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State-of-the-Art Article

Review of developments in research into English as a lingua franca

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We begin by considering how the recent phenomenon of English as a Lingua Franca (henceforth ELF) fits in with the older notion of lingua francas in general as well as with older versions of ELF. We then explore the beginnings of ELF in its modern manifestation, including the earliest ELF research, and tackle the thorny issue of defining ELF. After discussing the main locations and domains in which ELF research has been carried out to date, we move on to examining research into three linguistic levels, lexicogrammar, phonology and pragmatics, concluding with a discussion of very recent findings revealing ELF's linguistic fluidity. Next, we discuss research into two domains where ELF has proved especially prevalent: business English and academic English. This is followed by a consideration of ELF as a globalized and globalizing practice. We end the article by exploring the implications of ELF research for ELF-oriented English teaching and the role that attitudes are likely to play in this. We conclude that while the relaxed attitudes towards ELF of younger people are promising, strong resistance is still felt by many others, and that the major challenge remains in convincing the examination boards that they should take account of ELF.

1. Introduction

1.1 Lingua francas and English as a lingua franca

While research into ELF is a relatively recent activity, both ELF itself and other lingua francas (contact languages used among people who do not share a first language) have existed for many centuries. At various points, for example, Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Portuguese as well as several other languages have performed this function (see Ostler 2005). Meanwhile, English itself has served as a lingua franca ever since the countries of the OUTER CIRCLE (Kachru 1985) were first colonized from the late sixteenth century.

Turning to the term LINGUA FRANCA itself, the first language to be labelled explicitly as such was a variety spoken along the south-eastern coast of the Mediterranean from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries (Knapp & Meierkord 2002: 9). Prior to that, other terms such as CONTACT LANGUAGE, AUXILIARY LANGUAGE, TRADE LANGUAGE, and TRADE JARGON had been used (see Samarin 1987). The first explicitly-named lingua franca was a pidgin language that is likely to have been based initially on certain Italian dialects and also to have included elements of Arabic, French, Greek, Persian, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish (Knapp & Meierkord, ibid.). A plurilinguistic and hybrid composition thus characterized so-called lingua francas from their earliest history.

Moving on to ELF, while English had served as a lingua franca in parts of Asia (e.g. India and Singapore) and Africa (e.g. Nigeria and Kenya) since they were colonized by the British from the sixteenth century on, the phenomenon in its modern sense was first identified and reported by two German scholars in the 1980s: Hüllen (1982) and Knapp (1985, 1987). At that time, however, as Knapp himself later pointed out, the interest was 'mainly conceptual in nature, stressing the importance of ELF as an objective for English language teaching and also postulating the necessity of empirical studies that could identify formal or functional aspects to be taken account of in teaching' (Knapp 2002: 218). Outside Germany, scholars elsewhere, even in Europe, tended to be slow in noting the significance of this early German lead. The field of ELF, or ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE (EIL) as it was also known at the time (and still is occasionally), thus remained a minority interest, with only occasional independent discussions of the phenomenon being published between the late 1980s and late 1990s (principally Haberland 1989; Firth 1996; Jenkins 1996a, 1996b; Firth & Wagner 1997; Jenkins 1998; House 1999), and with little consistency across their approaches.

The turning point seems to have occurred at the start of the new millennium with the publication of two works which caught the attention of both applied linguists and English teaching professionals. The first of these was Jenkins (2000), an empirical study of ELF pronunciation. Jenkins identified some of the kinds of formal and functional features to which Knapp had earlier referred, and argued on the basis of these features that native English pronunciation is not optimum in ELF communication contexts. Seidlhofer's (2001) publication, a conceptual piece, argued more persuasively than in earlier such pieces that while ELF was 'the most extensive contemporary use of English worldwide' (p. 133), little description of this linguistic reality was currently available, which both 'preclude[d] us from conceiving of speakers of lingua franca English as language users in their own right' (ibid.) and meant that native English norms continued to be considered the only valid target for learners. In her article, Seidlhofer called for an empirical research agenda to fill this 'conceptual gap', and announced the compilation of the first ELF corpus, the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE), which had recently been launched at the University of Vienna under her directorship. This was followed two years later by the launch of a second major ELF corpus, the corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings, or ELFA, by a team at Tampere (now Helsinki) University under the leadership of Mauranen (Mauranen 2003). More recently, the compilation of another potentially major ELF corpus, the Asian Corpus of English (ACE) has begun in Hong Kong, with Andy Kirkpatrick leading a team in various parts of East Asia (Kirkpatrick 2010b), while the VOICE corpus became available online from May 2009.

During the first decade of the third millennium, interest in ELF increased dramatically, at least to some extent in response to the widespread attention given to Jenkins (2000) and Seidlhofer (2001). In addition to an avalanche of research-based and conceptual publications on the subject including dedicated journal issues (e.g. Mauranen & Metsä-Ketelä 2006; Meierkord 2006; House 2009a; Björkman 2011) and book-length treatments (e.g. Jenkins 2007; Kirkpatrick 2010c; Smit 2010; Cogo & Dewey 2011; Mauranen 2011; Seidlhofer 2011), an increasing number of ELF-focused doctoral theses have been completed, with many more in the pipeline, and a dedicated ELF conference series has been established (Helsinki 2008, Southampton 2009, Vienna 2010, Hong Kong 2011 and Istanbul 2012, to name just the first five), with the proceedings of the first conference already published (Mauranen & Ranta 2009) and those of the second conference in press at the time of writing (Archibald, Cogo & Jenkins in press). The most recent key development in ELF is the publisher de Gruyter Mouton's decision to launch a dedicated journal, the *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, in 2011.

Since the first discussions of the ELF phenomenon in the 1980s, the speed with which it has become a major focus of discussion and activity among both applied linguists and English language teaching professionals, particularly over the past decade, is thus little short of remarkable. It is not surprising, then, that ELF has also become controversial, and in later parts of this article we will explore some of the research that has investigated the controversies which ELF has aroused and the reasons that may underlie them. But for the remainder of the introduction, we will consider, first, how best to define ELF, and then go on to look at the extent of research to date on ELF's geographical locations and domains of use.

1.2 Definitions, locations and domains

On one level, defining ELF is straightforward. On the VOICE website, it is described simply as 'an additionally acquired language system which serves as a common means of communication for speakers of different first languages'. A key feature of this definition is that it does not exclude native speakers of English (henceforth NSEs), since ELF is not the same as English as a Native Language (ENL), and must therefore be 'additionally acquired' by NSEs too (albeit that their starting point renders the task easier). This is in contradistinction to another definition of ELF which is sometimes quoted: that of Firth, who defines ELF as 'a "contact language" between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture and for whom English is the chosen *foreign* language of communication' (1996: 240; emphasis in original). According to this perspective, which is shared by a minority of ELF researchers, NSEs are indeed excluded from ELF communication since they cannot be considered as 'foreign language' speakers of English.

For most ELF researchers, however, ELF and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are two entirely different phenomena. The differences between them have been presented in detail elsewhere (Jenkins 2006a), but can usefully be summarized as follows:

- ELF is part of the GLOBAL ENGLISHES paradigm, according to which most speakers of English are non-native speakers (henceforth NNSEs), and all English varieties,

native or non-native, are accepted in their own right rather than evaluated against a NSE benchmark. By contrast, EFL is part of the MODERN (FOREIGN) LANGUAGES paradigm, according to which most interaction involving non-native speakers is with native speakers of the language, and non-native speakers' goal is to approximate the native variety as closely as possible.

- Following from the previous point, an ELF perspective sees non-native Englishes as different rather than deficient. Or, to put it another way, differences from ENL are not assumed to be signs of incompetence, as they are when viewed from an EFL perspective, but are explored as emerging or potential features of ELF.
- Whereas EFL is underpinned by theories of L1 INTERFERENCE and FOSSILIZATION (e.g. Selinker 1972), ELF is underpinned by theories of language contact and evolution (e.g. Mufwene 2001). As a result, while in EFL code-switching is regarded as evidence of a gap in a NNSE's English knowledge, in ELF it is seen as a crucial bilingual pragmatic resource.

From an ELF perspective, then, once NNSEs are no longer learners of English, they are not the 'failed native speakers' of EFL, but – more often – highly skilled communicators who make use of their multilingual resources in ways not available to monolingual NSEs, and who are found to prioritize successful communication over narrow notions of 'correctness' in ways that NSEs, with their stronger attachment to their native English, may find more challenging. NNSEs may, for example, code-switch in order to promote solidarity and/or project their own cultural identity; or they may accommodate to their interlocutors from a wide range of first language backgrounds in ways that result in an 'error' in native English. We will return to these points in the second part of the article.

No definition of ELF could be complete without considering its similarities to and differences from the well-established World Englishes paradigm. While these two paradigms undoubtedly differ in certain ways, their research orientations also have a good deal in common. In particular, both are concerned with the implications of the spread of English far beyond its earliest contexts of use. Both explore the ways in which the resulting 'new' Englishes develop in their own right as a means of expressing their (NNSE) speakers' sociocultural identities instead of conforming to the norms of a distant group of NSs (Seidlhofer & Berns 2009: 190). On the other hand, while World Englishes research has always been, and remains, interested primarily in the study of 'bounded' varieties of English, albeit NNSE varieties, the position of ELF research is that the world has become so interconnected, and English so bound up with processes of globalization, that a traditional varieties orientation is no longer viable, and that we should, instead, focus on English as fluid, flexible, contingent, hybrid and deeply intercultural (Dewey 2007a). As Pennycook (2007) points out, 'the world Englishes framework places nationalism at its core' (p. 20). By contrast, ELF, with its built-in scope for variability, is similar to his (2007) notion of PLURILITHIC ENGLISHES. We will return to these points in section 4.

