



English as the lingua franca of globalised academia

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English in today's world

- Spread more widely than any other language ever
Explosive globalisation since the early 1990s

In contact with practically every other language in the world

But: 'second-order' language contact between
Spanglish, Finglish, Swinglish, Dunglish...

- Spoken far more by non-native speakers than native speakers
(4:1)

➤ A global *lingua franca*

Worries and concerns

- A homogeneous world:
English the only language?
- English degenerates:
- impoverished, simplified language?

Where is English going?

- Accelerated mobility -> faster language change
1. Theoretical interest
What happens to a language in highly complex language contact?
 2. Descriptive interest
How does English change?
 3. Applied interest
How should language professionals respond to this?

What is international English like? Typical ELF lexicogrammar

- Regularisation of verb forms (ta~~ch~~ed; st~~uck~~ed)
- Uncountable -> countable (offspring~~s~~; furnit~~ur~~es; research~~es~~)
-> regularisation
- Articles: non-standard uses (in Polish language; of the Wilson's disease)
- Prepositions: non-standard uses (discuss about; obsession in; we're dealing what is science)

How does a language tolerate such fuzziness in its most frequent items?

What is international English like? Typical ELF morphology

- overproductive or nonstandard morphology (**ir**relatively; **in**suitable; **un**useful; **ter**ritorial; **max**imalise; **in**troduced; **com**mentated; **add**iction)
 - creative solutions (*inspectionals; devaluarised; far away uncle*)
 - morphology potentially overproductive; held back by convention
 - productivity much exploited in academic discourse (also ENL)
- > *more, not less diversity*

The ELFA corpus

English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings

(www.eng.helsinki.fi/elfa)

1 million words of spoken English

- Academic speech events at four Finnish universities
- No events with same-L1 speakers; no EFL classes

-> speakers not learners:

an **SLU** (second language use) corpus,
not SLA (second language acquisition)

not CLIL

ELFA languages

- wide L1 coverage
650 speakers,
51 languages,
28% Finns
5% ENLs

Why **academic** speech

1. International;
the language of academia is ELF, not ENL
2. Sophisticated
3. **Influential**
- strong influence on standard languages and prestige varieties
cf. “Educated native speaker”

More relevant for the future: “**Educated speaker of English**”?

Speaking ELF: What gets understood

- miscommunication rare: 2 /6h
- typically not language-based (House 2003; Mauranen 2006, Kaur 2009)

Speaking ELF: What gets understood

- what does not cause communicative turbulence despite deviating from standard language?

Approximate use of
articles, prepositions and phraseology

Prepositions roughly in the intended sense category,
... after that you can nicely **focus to** even a very very limited aspect...
you have an intuitive **interest on** a topic and then ...
... simply give up this community comparison and be
satisfied at the policy level
we have to **discuss about** this kind of theoretical questions

lack of agreement

...i'm really interested in erm **how things is continuing** there

tense slips

... if i got some , er if i **get** the chance **to made** a case study...

voice flips

S6: yeah it was simone de beauvoir who said that er i i guess er we
you don't you don't born er **you don't born** as a w- as a wife er as
a as a woman you become er a woman with education

S1: yeah female [socialisation] (S6:[yeah] yeah) **so you have**
socialised [into] (S6:[yeah]) the role of being [a woman yeah]

nonstandard quantifiers

...the molecule that bind er bind the iron or make it increase the er
the number of iron that you lost

nonstandard interrogatives

you try to to see *how is the tissue*

what you can see here in this picture?

I don't remember do you, *what says the book*

missing inflections

so *it* somehow *have* to show so so some sort of an achievement...

nonstandard *ing* forms

that *was* also *depending* on just a couple of votes

Many features shared with “New Englishes” and learner language

- Not unlike L1 processing:

”We know very little about how people process ill-formed sentences, although existing studies suggest that morphosyntactic anomalies present surprisingly little difficulty.”

