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**TRANSCENDING THE TRANSACTIONAL FUNCTION OF ENGLISH
AS A LINGUA FRANCA EXPRESSING SUBJECTIVITIES IN
ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA SPOKEN DISCOURSE**

George Romero

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TRANSCENDING THE TRANSACTIONAL FUNCTION OF ENGLISH AS A
LINGUA FRANCA
EXPRESSING SUBJECTIVITIES IN ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA
SPOKEN DISCOURSE

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English and Writing Studies

by
George Romero
August 2022

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ABSTRACT

In 2008, David Crystal estimated that there were approximately two billion English speakers in the world (p. 5). For Crystal, an English speaker was anyone with “any systemic awareness, whether in speaking, listening, reading or writing [of English]” (p. 4). The conspicuous absence in Crystal’s definition of any reference to English native speaker competency points to the independence of the global spread of English from an Anglophone center. In our contemporary society, Crystal’s two billion English speakers are not using English to communicate with native English speakers. Instead, as the literature illustrates, the foremost trajectory of the global spread of English is to facilitate communication between interlocutors who simultaneously do not share the same first language yet do share some level of “systemic awareness of English.” In other words, English increasingly functions as a lingua franca allowing speakers from different parts of the world to communicate with each other.

In this thesis, I endeavor to bring a new perspective to ELF research by illustrating how ELF transcends the limited, utilitarian function of language that has historically defined lingua francas. I begin by tracing the major themes found in the current literature including the incongruence between ELF definitions and its theorization, the inappropriateness of native speaker norms for ELF speakers and how the level of practice becomes especially meaningful to understanding the emergent nature of the ELF context. I then propose that the dynamic nature of ELF makes it a productive site from which to discuss an equally dynamic

understanding of subjectivity. Using Bonnie Norton's (2013) poststructuralist theory of subjectivity and spoken discourse data from the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE), I analyze a variety of VOICE corpus extracts, to highlight multiple instances in which ELF speakers display the affective and identificatory processes that characterize the more advanced, integrative capacity of language.

The affective potential or dimension of ELF has been less investigated by the existing literature. When second language acquisition (SLA) theorists do address the affective, integrative function of language, they often situate the non-native speaker within the native speaker context. The questions then focus on how the non-native speaker adapts or orients to the native-speaker environment. My work on subjectivity in ELF addresses a lacuna in the existing SLA research. Rather than continuing to privilege the native speaker, I foreground how non-native speakers transform themselves into second language *users* by orienting themselves to the exigencies of their own specific ELF context. Within ELF, the non-native speaker no longer is positioned as an outsider. ELF allows interlocutors to assume the subject position of an ELF *insider*. This insider status allows for the subjectivity discussions to remain less hampered by adherence to native speaker conventions and forms. This freedom then encourages ELF's affective potential to be more readily accessed by its speakers.

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CHAPTER ONE:
TRANSCENDING THE TRANSACTIONAL FUNCTION OF ENGLISH AS A
LINGUA FRANCA: EXPRESSING SUBJECTIVITIES IN ENGLISH AS A LINGUA
FRANCA SPOKEN DISCOURSE

Introduction

In 2019, researchers estimated that English was spoken as a first or second language by one billion people (Eberhard et al., 2019). Importantly, this one billion figure includes only English speakers who demonstrate the proficiency required to be categorized either as native or second language speakers. This arbitrary proficiency requirement excluded an exponentially growing number of speakers whose English did not necessarily conform to specific proficiency standards. In his estimate, David Crystal (2008), incorporated these English speakers who fell outside pre-established proficiency categories by defining an English speaker as anyone with “any systemic awareness, whether in speaking, listening, reading or writing [of English]” (p. 4). His more inclusive English speaker definition resulted in Crystal estimating, as early as 2008, that there were approximately two billion English speakers in the world (p. 5). Crystal’s expanded definition of English speakers and the subsequent dramatic increase in the total number of English speakers, serve as a starting point to elucidate the dynamics of contemporary global English use.

In our contemporary society, Crystal’s (2008) two billion English speakers are decidedly not using English to communicate with its native speakers. Instead,

Beneke (1991) estimates that for some time now, “80 per cent [sic] of verbal exchanges in which English is used as a second or foreign language do not involve native speakers of English” (as cited by Seidlhofer, 2001, p.152). Highlighting the conspicuous absence of the English native speaker (NS) in English as a second or foreign language interactions, Beneke underscores the foremost trajectory of contemporary English use: English as a lingua franca (ELF). Seidlhofer currently defines ELF as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (<https://www.univie.ac.at/voice/page/faq>, last accessed 3 May 2022). As ELF interactions continue to dominate contemporary English use, they increasingly propel English further away from the benchmark of static models of native speaker proficiency to measure communicative efficacy. Recognizing the growing influence of ELF speakers, Kachru (1996) suggested that “the unprecedented functional range and penetration globally acquired by English demands fresh theoretical and descriptive perspectives” (p. 906).

In what follows, I endeavor to bring a new perspective to ELF research by illustrating how ELF transcends the utilitarian function often ascribed to it. I begin by tracing the major themes found in the current literature including the incongruence between ELF definitions and its theorization, the displacement of native speaker norms within ELF and how the level of practice becomes especially meaningful when discussing culture and language within the ELF context. I then propose that the dynamic nature of ELF makes it a productive

place to discuss an equally dynamic understanding of subjectivity. Using corpus data from the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE), I highlight multiple instances in which ELF reflects the affective and identificatory processes that characterize the integrative function of language.

Literature Review

Within English as a lingua franca (ELF) scholarship, the literature reveals that the shifting definitions of ELF inconsistently support its purported theorization. O'Regan (2014), Mortensen (2013) and Sowden (2012) critique the multiple iterations of ELF definitions that might be interpreted as an evolution of ELF's theory and description. These scholars argue that despite attempts to reframe ELF's central project, ELF's theory remains tethered to a theoretical paradigm that contradicts its purported evolving definition. Mortensen illustrates this incompatibility between ELF definition and description when he examines how Seidlhofer, a seminal figure in shaping ELF scholarship, defines ELF.