A final point we need to make in relation to defining ELF is that it has no connection with so-called 'Globish'. ELF, as this article makes clear, is a widely and meticulously researched phenomenon that has abundant support from empirical findings. Globish, an arbitrarily simplified version of English (called 'English light' on the Globish website), by contrast, is entirely intuitive (e.g. Nerrière 2004, Nerrière, Dufresne & Bourgon 2005, the version of

English for French learners). Thus, Globish is not a notion which merits serious consideration by applied linguists or English teaching professionals. It is, nevertheless, not surprising that Globish, with its catchy name, should have been taken up by the media (e.g. McCrum 2010), while they have ignored the scholarly approach taken by ELF researchers. What is surprising, however, is that ELF research has also been ignored by a respected linguist, Ostler, in his recent book-length discussion (2010) of the future of English as a lingua franca. As with Globish, then, Ostler's discussion of the likely future direction(s) of English fails to engage with the major body of research into the phenomenon that he explores.

Turning now to the locations of ELF research, another major feature of the ELF phenomenon is that its researchers are based in a wide range of geographical locations. The earliest conceptualizing of ELF (if not by name) was carried out by the German scholars Haberland (working in Denmark), Hüllen and Knapp. ELF research was subsequently taken up independently of the German work and researched by Firth (then Denmark, now UK), House (Germany), James (Austria), Jenkins (UK), Mauranen (Finland) and Seidlhofer (Austria). During the period 2000–2010, large numbers of other scholars have begun researching ELF, including members of Seidlhofer's VOICE team in Vienna, Mauranen's ELFA team in Helsinki, and a fast-growing number of doctoral and post-doctoral scholars in all these regions, as well as in Southern, Central and Eastern European countries including Greece, Serbia and Turkey. During the same years, ELF research began to be conducted in East Asian settings, particularly by Deterding and Kirkpatrick (e.g. Deterding & Kirkpatrick 2006) and, later, by Kirkpatrick's ACE (Asian Corpus of English) team in Hong Kong.

However, the fact that ELF research has been conducted in particular geographical locations should not be taken to mean that the research conducted IN a specific location necessarily relates to the English OF that location. The whole point about ELF is that it is a multilingual activity involving speakers who have come together from a range of different geographical regions. Thus, research carried out in Germany, for example, may well involve participants who have come together from both European and non-European contexts. Having said that, two clear geographical strands are emerging in ELF research: mainland European (e.g. Seidlhofer, Breiteneder & Pitzl 2006; Seidlhofer 2010) and East Asian/ASEAN (e.g. Kirkpatrick 2010c; Baker 2011). On the other hand, Latin America's research interest in ELF has so far remained lukewarm, probably because of the presence in the region of another 'global' lingua franca, Spanish (albeit not the national language of Brazil). Even the few scholars in the region who do engage with ELF tend to focus on the wider rather than local issues (e.g. Rajagopalan 2009). Perhaps, though, as happened in China's case when the 2008 Olympic Games were held in Beijing, interest in ELF will grow in Latin America as a result of the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Moving on to ELF domains, during the period in which ELF research has been spreading geographically, scholars with specialisms in a range of different research domains have also begun to engage with ELF and explore its implications for communication within their particular domain of interest. These include, in particular, business (e.g. Charles 2007; Ehrenreich 2009; Pullin Stark 2009), higher education (e.g. Erling 2007; Björkman 2010; Smit 2010), school settings (e.g. Sifakis & Fay in press), and tourism (e.g. Smit 2007). Because research into ELF in both business and academic settings is especially vibrant, we will return

to these two domains and explore them in more detail in the next part of the article, where we go on to consider the nature of ELF.

To sum up, then, it is clear that ELF research, publication and activity in general, have developed substantially since the time of both Seidlhofer's (2004) first survey article of the field, and her (2006) update with respect to the European context (Seidlhofer, Breiteneder & Pitzl). We turn now to the longest section of our article, on the theme in which more ELF research has been carried out than any other: linguistic levels. That is followed by a closer look at business and academic English. The final two parts of the article consider research into ELF and globalization (part 3) and ELF attitudes (part 4), and we end by exploring how ELF research may develop in the future.

2. Research into the nature of ELF

2.1 Linguistic levels

ELF research has been conducted at a range of linguistic levels, particularly lexis, lexicogrammar, pronunciation and pragmatics. While most has so far focused on speech, there has been a recent interest in exploring written ELF, although as yet not enough from which to draw implications.

Apart from the German publications discussed in 1.1 above, two of the earliest published ELF studies were Firth (1996) and House (1999), which focused on pragmatics. These, however, were not ELF studies 'proper' in the sense that empirical ELF research is now understood. In the first case, Firth's study did not investigate ELF communication explicitly. Rather, it explored communication among NNSs of English in order to demonstrate how, despite 'anomalies and infelicities' in their English as 'recognised by native-speaker assessments' (p. 239), the participants managed to communicate successfully with one another. In the second case, House's (1999) study took the form of a classroom simulation, in which House found, perhaps not surprisingly, that her participants did not engage seriously in the interaction, so the kinds of strategies and features found in later ELF research did not come into play. By contrast, subsequent empirical ELF research has both focused on NATURALLY OCCURRING DATA and explored ELF IN ITS OWN RIGHT rather than against a native English yardstick.

Another early ELF study was Jenkins's investigation of ELF pronunciation (2000, 2002, although shorter accounts of the research had been published in 1996a and 1998). Although, as in subsequent ELF research, the data was naturally occurring rather than elicited, a substantial amount of it was collected in educational settings, including general and academic English classrooms, and in practices for oral examinations. And while Jenkins explored ELF pronunciation in its own right, she focused primarily on learners of English at upper intermediate/low advanced level, who she characterized as NON-BILINGUAL ENGLISH SPEAKERS and contrasted with BILINGUAL ENGLISH SPEAKERS (who could be both L2 and L1 English speakers). A final difference between this study and subsequent ELF research is that whereas the vast majority of ELF researchers do not exclude NSs of English from ELF communication, Jenkins's earliest ELF research was based exclusively on NNS–NNS interactions.

Although the phonology research (see 2.1.1 below) included a substantial investigation of accommodation, it was otherwise more features-based, and this was also true of the earliest work on ELF lexicogrammar and lexis (see 2.1.2). Later, in line with increasing evidence of the fluidity and flexibility of ELF communication, the focus of research has shifted from an orientation to features and the ultimate aim of some kind of codification (an aim which, nevertheless, has not been dismissed out of hand), to an interest in the processes underlying and determining the choice of features used in any given ELF interaction. We will return to this point in 2.1.4 below. But first, we examine the main findings of ELF research within, respectively, phonology, lexis and lexicogrammar, and pragmatics.

2.1.1 Phonology

The early pronunciation research carried out by Jenkins (2000, 2002) explored two interrelated phenomena: pronunciation-based intelligibility problems and the use of phonological accommodation. The main aims of the research were to identify the extent to which pronunciation was a cause of miscommunication between NNSs of English, and which phonological features were subject to the phenomenon of ACCOMMODATION (Beebe & Giles 1984), i.e. which features speakers adjusted, and how they made that adjustment, in order to try to make their pronunciation more intelligible to their NNSE interlocutors. The accommodation element of the study produced some fascinating findings: when speakers were engaged in interactions where it was crucial for them to be understood (e.g. in an information exchange), they replaced some, but not other, features of their 'non-standard' (in relation to native English) accents with more 'standard' (in relation to native English) features; however, follow-up questionnaires and discussions with the research participants revealed that they tended not to do this when they regarded intelligibility as less important (e.g. in a social chat where it was not crucial for every word to be understood).

The miscommunication findings cast further light on the accommodation findings. They demonstrated that certain English pronunciation features (essentially consonant sounds apart from the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/, initial consonant clusters, vowel length distinctions, and nuclear stress) contributed significantly to intelligibility in the ELF interactions being studied. On the other hand, they showed that certain other features (e.g. weak forms, elisions, assimilations) did not appear to contribute to intelligibility in these interactions and may even have detracted from it. When the miscommunication findings were compared with those from the accommodation research, what emerged was that it tended to be the (often L1-influenced) substitutions for features that had been identified as contributing more to intelligibility, rather than substitutions for features that had been found to contribute less, that interlocutors replaced in 'high-stakes' situations such as information exchanges. Jenkins subsequently labelled the crucial features the LINGUA FRANCA CORE (LFC) and the non-crucial 'non-core'. She went on to argue on the basis of her findings that in NNSE–NNSE communication, the 'core' features were likely to enhance mutual intelligibility, and that English users would benefit from having them in their pronunciation repertoires along with sufficient accommodation skills to be able to adjust their pronunciation and use them as and when required.

Subsequently, and in line with various other points made in this article about the recent shift of emphasis in ELF research from product to process, scholars working in ELF pronunciation have begun prioritizing accommodation over pronunciation features in their conceptual frameworks. This, Deterding (in press) argues, is likely to have a number of repercussions on pronunciation teaching, because the teaching and learning of accommodation skills involves considerably more work than the teaching of a Received Pronunciation or General American (or other native English) accent. He points out that ELF-based pronunciation teaching can therefore never be regarded as a 'soft' option, as is sometimes claimed by those who consider ELF to be merely a 'simplified' or 'reduced' form of English. On the other hand, Deterding notes that the goals of ELF-based pronunciation teaching are attainable by contrast with that of native-speaking pronunciation, which, for most learners, is not achievable; that the fact that these goals are attainable means there is less chance of students being discouraged; and that classroom activities focusing on developing accommodation skills are likely to be more motivating and enjoyable than the pronunciation drills and similar used in the teaching of segmental and even suprasegmental phonology.

