

## Chapter 2

# English as a Means of Communication by Non-native Speakers

English is no longer spoken only in Great Britain, North America, Australia and New Zealand and it is no longer easy to navigate the politics and ownership of this language. With the spread of English for political reasons, English has claimed much of the entertainment as well as science and scholarly fields. English is now one of those languages which one has got to know in order to be able to function actively in today's world—be it for travel purposes, for work, for access to information or entertainment. With English being so omnipresent it is obvious that different forms/varieties develop, and indeed there has not been to date another lingua franca which has been so painstakingly examined with its main varieties thoroughly investigated and codified (Modiano 1999). Despite that, however, English seems to constantly change and spread, giving linguists endless possibilities of investigation.

English is nowadays the official language of, among others, the USA, the UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Zambia. The first five countries have English as their official language by choice, the rest by way of imperialism. For political reasons, as well as reasons of convenience, English is also the main medium of communication for such international organizations, closely related to the European Union (EU), as The Group of Eight (G8), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), United Nations (UN), World Trade Organisation (WTO), Council of Europe (CoE), European Economic Area (EEA), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Since such important organisations uniting officials from various countries around the globe agreed to use English for convenience then it seems unreasonable to demand from the European citizens to take 'the higher road' of learning multiple languages instead of using a simple solution at hand. As mentioned in the previous chapter, regardless of the official policy of the EU, the fact that as many as 43.1 % of the Europeans speak English (Risse 2010) proves that English indeed has the status of 'unofficially official' language in Europe. The characteristics of this language as a possible variety of English will be further explored in this chapter from the perspective of the spread of English and its present-day status of a possible lingua franca.

The unprecedented spread of English is, as mentioned before, not only bound with the past imperialism of the UK, and the present position of the US on the political arena, but also with convenience, which is best illustrated on the example of the EU. As discussed in [Chap. 1](#), the European Union was built on the ideal of equality of all member states, multilingualism and multiculturalism. When the Union was first established there were 4 official languages: French, German, Italian and Dutch and so there were 12 language combinations for translators, then in 1970s, along with enlargement, the number of language combination grew to 30. In 1997, with 11 Member States, there were 110 language pairs, and now, in 2011 there are 23 official languages and 506 language combinations—an amount truly impressive and bound to grow with further enlargement. In the spirit of multilingualism and equality, all proceedings are translated into all official languages, which is not only time and money consuming, but as one can predict, it may also carry the risk of information loss and miscommunication, especially in the case of simultaneous translation done via another language (in case a translator of a given language pair is unavailable).

With such a vast amount of languages it comes as no surprise that one language tends to emerge as the most common medium of communication. In spite of the official multicultural policy, during coffee breaks Members of European Parliament (MEPs) have been found to rely on English to communicate, and indeed Helman (1999 in Borowiak 2008) noticed that in the EU institutions in Brussels, English is the most widely heard language. The fact that English has become the ‘unofficially official’ language of the EU can be further supported by the fact that when subsequent Member States prepare for holding the Presidency over the European Council, instead of supporting the idea of multilingualism by insisting on their national languages, they, hold English language courses for their MPs and staff so as to be able to more easily communicate with international guests and politicians scheduled to come during that period (as illustrated by the English courses for Polish MPs before Polish presidency in 2012 that the author of this thesis had a privilege to conduct). It is an indisputable fact therefore, that English holds a special position in the European Union.

The example of the European Union shows that English is a force in its own right, a force which cannot be fought—not with English being present in politics, academia, the movies, music, the Internet, advertising and press. English is an intrinsic part of the modern world. With its spread, political discussions on its place on the linguistic arena of the EU are more common than ever before, and solutions to the problem put forward, one of which is the highly debated proposition of English as a *Lingua Franca*, claimed to be a gradually emerging variety of English used among non-native speakers, with features of its own, and without native speakers of English as its owners (Jenkins 2000; Seidlhofer 2001).

It is the aim of this chapter to describe the spread and functions of English, with special focus on English in the European Union. First, Kachru’s (1985) model of concentric circles, attempting at explaining the nature of the spread, use and acquisition of English, will be discussed in order to present the different functions this language plays in various sociolinguistic contexts. Next Modiano’s (1999) polemic

and adaptation of the Kachruvian framework to illustrate the international role of English will be discussed along with Bern's (1995) application of Kachru's model to the EU context. Next, a terminological clarification will be made, attempting to systematize the following terms: Euro-English, English as an International Language, English as a Global Language, Euro-English and English as a *Lingua Franca*. Once terminological clarity is achieved, a thorough analysis of characteristic features of ELF follows. The concept of ELF is significant for this study as some of its proponents suggest that it is this de-nationalised variety of English that should be employed in intercultural communication. Despite the description of systematic features of ELF, this thesis does not support the adoption of this variety as the linguistic solution to the European problem, as ELF does not reflect the multiculturalism of European member states and can additionally be associated with lower-status English, therefore positioning ELF speakers in an disadvantageous position.