In my introduction, I cited Seidlhofer's definition of ELF as "any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option" (<https://www.univie.ac.at/voice/page/faq> last accessed 3 May 2022). Seidlhofer's definition does not remain consistent. Mortensen (2013) calls attention to another iteration of Seidlhofer's definition that frames ELF as "an additionally acquired language system which serves as a common means of communication for speakers of different first languages" (ibid, 2012, emphasis added). Seidlhofer

vacillates between theorizing ELF as an acquired language system or as the more amorphous “any use of English.” Notwithstanding Seidlhofer’s (2022) current use of “any use of language”, Mortensen and O’Regan (2014) contend that Seidlhofer continues to describe ELF from a perspective that strengthens its theorization as a defined language system. It is precisely this unresolved tension between these two opposing ELF perspectives that O’Regan and Mortenson argue characterize the overarching ELF project.

O’Regan (2014), Mortensen (2013) and Sowden (2012) all suggest that attempts to uncover systemic features of ELF have unwittingly resulted in theorizing ELF as a bounded, closed entity; this they argue continues to define ELF as a system. In fact, the hope of uncovering ELF systemic features provides the impetus for Seidlhofer’s (2001) Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE). Seidlhofer makes her systemic-feature research agenda explicit by stating:

As a first research focus, it seems desirable to complement the work already done on ELF phonology and pragmatics by concentrating on lexico-grammar and discourse, in an investigation of what (if anything), notwithstanding all the diversity, might emerge as common features of ELF use, irrespective of speaker’s first language and level of proficiency (p. 147).

As illustrated above, Seidlhofer is contributing an existing ELF systemic-feature research tradition established by other ELF scholars. These scholars include

Cogo and Jenkins (2010) whose research has postulated a series of ELF phonological systemic features. Their research has led to claims that ELF speakers, for example, systematically substitute the full vowel for the schwa in words such as 'but', 'for' and 'them', and that ELF speakers use syllable-timed English rather than the standard stress-timed English of native speakers. Other earlier research by Peng and Ann (2000) has suggested that non-native English speakers tend to stress the phonetically longest syllable in multisyllabic words. Cogo and Jenkins extrapolate from Peng and Ann's findings to propose that "an international word stress rule may be emerging" (p. 276). Thus, Cogo and Jenkins contribute to advancing an idea of a universal ELF with expected or anticipated phonological features. While Seidlhofer explicitly calls attention to the diversity of ELF, and Cogo and Jenkins stress that "ELF speakers are found to be skilled communicators who innovate in English" (p. 276), the ELF project nonetheless remains invested in searching for predictable and routine processes to demarcate the outline of a universal form within ELF diversity and innovation. ELF becomes one specific thing with predictable characteristics.

It is this theorization of ELF systematicity that critics argue is problematic, leading to the reification of ELF as one specific thing. ELF cannot be "any use of English" if it is constituted by a set of specific characteristics. O'Regan (2014) and Mortensen (2013) do not believe that ELF scholars acknowledge this discrepancy. Mortensen concludes "ELF [becomes] reified ... turned into a bounded object that can be delimited and characterized in terms of specific

properties” (p. 30). Both authors argue that Seidlhofer’s (2001) explicit goal of using VOICE to codify ELF, to name it with specificity, is antithetical to Seidlhofer’s own current definition of EFL as “any use of English”.

Seidlhofer (2001) is motivated to establish a codified ELF as a viable substitute to the native speaker (NS) English that she argues is reflexively prioritized as the model in the English language learning context. Consequently, Seidlhofer proposes to describe ELF with enough specificity to allow for the “conceivable ultimate objective of making [ELF] a feasible, acceptable and respected alternative to [English as a native language] ENL” (p. 150).

Seidlhofer’s critics claim that her attempt to establish ELF as an alternative to ENL ultimately hypostatizes ELF by theorizing ELF as a stable variety of English. If ELF is a variety, then it should be expected to reflect consistent forms regardless of its specific interlocutors. In this scenario, O’Regan (2014) critiques ELF scholars for ignoring that “the relativized conception of English which ‘using English as a lingua franca’ implies [has] congealed, [so that] users of English—of whatever stripe— in multicultural settings become speakers ... of an [sic] hypostatized ‘ELF’” (p. 536, emphasis in original). Given ELF’s hypostatization, the unique linguistic features of individual ELF instantiations, vis-a-vis ELF’s variable realization as a function of specific interlocutor configurations, come to be erased or subsumed under one reified ELF. Mortensen (2013) and O’Regan suggest that this obfuscates the ongoing dynamic and innovative linguistic quality of future instantiations of ELF. For example, any systemic features claimed to

have been discovered in ELF are, in fact, only revealed in a limited set of ELF data. This data cannot reflect ELF in its entirety when ELF represents innumerable instantiations: “any use of English”. Seidlhofer’s opponents would argue that her intention to offer an alternative model to ENL advances an abstract, static ELF that propagates universal features such as syllable-timed English and, in so doing, betrays ELF’s central premise that it “develop[s] independently with a great deal of variation” (Seidlhofer, 2001, p. 138) and instead continues to theorize ELF as a stable language system.

ELF scholars’ on-going descriptive work on a distinct ELF language system has also problematized how ELF English is understood with respect to central second language acquisition (SLA) frameworks. Unlike most SLA literature, current ELF scholarship dismisses the validity of assessing ELF communicative processes against the backdrop of native speaker (NS) or L1 English. Instead, current ELF theoretical frameworks acknowledge the validity and primacy of the highly variable nature of ELF linguistic targets as opposed to static NS benchmarks.

One SLA orientation challenged by current ELF literature is Selinker’s (1972) interlanguage framework that establishes a clear dichotomy between the NS and the non-native speaker (NNS). Selinker hypothesized that in the process of acquiring an L2, speakers develop what he termed an interlanguage (IL) linguistic system “which results from a learner’s attempted production of a [target language] TL norm” (p. 214). As the L2 learner’s acquisition advances, their

variable IL reflects their progress by demonstrating greater approximation to the TL standard linguistic norms. With respect to successful second-language learning, for most learners that means “the reorganization of linguistic material from an IL to identity with a particular TL” (Selinker, 1972, p. 229).

Consequently, IL represents a prolonged L2 learner trajectory that impedes the L2 learner from achieving “identity with a particular TL” (ibid). This framework establishes a fundamental polarity between the L2 learner’s language and the target language that many ELF scholars challenge. The resistance to interlanguage illustrates how ELF theory has propelled SLA to reconsider some of its basic assumptions.

