '*process*' or /l/ in '*plastic*'

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