



DYLAN's Research Task 4.2 has been to investigate the linguistic and communicative changes that affect English as a lingua franca under increasing interaction with other languages in multilingual practices. The team has looked into how English as a lingua franca (henceforth ELF) is actually being activated, used and communicatively exploited by its users, in an attempt to understand the salient processes of interactants' strategic linguistic manipulation and adaptation for intercultural purposes as well as their related formal surface manifestations. The findings point to more general, conceptual questions about the nature of languages in the age of globalised communication and so become relevant for research into multilingualism more generally, beyond the specifics of ELF. At the same time, however, ELF is a viable subject of empirical investigation because of its specifics. Due to its current spread, it has assumed a special position among the European languages and enables us to find out about processes that may emerge in any lingua franca and about global developments that potentially occur in intercultural communication situations with high linguistic diversity.

ELF is defined as a common means of intercultural communication among speakers who do not share a primary lingua-cultural background. It thus involves at least three elements: one speaker's first language, another speaker's first language, and the lingua franca element, and so is a site of language contact by definition. ELF emerges in multilingual settings and is potentially not only realised within, but also through linguistic diversity. ELF is typically characterised by the exploitation of elements of diverse origin. Regardless of how much of the plurilingual influence is directly observable on the surface structure of ELF talk – the important thing, as we have demonstrated, is that there is, in principle, room for integration of plurilingual elements. ELF thus clearly has to be viewed as a multilingual mode. The communicative potential in ELF is grounded in the fact that form follows function (Seidlhofer 2009), i.e. that conventional structures can be, and are, appropriated and expanded in line with speakers' communicative purposes and pragmatic motives. ELF cannot be pinned down to a specific set of formal features. For understanding the

interplay of stability and variability which characterises ELF, one has to consider both its constituents: the E for English, the common resource, and the LF for the lingua franca mode, the adaptability. It is a phenomenon which is based on a shared code but activated as adaptive mode. It is a global phenomenon which needs local negotiation. We thus have to perform a conceptual shift, whereby ELF is not English, which in many European contexts happens to be an important lingua franca, but an important lingua franca, which in many European contexts happens to take as its basis the 'open source' code of English. One of the most crucial processes in ELF is thus accommodation, the strategic adaptation of language according to situational purposes, in which it is crucial for the participants to negotiate meaning and pursue cooperation and consensus, to gauge each other's levels of linguistic and pragmatic competence and to adjust expectations on the linguistic and pragmatic levels. There is a complex interconnection of situatedness and situationality in a lingua franca mode and in intercultural settings in general. In addition to the communicative context, it is thus situational speaker and resource constellations that determine the language use in specific speech events.

The value of partial competences especially on the receptive plane should not be underestimated. In effective ELF talk, this has been observed to go together with flexible language usage that is geared towards enhanced clarity and transparency and avoids 'unilateral idiomaticity' (Seidlhofer e.g. 2003), i.e. the use of opaque language based on conventions of certain native-speaker communities. Due to the high degree of flexibility of ELF, new forms emerge from every interaction. In the light of this in-built variability, the notion of a variety, conventionally defined by a relatively stable set of features characterising the usage of a relatively stable community, is to some extent a misnomer that cannot capture the contemporary concept of a lingua franca. When priority is given to mutual intelligibility among the participants, effectiveness clearly overrules traditional assumptions of correctness as norm-adherence. In doing away with both code-fixation and the native speaker bias, ELF highlights the need for new conceptual directions in the field of intercultural communication as a whole.

When language users are in an ELF mode, the range of resources and possibilities available to them is not limited to English. Even though English serves as a surface medium in ELF, the speakers' linguistic resources always operate simultaneously. The creative act lies in the strategic exploitation of the flexibility of boundaries and across boundaries. It is a combination of the innovative application of existing rules so that they fit the situational interactional context and a stimulation of this process by plurilingual elements. A plurilingual speaker operating in an intercultural mode like ELF can be assumed to have both more leeway and more means for linguistic creativity than a monolingual person because he/she has more resources to draw upon, be creative with and manipulate for the purposes of an ongoing conversation. The plurilingual recipient, on the other hand, then has more resources available to base his/her interpretation and understanding on. The

manifestations of plurilingualism being exploited for effective intercultural communication are prominent in ELF. It is both a resource within and an inherent characteristic of ELF which features at all linguistic levels. What have been traditionally conceptualised as 'code-switches' and 'transferred' items, for example, are actually integral elements of the ELF talk. These elements are as 'ELFish' as any other emergent elements within this mode. Plurilingual elements might constitute a switch from English, but not from ELF. They might involve a transfer of patterns atypical of English, but not of ELF. In the light of the integrated plurilingual practices in ELF, then, the concepts of code-switching and transfer themselves will eventually require reconsideration.