As far as the LFC itself is concerned, Jenkins pointed out from the start that it was not intended as a pronunciation model, but more as a set of guidelines that would be important for intelligibility on some occasions but not others, depending, in particular, on who was speaking with whom, and the degree of accommodation required. Jenkins also observed that her phonological research was not definitive and was in need of replicating. Perhaps in part because pronunciation has always tended to be of less interest than other linguistic levels among applied linguists and even ELT professionals, and perhaps in part because orientations to English pronunciation, more than to other linguistic levels, remain dominated by native English language ideology (Jenkins 2007), there have been remarkably few published replications of Jenkins's original study. Those who have criticized the LFC have tended not to support their criticisms with empirical evidence but only with their intuitions and even personal dogmas (e.g. Sobkowiak 2005; Nelson 2008). The scholars who have replicated the ELF pronunciation research, by contrast, have found that their findings in the main support those of Jenkins (e.g. da Silva 1999; Deterding & Kirkpatrick 2006; Rajadurai 2007; Osimk 2009; Kirkpatrick 2010c), although they have also identified occasional areas in which the LFC needs a degree of 'fine-tuning' (Walker 2010: 43–44). For example, Pickering (2009) produces experimental evidence demonstrating that pitch cues may have a role to play in ELF communication. Clearly, it is early days and far more research into ELF pronunciation is still needed. This, we believe, is particularly true of research into phonological accommodation in ELF, a phenomenon on which Walker (2010), the first book-length publication providing guidelines for teachers who wish to incorporate an ELF approach into their pronunciation teaching, places considerable emphasis.

2.1.2 Lexis/lexicogrammar

Research in this area has shown how speakers in ELF interactions customarily manipulate the linguistic resources available to them in systematic, regular ways. Speakers routinely – but not unvaryingly – exploit the language systems of English to the extent that we can identify

EMERGING PATTERNS of lexical and grammatical forms. Initial empirical investigations into ELF lexicogrammar and lexis were primarily concerned with identifying language features that might be considered characteristic of ELF spoken communication. Although more recently emphasis has to some extent shifted away from the identification of LINGUISTIC FEATURES towards a focus on the communicative functions that give rise to these features (see section 2.1.4 below), as most of the earlier work in ELF was concerned with describing characteristic language forms it is important that we give an overview of this work here.

Corpus findings in ELF have thus far given rise to a certain degree of typicality in the more salient features that occur in lingua franca interactions. ELF researchers have been at pains to accentuate the SYSTEMATICITY involved in the emerging patterns of language use that these features appear to indicate. As discussed in Dewey (2007b), features identified in ELF research as typical are usually deemed to have met a number of key criteria in order to be included in descriptions of ELF lexicogrammar. Firstly, they have been closely scrutinized by means of both qualitative and quantitative analysis, for instance by using concordancing software, to determine that patterns of use are systematic in nature. Secondly, they have been found to occur frequently and extensively with features most often being produced by numerous speakers from a wide variety of LINGUACULTURAL BACKGROUNDS. Thirdly, all features described can be considered communicatively effective, and in many cases, arguably more so than ENL forms (see especially Cogo & Dewey 2006 on this matter). Finally, in meeting each of these criteria these language features are thus considered to be ELF VARIANTS (not errors) when contrasted with equivalent standard ENL forms.

Seidlhofer (2004) provided an early state-of-the-art survey of ELF empirical work that had been conducted to date, research studies having until that point focused more on phonology (e.g. Jenkins 2000) and pragmatics (e.g. House 2002; Meierkord 2002) than on the lexicogrammatical level, where far less description had by then taken place. This is primarily due to the relatively larger corpus size required for findings in lexis and lexicogrammar to be fully attested. Since the publication of Seidlhofer's paper, the VOICE and ELFA projects have begun to provide corpus data on that scale. In the paper, Seidlhofer presents the following list of preliminary lexicogrammatical characteristics, which at the time was put forward as a set of hypotheses rather than determinate ELF features, but which have proved to be quite durable, appearing in and helping to give direction to numerous subsequent research studies in this area (e.g. Breiteneder 2005; Cogo & Dewey 2006; Breiteneder 2009).

- 'Dropping' the third person present tense *–s*
- 'Confusing' the relative pronouns *who* and *which*
- 'Omitting' definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in ENL, and inserting them where they do not occur in ENL
- 'Failing' to use correct forms in tag questions (e.g., *isn't it?* or *no*? instead of *shouldn't they?*)
- Inserting 'redundant' prepositions, as in *We have to study about. . .*)
- 'Overusing' certain verbs of high semantic generality, such as *do, have, make, put, take*
- 'Replacing' infinitive-constructions with *that*-clauses, as in *I want that*

- 'Overdoing' explicitness (e.g. *black color* rather than just *black*) (Seidlhofer 2004: 220)[1]

Although the findings were intended as precursory, Seidlhofer's (2004) paper represents a substantial departure from conventional linguistic descriptions, for the first time offering up features of non-native use as examples of lingua franca VARIANCE in their own right. Many of these features are precisely the language forms that tend to be treated as 'fossilized' in ELT, that is, they would be seen as evidence of incomplete learning, errors which are resistant to the NS-based corrections of language teachers.

To date, subsequent papers that report findings in ELF lexis and lexicogrammar have tended to take Seidlhofer's preliminary hypotheses as their point of departure, usually exploring one or other of the listed features in more detail. Probably the best documented of these is the use of present simple third person *–s*, described for example in Breiteneder (2005) as part of her account of the naturalness of lingua franca English. In her corpus, despite a strong tendency for speakers to conform to the norms of Standard ENL (80% of present simple verb forms in her data show *–s* marking), there are 29 occurrences of the zero form. Breiteneder's examination of her data reveals that various linguistic and extra-linguistic circumstances combine to cause quite a high level of variation in usage with third person verb forms. Most significantly, she concludes that

> departures from standard norms may be triggered by the highly irregular nature of the present tense verb morphology of Standard English and additionally motivated by the transactional nature of the E[European]ELF interactions, i.e. there is a focus on the content rather than the form of the message. (Breiteneder 2005: 22)

She attributes the occurrence of the zero forms to a process of regularization by means of analogy and as the result of principles of notional concord, pointing out that only the third person takes MORPHOLOGICAL MARKING in English, and the use of the *–s* morpheme is also used to denote the plural inflection.

Cogo & Dewey (2006) likewise report variability in the use of third person verb forms, though unlike Breiteneder they find a fairly even distribution of the variants in terms of total occurrences of *–s* and the zero form (respectively 48% and 52% of all propositional, i.e. non auxiliary, verbs in the third person singular present). However, they also find the zero form to be the more productive, occurring in more numerous settings and a wider range of communicative domains than *–s*. They conclude that, among their data at least, the occurrence of third person singular zero – unlike the *–s* morpheme – is not restricted by the particularities of the communicative setting or linguacultural background of the speakers. A further finding relates to the presence or absence of English NSs in the data. That is, when Cogo & Dewey exclude from their analysis those cases where a NS (in this case a teacher) is present, the ratio of zero to *–s* forms increases in favour of THIRD PERSON ZERO to a statistically

[1] In line with Jenkins (2009), we have reinstated Seidlhofer's original scare quotes. These were mistakenly omitted by the 2004 publisher, thus creating the false impression that Seidlhofer herself regarded the features negatively rather than as valid ELF variants.

significant level. The authors conclude that the case of third person singular present verb forms indicates that speakers in ELF settings will often make use of the resources in their linguistic repertoires in ways that are both efficient and effective, but that they do so with acute awareness of the identities of their interlocutors.

Cogo & Dewey (2011) highlight additional SALIENT FEATURES in the lexis and grammar found in ELF corpora, focusing particularly on those aspects of the lexicogrammar in which patterns of use are most pronounced. The more prominent variations away from ENL norms include, inter alia, the use of prepositions, the article system and collocations. What Cogo and Dewey describe as 'innovative forms' are observed to operate at various linguistic levels, most notably in relation to grammatical systems, as in the case of article use, morphology, in terms of both INFLECTIONAL MORPHOLOGY (as in the use of third person zero) and DERIVATIONAL MORPHOLOGY (especially with productive use of suffixation, see also Pitzl, Breiteneder & Klimpfinger 2007 on 'processes of lexical innovation'), and patterns of syntax (see also Dewey 2007b for a thorough study of word order patterns in ELF; see Ranta 2009 for an account of ELF syntactic features, including use of *if* clauses, existential *there is* and embedded inversions). In addition, Cogo & Dewey (2011) find that close examination at the level of discourse of each discrete form being studied is necessary in order to ascertain functional/semantic properties and thus fully appreciate the relevance of a given form. In other words, it is not so much the features themselves that are now the focus of attention in ELF empirical research, but rather a consideration of the FUNCTIONAL USE of these items; that is, what is each form illustrative of? (Dewey 2009; Seidlhofer 2009b).

In short, although research interest in ELF lexicogrammar got off the ground more slowly than ELF phonology and pragmatics, it has now developed into a particularly vibrant area of empirical work. Recent work in the field has continued to build on the findings first reported in Seidlhofer (2004), demonstrating inexorably that the formal and functional properties of ELF lexicogrammar involve longstanding PROCESSES OF LANGUAGE EVOLUTION, with many features occurring as the result of a REGULARIZATION of the system. As discussed in Dewey (2007b), this is a process that occurs in all language varieties, including ENL ones, but which in the case of ELF, freed from the STANDARDIZING CONSTRAINTS of a set of norms, becomes accelerated and intensified. This can be seen in a range of language features reported in ELF research (as is demonstrably the case with third person singular verb forms mentioned above). Describing all these findings in detail is, of course, beyond the scope of an article such as this, but see Cogo & Dewey (2011) for further details.