## 2.1 English Around the World

Kachru's model of the functions and roles English fulfils around the world is a well-established framework, which has been a starting point for many other models. With ample criticism and adaptations, Kachru's framework of concentric circles seems to be an indispensable tool when looking at English in the world. Kachru (1985) proposed a model consisting of three concentric circles, with the one in the centre referred to as 'Inner', the next 'Outer', and the last 'Expanding'. Each of the circles represents a particular type of language spread, along with models of acquisition, and roles it plays in different cultures. The three circles refer respectively to native users of English, those for whom English is a second language, and those who use English as a foreign language. Each of the three circles includes individual countries, which again has been widely debated, e.g. Berns (1995) believes that in so doing Kachru "underscores important and meaningful social and linguistic variations found within a country" (Berns 1995: 4).

The central, Inner circle of Kachru's model contains countries where English is a native, primary language, countries whose speakers are perceived by most learners as standard-providers of English (Berns 1995): the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The second, Outer circle, refers to those countries, which through the Imperial rule had English enforced on them, and where it now functions as one of the official, state or 'associate' language (Berns 1995). This group includes Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Zambia. Speakers of English in those countries use English as a second language and develop their own varieties by referring to the standard varieties of the Inner circle and by drawing from their own experience. Speakers from this circle use English for a multitude of purposes, from social, through educational and administrative, to literary and entertainment.

The Expanding circle includes speakers of English who learn this language as foreign and who refer to the norms set by the speakers from the Inner circle. English spoken in this circle is norm-dependent, and the different types of English which are spoken here are called performance varieties. English for speakers of the Expanding circle is an international language, for whom the functions this language serves are limited.

The straightforwardness and simplicity of the Kachruvian model has been claimed by many to be outdated (McArthur 2003), problematic (Bruthiaux 2003), in need of adaptation for the present linguistic situation in Europe (Berns 1995) and as simply unfair to users of English (Modiano 1999).

One of the criticisms put forward by Bruthiaux (2003 in Mollin 2006: 103) was that Kachru's model does not clearly state what it aims at categorizing, as countries, language functions and types of varieties are all mentioned in it. On the one hand we have native speakers of English in the Inner Circle, and non native speakers in the Outer and Expanding Circles. Function-wise the members of the Inner Circle use English for all possible communicative functions in all possible domains, the Outer Circle members use English for a number of functions in specific domains, and those in the Expanding Circle employ English in order to communicate with the Inner and Outer Circles members. When it comes to standard-orientation, Inner Circle users are norm-providing, Outer Circle communities are norm-developing, and Expanding Circle communities are norm-dependent. Bruthiaux (*ibid.*) sees the multi-levelness of this analysis fused together, as the main weakness. Additionally, as Mollin (2006) notes, Kachru's model (1985) does not encompass the lingua franca function English serves today, and that this function should be included in the model, especially in the Expanding Circle.

The model has been further criticised by McArthur (2003) who highlights the lack of clear boundaries between the three circles. He rightly observes that the native speakers of English tend to frown upon the English spoken by other native speakers, and that many users of English as a second language (from the Outer Circle) are more fluent in various linguistic aspects than the natives (especially in professional contexts), and finally, that many who belong to the Expanding Circle, and are labelled as users of English as a foreign language, use it with greater ease and proficiency than those for whom English is a second or native language (especially if they started learning at a young age). McArthur (*ibid.*) notes that it is for that reason that especially the boundary between second and foreign language users is rather blurred and difficult to specify. Nowadays, with English being a high impact language finding its way to most other languages through Anglicisms and Anglo-hybridization, a compulsory language in most European member states, and at the core of language policies of such corporations as for example Nokia, ABB and Fujitsu Siemens, it is difficult to maintain clear-cut distinctions between the Circles.

One of the more direct criticisms of the Kachruvian model has been formulated by Modiano (1999) who stresses that the model reinforces the position of native English users as being central, norm-setting, and at the top of class and social ladder. His claim that the model of concentric circles supports the notion of

English as belonging to specific groups, experts, who establish the correct usage of this language, is one that cannot be easily discarded. In the opinion that varieties of English of the Outer Circle regions should be used as educational standards in those regions, Modiano (*ibid.*) seems to see an imperial game aiming at positioning the native speakers of English with their prestigious standard English, higher than those speaking local varieties (which have traditionally been identified as sub-standard). He also notes that “the cultural apparatus deployed when conceptualizing the language is dependent on the definitions and linguistic ideologies which emanate from the supposed purveyors of the language, the mother-tongue proprietors of English, and all of her standard varieties” (Modiano 1999: 23). He calls the Inner Circle a ‘Eurocentric frame’ with Britain along with its former colonies as the ‘bulwark of English’ who possess this language. Modiano (*ibid.*) notices that the Kachruvian model can be interpreted in terms of a hierarchy with native speakers on the top, followed by speakers of English as a second language, and finally speakers of English as a foreign language. Highlighting the system of prestige and inferiority of the Outer and Expanding Circles, Modiano (*ibid.*) underlines the new role of English as a lingua franca and the emerging, active position of non-native speakers in developing English as an international language.