ELF scholarship (House 2003, Jenkins 2006, Firth 2009 and others) draws attention to the mismatch in linguistic targets between ELF and traditional SLA as understood through interlanguage. For interlanguage, the target language “is restricted to mean that there is only one norm of one dialect within the interlingual focus of attention of the learner” (Selinker, 1972, p. 213, emphasis added). In a marked departure from traditional SLA, the ELF literature reorients the efforts of ELF speakers away from interlanguage’s obligatory NS targets. In critiquing the prevailing authority of NS competence within SLA, Jenkins (2006) argues that “[t]he NS-normative tendency in SLA seems to be so deeply entrenched that its researchers have difficulty in conceiving of any form of correctness that is not commensurate with NS norms” (pp. 138-139). By reflexively subjecting non-native speakers (NNSs) to a NS target competency objective, SLA routinely

ignores the other competing priorities or exigencies for NNSs that may conflict with NS targets. Among exclusively NNSs, failing to achieve NS targets does not necessarily restrict effective communication.

In contrast, ELF scholarship argues that ELF should be theorized as intersubjectively constituted and organized. ELF internally establishes its appropriate forms specific to each instantiation. The target forms are therefore not located outside the ELF interactants themselves as in an interlanguage framework. In so doing, ELF prioritizes the spatiotemporal exigencies of the specific NNS interactants engaged in each instantiation of ELF. A pre-established ELF is not activated by every group of NNS speakers, instead each group determines how to use English to meet their needs. Canagarajah (2007) claims, “[ELF] cannot be characterized outside the specific interaction and speakers in a communicative context... [it] does not exist as a system ‘out there.’ It is constantly brought into being in each context of communication” (p. 926). Inherent variability and change are constitutive characteristics of the pronounced intersubjective nature of ELF discourse, which brings into question the usefulness of theoretical models, such as interlanguage, that center on an a priori target system to understand ELF.

The problematizing of static NS norms has also resulted in a reevaluation of the positionality of the L2 “learner”. Seidlhofer (2004), Jenkins (2006), Cook (2016), Firth (2009a, 2009b) and Canagarajah (2007) have each critiqued the de facto “defective communicator” (Seidlhofer, p. 213) subject position SLA ascribes

to L2 learners. This pejorative perspective on the L2 learner, they argue, results from SLA's traditional insistence on narrowly defining successful L2 acquisition as the mastery of NS linguistic forms. Given that SLA has been historically invested in L2 learners reproducing NS forms, Canagarajah suggests that SLA has consistently situated L2 learners as "handicapped in their capacity to communicate with the undeveloped language they possess" (p. 923).

Specifically, he claims SLA's interlanguage defines deviations from NS forms as obstacles or handicaps that prevent L2 learners from acquiring a fully developed L2. SLA's normalized equivalence between L2 acquisition and strict adherence to NS forms has subjected the L2 learner to be positioned as a deficient L2 speaker by an obstinate, and unproductive, focus on their perceived errors.

Firth (2009a), likewise, disputes the intransigent centrality of NS norms in constituting the SLA L2 learner. By foregrounding NS norms, the demands of the L2 user's spatiotemporal context are subordinated to an abstracted, a priori context where both L2 NNSs and L1 NSs are judged to be responding to the same priorities. NNSs are not defined in relation to their specific communicative exigence, but rather they are situated in a communicative interaction devoid of any context. The failure to account for the unique communicative demands of a group of NNSs helps explain why L2 learners continue to be unduly conceived in relation to the degree of their acquisition of external NS forms. Recall that ELF exists intersubjectively constituted in response to the collective internal demands of its specific interlocutors. Firth suggests that by eliding this crucial distinction,

SLA positions NNSs as “perforce deficient communicators who are perpetually, agonizingly, chronically struggling, like Sisyphus and his stone, [toward] ... the promised land of ‘target competence’, that hallowed place reserved for the fabled and idealized native speakers” (p. 151). ELF theorists contest that the acquisition of a static, external NS/L1 English represents the competency required for NNSs to be positioned as successful L2 users.

The centrality of the NS continues to figure prominently in multiple areas of SLA scholarship beyond interlanguage. Within the literature, ELF scholars also question how SLA conceives of the inextricable relationship between language and culture and the presumed outsider status of NNSs. As in interlanguage, some SLA research argues that the acquisition of NS targets reduces for NNSs the degree of accompanying outsider status. Schumann (1995) establishes his pidginization hypothesis on this varying degree of this outsider status. He correlates a perceived high outsider status to the L1 culture/language with the development of a pidginized form of L1 English.

Summarizing his hypothesis Schumann (1995) writes, “[I] would argue that the speech of the second language learner will be restricted to the communicative function if the learner is socially and/or psychologically distant from the speakers of the target language” (p. 267). For Schumann, a prerequisite for advanced, or more integrative functions of language, requires reducing the sociopsychological distance between speakers. The opposite poles of Schumann’s distance between speakers have been constructed within SLA’s

traditional NNS/NS dichotomy. Given that ELF eschews SLA's impulse to theorize from a NNS/NS vantage point, Schumann's construction of interlocutor sociopsychological solidarity necessarily requires reassessing whether opposing language/cultures poles do exist within the ELF context.

Schumann (1995) theorizes that the integrative capacity for language is only accessed when an interlocutor successfully utilizes the conventionalized linguistic forms associated with the L1 language. This leads Schumann to suggest that the "integrative function is engaged when a speaker acquires language to the extent that it marks him as a member of a particular social group" (p. 266). In this framework, speakers only progress from the communicative or transactional function of language to the more advanced integrative function if their language avoids being "characterized by a lack of inflectional morphology and a tendency to eliminate grammatical transformations" (Schumann, 1995, p. 266). Some ELF scholars might argue that Schumann did not consider that a group of ELF interlocutors, absent any L1 speakers, may intersubjectively determine that a strict adherence to an a priori inflectional morphology and grammatical conventions does not serve their specific purposes. Deviating from these conventions would also not imply that their linguistic interactions are restricted to only be communicative rather than integrative.

One ELF researcher, House (2003), however does indeed relegate ELF solely to a communicative language: "[b]ecause ELF is not a national language, but a mere tool bereft of collective cultural capital, it is a language usable neither

for identity marking, nor for a positive ('integrative') disposition toward an L2 group" (p. 560). House's project is centered on illustrating how, despite the growing dominance of English as the language of instruction within European higher education, the integrative function of language remains firmly entrenched within European L1 national languages. House equates a "national" language with characteristic features used by Seidlhofer (2001) to describe a natural language. In articulating its distinctive features, Seidlhofer (2001) defines a natural language as "full of conventions and markers of in-group membership such as characteristic pronunciations, specialized vocabulary and idiomatic phraseology, and references and allusions to shared experience and cultural background" (p. 136). Both House and Seidlhofer rightly stress the affiliative, "in-group membership" potential of language, but House interprets "ELF's need to continuously work out a joint basis for their interactions" (p. 559) to imply that ELF lacks the potential to project a culture or establish a discernible ELF community that transcends local instantiations. Consequently, House concludes that without a significant degree of fixity or permanence languages cannot amass a nation state type of collective cultural capital required for language to be used for "affective, identificatory purposes" (p. 561).