In recent lexicogrammatical work there has been a particular focus on the FUNCTIONAL PROPERTIES of the various formal characteristics of ELF. Björkman (2009), in a study of ELF in a university setting in Sweden, finds that speakers adapt English morphosyntactically in order to best achieve their communicative needs, or in her words 'to get the job done' (2009: 225). Björkman reports some very interesting patterns of development in the use of morphology, with novel formations such as *discriminization* and *levelize* (2009: 231), as well as syntactical variation at the phrase level and clause level. In terms of recent work that looks more specifically at the use of lexical patterns in ELF, Pitzl's (2009) discussion of idiomaticity is especially noteworthy. Pitzl shows how IDIOMATIC EXPRESSION occurs very differently in ELF as opposed to ENL. She finds that idiomatic language in ELF is not so much a question of using a fixed (culturally tethered) idiom, but rather more a case of speakers coining idiomatic

language that has gone through a process that she calls 're-metaphorization' (Seidlhofer & Widdowson 2009). Pitzl shows that idioms in ELF can vary formally from their ENL equivalents, but without inhibiting (and possibly even enhancing) their functionality. The example of ELF idiomaticity provided in the title of the paper, 'we should not wake up any dogs', is an elegant illustration of what she means. She argues that here the metaphor underlying the idiomatic ENL expression *Let sleeping dogs lie* has been re-awakened by the speaker to produce an innovative metaphorical use of language. Pitzl presents findings taken from the VOICE corpus that reveal how metaphors in ELF can emerge in the following ways:

> they may be entirely novel with a metaphorical image being created ad hoc by a speaker; secondly, metaphors may be formally related to existing English idioms, re-introducing metaphoricity often via formal variation of the expression; and thirdly, metaphors may be created with other language idioms being transplanted into English. (Pitzl 2009: 317)

Crucially, Pitzl also makes the point that in ENL, idiomatic expressions are largely CONVENTIONALIZED and relatively fixed, with the possibility of reintroducing metaphor into idiomatic language far less likely in ENL than in ELF interactions. In other words, ENL INSTITUTIONALIZED FORMS place a constraint on naturally occurring processes of language production, which in ELF settings tend to be far freer to flourish.

It is undeniably the case that ELF empirical work in the area of lexicogrammr has become well established, shedding light on a huge number of INNOVATIVE PATTERNS of use. However, as Seidlhofer (2009a) makes clear, the identification of linguistic features in ELF represents only one aspect of the descriptive enterprise. Commenting on the growing momentum of ELF research projects in recent years, Seidlhofer makes the following key point:

> Rather than limiting itself to the identification of particular linguistic features, this research has tended to take a much more processual, communicative view of ELF, of which linguistic features constitute but a part and are investigated not for their own sake but as indications of the various functions ELF fulfils in the interactions observed. So the crucial challenge has been to move from the surface description of particular features, however interesting they may be in themselves, to an explanation of the underlying significance of the forms: to ask what work they do, what functions they are symptomatic of. (Seidlhofer 2009a: 241)

It is precisely this that has become the focus of the more recent work in the field. Researchers in ELF have moved away from simply naming the language features that typify ELF interactions towards accounting for the means by which these features emerge, paying particular attention to the PRAGMATIC MOTIVES (Cogo & Dewey 2006) and functional meanings involved in their use. In addition to those sources already cited, Hülmbauer (2009), Hüttner (2009) and Klimpfinger (2009) also comment on features of the lexical and/or grammatical properties of ELF conversations in a range of interactional settings. Each of the sources cited in this section has tended to undertake this work in relation to making more sense of what the features being described signify in terms of the CO-CONSTRUCTIVE, LISTENER-ORIENTED, NON-NORMATIVE manner in which ELF talk is produced.

2.1.3 Pragmatics

As with research into ELF lexicogrammar, there is a thriving body of research into ELF pragmatics. This research has taken place in various locations, the majority in Europe, but some in other regions of the world, especially East Asia. The data that has been analysed is as varied as the settings themselves, ranging from business-related telephone conversations (e.g. Firth 1996; Firth & Wagner 1997; Haegeman 2002) to face-to-face conversations in academic settings (e.g. House 1999, 2002; Knapp 2002; Lesznyák 2002; Meierkord 2002; Mauranen 2003; Watterson 2008), and from business meetings to domestic gatherings (e.g. Pölzl & Seidlhofer 2006) (see sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 below for more detailed discussions of research into business and academic ELF).

The beginnings of research into ELF pragmatics (Firth 1996; House 1999; Meierkord 2002) pointed to mutual cooperation as a major characteristic of ELF communication, along with a strong orientation towards securing mutual understanding regardless of 'correctness', for instance by employing 'let it pass' and 'making it normal' strategies (Firth 1996). Much of the research following these earlier studies has focused on miscommunication and the negotiation and resolution of NON-UNDERSTANDING. One common finding running through all the more recent empirical studies of ELF pragmatics is that non-understanding/misunderstanding tends to occur less frequently than it does in NSEE communication. In addition, on those occasions when it does occur, ELF interlocutors are shown to exhibit a high degree of interactional and pragmatic competence in the way they signal non-understanding so as not to disrupt the flow of the exchange and yet provide enough information to the interlocutor for the problem to be resolved (Pitzl 2005).

As well as the signalling of non-understanding, the focus of ELF pragmatics research has been on how ELF speakers resolve instances of miscommunication, i.e. the strategies they use to respond to and negotiate an initial possibility of non-understanding. Among these strategies, REPETITION has been identified as a common strategy in various studies and contexts (e.g. Lichtkoppler 2007; Watterson 2008; Cogo 2009). Mauranen (2006) shows how proactive strategies such as clarification, self-repair and repetition are frequently used to ensure understanding and mutual intelligibility. Along the same lines, Kaur (2009) highlights how her ELF corpus of communication among students at a university in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) displays a considerable amount of repetition and PARAPHRASING as proactive measures to help avert problems of understanding in specific interactional contexts, such as after a prolonged silence, minimal response or overlapping talk. Similar results have been found in Cogo & Dewey (2006), Lichtkoppler (2007) and Cogo (2009).

Furthermore, whereas the earlier studies based on simulated conversations or telephone data suggested that non-understandings were dealt with by topic change or the 'let it pass' strategy (Firth 1996; House 1999), later corpus research has shown that ELF communication is heavily content-oriented. This research has also reported on the various negotiation strategies in which ELF speakers engage during moments of non-understanding or, more generally, to avoid miscommunication. Pre-empting strategies have proved to be particularly relevant, as they show how mutual understanding in ELF is not taken for granted, but that speakers engage in a joint effort to monitor understanding at every stage of communication, even before non-understanding has taken place. Another strategy found to be used by ELF speakers in their

collaborative construction of meaning is the EXPLOITATION OF PLURILINGUAL RESOURCES. Hülmbauer (2009), for example, shows how ELF speakers exploit their shared non-nativeness by making use of the pool of plurilingual resources from which they can draw. Not only does this consist of overt code-switching moves, but also of more covert transfer phenomena and the use of cognates (Hülmbauer in press). Other studies explore how speakers may signal their cultural identities by making code-switching an intrinsic part of their interactions (e.g. Pölzl & Seidlhofer 2006; Klimpfinger 2009; Cogo 2010 and forthcoming).

As regards the field of pragmatics more broadly, we can identify an overall tension between on the one hand, signalling and constructing identity, and on the other, ensuring intelligibility. Identity displays involve the use of resources that identify a particular group and that are not known to others outside the group, while intelligibility presumes the use of shared and 'known-in-common' (Firth 1996) resources. This tension is reflected in IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS in ELF (Pitzl 2009; Seidlhofer 2009c). Despite the 'unilateral idiomaticity' (Seidlhofer 2004: 220) of ENL idioms and similar expressions, research has shown that ELF speakers do not avoid such constructions. Instead, they creatively build their own idioms by means of their online co-construction of not necessarily NSE-like resources. Seidlhofer (2009c) provides evidence of this in the VOICE corpus by showing how ELF speakers skilfully balance the COOPERATIVE and TERRITORIAL IMPERATIVE. ELF users create their online idiomatic expressions in the here-and-now of their conversations. By doing so, they follow the cooperative imperative as they collaborate in the online phrasing of new idioms, accommodate to each other, and make themselves understood. At the same time they operate according to the territorial principle by their creation of new expressions, which then become markers of in-group membership.

Many studies in the pragmatics of ELF involve exploring the means by which participants from different socio-cultural backgrounds achieve understanding and build common ground. In order to achieve this, interactional support is needed, and some studies have investigated the TURN-TAKING system, simultaneous speech and utterance completions (e.g. Kaur in press; Wolfartsberger in press) in naturally-occurring conversations. Their results demonstrate how ELF speakers use various interactional moves to support smooth interaction and also to contribute to the building of considerate and mutually-supportive communicative behaviour (e.g. Kaur 2009; Pullin Stark 2009).

Another area of particular attention has been the use of DISCOURSE MARKERS, which, while extensively explored in NSE communication, has been relatively ignored in ELF studies. House (2009a) tackles the discourse marker *you know* and finds that in ELF discourse, as contrasted with ENL discourse, the relational function of this marker is not particularly salient. In other words, instead of using the phrase as a marker of involvement, politeness, and cooperation, ELF speakers mainly use it to do something in discourse rather than to relate it to the other speakers. That is, they use it to reinforce a position and make a topic more salient, to introduce and focus on what they are going to say next, or for discourse planning and production. These main functions are in stark contrast with the dominant stance-indicating role assumed in NSE communication, and are confirmed in findings concerning other discourse markers (e.g. Baumgarten & House 2010) and metadiscourse (e.g. Mauranen 2010; Penz in press).