It is difficult to disagree with Modiano’s (*ibid.*) annoyance with the British Council, which assumed the position of authority in all matters relating to British English and which insisted that British English should be the standard for international communication, as it is supposed to enjoy the highest prestige. However, many studies prove over and over again that the British standard, along with RP, is indeed the most desirable among language learners (Smit and Dalton 2000; Waniek-Klimczak 2002), which may be argued as the result of the imbedded message language instruction materials in Europe carry.

To reflect the present status of English as a lingua franca, or as an international language, Modiano (1999) suggests a model which he calls ‘the centripetal circles of international English’. It is his aim to shift the accountability for English from native users of English to non-natives, detach the model from regions, and instead to focus it on users of English, as a lingua franca is by definition not geographically bound to any one location. In his model the central position is therefore, taken not by native speakers of English, but by those who are proficient in international English, i.e. those who can produce comprehensible English, and who can comprehend such English. Modiano (*ibid.*) here claims that people who can and cannot communicate well are easily recognizable and therefore there is no problem in assigning them to the appropriate circles. The second circle includes native and non-native speakers whose varying proficiency in English as an international language does not allow them to avoid code-switching between their learnt variety and EIL when communicating in an international setting. The third circle encompasses all those who are learning English, be it in a specific indigenized, regional variety, dialect, or standard varieties.

Modiano’s (1999) model is one that manages to take away the power from the native English users and regions, and focuses more on the function of English

as an international language. Despite Toolan's (1999) suggestion the model also suffers "false hierarchizing" and hints of Dante's "Inferno", it is difficult to dismiss Modiano's model, however many undefined notions (such as what it means to be proficient in EIL) it may include.

Unlike Modiano, Berns (1995) sees the Kachruvian model as one that needs an extension to account for the complexities of individual countries, distinct sociolinguistic variations in a country, which the original model overlooks. Especially when it comes to such linguistically and socially complex countries as India, ignoring the internal varieties may be considered a weakness. Berns (*ibid.*) attempted to apply the Kachruvian model to the European Union, treating it as a single complex sociolinguistic unit, claiming that the EU is quite similar to India in terms of multiculturalism, multilingualism, and the function English plays there, as the language of wider communication. Additionally, Berns (*ibid.*) is convinced that the EU is an economic and political unit, and that not only it treats itself in this way but also is treated alike by its neighbours. Berns (*ibid.*) notices that "a sense of unity through a common culture, however it may be defined, is viewed as being as essential as the economic and social mobility that is a foundation of EC" (Berns 1995: 6). Although the arguments Berns presents for treating the EU as a single body, comparable to a single country such as India, are not without grounds, still many would disagree—among them Lewicki (2004), who nine years later believes there can be no talk of a European identity. Borowiak (2008) too would not agree with Berns, as he questions the notion of the European tradition which many refer to. He notes that history is the foundation of tradition and looking at the history of Member States it is very difficult to find a common denominator. However, despite, the questionability and perhaps premature treatment of Europe as a single unit, Berns' (1995) extension of the Kachruvian model is noteworthy. Having considered different roles English plays across countries in the EU and related to it the amount of opportunities to use English in every-day communication, Berns (*ibid.*) places Great Britain and Ireland in the Inner Circle, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands in the Expanding/Outer Circle, and Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain in the Expanding Circle.

Perceiving the position of English in the EU (called by Berns European Community (EC) or 'The Twelve', in correspondence to the number of European Community members at the time) as being in an extraordinary sociolinguistic situation, Berns enumerates 3 characteristics of the situation English is found in. The first feature she points to is the different functions English plays for citizens of different countries of the EU (native, foreign, and international language). The second characteristics is the process of nativization or 'Europeanization' of English, and third one are the similar contexts and patterns in which Europeans acquire and are exposed to English. Noting that English was the most widely learnt foreign language in the EC at that time and that English was learnt in and outside of classroom, that it was a compulsory subject in a number of high schools, and the language of instruction in many higher education institutions, Berns (*ibid.*) puts forward the opinion that the recognition of a community using



European-English is “important for and relevant to the idea of an integrated Europe” (Berns 1995: 7). Again, one may claim it was a premature statement which aimed at placing English as the top language of Europe, and through that, placing those in the Inner Circle on the top of the hierarchy with everyone in the EU either using a sub-standard variety or trying to achieve the prestigious British standard (see Modiano 1999), which would clearly destabilise the power relations, placing Great Britain and Ireland in a more advantageous position. Additionally, Modiano (1999) noted that by establishing a variety of English as the language of communication in a given region, conceptualizations and values carried by English would undoubtedly not be without influence. Finally, Edwards (2001) states that “languages of ‘wider communication’ have no special linguistic capabilities to recommend them; they are simply the varieties of those who have power and prestige” (in Llorca 2004: 315).