All in all, it becomes obvious that ELF is part and parcel of multilingualism. On a macro-level, ELF provides the possibility of extending the linguistic repertoire to account for the need for intercultural communication without compromising the integrity of diverse languages as the means for intracultural interaction and the expression of distinct sociocultural identities. From this perspective, ELF does not undermine multilingual diversity but actually helps to sustain it. The lingua franca mode does not only function as a complement to multilingualism. ELF is part of multilingualism, and plurilingual elements are part of ELF. The observations of how these linguistically diverse resources are being exploited, however, also reveal the limitations of traditional frameworks in capturing plurilingual speakers' practices. There are linguistic items emerging within an intercultural mode of communication which cannot be attributed to one separate code. One could attach some sense of hybridity to such occurrences, portraying them as oscillating between two languages. Strictly speaking, however, such a notion of mixing, or mixture, does not do justice to the phenomenon. Language forms are no longer clearly assignable to a particular code when they emerge from the dynamics of intercultural encounters. The demarcations of languages become blurred. Attempts to explain intercultural language forms on the basis of frameworks that draw on idealized, stable categories are doomed to failure. Processes taking place in linguistically diverse settings are not only based on flexibility across boundaries, but beyond boundaries. In this, a view of plurilingualism in which the prefix *pluri* simply denotes an adding up of two or more monolingualisms clearly loses its validity. Approaches based on assumptions of stability and separation run counter to the reality of ELF, and other intercultural modes, and are no longer valid (if indeed they ever were) in a world where networks of interaction no longer depend on territoriality and immediate face-to-face contact. Coming to terms with Europe's linguistic diversity, then, involves a number of related aspects: (a) a differentiated (re-)conceptualisation of the notion of 'multilingualism'/'plurilingualism' which takes in the holistic and dynamic nature of language use as it emerges especially in linguistically diverse contexts, and which works towards overcoming both an additive vision of multilingualism and a static vision of language. The reconceptualisation does not only concern multilingualism, but (b) as a prerequisite needs to question traditional definitions of 'languages' themselves. A view of them as fixed, reified units is no longer appropriate. Moreover, the conditions of ELF talk in particular and

global communication as a whole also call for (c) a reconsideration of sociolinguistically prominent concepts such as the 'speech community'. Due to their independence of territory and native language, ELF users are best seen as members of 'communities of practice'— a concept in which a community is no longer created by a common language, but rather language is jointly created by a community. In this, an OLAAT (one-language-at-a-time) approach which is based on additive, segregational assumptions towards plurilingual phenomena is clearly outdated. Rather, we have to replace it by an ALAAT, an all-language-at-all-times (Hülmbauer 2011) perspective which acknowledges the elusiveness of current linguistic forms by referring to all language in a generic sense rather than to languages in the plural as countable objects, and the holistic exploitation of resources in plurilingual practices by which all kinds of them can potentially be exploited at all times. A similar approach has been proposed through the concept of 'languaging' (Jørgensen 2008) which refers to a process in which speakers use whatever resources are available and which they find useful for making meaning, regardless of their origin. All in all, in multilingual modes we will eventually have to re-adjust our perceptions from separate languages to communicative practices.

The current communicative realities of ELF are in friction, nevertheless, with theoretical conceptualisations of language use. ELF stands a prominent example that points to the fact that many languages are used less and less just among their native speaker interlocutors. With the heightened frequency of intercultural communication, there thus needs to be a re-definition and re-evaluation of competence(s). Language has to be dynamic in order to function in diversified settings with ever-changing sociolinguistic constellations, and it would be surprising if these dynamics did not manifest themselves in the linguistic forms employed by language users. Given the situational character of intercultural communication, there needs to be room for in situ negotiation and ad hoc language choices. With regard to future conceptualisations of language, then, we have to shift our focus from quantitative to qualitative considerations. For successful intercultural communicators, whether they talk via ELF or any other multilingual mode, it will be crucial to exploit global linguistic knowledge. In addition to knowing languages, then, they will need to know how to language; and they will need to find a framework of language policies that leaves them sufficiently flexible to deploy their languaging capabilities not only in reactive, but in proactive communicative strategies. In keeping with European speakers' effective current linguistic practices, then, language policy and education need to establish frameworks in which these abilities can unfold in the best possible way. ELF as medium of communication is liberating since it encourages a relatively unconstrained exploitation of the resources of English and a readiness to draw on resources available through plurilingual channels. In contrast, monolingual native speakers and non-native speakers with 'near-native' proficiency are likely to be inhibited by their familiarity with, and deference to, the regulative conventions of English as a native language. From this perspective, thus, the difference between multilingual and monolingual situations is not so much a matter of language choice and number of

languages spoken in an interaction but rather of the speakers' approach to language (use). On the level of the single speaker, then, linguistic diversity can definitely be an asset when updated communicative concepts leave room for ad hoc manoeuvre and situational flexibility.

Persisting with an antagonistic juxtaposition between ELF on one side and multilingualism on the other would seem to reflect a rather simplistic view of the linguistic situation of today's Europe as a whole and of language users' communicative realities. It is precisely such a simplistic, enumerative and segregational notion of multilingualism, rooted in the 19th century concept of national languages and based on standard language ideologies that the Integrated Project DYLAN has questioned and revealed as outdated, and for which further research needs to elaborate alternative conceptualisations. Only fresh perspectives can lead to insights which hold potential for language policies that look to the future rather than hark back to the past. The investigation of ELF practices has pointed us to a general re-evaluation of multilingual frameworks – from the separation of codes or language varieties towards the stretching and re-adjusting of boundaries, on to notions of hybridity in plurilingual forms and eventually towards the integratedness of linguistically diverse resources in today's intercultural communication contexts. The project's focus on multilingualism does not mean, however, that these challenges are not present in less linguistically diversified settings. Rather, the phenomenon multilingualism/plurilingualism leads us to revise our views of the very nature of language and to see it as a continuously variable and adaptable resource for communication, which defies the traditional concept of languages as completely distinct and separate entities. The implications of both an investigation of ELF in particular and multilingualism research in general are thus far-reaching and offer points of contact for various disciplines dealing with language in the 21st century.

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