Not only are existing ENL discourse markers used for new functions in ELF, but new ones are also created. Mauranen (2005, 2009) explores the creativity of ELF speakers in their

use of CHUNKING (the process of creating phraseological units to manage interaction in ELF communication). The organizational elements that she explores can be ascribed two main functions: maintaining the discourse (convergent function), and shifting direction (divergent function) in order, for example, to introduce a different opinion. The chunk *in my opinion* is found to be the most common means of expressing opinion, with *in my point of view* coming second. Mauranen finds these expressions far more common than in comparable ENL corpora, such as MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English), with longer, more variable, units of speech being more amenable to non-conformity to NSE conventions. Thus, for example, the expression *in my point of view* not only demonstrates the creative adaptations of ELF speakers (a synthesis of NSE *in my view* and *from my point of view*), but also denotes a new function, that of signalling divergence of opinion. This example also supports Ranta's (2006) finding that ELF speakers prefer the *–ing* form and use it more frequently than do NSEs, as it is longer and therefore has 'greater visibility' and 'expressivity' (see 2.2.2 below). The same can be said for *in my point of view*, which is employed to give more weight to a difference of opinion. Thus, in such cases (and see also House 2009a), there is an important frequency difference as well as the difference in function.

2.1.4 Linguistic flexibility and fluidity

One of the anonymous reviewers of our original proposal for this article argued in his/her report that ELF is still 'in the making, not yet crystallized, in the process of "becoming"', and therefore that it would be premature to attempt to describe it at this point. The majority of ELF researchers would agree entirely. However, they would now take the argument even further. For, as the above three sections on linguistic levels have demonstrated, ELF involves not only the frequent systematic use of certain forms (lexicogrammatical, phonological and so on) that are not found in native English, but also a range of pragmatic on-line processes that determine which particular forms are utilized at any particular point in a given interaction. And this calls into question the viability of attempting a description of ELF in the first place, at least according to the traditional sense of 'language description'.

Much of the earlier ELF research was undoubtedly concerned primarily with identifying the features that seemed to be characterizing this emerging kind of English use, with the ultimate aim of being able, one distant day, to codify ELF (Seidlhofer 2001). Researchers thus focused their enquiry on what was regular in their data rather than what was variable. However, they did not ignore variability altogether: while it was not their main focus, as discussed above, some researchers (e.g. Jenkins 2000) nevertheless explored the variability of their ELF data, accounting for it by means of accommodation theory (Beebe & Giles 1984). Meanwhile, those researchers who worked with variability from the start tended to be exploring the ELF use of English LEARNERS and other lower proficiency users, and to explain the variability in their data within frameworks of linguistic competence and second language acquisition rather than accommodation (e.g. Firth 1996; James 2000). They demonstrated, for example, how a less proficient speaker might vary his/her 'incorrect' use of a particular form after hearing the 'correct' version uttered by a more proficient speaker.

During the last decade, as more and more empirical data has become available, there has been a corresponding change in orientation, with a move away from the mainly features-focused beginnings of ELF research to a far greater interest in the underlying processes that motivate the use of one or another form at any given moment in an interaction. This does not mean that the earlier work ignored processes, which were discussed extensively in both Jenkins (2000) and Seidlhofer (2001), though this has tended to be overlooked. On the other hand, nor does it mean that the hope of codification has been completely abandoned, for as Seidlhofer points out, 'codification is recognised as a crucial requirement . . . in terms of actual descriptions of certain observed regularities' (2009a: 240). It does mean, however, that ELF researchers are faced with a dilemma because, as Seidlhofer goes on to explain, these 'observed regularities' do not in any way enable them to 'deny the inherent fluidity of ELF', because the findings of the past few years have demonstrated how 'ELF users exploit the potential of the language' as they focus 'on the purpose of talk and on their interlocutors as people . . . absorbed in the ad hoc, situated negotiation of meaning'. This, as she points out, is 'a far cry from calling up elements of a foreign language as they were learnt at school and pressing them into service as "correctly" as possible' (2009a: 242).

Other scholars have made similar points about the fluidity of ELF. For instance, Pennycook explains that 'ELF research . . . seeks to show how English is always under negotiation' and that 'the ELF focus is trying to address precisely the gap left by the holes in the WE [World Englishes] model: How to come to grips with a non-centrist understanding of English as an international language that is dependent neither on hegemonic versions of central English nor on nationally defined new Englishes, but rather attempts to account for the ever-changing negotiated spaces of current language use' (2009: 195). Canagarajah likewise points out that because of the diversity at the heart of ELF, it is 'intersubjectively constructed in each specific context of interaction' and its forms 'negotiated by each set of speakers for their purposes' (2007: 926).

The fluidity of ELF, along with the hybridity that we referred to earlier, calls into question whether ELF can be considered a language variety or even a group of varieties in the traditional sense of the notion. We would argue that it cannot. Even the earlier form-focused ELF research had observed and explored how ELF varies according to contextual factors and, in particular, how these factors impacted on speakers' accommodative behaviours. In the past few years, these contextual factors have moved towards centre stage as they have been shown increasingly to play a more significant role in ELF communication than was appreciated earlier on. Most importantly, research has begun to demonstrate how proficient (and not merely non-proficient) ELF speakers exhibit substantial linguistic variation in their interactions for a range of purposes, including the projection of cultural identity, the promotion of solidarity, the sharing of humour and so on, rather than (primarily) to promote intelligibility between speakers from different first language groups or as a result of interlocutors' different levels of proficiency.

Thus, not only does ELF research have to tackle the dilemma of how to embrace ELF's contingent fluidity and hybridity while not denying the 'observed regularities' also found in forms, but it also has to solve the problem of what ELF actually IS. The former is likely to be a work in progress for some time to come, but the latter has already started being addressed by Seidlhofer, who argues that ELF demonstrates the need to rethink what we

mean by the notions of LANGUAGE VARIETY and SPEECH COMMUNITY. As she points out, these terms are 'still used in the same way as they were long before the days of mass international travel, let alone electronic communication', and adds that as far as English is concerned, 'at a time of pervasive and widespread global communication, the old notion of community, based purely on frequent face-to-face contact among people living in close proximity to each other, clearly does not hold any more' (2009a: 238). Seidlhofer (ibid.) proposes the notion of COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE (Wenger 1998) as a better way to think about ELF speakers, with their interactions 'characterised by "mutual engagement" in shared practices, taking part in some jointly negotiated "enterprise", and making use of members' "shared repertoire"'. This would be entirely consistent with the way in which ELF has been found to operate. Baker's empirical work (2009; in press) exploring ELF in a Thai higher education setting draws on the theorizations of Seidlhofer, Pennycook and Canagarajah, to examine the manner in which ELF is used to both represent and create these hybrid, fluid and liminal communities and cultural identities that reflect, while moving between, global, national, local and individual orientations.

For English (and possibly other 'global' languages such as Spanish), then, the nation-state view of language varieties and speech communities no longer suffices. An alternative interpretation is needed to take account of the manifold ways in which ELF users skilfully negotiate and co-construct English for their own purposes, treating the language as a shared communicative resource within which they innovate, accommodate and code-switch, all the while enjoying the freedom to produce forms that NSEs do not necessarily use. Traditionally there are only two possibilities: a language either has to be relatively fixed so that its 'fixedness' can be codified in dictionaries and grammars, or it is a case of linguistic anarchy. But ELF does not fit into this neat dichotomy. And herein lies the germ of a solution to the dilemma of how to deal with its 'observed regularities' versus its fluidity. For the simple truth may be that ELF is not too fluid and variable to be a language variety, but that variability is one of ELF's defining characteristics (Firth 2009). The challenge for ELF researchers and, even more, for English teaching professionals, then, is to find ways of dealing with this variability so that it can be incorporated into teaching in ways that are digestible for learners.

2.2 Domains

As was noted in the Introduction, ELF researchers are engaged in exploring ELF use in a number of domains of social contact, particularly those of business, education (both school and university settings), tourism, politics, technology and the media. Ehrenreich (in press) points out that ELF's current focus on domains 'as significant centres of language contact activity [complements] the concept of geographical proximity'. She adds that this 'is fully in line with what has been observed as a recent trend in contemporary sociolinguistics', and cites McGroarty's (2003) observation that there has been a shift of emphasis in sociolinguistics from the study of language contact across geographical boundaries to domains as fruitful contexts for the study of language contact. Two domains – business and higher education – have been more extensively studied in relation to ELF than any other. We will therefore

consider research into these in greater detail, looking first at business and second at academic settings.

2.2.1 Business ELF settings

For all kinds of reasons, in the past few decades it has become widely accepted that the lingua franca of international business is English, and the area of business ELF (BELF) has received much attention.[2] A substantial number of studies covers the aspect of attitudes and analyses business professionals' perceptions of BELF communication. Overall, the research reveals that BELF communication is seen as content-oriented (rather than focusing on form) and requiring domain specific knowledge. For example, Kankaanranta & Planken's (2010) study shows that BELF is an integral part of business knowledge, and that expertise and correctness in terms of NS standards, such as native-like grammar or pronunciation, are secondary to accommodation practices. Ehrenreich (2010) likewise confirms that NS correctness is not regarded as important in spoken communication inside the company, although it is considered important in transmitting a certain corporate image, particularly in writing, where native-like competence is still seen as a matter of prestige.

Further studies have revealed a complex relationship between English and other languages, especially in respect to multinational companies which increasingly use English as their CORPORATE LANGUAGE. Although English is widely recognized as facilitating communication, there is also increasing evidence that the choice of language(s) used is a delicate issue (Charles 2007) and that other languages are also seen as important (Chew 2005; Erling & Walton 2007). Ehrenreich (2009, 2010, in press), for instance, emphasizes how English is seen as a 'must' (2010: 416), especially as a facilitator for intercultural contexts, but that other languages are appreciated as valuable strategic resources.