Berns (1995) foresaw a development of studies into European English and the fact that English would grow in strength with time for intra European communication, whether it would ever be formally acknowledged as an official language of the EU or not. She also believed that the competence in English that would be developed by individuals or groups would not be identical to that of the Inner Circle, and that there is a possibility that British English would be considered one of the different sub-varieties of English in the EU (with French-English, Dutch English and a developing variety of Continental English).

The Kachruvian model is possibly not the model one should adapt to encompass the linguistic situation in the European Union. Modiano (1999) is right when he says that “the understanding that the international variety of the English language is defined by native speakers must become a thing of the past.” (Modiano 1999: 27). Undoubtedly, it is a widely recognized issue that native speakers of English need to stop being placed in the centre, on the top of the linguistic hierarchy. Attempts to do so have been numerous, however, no single model which would satisfy all has been presented to date.

In the process of describing different uses of English and forming models of English use, several terms have appeared and reappeared in different contexts and with different meanings. It is the purpose of the next section to clarify those terms which are particularly significant for the present discussion.

## **2.2 The Use of English Around Europe: Terminological Clarification**

Before continuing the discussion of English around the World and Europe, it seems of paramount importance to define basic concepts, terms which appear and reappear: English as an International Language, Euro-English, and English as a *Lingua Franca*.

According to McArthur (2003) the term ‘International English’ appeared for the first time in print in 1980s and confusion with World English began. In 1982

two publications became available: Trudgill and Hannah's "International English: A Guide to Varieties of Standard English" and Bailey and Görlach's "English as a World Language" which resulted in an alternation between 'English as a world language' and 'English as an international language', as well as between world English and international English, despite the fact that traditionally, and according to some dictionary definitions the term 'world English' was a more general, 'all-embracing' term than 'international English'. The term 'international English' and the sense of standardness grew in strength with the emergence of a movement in English Language Teaching (ELT), namely '(Teaching) English as an international language' (TEIL, EIL) which was positioned in contrast to pedagogical approaches of '(Teaching) English as a Foreign Language' (TEFL, EFL) and '(Teaching) English as a Second Language' (TESL, ESL). What distinguishes TEIL from the other two is that when using EIL native users of English also have to make an effort, cooperate and accommodate in order to reach understanding in an international setting. It stresses that English does not belong to the native speakers any more, but to its users who negotiate meaning—a difficult task at times. As McArthur points out, TEIL was defined in Oxford Companion to the English Language (1992) as follows:

A term in language teaching and applied linguistics for teaching the use of English between or among speakers from different nations. Such persons may be native speakers (such as Americans and Britons who may not always understand each other well), non-native speakers (such as Thais dealing with Arabs or Mexicans dealing with Japanese), or native speakers and non-native speakers (such as Americans dealing with Hungarians, or Ethiopians dealing with Australians).

Oxford Companion to the English Language (1992) in McArthur (2004)

Interestingly enough, as McArthur (2004) notes, the term International English did not appeal to major lexicographers as a term worth defining in their publications. However, as the author remarks, International English cannot be simply referred to as a 'limited version of world English', and its three characteristics need to be kept in mind. Firstly, it is the distribution, secondly, the characteristics of a lingua franca and finally, standardness.

Unquestionable as it is that English is increasingly used around Europe, the question of whether the community using it shares enough characteristics to claim the existence of one variety that could be termed Euro-English remains an open question.

It seems that one of the first to foresee the Europeanization of English was Quirk (1970) when he wrote in his article on the future of English that large scale vocabulary borrowing would take place. Some of the first mentions of Euro-English, however, can be found in the work of Carstensen (1986) and Denison (1981) to distinguish European speakers of English from users of various other varieties. Carstensen (1986), in his article entitled 'Euro-English' points to two characteristic features of this new variety. First, it is the widespread of pseudo-loans, which appear in at least two languages. The second is the transferability of such pseudo-loans across European countries, for example the word *keksz* (Hungarian), *keks* (German) have their source in the English *cakes*.



Berns (1995) gives the following definition of Euro-English:

The label European English identifies those uses of English that are not British (and not American or Canadian or Australian or any other native variety), but are distinctly European and distinguish European English speakers from speakers of other varieties.