Baker (2009), however, proposes a move away from House's (2003) reliance on permanence or durability as a factor required for the affective, integrative uses of language. He suggests that Risager (2006) provides an interpretation of the dynamic between language and culture that proposes "all

languages, and especially international languages such as English, can in practice (i.e., during actual instances of use) take on new cultural meanings of what [Risager] refers to as languacultures” (Baker, 2009, p. 571, emphasis in original). These languacultures are situationally dependent and continuously create “the link between language and culture in every new communicative event” (Risager, 2006, p.185). This perspective illustrates that House’s “collective cultural capital” can be understood as a temporally and spatially contingent coalescing of individual languacultures, which themselves are equally contingent on time and place. Collective cultural capital does not remain fixed and stationary; it is not a static point that speakers necessarily orient to for identificatory purposes. The instantiation of culture enacted continuously at the site of practice, proposed by Baker and Risager, parallels the intersubjective instantiation of ELF by Canagarajah (2007) and Firth (2009a).

This continuous relinking between language and culture avoids positioning ELF interactants as Anglophone culture outsiders simply because they are communicating in English. Instead, as Baker (2009) and Risager (2006) argue, every instantiation of ELF allows for a distinct, new culture (languaculture) to emerge that reflects an intersubjective collaboration among the participating interlocutors. In terms of Schumann’s (1995) ideas about psychosocial distance, NNS ELF interlocutors collaborating in the development of the ELF languaculture would likely experience solidarity rather than distance from each other and their ELF.

Foregrounding practice has allowed us to reconsider the mutable and emergent quality of the link between culture and language. Canagarajah (2007) suggests that closer attention to practice will also allow for greater fluidity between the cognition-society or form-pragmatics dichotomies. By focusing on practice, Canagarajah (2007) redirects our understanding of language, and in particular SLA, away from the trajectory to an a priori target competence to one that prioritizes a situated, dynamic emergence of language and culture through real-time interactions. In characterizing his ELF practice orientation, Canagarajah claims that “[w]hat brings people together in communities is not what they share—language, discourse, or values—but interests to be accomplished” (2007, p. 935, emphasis in original). If interlocutors share a common, mutual interest then, by definition, there must exist solidarity toward achieving that collective goal. Within ELF, the overriding principle of communication in service to shared interests underscores the accepted variability of linguistic form and conventions. These shared interests mark a point of intersection between both cognition and society and form and pragmatics. At the level of practice, all these aspects of communication remain intersubjectively contingent. As such, this intersubjectivity allows for the affiliative, in-group membership required to express the integrative function of language.

Canagarajah (2007) alludes to the constitutive variability of ELF by arguing that within an ELF practice meaning does not exist “out there” in predetermined, conventionalized forms such as a NS or L1 English, i.e., an “a

priori grammar” (p. 927). Rather, all ELF forms are inextricably dependent on the unique linguistic resources of the interlocutors involved. This explains why specific form-meaning exists within the actual interaction of the ELF interlocutors themselves and not “out there” outside them. Canagarajah argues that this emic negotiation characterizes ELF “[p]articipants [as] radically other-centered. They have to be imaginative and alert to make on-the-spot decisions in relation to the forms and conventions employed by the other” (p. 931). This other-centeredness helps to mitigate, and in a real sense eliminate, the risk of sociopsychological distance between ELF interlocutors.

Canagarajah’s (2007) view directly informs how we might theorize ELF competence. Within ELF, competence “does not constitute a form of knowledge, but rather encompasses interaction strategies” (Canagarajah, 2007, p. 931). Canagarajah foregrounds what he terms “alignment,” “[where e]ach participant brings his or her own language resources to find a strategic fit with the participants and purpose of a context,” rather than the traditional target-based cognitive or pragmatic definition of competence” (p. 933). Elaborating further, Canagarajah distinguishes competence from “applying mental rules to situations, [and instead] aligning one’s resources with situational demands and shaping the environment to match the language resources one brings” (2007, p. 933, emphasis added). This interactional, strategic fit or alignment priority points to Canagarajah’s perspective that ELF competence should be understood “[as] a mode of practice, not resident solely in cognition” (2007, p. 932).

Recognizing that meaning is acquired through dynamic interaction and not by mastering an abstracted linguistic knowledge base, Canagarajah (2007) argues that:

[b]ecause of the diversity at the heart of this communicative medium, [ELF] is intersubjectively constructed in each specific context of interaction. The form of English is negotiated by each set of speakers for their purposes. The speakers are able to monitor each other's language proficiency to determine mutually the appropriate grammar, phonology, lexical range, and pragmatic conventions that would ensure intelligibility. (p. 925, my emphasis).

Specific language forms are not imposed externally on ELF interlocutors. This intersubjectivity is realized in actual practice which allows mutual interests to be accomplished. Therefore, when outsiders, not engaged in the real-time practice of ELF, overhear ELF discourse, they may equate it with it "broken English". This mischaracterization assumes only utilitarian or transactional goals are being achieved. For the group speaking this "broken English", however, their language is intersubjectively constructed to respond to their needs and consequently allows their language to achieve an integrative function.

Canagarajah (2007) post-structuralist ELF perspective recognizes that ELF adapts to its spatiotemporal context by continuously restructuring itself into distinct iterations of English. This emphasis on a practice-based actualization of English, contingent on the specific linguistic resources of the interactants, mirrors

Norton's (2013) post-structuralist theory of subjectivity, investment and language learning. While Norton's theory is more interested in how second language learners come to terms with the learning and language practices of the target language, her specific work on subjectivity provides a productive framework for illustrating that ELF can do more than transform a linguistic code and instantiate new linguistic conventions. Using Norton to analyze the expression of subjectivities and social positions through ELF discourse will hopefully demonstrate that ELF does transcend the utilitarian, communicative plane.