There is broad agreement that as English is the international language of business, it is not associated with the English of NSs. However, the research reveals contradictions in this respect. On the one hand, NNSs have been found to feel disempowered because English has been chosen as their company's main language. From this perspective, NSEs are perceived as being at an advantage. On the other hand, NSEs may be considered to be at a disadvantage or even to be a problem. Charles & Marschan-Piekkari (2002), for instance, demonstrate that English NSs are particularly problematic in international business communication because they are more difficult to understand than speakers of other varieties of English. The potentially problematic role of the NS is also the main focus of Sweeney & Zhu's (2010) study. This is a comparison of the use of accommodation strategies by NS business operatives and NNS students of business English courses. The results reveal that the NSs are only partially successful in accommodating to NNSs, and that while they seem to be aware of the challenges of intercultural communication, they seem unable to adopt

[2] Research concerning cross-cultural and intercultural communication in business settings has been carried out, focusing especially on differences between cultural groups usually identified in national cultures. This more cross-cultural line of work, though offering some important insights into possible communication difficulties, is not examined here, as, unlike ELF research, it overemphasizes differences in national cultures and miscommunication (for an overview, see Koester (2010)).

effective accommodation strategies. Such studies concur in recommending that NSEs should be trained in intercultural communication skills. Other research, however, has shown that NSs, at least in their self-reports, are aware of the need for such kinds of skills, and claim that they do take steps to accommodate to their NNS counterparts by, for instance, avoiding idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms (e.g. Rogerson-Revell 2007).

Indeed, much BELF research, as with ELF research more generally, has focused on the phenomenon of accommodation and has demonstrated that BELF speakers accommodate in various ways in order to ensure understanding and communicative efficiency (Connor 1999; Pitzl 2005; Rogerson-Revell 2008; Ehrenreich 2009; Koester 2010). Fewer studies, however, have focused on other aspects of BELF use. A small number have explored company internal email communication (e.g. Louhiala-Salminen, Charles & Kankaanranta 2005; Kankaanranta 2006); a few have explored the role of small talk and humour (e.g. Pullin Stark 2009, 2010); and others have focused on the teaching of English for international business communication (e.g. Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen 2007). But regardless of their specific focus, the findings of BELF studies demonstrate that intercultural communication skills rather than NS English correctness are key in BELF contexts, and BELF researchers therefore tend to conclude that communication and accommodation, rather than mastery of NS English forms, should be the focus of business English instruction.

2.2.2 Academic ELF settings

Although those engaged in teaching and researching Business English would argue with some justification that Business English has long had an approach consistent with that of ELF, to our knowledge it is among researchers of academic English that the link with the already thriving field of ELF research was first made domain-explicit. The first scholar to do so was Mauranen who, in 2003, following the precedent set a couple of years earlier by VOICE, began compiling an academic ELF corpus, ELFA (English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings), based in Finland, originally at the University of Tampere, then at the University of Helsinki (Mauranen 2003). The ELFA corpus now numbers over a million words, and Mauranen and her team have published numerous empirical research papers drawing on it, while Mauranen is, herself, the author of one of the earliest monographs on ELF in academic settings (Mauranen 2011).

Mauranen, Pérez-Llantada & Swales argue that '[i]f our purpose is to understand present-day academic speaking in English, we should look at the way English works as a lingua franca (ELF)', which is 'a better representative than native English' because academia 'is one of the domains that has adopted English as its common language, and is one where international communication characterizes the domain across the board' (2010: 640). Thus, in the introduction to her study of metadiscourse in spoken academic ELF, Mauranen notes that the study 'makes no comparisons to native speakers' and that 'to understand academic speaking, it is necessary to rid ourselves of the baggage of native English practices' (2010: 15). The crux of the matter, she points out, is that '[a]cademic research is international by nature, not in itself associated with the preferences of a culturally or nationally defined language community', along with the fact that 'universities are on a fast track to becoming globally

intertwined, with increasing numbers of students and staff moving around from country to country'. It is thus their lingua franca English rather than native academic English that characterizes the mainstream of academic English use.

The existence of the ELFA corpus has enabled Mauranen and her colleagues to investigate and demonstrate the way English operates in academic lingua franca settings, in its own right rather than against some 'standard' academic English predicated on the way native English academics, a tiny minority of global academia, choose to speak (and write). Other scholars have since collected similar, if smaller, academic ELF corpora and their analyses have, likewise, extended our knowledge of how English is used as an international academic lingua franca. Björkman (2008, 2009), for example, demonstrates how academic ELF shares many lexical and grammatical features with those that have been identified in 'general ELF', but that it has certain other features that are particular to the academic domain. As well as corpus-based approaches such as these, and the ethnographic approach adopted by Smit (2010), the findings of other research into academic ELF have led still other scholars to begin to critique higher education English language policy in so-called 'international universities', that is, in institutions where English is the Medium of Instruction or 'EMI institutions' (e.g. Ammon 2007; Haberland 2011; Jenkins 2011). We therefore begin this section by considering some of the kinds of features of academic ELF that have been identified in corpus-based research, and then go on to consider the higher education language policy issue.

In exploring findings that draw on corpora of academic ELF, we focus on two language areas: ELF speakers' use of the progressive aspect, and the expression *more or less* (and see above, 2.1.3, and Mauranen 2005, 2009, in respect of a third area, that of chunking). Starting with the progressive aspect, Ranta (2006) draws on the ELFA corpus in her analysis of the ways in which ELF speakers extend their use of the progressive in linguistic contexts where native English would require the simple form. One of these is stative verbs. Ranta's data show ELF speakers using progressive forms such as *are belonging* rather than the corresponding simple form, *belong*; another context is that of habitual activity, where ELF speakers refer, for example, to *the air that we are breathing*, rather than *the air that we breathe*. A third is reference to past points in time, where an ELF speaker is likely to refer to *the point I've just been mentioning* and not *the point I've just mentioned*. Ranta argues from her empirical evidence that the participants in these academic ELF interactions are assigning an extra function to the progressive because of their appreciation of the progressive's communicative value: i.e. the *–ing* ending gives verbs added prominence, thus attracting the interlocutor's attention and ensuring greater clarity. In other words, they are making an innovative use of a resource available within the English language for their own purposes, an 'attention-catching' function.

In her study of academic ELF speakers' use of the expression *more or less*, Metsä-Ketelä (2006) comes to similar conclusions. She finds that the expression is used substantially more in academic ELF interaction than in native English academic discourse. She identifies three main functions of the expression, minimizing, comparing similarities, and approximating quantities, and by comparing her data with a corpus of native academic English, demonstrates that while all three functions are actualized more in ELFA, the minimizing function is restricted exclusively to academic ELF. Further, it is particularly evident in question and answer situations such as research seminars and doctoral defences, for example, *Do you think this more or less bureaucratic difference makes the situation so different. . ..?* Again, the author argues on

the basis of her empirical data that ELF speakers are making innovative uses of English in negotiating new meanings for old words.

We turn now to the issue of academic English language policy. From what has been said so far, it should be clear that an alternative way of looking at English is needed alongside traditional EFL approaches, if not replacing them entirely. There is a need to take account of the large number of English NNSs as well as NSs who use the language primarily as an international lingua franca. This involves rethinking for all but the minority whose goal is to communicate and blend in with NSs, the equation of skilful use of English with the mastery of native English forms. In lingua franca communication, as the empirical research discussed in section 2.1 above has demonstrated, competence in lingua franca communication involves above all the acquisition of the pragmatic skills required to adapt one's English use to the demands of the current communicative situation. And this undoubtedly includes the lingua franca situation that occurs frequently in the majority of EMI universities.

There are already signs of an incipient change in attitude towards academic English in lingua franca settings. Ammon (e.g. 2006, 2007), for example, has called for English to be renamed 'Globalish' (not to be confused with the notion of 'Globish' discussed in 1.2 above). Ammon argues that '[t]his new name would raise awareness of a status and function fundamentally different from the English language, namely a lingua franca, whose norms are no longer under the control of native speakers of English' (2006: 25). Another sign that things are changing is a new willingness to eschew the traditional notion of requiring NNS contributors to academic journals and books to have their contributions checked by a native speaker. For instance, Mauranen & Metsä-Ketelä (2006) state:

> This special issue ... is written in ELF. Though native [English] speakers have not been excluded from the volume, they have not acted as the ultimate authorities of linguistic correctness or comprehensibility. Thus, the papers have not been 'checked by a native speaker' as the saying goes. (p. 6)

The same point is made in the introductions to Carli & Ammon (2007), Murata & Jenkins (2009), and Mauranen & Ranta (2009), and no doubt more editors will gradually follow suit. In the same vein Flowerdew (2008) likens NS-normative expectations of NNS academic writers to Goffman's (1968) notion of STIGMA. He argues instead for an ELF-oriented approach in academic English writing, according to which 'large corpora for the various disciplines written by EAL writers might help to identify what is acceptable in terms of intelligibility in written academic English and what is not'. In this way, he concludes, it would be possible for editors 'to accept writing according to standards which truly belong to the international academic community rather than just to NESs' (p. 84).

Other signs of a move towards acceptance of a more ELF-oriented approach to academic English is the increasing number of journal special issues and books dedicated to academic ELF, e.g. Björkman (2010, 2011), Mauranen & Metsä-Ketelä (2006), or which include contributions with academic ELF orientations (e.g. Carli & Ammon (2007), Haberland et al. (2008), Mauranen & Ranta (2009)), and even conferences on higher education that highlight ELF approaches, such as the 2008 CALPIU (Cultural and Linguistic Practices in the International University) in Roskilde, Denmark.