(Berns 1995: 7)

According to McArthur (2003), however, the term ‘Euro-English’ has often been used to signify ‘bad English perpetrated in Brussels’ associated with ‘Eurospeak’—the hybridized English, which can be heard in EU institutions. McArthur (ibid.) also refers back to an article of a European Commission member Emma Wagner where she asks the question whether Euro-English is a problem or a solution, and where she notes that there are two main concerns which need to be considered. Firstly, the issue and possibility of Euro-English becoming the language of the elite; and secondly, that “the usage of the European Commission is replete with ‘Eurospeak, Eurowaffle and plain bad English’” (in McArthur 2003: 57). However, the Euro-English Wagner speaks of seems to refer to a hybridized jargon, as used by EU officials. The more typical understanding of Euro-English refers to the emerging variety of English in whole of the European Union.

Modiano (2001) talks about an emerging variety of English, which he refers to as Euro-English, a variety which he believes is most probably going to become the official language of the EU along with one or two other prominent European languages. He talks of an emerging European culture and of new terms, distinct for European communication, such as *Maastricht* or *Shengen*, *Euro*, or *additionality* and *Berlaymont*. He points to the processes of discursual nativization—a process through which such terms as *Berlaymont*, which are foreign to most native speakers, becomes an important tool for communication; and fossilization—a process through which non-standard forms are accepted.

Modiano (2001) highlights that in the European variety of English there are numerous expressions, conceptualizations and structures, which native speakers of English do not understand. He illustrates his point with examples from English spoken by the Swedes. First, he gives an example of *hoppa över* which the Swedes tend to translate as “hop over” to signify skipping, neglecting something. An utterance: *I am going to hop over lunch today* would perhaps cause bewilderment to those unfamiliar with Swedish, but despite it being clearly non-native, Modiano (ibid.) claims such an utterance is fully comprehensible and therefore could become acceptable in Euro-English.

Euro-English is seen by many as an emerging variety of English in Europe, however Seidlhofer (2001) approaches the topic more carefully, noting that if indeed such a variety is emerging as a European lingua franca, then systematic description and later codification should be possible. Seidlhofer (ibid.), uses the terms Euro-English and English as a lingua franca to possibly refer to the same phenomenon.

Jenkins, one of the perhaps more prolific authors on all ELF-connected matters, describes ELF as being “a contact language used only among non-native speakers”

(Jenkins 2006: 160) and it is this feature which differentiates ELF and EIL (which includes native speakers). She introduces the distinction even though EIL and ELF have been used interchangeably for some time, as well as ELF and Euro-English (this is because the lingua franca movement is nowadays mainly focused on Europe). Additionally, Berns (2009) notes that while some prefer the use of the term English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), among them House (1999), Jenkins (2000 and after), Seidlhofer (2000 and after), others lean towards the usage of Lingua Franca English (Canagarajah 2007; Mauranen 2003).

With respect to the Kachruvian model, Mollin (2006) notices that Jenkins (2003) uses ELF as a new term to describe the speakers of the Expanding Circle, while Seidlhofer (2002) sees ELF as a uniting force of all those who employ English for cross-cultural communication and therefore a force which transcends the Circles. Some, however, (e.g. Mauranen 2003) perceive ELF as a variety, while others (Mollin 2006) find that ELF does not exhibit coherent features which would differentiate it from other varieties. As it can be easily noticed, the place of ELF in the theoretical space has not yet been decided upon.

Proponents of ELF (i.e. Jenkins 2006; Seidlhofer 2005) have argued that this framework frees non-native speakers of English and places them in a new position, that of equality to native speakers, where they do not have to, or need to, aim at reaching native-like competence and linguistic proficiency. ELF is meant to liberate the L2 speakers from the uneven power distribution and from ‘unilateral idiomacity’ (Seidlhofer 2004: 220) which often causes breakdowns in communication

What needs to be noted, however, is the fact that many disagree with the use of the term ‘lingua franca’ to signify a variety of English, as they claim the term refers more to the “context of use definable by extralinguistic factors” than to “a formal, linguistic phenomenon” (Ammon in Berns 2009: 193). Eoyang (1999) contends stating that this term refers rather to an impure linguistic product resulting from mixing of various languages. Berns (2009) notes that the use of the term “lingua franca” to refer to a variety instead of a use questions the validity of the theory of ELF.

## 2.3 English as a Lingua Franca

Having clarified the terminology, the following section aims at considering ELF more in depth. If ELF is indeed, as some claim, a new variety of English, which belongs to the Europeans, it could be the solution to the linguistic problem of the EU. If there really can be no ownership of ELF and it provides neutral grounds for communication, then it most certainly needs to be investigated. It is the aim of this section to discuss findings on English as a lingua franca and to focus on its phonetics and phonology, lexico-grammar and pragmatics, before discussing ELF as a potential solution to the linguistic problem of the EU.