Norton (2013) grounds her theory of subjectivity in the work of post-structuralist feminist scholar Christine Weedon (1987/1997). In defining subjectivity, both Norton and Weedon foreground the relational aspect of self-identity; subjectivity or identity must be understood in relation to the social world. For Norton, "identity [is] the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands the possibilities for the future" (p. 4). Furthermore, Norton's (2013) post-structuralist construct of subjectivity "depicts the individual (i.e., the subject) as diverse, contradictory, dynamic and changing over historical time and social space" (p. 4). There exists a parallel between Norton's understanding of subjectivity and Canaragarajah's (2007) argument that ELF is intersubjective. Both ideas help us to see that ELF and the identities of ELF speakers cannot exist in isolation from other social actors and the social milieu.

ELF, much like the subject, represents a dynamic entity that is defined in relation to the surrounding social environment.

A post-structuralist orientation of both identity and language allows for an appreciation of the full capacity of ELF. Although more focused on language learners than ELF per se, Norton (2013) suggests that “every time language learners speak, read or write the target language, they are not only exchanging information with members of the target language community they are also organizing ... a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world” (p. 4, emphasis added). Norton’s statement directly challenges the assumptions of SLA theorists, like Schumann (1995), who contend that NNS remain restricted to only exchanging information unless they use NS targets.

Norton rejects limiting the ELF speaker or language learner to the instrumental plane of communication. Rather than assuming these speakers can only command a utilitarian function of the language, Norton argues that when language learners, and by extension ELF speakers, use language, they “are engaged in identity construction and negotiation” (p. 4). It is critical to note that Norton is not describing a process of identity formation that occurs isolated within the internal cognitive processes of the individual. For Norton, interlocutors are not continuously reassessing their social identity or subjectivity in isolation from the social world. Instead, Norton’s post-structuralist perspective foregrounds language and discourse, the interaction between interlocutors, as the vehicle for the actualization of identity.

Norton's (2013) subjectivity is defined in relation to the social world but expressed through discourse or language. From a post-structuralist vantage point, Norton contends that "subjectivity ... is understood as discursively constructed and ... socially and historically embedded" (p. 4). She concludes by explaining that "identity is constituted in and through language" (p. 4). Given that language constructs a post-structuralist self-identity, a highly dynamic language practice such as ELF serves as a particularly generative site to investigate subjectivity.

Method

I investigated ELF speakers' expression of subjectivity or social identities by examining written transcripts of extracts taken from the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE). I choose the VOICE corpus because it exclusively contains authentic spoken discourse by ELF speakers. My analysis includes six different extracts from two different groups of speakers. The first four extracts come from group 1; a group of female speakers who engage in an informal conversation about their multiple and intersecting social identities as women, business professionals and mothers. The remaining two extracts come from group 2; a group of university classmates who debate opposing ideas of language, nationality and identity. I choose these specific conversations because, as each of the conversations unfolds, we witness the participants express an affective disposition toward an explicit subject position and an awareness of how language shapes their identity. My analysis centered on an

interpretation of the stance that each interactant assumed in response to their fellow interlocutors' contributions to the conversation. My interpretations were drawn primarily from the interlocutors own articulated interpretation of their language use.

VOICE

Given my supposition that all discourse is constitutive of social identity, my analysis of the expression of subjectivity in ELF will be grounded on extract data from a corpus of authentic ELF discourse. The individual extracts analyzed form part of the larger Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE) compiled at the Department of English at the University of Vienna. Barbara Seidlhofer spearheaded the VOICE corpus in response to what she saw as the implications of a paucity of computer-readable, authentic language data on the spoken use of ELF.

Seidlhofer (2001) initiated VOICE as a step toward remedying what she determined was a “conceptual gap” or unproblematized tensions within applied linguistics. On the one hand, applied linguistics increasingly recognizes the use of multiple legitimate Englishes that reflect the immediate social environment; yet on the other hand, applied linguistics unreflectively returns to native speaker norms and conventions as the only “legitimate” learning targets in the ELT classroom. Seidlhofer challenges applied linguistics to acknowledge this blind spot between the many Englishes it acknowledges in practice and the one English it continues to advance inside the classroom.

This obstinate commitment to native speaker's norms within ELT, Seidlhofer (2001) argues, has been perpetuated, in part, by the recent advent of large-scale, computerized corpora. Corpora such as the British component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-GB) contain a million words of spoken and written English. According to ICE-GB, its spoken corpus is the biggest collection of parsed spoken material anywhere. Although ICE made considerable progress toward expanding the corpus of the various varieties of English by including the many nativized Englishes spoken outside the inner-circle Anglophone world, Seidlhofer suggests that ICE fails to accurately represent an international corpus of English because "it does not include a description of the use of English by the majority of its speakers, those who primarily learnt English as a lingua franca for communicating with other lingua franca speakers" (p. 139). Instead, corpora such as ICE continue to restrict large-scale linguistic investigations to the analysis of only L1 English speaker data.

English language corpora influence the development of ELT materials and pedagogy which in turn helps propagate "an established English being described more and more precisely in terms of native-speaker behaviour and then being distributed" (Seidlhofer, 2001, p. 138). It is the distribution, via ELT pedagogy, of a nativized variety of English that Seidlhofer does not believe reflects and supports the predominately ELF milieu that should inform the majority of ELT pedagogy.

In response to privileging an L1 English variety in ELT pedagogy, Seidlhofer (2001) proposed to amass a corpus that could afford ELF “pride of place” (p. 137) in ELT. In so doing, Seidlhofer asks that applied linguists acknowledge that English, in its largely lingua franca global context, “is being spread, developed independently, with a great deal of variation but enough stability to be viable for lingua franca communication” (p. 138). ELF’s independent variation, which untethers itself from “all the conventions and markers of in-group membership such as characteristic pronunciations, specialized vocabulary and idiomatic phraseology” (Seidlhofer, 2001, p. 136) of English as a native language, drives the pedagogical development of ELT outside the inner and outer circles. VOICE’s primary goal was to provide an initial attempt at a “thick description” of ELF that rivalled the thick empirical description that corpus linguistics had already provided the various varieties of English as a native language. Seidlhofer postulated that systematic VOICE corpus analysis would eventually lead to an empirically-derived description of a specific European variety of ELF.

Seidlhofer’s VOICE contains data exclusively from interactions outside the inner and outer circles. VOICE moves beyond the L1 speakers of the indigenized varieties of English across the globe. By providing a “sizeable, computer-readable corpus of English as it is spoken by [its] non-native speaking majority of users in different contexts” (VOICE, about page, emphasis added), VOICE foregrounds the genuinely global reach of English. VOICE contains 1 million

words of spoken ELF discourse from approximately 1250 ELF speakers representing 50 different first languages (VOICE, home page). By creating a corpus of comparable size to ICE, Seidlhofer (2001) has established equal footing between the two largest descriptors of English language.