Finally, it seems that NNSE students in higher education have themselves begun to notice that while their lingua franca English differs from that of native English students, theirs has

a number of advantages over native English. For example, Kolocsai (2009) reports on data collected by colleagues and herself for the LINEE Project. The students, from a range of continental European countries, and studying in Hungary at the time of the data collection, comment on how they find their English creative and 'fun', even if they still do not consider it to be 'correct':

> I liked very much with the English here to speak English with non-native speakers it's the funny new words or new pronunciations that emerge and then you just keep those because you like them so much and not important anymore to say in the right way and even more fun to create this new language, yeah just take some Spanish pronunciation, Italian and that makes it, yeah, very nice. (Kolocsai 2009: 34)

They also find their ELF easier to understand than the English of their native speaker peer group:

> I see that if I'm in the middle of people that are not English and they're speaking English and so there is no problem understanding them, probably my obstacle was that to understand like really English people talking. (Kolocsai 2009: 34)

These students also comment on the NSE students' lack of accommodation skills (which no doubt accounts at least in part for their lower level of intelligibility), and the fact that the NSE students tend to socialize together rather than to mix with students from other nationalities and first languages. It seems, then, that at least in international academic contexts, it may be the native English speakers, or at least those unable to orient themselves towards ELF, who may be more at risk in future. However, this is an area in which much more research is still needed, not only in relation to spoken academic ELF settings, but even more in terms of written ELF. As one of our reviewers points out, the above quotations clearly refer to speech, and it may be that acceptance of spoken ELF is a less controversial issue even among young ELF speakers, than the acceptance of written academic ELF for journal articles, doctoral theses and the like. To date, the few publications that have not required their English to be 'checked by native speaker' are those with ELF leanings. Empirical evidence is therefore needed to demonstrate whether or not academic publications in a range of disciplines are moving towards a similar position on ELF, and away from the requirement that content must be expressed in native-like English in order to be published.

3. ELF as a globalized/globalizing communicative practice

In order to fully appreciate the broader social significance as well as the linguistic nature of ELF, some scholars have begun to look beyond the realms of applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, drawing on a number of interrelated disciplines, including, in particular, economics, cultural theory, geography and political science. This is in fact essential if we are to determine what the growth in ELF empirical work means at a theoretical and practical level. Dewey (2009) comments that research in ELF has reached a certain critical mass, a point where the available findings indicate that considerable reassessment and retheorizing of the relevant concepts with which we have customarily been concerned is now required. It has proved particularly beneficial to consider the various theoretical accounts of GLOBALIZATION when dealing with this matter.

The study of ELF should of course pay close attention to the intellectual discourse on globalization. ELF is simultaneously the consequence and the principal language medium of GLOBALIZING PROCESSES. The English language has become a lingua franca on such a scale worldwide partly in response to globalization; but also, large-scale globalization is in part incumbent on the emergence of a globally diffuse lingua franca. Therefore, close consideration of theoretical accounts of globalization given in the (typically interdisciplinary) literature is directly relevant to furthering our understanding of ELF. If globalization is the means by which the world has become more INTERCONNECTED, with our economic, cultural, political, professional and social spaces ever more entwined, then lingua franca interactions in English are the primary means by which those connections are made, by which human relations are maintained across conventional boundaries. In other words, ELF is at once a GLOBALIZED and GLOBALIZING phenomenon.

In their account of recent debates surrounding the current world order and GEOPOLITICAL STRUCTURE, Held & McGrew (2003a: 2) characterize the growth era in modern globalization as 'rapidly expanding political and economic interdependence'. Of particular relevance to us is their comment that this rapid expansion generated

> much reflection on the inadequacies of orthodox approaches to thinking about politics, economics and culture which presumed a strict separation between internal and external affairs, the domestic and international arenas, and the local and the global. (ibid.)

Conventional approaches to the study of language might also be said to have been characterized by similar presumptions. Although these have long been strongly contested, in applied linguistics and ELT we continue to talk about separations such as native speaker/non-native speaker, L1/L2, and we continue to think about languages and language varieties largely as separate and bounded entities. Yet, the use of English in ELF interactions occurs not as the deployment of a particular set of language norms, but rather as a continually renewed, co-operatively modified, somewhat HYBRIDIZED linguistic resource, leading us to similarly call into question our conventional frames of reference and descriptive/analytical practices in applied linguistics.

Particularly striking in relation to this point is the following conceptual account of globalization: 'a process which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations . . . generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks' (Held et al. 2003: 67). In other words, globalization is the process by which the world has become/is becoming more interconnected, where relations across local, regional and global contexts become more enmeshed, where flows of language, culture and people are intensified and accelerated. The primary means by which these flows and networks are established and maintained is through the use of a common contact language. English, the most widely diffused contact language, is the primary linguistic channel through which these flows take place, so ELF is part of the texture and infrastructure of globalization. In their theoretical account of globalization, Held et al. (2003) accentuate the TRANSFORMATIVE PROPERTIES of current spatial and organizational realities, arguing that processes of globalization engender substantial transformations in contemporary political, social and cultural attributes. The analytical framework described by Held et al. offers a particularly fruitful means of thinking

about the relationship between ELF and the various interpretations of globalization (see also Dewey 2007a for a thorough discussion).

Empirical evidence for the way English is spoken in ELF interactions has clearly shown that, although the use of English in lingua franca communication is a global phenomenon, this has not brought about the emergence of a single lingua franca variety – it has, in fact, led some ELF scholars to challenge some of our conventional assumptions about language varieties. Many of the ELF research findings discussed above show that the globalization of English has in lingua franca contexts led to the language being repeatedly transformed. ELF is a means by which English is continually being re-enacted and reinvigorated through the inventiveness of its speakers as they respond to their immediate communicative and expressive needs. It is precisely the fluidity of these interactions that most characterizes lingua franca talk.

English is thus a globalized phenomenon that is continuously being LOCALIZED during its countless interactions. It fits well with what Held et al. (2003) describe as a TRANSFORMATIONALIST perspective, whereby globalization is seen not as a HOMOGENIZING process that leads to greater Westernization, but rather as a major stimulus for change in political, social and cultural structures and artefacts. Transformationalist accounts of globalization see its cultural impacts as complex and multi-varied, with cultural flows operating in all manner of directions (see also Pennycook 2007 on the notion of TRANSCULTURAL FLOWS). This is especially relevant in light of ELF, since it is an archetypal setting in which communication transcends conventional linguacultural boundaries, with the result that cultural practices and language resources become interactionally transformed as they are performed. This represents a substantial challenge to the homogenization hypothesis, as well as to claims that ELF research has concerned itself with identifying core features of a monolithic ELF variety (see Jenkins 2006d, Seidlhofer 2006, Dewey & Jenkins 2010).

The current transformations that English is undergoing, and which in ELF contexts are accelerated, are part of wider global trends. The increased cultural flows of our digitized world have given rise to an intensification of innovative language practices, and these are especially prominent in ELF interactional settings. In short, the lexicogrammatical and pragmatic forms that ELF corpus work has begun to shed light on are indicative of larger transformative processes that occur as a result of the increasingly interconnected experiences that so characterize the contemporary era.

4. Looking ahead: implications for ELF-oriented teaching and use

In the final part of the article, we explore first what it means – and can mean – to incorporate an ELF orientation into ELT. We go on to consider the role which attitudes towards ELF currently play and are likely to play in the future in encouraging and/or discouraging ELF-oriented teaching and, thus, ELF use outside the classroom.

4.1 ELF and English Language Teaching

ELF empirical work and theoretical discussions have raised profound questions about current PRINCIPLES and PRACTICE in ELT (Widdowson 2004). Research findings in ELF have major

implications for a multitude of common beliefs and assumptions about what is sanctioned as good practice by the profession. The PEDAGOGIC IMPLICATIONS of ELF include the following key areas in particular: the nature of the LANGUAGE SYLLABUS, TEACHING MATERIALS, APPROACHES and METHODS, LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT and ultimately the KNOWLEDGE BASE of language teachers. All this has, of course, far reaching implications for language teacher education.

Debate surrounding the global presence of English has gradually become more commonplace at ELT conferences and publications. A number of teacher training manuals now incorporate sections that deal with the spread of English in the world. In Harmer (2007), for example, the opening chapter includes a section on developments in World Englishes and a passing mention of 'the newly-observed phenomenon that is sometimes called ELF' (2007: 10). Yet, while texts of this kind are an important first step in raising awareness of ELF among novice teachers, much more detailed discussions are needed if there is to be proper engagement with ELF in practice. So far there has been little detailed discussion of how different varieties of English, or how the dynamic variability of ELF, might impact on language teaching MODELS or METHODOLOGY. In Harmer (2007) for instance, the conclusions arrived at are somewhat conservative: after a brief discussion of English varieties, Harmer observes that learners' and teachers' options largely amount to a choice between British English or American English. In other words, practically no consideration is given to empirical work on nativized Englishes or the expanding body of ELF research.

Several texts have also begun to address the internationalization of English in relation to ELT more extensively (e.g. McKay 2002; Holliday 2005). But apart from Walker (2010), a handbook for teachers who wish to use an ELF approach to teach pronunciation, there has been little discussion of what an ELF-oriented PEDAGOGY might actually look like, and little consideration of what teachers might do in order to incorporate an ELF perspective, the extensive discussion occupying the final chapter of Seidlhofer (2011) being a rare exception. However, what most assuredly has taken place is very considerable (and sometimes heated) debate about the claims of ELF researchers with regard to ELT methods, materials and practices. The debate has understandably given rise to a fair deal of controversy in the ELT profession (see 4.2 below, and Jenkins (2007) for a discussion of the complex issues of attitude and identity in relation to ELF and language teachers). Because ELF research findings pose substantial challenges to current beliefs and practice, it is likely that further engagement with ELF in the language classroom will be contested and hence gradual. For as Roberts (1998) points out, changes in the CURRICULUM and any rethinking of PEDAGOGIC PRACTICE that these changes require often provoke controversy, and can be very unsettling.