Jenkins formulated the principles of Lingua Franca Core (LFC) as a set of priorities in 2000. LFC proposal proved to be the most influential, however, it is not the

first attempt to formulate communicative priorities in teaching the pronunciation of English. As early as in 1978 Gimson noticed that:

... in recent years voices have been raised to express the view that in our contemporary world, in which so many different forms of English exist as mother tongues and in which the number of non-native users shows a steady increase, it is time that an international form of English rudimentary international pronunciation should be devised artificially or derived from an amalgam of existing form.

(Gimson 1978: 45 in Sobkowiak 2005: 132)

In a similar vein, Sobkowiak (2005) notes that Kenworthy (1987: 3) sets “comfortable intelligibility” as the aim of pronunciation teaching. The first formulation of the common core in pronunciation teaching as based on a set of shared characteristics across pronunciations of English was suggested by Jenner (1989). Formulating her LFC Jenkins (2000) decided to go beyond Jenner’s proposal and concentrate on a selected set of characteristic features of English pronunciations found in a majority of varieties of English (for example vowel length distinction or aspiration of /p/, /t/, /k/) and added features on the basis of two other principles. The first being most frequently noticed speech patterns in non-native speakers (such as the avoidance of stress timing or problems with weak forms), and the second being teachability.

Her original formulation of LFC was based on intuitive rather than research based data. What she proposed was subject for further investigation and although many researchers found her suggestions controversial, she continued to support her original LFC priorities with interactional data (Jenkins 2002).

LFC is a set of pronunciation features which one, according to Jenkins, has to master in order to successfully communicate with other non native speakers of English. LFC is what Jenkins (2005: 200) calls “a proposal for a pronunciation syllabus for learners of English as a Lingua Franca”. Despite the fact that Jenkins’ inclusion of some and exclusion of other phonetic features has been met with a vast body of criticism (e.g. Szpyra-Kozłowska 2003, 2005) and indeed the whole concept of LFC has been approached rather sceptically by many (e.g. Sobkowiak 2005; Scheuer 2005), it has to be recognized that she formulated the first comprehensive list of elements of the English language system claimed to be crucial for communication in ELF. She selected those features which she believes cannot be ignored, leaving the rest for individual variation depending on their L1.

The core areas identified by Jenkins as EIL targets include a number of segmental and suprasegmental elements. In the segmental inventory Jenkins recognizes the importance of all consonants except for <th> and ‘dark l’; in the vowel system it is only the long-short contrast that is considered relevant for EIL communication. At the phonetic level the realisations of consonants is deemed important with the reference to such specific category implementation strategies as aspiration after /p/, /t/, /k/ and appropriate vowel length before fortis/lenis consonants (Jenkins 2002). The phonetic level requirements suggest the importance of specifically English, highly marked realisations, such as position defined consonant voicing with aspiration of /p/, /t/, /k/ on the one hand and vowel length treated

as a major cue for consonant voicing on the other. At the same time vowel quality is not relevant and L2 regional qualities are accepted as equivalents of vowels close to RP or GA. In the vowel system then, it is the vowel quantity i.e. long-short vowel contrast and its contextual usage as a major cue for consonant voicing that is believed to be relevant for EIL communication. As for phonotactic constraints, consonant clusters are believed to be relevant in word initial and word medial positions. This implies that word final consonant clusters can be simplified in all contexts, including morphologically complex clusters in words like *mixed* or *stands*. As far as the organization of speech is concerned such elements of connected speech as weak form or elisions and weakenings are believed to be unhelpful and/or inconsequential (Jenkins 2002). Stress timed rhythm is claimed not to exist in EIL and word stress is treated as unteachable. Pitch movement, or intonation, is treated in a similar fashion, that is it is essential for indicating attitude and grammar in native speaker target, but unteachable/incorrectly linked to native speaker attitudes and grammar in the practice of EIL speakers. The only element of suprasegmental phonetics that is believed to be critical is nuclear (tonic) stress.

A major contribution that Jenkins made to the field is based on the precision of her formulation of the priorities for EIL (later specified as ELF) speakers. The formulation of targets suggested in Jenkins (2002) provoked an outburst among theoreticians and practitioners in the field of phonetics and phonology teaching (see section 4 for further discussion of this issue). However, it is important to mention that the LFC proposal has been the most precise suggestion among those proposed by ELF proponents.

In the early days of LFC Jenkins (2000, 2002) concentrated on data coming from accommodation and miscommunication in interaction between non-native speakers. Consequently the findings were interpreted as guidelines for intelligibility. In commenting on the development of her approach, Jenkins et al. (2011) mention misunderstandings surrounding LFC when mistakenly interpreted as a model and quote studies supporting the communicative priorities of LFC features. The main conclusion one can draw at this point is that in the sound system the proposed set of features requires further studies before it can be applied in language instruction.