(Dabrowska 2004)

Approximative items understood if

- they give a sufficient hint of what the target item might be

analogy (cf. *discuss about*)

- if the context supplies enough backup to enable recognition

linearity /temporality

Phraseological units frequently non-standard

...take closer look to the world

... i think that on the end somehow the law has had some results

...how to put the end on it

... it's on the worst during the first week

... clashes with soviet union was in the matter of few inches

Top 3-grams from academic speaking

ELF (ELFA)

1. I don't know
2. a lot of
3. I think that
4. one of the
5. and so on
6. you have to
7. there is a
8. I think it's
9. the the the
10. a little bit

ENL (MICASE)

1. I don't know
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- Conventionalised phraseological units, **multi-word units of meaning** frequent,
contribute to fluency and predictability
- facilitate processing for both speakers and hearers
- combine lexis and structure

Articles and prepositions often part of phraseological units
with highly conventional schemata

to put an end to it/ to put the end on it

lexical elements

and the schematic whole

ensure that meanings get across

- structural elements can vary within the whole
without disrupting communication

What resources do speakers draw on to achieve mutual comprehension ?

Cooperation

S6: yeah (S5: yeah) they could go yeah and also they increased the time for er **parental** [er]

S1: [**parental**] leave

S6: [yeah yeah and] (S1: [yeah yeah]) so for for for men [they]...

Shared cultural resources

...it is a way of controlling us sort of eh I don't know *divide and govern* sort of a thing

...I don't know *what's the hen and what's the egg*

Shared linguistic resources

... you could do the same for *the dooming cathedral* in Turku
(< domkyrka?)

Enhanced explicitness

Rephrasing

... because of *the poor nutrition level* *this poor diet* the whole standard of living was poor...

Headers ('left dislocation')

...*Pippi Longstocking* *she* 's extremely strong

or tails

... and *they* are in very tight control *those alcoholics*

Metadiscourse (reflexive discourse)

... are you *are you saying* that er , the imagery...

Accommodation

S1: [yeah] from time to time I think er it kind of er , first this law for that you can **registrate** your er how you say your (S5: sort of partnership) partnership er I think er you cannot argue for too much in in in Finland you have to , go li- by [steps] (S5:[(it was)]) yeah (S5: yes) with small steps so [that you can]

S5: [was it] in this , er

S1: it was [together]

S5: [this spring] , spring 2002 was it 2001 (S1:mhm) that it became possible in Finland that you can **register** you can't [get] (NS2: [ah]) married and you can't you can **register** yourself , to be partners [with]

S1: ...you can **registrate** your er how you say your...

S5:... you can **register** you can't get married and you can't you can **register** yourself ...

S5:... very much against **this, er registration thing** because ...

S3: ... between **registration** and marriage so

S5:... got the right to **registrate** so I suppose in another ten years ...

S1: ... er getting re- **registrated** was were kept together but then ...

What's new from ELF?

S1: but that would allow er people more time to do whatever

S2: yeah but i **in my point of view** that was really good [because]

S3: [@yeah@]

in my view + from my point of view

-> a **blend**, **not simplification**

ific in-, interest erm **in my point of view** in in this kind of usage. b
[mhm] for example **in my point of view** daddies always cook what
g new globalisation **in my point of view** er but on the other hand i
whatever yeah but i **in my point of view** that was really good [beca
t can be said and er **on my point of view** er i will say that the secon
market regulation **on my point of view** are the third world countrie
n we have where , **on my point of view** my humble point of view i
nsifies , the world **on my point of view** if you want we can open fo

Let me + V_{comm}

let me say a few words about the solution

ENL (MICASE) *words about*

gonna say a few words about why this problem is difficult
let me say a few words about the solution. um... in my
conclude with a, few words about Hilbert and his problems.

just a few words about the planning committee um
solve, and a few words about the solution, and then towards

Fixed cluster

ELFA

a few words about (7)

few words about (6)

a couple of words about (1)

some words about (9)

- break-up of an ENL fixed cluster
- > **more variation** than in ENL

ELFA

preferred pattern:

some words about (9)

have you have done , then *some words about* the thickness of the
en if we open book er say *some words about* the nomenclature
u are (xx).(xx xx) okay er *some words about* the state of the art in
ified with experiments and *some words about* er the aspects the
uences of er the past , now *some words about* the problem (xx)
'm at last i'm going to , say *some words about* the library
yeah most important then *some words about* app- theoretical