In contrast to other non-native English speaker corpora, VOICE distinguishes itself as a corpus of language users and not learners. While several other non-native speaker corpora exist, their data is utilized to identify common areas of deficiency for English language learners. These corpora typically utilize student exam essays or other assessment tools found within the institutional practices of ELT. This provides further evidence to Seidlhofer's (2001) argument that ELT continues to tether inextricably its pedagogy to native speaker norms and conventions. As Seidlhofer and others have pointed out, ELT's preponderance of promulgating the conventions of English as a native language, fails to address the overwhelming context of English second language use. Within the larger global context, English L2 interlocutors are decidedly not learning English to communicate with English native speakers. English L2 speakers use English as a lingua franca to interact with fellow English L2 speakers from distinct L1 backgrounds. Given the overwhelming English L2 speaker to fellow English L2 speaker dynamic of non-native English use, prioritizing the conventions of English as a native language seems misguided and ineffective. VOICE recognizes that ELF speakers independently claim for themselves the subject position of language user. By intentionally not positioning

its speakers as language learners, VOICE uniquely allows the researcher to describe the myriad ways in which speakers of varying L2s authentically use English as a lingua franca amongst themselves as a form of social interaction and engagement in which they express various subjectivities.

VOICE Extracts

Although Seidlhofer did not explicitly establish VOICE as a tool for sociocultural linguistic analysis, I hope that my discussion of subject positions found in VOICE will foreground the opportunity for sociocultural analysis available in ELF corpora data. VOICE contains transcripts from 120 hours of face to face interaction. The interactions occur across multiple settings including the professional, education and leisure domains. Within each domain, there are several different types of speech events represented such as: meetings, conversations, service encounters among others.

Text Analysis

VOICE extracts 1 – 4 that follow analyze a conversation among three different female interlocutors, two are L1 Austrian German speakers (S3 and S4) and one is an L1 Serbian speaker (S2). Based on the information available on VOICE, all three participants are work colleagues with some level of familiarity, and they all share a fairly symmetrical power dynamic between one another. The informal conversation recorded in the extract takes place at the interlocutors'

workplace in Austria. They discuss the challenges they face when their professional identities overtake their personal lives.

My analysis centers on describing how these three interactants express their intersectional subject positions of as women, female business professionals, mothers and partners. Through their discussion of the intersecting and often competing priorities of their different subjectivities, these interactants illustrate that through ELF discourse they successfully access the identificatory and affective functions of language.

In Extract 1 below, S4 discusses her awareness that her own demanding pressure to succeed professionally has overtaken her life. She cannot escape what she now considers a burden. From the outset, what is particularly striking about extract 1 is the integrative capacity of language consistently expressed throughout the dialogue. While it could be argued that the interlocutors are operating within the restricted domain of business, their conversation extends beyond their female business professional subject positions.

The interactants discuss the frustrations of claiming the social identity of a female business professional and how that positionality intersects with their identities as women.

Extract 1:

49. S4: no but i really try every day to soften myself because i'm
dema-i'm very demanding to myself
50. S2: yeah yeah i know and tough also
51. S4: you know so i think i'm more demanding to myself than to
the others so and sometimes when it when I discuss with

- [S3] i really have to soften myself or to to keep to keep myself back
52. S2: hh i keep doing it for years but i don't know
53. S4: mhm
54. S3: it it's your company and that's the difference\

Using ELF, these three women discuss a shared emotional struggle to lessen the pressure they place on themselves. S4 begins this extract in line 49 by saying “i really try every day to soften myself”. S4 continues in line 51 by saying “when I discuss with [S3] i really have to soften myself or to keep myself back”. Here we notice that the same language can acquire new or added meaning in a different spatiotemporal context. It seems that S4's pressure to perform becomes more salient when she talks with another female colleague. S2 shares the same frustration when, in line 52, she states, “hh i keep doing it for years but i don't know”. Although S4 repeatedly uses the construction “demanding to*” rather than “demanding on”, this nonstandard construction does not impede the affective function of this extract. S3's comment in line 54 is salient to understanding why these interlocutors struggle to reconcile these two different subject positions. In line 54, S3 alludes to the fact, as the female owner of her own business, S2 has had to be demanding for S2's business to succeed. From this extract it becomes evident that S2 and S4 want to lessen the pressure they apply to themselves. This extract illustrates that the three female interactants share an affective and identificatory solidarity amongst themselves with respect to their inability to relax the high demands they constantly place on themselves.

While Extract 1 focused on the interactants subjecting themselves to their own high demands, Extract 2 describes how being positioning by others as demanding affects the three female interactants. The women share how they have transported the high demands they expect in the workplace to their private lives with their families.

Extract 2

59. S2: and also to my closest
60. S2: t-to my sons to a man i live with
61. S3: yeah yeah
62. S2: and after a few years er years he's fed up of my demands
but i cannot do
differently
63. S4: exactly
64. S4: yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yah yah yes yes yes yes yes yes
yes yes yes exactly
exactly
65. S3: okay yeah
66. S2: then at the end you start going to to to somebody's nerves
because it's especially to to to the close people to me
because it's everyday pushing from my side
67. S4: yeah right right
68. S4: uhu
69. S4: mhm
70. S4: yeah right right right right mhm
71. S2: and i do it myself and somehow I do it to to to people around
Me

Throughout this extract, S2 describes how the high workplace demands jeopardize her other social identities beyond the workplace. In line 62, S2 replies “and after a few years er years he's fed up of my demands but i cannot do differently”. S2 continues to resign herself to her professional identity overriding

her other subjectivities when, in line 66, she states “you start going to to to somebody’s nerves because it’s especially to to to the close people to me because it’s everyday pushing from my side”. Here, S2 uses ELF to deftly express a complicated intersecting of different subject position that her perceived behavior can promote. Additionally, extract 2 illustrates Norton’s (2013) perspective that subjectivity “depicts the individual (i.e., the subject) as diverse, contradictory, dynamic and changing over historical time and space” (p.4). S2 places particular emphasis on both historical time “after a few years,” “at the end,” “everyday” and place; in this extract she specifically discusses her demanding nature outside the workplace. Through discourse, S2 explains to the other interactants that this specific time and place context defines how her family positions her.