Research into lexis and lexicogrammar in ELF concentrates on identifying the reoccurring patterns that are not identical to one specific variety of English but emerge in non-native speaker communication when speakers make use of all the language systems available to them. Most studies providing data on lexical and grammatical features of ELF come from corpus findings, the largest of which is the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE), which focuses mainly on Europe.

Seidlhofer noted in 2001 that there was an abundance of discussions on English in Europe on a meta-level, and a shortage of actual linguistic research which would document how this English, so widely discussed from cultural, political, economical and social perspectives, really looks like—how English is used in real life among people from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. It was in that year that Seidlhofer (2001) noted a beginning of a new type of English, English used as

a lingua franca with its own rules, an English independent of the to-date treated as default 'native-speaker English'. This lingua franca, Seidlhofer (ibid.) predicts, will with time derive more and more of its norms of what is correct and appropriate from the ways its speakers use it, and not from the native English standards. However, before this process can begin, a large corpus of ELF is needed in order to detect the salient features of ELF, to describe and then to codify it, so that it can be introduced to education. It is precisely for this reason that Seidlhofer began her Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE).

In VOICE researchers focused solely on spoken data, seeing writing as exerting more stabilizing and standardizing influence. Moreover, spoken interaction is openly and overtly reciprocal and it allows for the analysis of intelligibility of the utterances produced by the interlocutors. The data have been collected exclusively from non-native speakers of English (from various L1 backgrounds, whose primary and secondary education was conducted in a non-native English setting), who are 'fairly fluent' (Seidlhofer 2001: 15) in English, in a context where English is not the main means of communication (Vienna). The first focus of Seidlhofer (2004) is that of emerging lexico-grammatical patterns, features common to the speakers, regardless of their linguistic backgrounds and proficiency in English. It is Seidlhofer's (2001) aim to distinguish the grammatical constructions and lexical choices the speakers rely on the most and which they are able to successfully use; to recognize common causes of misunderstandings and see if there are in ELF such constructions and uses of English, which would be deemed incorrect or ungrammatical in L1 English, but not in ELF. It would be those simplifications of L1 English which could be claimed to function as systematic features of ELF.

Some of the ELF features distinguished by Seidlhofer (2004) include a shift in the meaning in the so-called 'false friends', e.g. *actually*, British English (BE): in fact, EFL: currently; increased explicitness, e.g. *How long time*, *black color*, etc.; assigning meaning to function words, i.e. *I back to Korea next week*; new word formations: *angriness*, *touristic*, *importancy*, *smoothfully*; shift in the use of articles (zero article), zero marking in third person singular, e.g. *she work*; shift in countable/uncountable nouns: *informations*, *advices*; the interchangeable use of which/who; shift in prepositions, e.g. *discuss about*; overusing some verbs of high semantic generality such as *have* and *do* (Seidlhofer 2004: 214).

In their 2006 analysis of two case studies, Seidlhofer, Breiteneder and Pitzl highlight the ability of the ELF users to take advantage of "the built-in redundancy of the Standard English grammar and do not hesitate to do away with an idiosyncrasy such as the third person -s, when conveying the message is more important than adhering to grammatical norms" in the first study, and "how ELF users skilfully utilize English for their communicative goals in a sales context" in the second (Seidlhofer et al. 2006: 20). It is in that creative approach of the speakers, the taking of the language and making it their own, adjusting it to their needs and not treating it as a set of strict rules which cannot be bent, in which the authors see their highly effective linguistic behaviours. Naturally, not aiming at generalizing these salient features to all of ELF, the authors note that the features exhibited in the two case studies give examples of some of such salient features which occur in real ELF exchanges.

Seidlhofer repeatedly (2001, 2004, 2006) approaches the topic of treating ELF as a variety very cautiously, and continually highlights the need to conduct more research and more analyses, which would allow us to decisively say there are undoubtedly such and such salient features.

Seidlhofer's original set of ELF characteristics in lexico-grammar were taken as hypotheses for subsequent studies. One of the first fully supported feature seems to be the use of third person *s*. The studies conducted by Breiteneder (2005) and Cogo and Dewey (2006) report variability in the use of the third person marking. However, while the former reports about 80 % of standard English native language marking, a more even distribution is reported by the latter. Further studies (Cogo and Dewey 2011) investigate different 'innovative forms' (ibid.) operating in the grammatical system (the use of articles) in morphology (both inflectional and derivational) and syntax (for example 'if' clauses, and embedded inversions).

However, it is often stressed (e.g. Cogo and Dewey 2011) that lexicogrammar innovations need to be considered at the discourse level in order to decide on their actual function in communication.