➤ Speaking ELF generates **new phraseological preferences**

matter of fact

pite some difficulties that as the matter of fact they come across
en in finland , he invented as the matter of fact er many initiatives
ontroversial er statements as the matter of fact er soviets were
they did they solve it no , as the matter of fact none none have been
ns er er i i i when i lecture as the matter of fact these topics i erm
nd yet erm something that as the matter of fact er very bad erm and
ntest in this context erm is as the matter of fact indirectly empirical
data erm and i did as the matter of fact erm i did lecture ns
well the democracy will as the matter of fact function well , well
nometrically their economy is as the matter of fact very much
don't have (xx) but there is as the matter of fact in (xx) there are
er but there you have @@ as the matter of fact @@ i mean when

Implications for teaching

Finnish IT company representative after a merger with an Indian company:

”We had a bit of a problem when they’d call us and we didn’t always understand what they said in their Indian accent. We’d rather have used email. But that was not working out, because speaking is so important to them.”

Implications for teaching: accent

Accents:

- Expose students to a wide variety of accents

Pronunciation:

- Teach the pronunciation variety that seems most appropriate for your particular context
- Focus on sounds most crucial for global comprehensibility

Implications for teaching: pronunciation

Jennifer Jenkins (2000):

“core features” in ELF (or EIL, English as an International Language)

Features which do **not** cause **comprehension problems** include

- substituting dental fricatives (th sounds) for **t/s/f** (voiceless); **d/z** (voiced.)
- using the full form vowel in non-prominent syllables (*from, for*)

Implications for teaching: pronunciation

Jennifer Jenkins (2000):

“core features” in ELF, (or EIL, English as an International Language)

Important for comprehensibility:

- consonants other than dental fricatives and the ‘dark l’
- vowel quantity
- aspiration in word-initial plosives **p,t,k**
- consonant clusters
- primary stress

Implications for teaching: discourse

- Discourse strategies enhancing hearer-orientedness ('recipient design')
 - Interactivity
 - Explicitness (transparency): rephrasing, metadiscourse, headers & tails
 - Cooperative strategies

Implications for teaching: testing

- Competence in interaction
as full participants
- Away from testing isolated individual performances
- Not from an ENL speaker's perspective

What is ELF like now?

Simplification

- regularisation
- loss of ENL idiom

Complexification

- structural explicitness increases
- discourse explicitness increases

Break-up of ENL fixed clusters

- more variation than in ENL
- new phraseological preferences develop

Similarities to New Englishes, learner language and translation universals

Where is English going?

- ‘second-order language contact’

Probably less dramatic than contact between mutually unintelligible languages (e.g. Russenorsk)

- more like dialect contact

- dialect levelling (loss of marked and minority forms)

- many ENL forms may be marginalised as minority forms:

e.g. opaque idioms

- time scale?

Three generations

This is the first global ELF generation

English tomorrow?

Wipes out all other languages?

- Not likely:
contact languages have their functions, other languages have theirs
- The interests of **small and minority languages**
compatible with one major international lingua franca
- Reduces the chances of other large languages to maintain or gain a status as
an **international** lingua franca

English tomorrow?

Towards homogenisation – or fragmentation?

- Centripetal forces: common interest in mutual comprehensibility
 - absence of standardising bodies > norm-development spontaneous
 - mobility > dialect contact > levelling
- Centrifugal forces: regional contacts frequent (e.g. South-East Asia, Nordic countries)
 - mobility > new influences > change
 - ‘glocalisation’ (Robertson 1995)
 - differences likely to develop between Asia, Europe

English tomorrow?

“Core varieties” vs. international English?

- Currently ‘core varieties’ (BrE, AmE) still largely prestige varieties → exonormativity in ELF
- Linguistic prestige follows from speaker group prestige
- global power centres no longer populated by Anglo-American ENL speakers
→ endonormativity likely to replace current exonormativity
- ENL speakers adopt certain international uses (*informations, furnitures, discuss about..*)
- The future of English is in the hands of its international speakers