This ability to articulate and discuss such nuanced subject positions in extract 2 underscores how ELF routinely transcends its more commonly associated transactional nature. In this manner, a specific languaculture (reflecting these specific interlocutors) about a women’s social positioning outside the workplace is in the process of emerging through practice.

Extract 3 below illustrates how this emerging practice dictates its own conventions and norms. It does so by developing a competence of alignment among the interlocutors, instead of a competence based on mastering pre-existing, abstracted knowledge. In this extract, the women discuss how their

priority of avoiding mistakes is perceived by others as actively looking for errors to criticize coworkers.

Extract 3

121. S2: yes and er this is it i see everything
122. S4: mhm
123. S2: even in the quick sight i see
124. S4: mhm
125. S2: all these xx so they say oh you must always see the problem
but i am looking
for the problem
126. S4: mhm mhm
127. S3: mhm
128. S4: yeah yeah yeah to make sure that everything goes smoothly
right right right hh
i mean the only thing y-we have
129. S3: yeah sure because
130. S2: normal things are normal to me yes yes yes
131. S2: to solve it
132. S4: ri-right right right

This extract again foregrounds the interlocutors' female business professional subject position and describes how other professional colleagues perceive the dynamics of their relationship. Throughout this extract there are some non-standard forms and constructions. Line 123 contains "even in the quick sight I see*" and "normal things are normal to me" both of which would require some effort by an L1 English speaker to "translate." Yet, within the extract there is no request for clarification. These ELF speakers have attuned themselves to the linguistic resources of their fellow interactants. Consequently, they have strategically aligned their language resources to avoid the necessity of

a “translation”. Schumann (1995) contends that these lapses of L1 English competence (as defined by L1 norms) would entail that these these speakers would not be able to use ELF for more advanced integrative functions. Schumann categorizes integrative communication as activated “when speech contains those features (such as correct noun and verb inflections...) that are necessary for simple referential communication, but which are necessary in order to sound like a member of the group whose language contains those features” (p. 266). I would not necessarily disagree with Schumann’s assessment; except I would insist that these norms are always emerging and that ELF does not possess its own predetermined form-meaning relationships. Those relationships are always seen as operating within a strategic alignment framework that reflects the intersubjectivity of ELF. Consequently, there are rarely any requests for clarification, confirmation, recasts or other indications that meaning is ambiguous within the extract. The ELF prioritization of strategic alignment over predetermined form eliminates that need.

Extract 4 contains English that does not reflect native or L1 fluency; nonetheless the ELF discourse remains robust and integrative. Through discourse, the interlocutors discover that they share a mutual agreement of the different positionalities that children hold for their mothers versus their fathers.

Extract 4:

176. S2: so er i visited my son in greece and erm i spent a week with him so he said it’s the time you go home. i want to feel free

- and he's looking forward for his father to come because he knows they will go have fun be there and i come to give him ideas how to
177. S3: just like every xxx
178. S4: yeah
179. S4: yeah yeah
180. S4: yeah
181. S2: run the the the the flat and all the domestic things and what to do with money what to do with school and how to do it wi- with books and hh so he's fed up with me of course
182. S3: yeah but that's also the age different the son and the father and
183. S3: yeah
184. S4: one week is enough
185. S2: he says it's time you go home
186. S3: but in the other way er if he has problems then he comes to you and not to not to his father probably
187. S4: yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah
188. S2: he turns to me yes yes this is true
189. S4: yeah yeah
190. S2: and then of course children erm know they feel that you er er as a mother love them unconditionally
191. S4: mhm mhm mhm
192. S2: and that they have to er treat their father in special way because if they er don't don't catch him er catch his
193. S4: mhm
194. S4: attention or attraction yeah yeah yeah yeah
195. S2: he will not be there
196. S4: yeah he's not so caring mhm mhm so
197. S2: no
198. S2: and not not only because we are divorced but because father love their children con-er conditionally

In line 176, S2 discusses visiting her son in Greece and states, "so er i visited my son in greece and erm i spent a week with him so he said it's the time you go home. i want to feel free and he's looking forward for his father to come because

he knows they will go to have fun be there and i come to give him ideas how to". Although this line contains several NNS constructions, it, cannot be categorized as transactional or simply communicative "in transmit[ting only] referential, denotative information between persons" (Schumann, 1995, p. 266).

Rather, Extract 4 deals with the different social identities that mothers and fathers assume for their children. In this extract, the interactants share a mutual understanding that children expect their mothers to always be available to support them. In line 186 S3 states, "but in the other way er if he has problems then he comes to you and not to not to his father probably". And then in line 176, S2 expresses disappointment that her son is anxious for her to leave, she understands that in times of crisis her son will reach out to her expecting her to help him.

This extract also details how the female interactants position their children in relation to themselves and their children's fathers. Unlike mothers who love their children "unconditionally," in line 192 S2 claims "that they have to er treat their father in special way because if they er don't don't catch him er catch his attention or attraction". S2 is suggesting that the paternal relationship is somehow more contingent than the maternal relationship. S2 believes that children are expected to demonstrate deliberate effort at cultivating a relationship with their father "because father love their children con-er conditionally" (line 198). Within this extract, the three interactants have elaborated their distinct

understanding of the many social relationships that inform the subject positions found within the nuclear family.

These preceding four extracts describe a specific ELF practice where the interlocutors' interests center on articulating the challenges and pitfalls of contemporary gender politics in business and modern motherhood. In this specific practice, all three interlocutors seem particularly invested in this one guiding interest. As evidence of this investment, although two of the interlocutors share a common L1, throughout the entire discourse there is only one instance, line 146, that is spoken in an L1 as opposed to ELF. This suggests a considerable investment by the interlocutors to express their impressions of their subjectivities to all three participants, not just to the two that share the common L1. Norton (1995) argues that "if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and materials resources" (p. 17). In this case, with their concerted investment in speaking ELF, all three interlocutors can fully engage one another to discuss their subjectivities in a highly sophisticated manner. This opportunity for a frank discussion is the symbolic resource rewarded for their investment in ELF.

Extracts 5 and 6 occur in Spain at the private home of one of the interactants. This is a relaxed conversation among seven interactants aged 17 – 34. The majority are university students. S1 is a L1 Spanish speaker from Spain, while S3 and S6 are L1 Spanish speakers from Argentina. S2, S4, S5 and S7 are L1 German speakers from Spain. Their conversation centers on the different

dialects of both Spanish and German and how language defines nationality and identity.