The few research-based texts that directly address the potential pedagogic impact of ELF, e.g. Jenkins (2006b), question the viability of external NORMS, and the continued favouring of one of only two so-called prestige models, American or British English. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that regardless of how far-reaching the implications of ELF may turn out to be, the aim of ELF researchers has never been to propose an alternative model of English, let alone a monolithic version that should be taught in all contexts. Rather, ELF research provides insights into the heterogeneous nature of English as it is used in contact

situations. Thus, a fundamental initial consequence of ELF research is the need to raise awareness of the relationship between language models (which are necessarily abstractions) and the variable nature of language in interaction. From this perspective, developing an ELF perspective in pedagogy entails above all, at least for now, the generating of an understanding among learners and teachers of the inherent variability (even instability) of human language in general and English more specifically.

ELF research, then, is not about determining what should or should not be taught in the language classroom. Rather, ELF researchers feel their responsibility is to make current research findings accessible in a way that enables teachers to reconsider their beliefs and practices and make informed decisions about the significance of ELF for their own individual teaching contexts. Canagarajah (2005) describes a less 'hierarchical', more 'leveled approach' to language education, in which teaching models, materials and methods are developed at a local level. Although addressing the impact of World Englishes on pedagogy without discussing ELF in particular, Canagarajah's recommendation that a more PLURICENTRIC approach should be adopted is directly relevant to the pedagogic implications of ELF research. The same is true of Pennycook's (2009) PLURILITHIC ENGLISHES. And Kirkpatrick (2007) presents similar arguments in favour of adopting a pluralistic approach. Of most significance vis-à-vis ELF is his discussion not only of the need for learners and teachers to be exposed to a range of Englishes, but also the need to focus less on language norms and more on the communicative practices and strategies of effective speakers.

Baker (2011, forthcoming) has begun to explore what some of these communicative practices and strategies might be, and how they can be translated to the ELT classroom. He utilizes previous work on intercultural competence, but in keeping with ELF perspectives, adopts a more fluid approach to the 'norms' of communicative practices than the nation–culture–language correlations typically regarded as forming part of intercultural competence. This has resulted in the formulation of a range of attitudes, knowledge and skills associated with successful multilingual and multicultural ELF users that Baker terms 'intercultural awareness' (ibid.). Crucially, these are not based on the communicative practices of any one particular community and certainly not a native-speaker 'target community'. Instead the emphasis is on the ability to adapt, negotiate and mediate communication in dynamic and context-sensitive ways, which both recognizes that communication may be influenced by the norms of specific communities, but, equally, that in ELF it may not. Furthermore, suggestions for developing this awareness or competence within the classroom both in general (Baker forthcoming) and in specific settings (Baker 2011) are provided. However, this work remains exploratory and further research within ELT classrooms is much needed.

What this all means in practice requires further empirical research (a point explicitly made in both Jenkins (2006b) and Seidlhofer (2004)), preferably ACTION RESEARCH carried out not by academics but by language teachers themselves in order to reassess practices in their own specific, situated teaching contexts, and incorporate changes in approach in whatever ways and to whatever extent is most appropriate. The English language – and as a consequence ELT – has arrived at an important juncture in its history. The only way to move forward methodologically, we argue, is to open up the possibility of incorporating a multi-norm, multi-method approach, one in which linguistic diversity is acknowledged and better understood. However, this will entail promoting an ELF perspective not as an

alternative approach intended to supplant existing pedagogy, but rather as an additional option about which teachers and learners can make informed choices.

4.2 ELF attitudes and perceptions

No matter how effectively researchers demonstrate the communicative advantages of an ELF approach, unless these advantages are seen as such by those most closely involved, i.e. English language learners, teachers and NNS users in general, then any change is unlikely. And in this respect, attitudes towards ELF and individuals' own perceptions of its implications for them will inevitably be the principal determining factors.

On the positive side, it appears that some younger English users orient favourably towards ELF. This is evident in research carried out for the LINEE project (see section 2.2.2 above; Kolocsai 2009), in which Erasmus students from a range of European nationalities studying in Hungary talk about their English use in terms of its creativity, fun, mutual intelligibility and generation of interest in each others' first languages, while not being particularly concerned about their 'mistakes' in respect of native English. Indeed, they tend to contrast their non-native English with what they see as the less effective lingua franca skills of their NS English peer group. Other studies of younger ELF speakers have produced similar findings, e.g. Ranta (2010) in Finland, and Erling (2007) in Germany. In discussing the generational issue in relation to European ELF users, Seidlhofer (2010: 357) therefore considers the possibility that because today's youth 'have grown up in an increasingly globalized world', the issue of linguistic standardization linked to native norms may be resolved when young people such as these, with their 'more relaxed and flexible attitude towards the use of linguistic repertoires', reach an age at which they may become involved in language policy formulation.

Identity is of course closely involved in language attitudes, and what emerges strongly from the LINEE research is the extent to which the young continental Europeans in the study identify with their own use of English rather than with a standard NS variety. Norton (2000: 5) argues that one aspect of identity in language learning – and we would add, in language use – is 'how the person understands possibilities for the future'. The implication is that where younger ELF users are found in research to identify positively with their own English, it is because they see ELF (not necessarily by name) as likely to enhance rather than deny their future success in a globalized world. First-hand ELF experience is likely to be key in this outcome, and no doubt explains why ELF has been received most favourably in the business domain (see 2.2.1 above).

On the other hand, the teachers of English in Jenkins's (2007) study reveal a degree of ambivalence, with both positive and negative attitudes and identity positions being expressed, even within the same research participant in the same interview. This may be because of their special role as language teachers who have invested more in their own learning than is the case for non-teachers. It may also be because they tend to be older than the students participating in the other studies discussed here. Many of the teachers in Jenkins's study accept the notion of ELF in theory and would even consider it an appropriate kind of English for their students if teaching materials were available. But for themselves, for many of them, native English is the desired goal. This takes us back to Norton's point about 'possibilities

for the future'. In a world which still links one nation with one language and places great emphasis on the standardization of languages according to native norms, success as a second language teacher is seen to depend on the ability to approximate those norms.

This leads straight back to attitudes. Despite the fact that the majority of the world's English speakers are NNSs, and that many of them use English mainly for lingua franca purposes or, in Canagarajah's words, 'to shuttle between communities' (2005: xxvi), the notion that they should all endeavour to conform to the kinds of English which the NS minority use to communicate with each other is proving very resistant to change. Even sociolinguists such as Görlach (e.g. 2002) and Trudgill (e.g. 2002; Trudgill & Hannah 2009), who normally welcome socially-motivated language change are unwilling to engage with it in the case of English if the impetus does not come from either mother tongue speakers or those in post-colonial contexts, but instead, from lingua franca users. ELF speakers' differences from native English of the kind we discuss in part 2 above continue to be categorized by such sociolinguistics as mistakes and, at best, accepted somewhat begrudgingly if the NS version causes 'difficulty' for NNSs, particularly where their NNS interlocutors 'would probably make the same mistake themselves' (Trudgill & Hannah 2009: 8–9). As we pointed out earlier (2.1.4), much of the problem here is the result of continuing to conceive of the notions of language variety, speech community and even language itself as if they operate in the same way now as they did a century and more ago, prior to the processes of globalization and internationalization of recent decades that, inevitably, have impacted on language use in unprecedented ways.

Coming to ELF from another perspective entirely, scholars of World Englishes have expressed concerns that ELF is another attempt to impose a monolithic English on the world's NNSs. This is the position, for example, of several of the contributors to Rubdy & Saraceni's (2006) edited volume, including the editors themselves, and of Kachru & Nelson (2006) in the introduction to their own edited volume. In other words, while those who prefer the spread of English to mean the spread of native English, and regard ELF as containing mistakes where it differs from ENL, those who prefer to see English developing in its own ways and in its own right when it moves beyond the mother tongue countries, regard ELF as somehow preventing this, and imposing a unitary model.

This is not to say that ELF is unproblematic. Some criticisms are undoubtedly the result of misconceptions about the nature of ELF. There are, for example, 'astonishing assertions' (as one reviewer of this article put it) in some of the contributions to Gu (2009), a special issue on ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE (i.e. ELF) of *Language and Intercultural Communication*. But this is also not to say that all 'heretic voices' are by definition misconceived. ELF research has grown dramatically in a very short time, and researchers have taken note of new empirical evidence as it has become available and adjusted their orientations in light of it. In this respect it is disappointing that positions taken by ELF scholars, say, ten years ago (which is a lifetime in ELF terms), are not infrequently cited as if they are still tenaciously held, when the ELF scholar in question has long since moved on. Nevertheless, it is precisely this 'moving on' that has inevitably led to a degree of lack of clarity, and to some entirely legitimate problematizations of ELF, particularly in relation to premature attempts to describe a phenomenon that is still in the making (see, for example, Canagarajah 2007; Ferguson 2009). What is urgently needed, then, is a detailed account of ELF that will provide a fuller and

more contextualized understanding of the phenomenon than has hitherto been available. In this respect, Seidlhofer's latest (2011) book, *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca*, currently in press, promises to provide just such an account.

So where does all this leave us? Research into ELF continues to gather pace, and the more that information becomes available, especially in terms of ELF corpora, the more ELF researchers will be able to improve the quality of their analyses. There are still some major gaps, particularly relating to the written language and to testing, both of which tend to be slower to change. Although both have been touched on (or shortly will be), for example by Flowerdew (2008), Lillis & Curry (2010), and Horner (in press) in relation to writing, and by Jenkins (2006c), Leung & Lewkovicz (2006) and Jenkins & Leung (forthcoming) in relation to testing, neither area has so far been researched sufficiently. And given that testing exerts such a massive influence on language teaching and, hence, on spoken and written language use, a major challenge for ELF over the next few years is to make the strongest possible case to the large ELT examination boards that they should start to take account of the findings of ELF research.

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Given space limitations, titles are given in the original languages only. Readers interested in their English translations should contact the lead author at j.jenkins@soton.ac.uk.

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