Extract 5:

- 5. S2: but maybe I'll change the subject and write in Spanish or something like that
- 6. S3: yeah but actually we're not Spanish
- 7. S2: hh yeah you're speaking
- 11. S2: i don't know is it a problem when i when i say that you're Spanish
- 12. S5: yes it's
- 13. S2: but you're spanish-speaking
- 17. S2: yeah but we speak german and you speak spanish mhm okay
- 21. S5: yeah but
- 22. S4: it's just
- 23. S2: ye- yeah yeah it's interesting i know
- 30. S4: but if somebody tells me in your restaurant well are you from germany i said no
- 31. S2: yeah but i'm a teacher of german not of austrian

A disagreement occurs early in extract 5 when S3, an L1 Spanish Argentine male, challenges the presumed subjectivity of "Spanish" placed on him and the other Argentine speakers by S2. In line 11 when S2, a female L1 German Austrian, states "...is it a problem when i when i say that you're Spanish". In response to S3's refusal to accept a "Spanish" social identity, S2 replies in line 13, "but you're spanish-speaking." In this specific context, when the salient difference between the two groups is either L1 Spanish or L1 German, the positionality of "Spanish" can assume a different meaning from the traditional nation-state definition of nationality. S2 alludes to this context-specific definition

when she states in line 17 “yeah but we speak german and you speak spanish”. This extract suggests that S2 is amenable to assuming a subjectivity that foregrounds an affiliation with her language and less with her nation-state of origin/residence. Her fellow speakers appear less ready to adopt a social position that they fear impinges on what may be understood, by them, as a more critical feature of their social identity: their nationality.

This priority to claim a national origin is what motivates S4, an L1 German Austrian, to refute S2’s positioning of S4 as “German”. In line 30, S4 says, “but if somebody tells me in your restaurant well are you from germany i said no”. S4’s comments reflect the larger group’s inextricable link between “Spanish” or “German” with only the countries of Spain or Germany respectively. S4 immediately extrapolates the conversation outside of its immediate context. Now, these speakers are no longer in a group separated largely by two different L1s. S4 stipulates a potentially more heterogenous context where nationality could become a highly salient difference and therefore strongly influence subject positions. For S2, even in the wider world outside this immediate group, she maintains her “German” subjectivity. In the last line of this extract, 31, S2 states “yeah but i’m a teacher of german not of austrian”. Here, S2 illustrates how her professional subjectivity as a German language teacher reinforces her positionality in relationship to the German language.

Extract 6:

Line 86: S2: ... but why is it annoying for you is it annoying when i say

Line 88: S2: yeah you spanish people you're spanish you're spanish-speaking
Line 89: S3: spanish-speaking
Line 90: S2: yeah
Line 91: S6: yeah
Line 92: S3: yeah
Line 93: S2: but i was saying that you are always spanish-speaking and he said no no we are argentinian but you speak spanish

This extract reveals another dimension in which “spanish-speaking” is interpreted differently when constructing social identities or subjectivities. While all the speakers agree that the L1 Spanish Argentine speakers are “Spanish-speaking” that fact translates into competing subject positions. For S2, being “always spanish-speaking” makes the distinction between “Spanish” and “Spanish-speaking” inconsequential. It could be argued that S2 defines a “Spanish” subject position” as a highly mutable social position that does not foreclose the possible simultaneous identification with a particular nation-state. S2 never negates the national identities assumed by her fellow speakers. Instead, she questions why they do not assume the broader language-based identity in tandem with their nationality. In constructing her fellow speakers’ subject positions, S2 constructs identities based on commonalities as opposed to differences. S2 might argue that since Spanish-speakers will always speak Spanish as an L1, how could such a consistent part of their identity remain subsumed to nationality.

While these extracts focus on identity as it relates to the Spanish and German languages, the interactants nonetheless engaged in a sophisticated debate about the intersection of national original, identity and language through ELF. Furthermore, S2 uses ELF to propose a new semiotic meaning for the signs “Spanish” and “German”. In part, I included these extracts to illustrate that ELF has the potential to create its own new intersubjective semiotic meanings. Although a new intersubjective meaning for “Spanish” and “German” was established in this ELF instantiation, that does not mean that all the interactants accepted this new meaning. When ELF is described as intersubjective and motivated to get shared goals accomplished, ELF is seen as uncommonly cooperative and harmonious. I also included Extract 5 and 6 to demonstrate that ELF does not ignore disagreement. In the preceding two extracts, the interactants are mutually engaged in accomplishing the shared goal of debating S2’s new meanings for “Spanish” and “German”. The shared goal here is to defend opposing perspectives. Additionally, while all the interactants understand the new semiotic meanings proposed for “Spanish” and “German”, the ensuing debate illustrates that while new meanings can be understood, that does preclude them from being contested.

Conclusion

My synthesis of ELF scholarship and analysis of several VOICE extracts reveals that ELF’s possibilities extend far beyond an initial formulation as a contact language between speakers of different first languages. With its

constitutive emergent nature, ELF questions the usefulness of any framework that seeks to understand and describe it by referencing L1 English. ELF, however, cannot be entirely divorced from foundational structures of L1 English that, at some early point, helped establish the broad contours of ELF. Nonetheless, ELF also routinely manipulates or realigns those contours to respond to the exigencies of the specific ELF interlocuters. ELF distinguishes itself in its priority to intersubjectively construct itself such that it provides a particularly dynamic and consistently emergent framework to overlay popular SLA theoretical lenses like Norton's (1995) investment and subjectivity framework and Schumann's (1995) sociopsychological distancing model.

Future research might consider applying ELF theories to communication among multilingual immigrant communities within English-dominant countries. With the prevailing influence of native speakers in English-dominant countries, it becomes impossible for the immigrant L2 English user to escape the "deficient communicator" moniker. I would argue, however, that multilingual immigrant communities within English-dominant countries provide similar dynamics to the ELF context in Japan, Hungary or Egypt. In all these cases, interactants from different L1s are using English to communicate. Within the domestic context, much work has been done on code switching between English and the individual L1 of distinct immigrant groups. Less work has been done on how ELF models might elucidate new insights into the multilingualism that develops among our own immigrant communities.

ELF is predominately a European research agenda given the density of different L1s in a relatively small area. Furthermore, the data from ELF traditionally has come from speakers with a fair amount of formal education that includes several years studying English. The interactions contained within VOICE fit this profile. I would like to recommend that future research focus more on the refugee and immigrant population groups who use ELF with less social capital and material resources than the traditional subjects of ELF research. ELF theories could then offer new propositions that reflect a more honest assessment of the totality of ELF use.

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