ELF allows speakers of different L1s to employ the English code and make it their own—expressing their own culture, identity in a way appropriate for them, allowing them to access their linguistic resources and use them creatively in order to reach their communicative goals. Therefore, a speaker from a particular L1 background may use ELF in a very different manner than a speaker from another L1 background. They may vary in their proficiency levels in ELF, may employ different strategies, refer to different interactional norms, values, politeness yardsticks etc., they may have nothing in common and no shared knowledge to refer to. With no *a priori* set rules and standards of ELF it would seem that the potential for miscommunication is as high as it may be. As House (2010: 365) puts it "lingua franca speakers must always work out a new joint linguistic, intercultural and behavioural basis for their communication in different communities of practice". Somewhat surprisingly then, pragmatics of ELF, as Jenkins (2011) notes, has become of interest to researchers fairly recently and only now can we observe a true shift in research interest from surface linguistics to the underlying pragmatic skills and strategies. Some of the first researchers who began the venture into ELF pragmatics are Firth (1990, 1996, 2009), Meierkord (1996, 2000, 2002), and House (1999, 2002, 2003, 2009, 2010) and it is their research which we shall turn to now, despite the fact that the early studies of Firth (1996) and House (1999) "were not ELF studies 'proper' in the sense that empirical ELF research is now understood" (Jenkins 2011: 286).

Firth, who in his 1996 article defined ELF as "a contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common national culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (1996: 20), analyzed through conversation analysis 280 (with ethnographic information) telephone business conversations between speakers of different L1s. The speakers were export managers from Denmark and their clients, and the main goal of the first ones was to sell goods to the second ones. Firth (ibid.) notes that the conversations were normal, ordinary and meaningful, thanks to the effort put in by



both sides to make the conversations so. The speakers constantly engaged in doing ‘interactional work’, as well as in interpretative efforts in order to maintain this “normality” and “ordinariness” despite the different non-standard linguistic and pragmatic behaviour.

The two strategies which Firth (ibid.) recognizes as paramount to this process are the ‘let-it-pass’ and ‘make-it-normal’ strategies. The first one refers to an instance of speakers ignoring, letting pass, a word, phrase or whole utterance in order not to create a situation which could prove problematic. They return to the unclear item only when a common ground is established and asking for clarification does not pose a direct threat to the success of the conversation. Such pretending to understand, concealing a problem, was a recurring strategy in the analyzed conversations. The second strategy, the ‘make-it-normal’ strategy is employed when one of the interlocutors employs a non-standard structure (be it a morphological, lexical, grammatical, phonological, idiosyncratic syntactic structuring, or an issue with idiomaticity) and the hearer decides to make it normal, to accommodate, accept it and reformulate, instead of employing the strategy called ‘other repair’ in which the hearer focuses on the form and not on the content, and exposes the interlocutor’s linguistic inadequacies. The speakers in Firth’s (1996) data clearly focused on reaching their communicative goals and by doing “interactional work” which allowed them to conduct a robust conversation where non-standard structures were not a hindrance. Indeed, Firth (ibid.) claims that ELF speakers “have a remarkable ability and willingness to tolerate anomalous usage and marked linguistic behaviour even in the face of what appears to be usage that is at times acutely opaque” (1996: 247).

Having conducted multiple analyses and reviewing research in the field of ELF, Firth (2009) arrives at a conclusion that there is indeed ELF *sui generis*, however, he claims that the ‘ELF factor’ does not lie in neither language nor discourse forms produced, but in what he calls ‘entailment’ and ‘metatheory’. Entailment refers to “the inherent interactional and linguistic variability that lingua franca interactions entail” and “[m]etatheory refers to theoretical underpinnings and dispositions brought about by adopting a lingua franca outlook on language” (Firth 2009: 150). Having analyzed multiple telephone conversations Firth (ibid.) notes that the business conversations he analyzed point to a shift from ‘linguistic-form-as-target’ to ‘task-as-target’ and that the interlocutors employ all available, shared communicative resources (such as another language) if only they can help to achieve the goal. Naturally, those shared communicative resources are not stable, but need to be established locally and discursively. Another observation he makes regards the conjoined efforts of both interlocutors at shifting the focus away from the surface linguistic correctness and instead they focus on “transcendent interpersonal meaning” (p. 156). Firth (ibid.) notes that what seems to be a common denominator for all ELF encounters is the inherent variability, which is at the core of all ELF interactions, with regards to interactionality and the linguistic ‘form’, which is negotiated by each set of interlocutors, depending on their purposes, which also may change from turn to turn (Canagarajah 2007 in Firth 2009). It is this variability which causes interlocutors to observe each other’s proficiency and accommodate

accordingly and it is this that in turn points Firth to the conclusion that in order to be a competent ELF user mastering the “strategies for the accomplishment of accommodation of diverse practices and modes of meaning” (2009: 163) is what is essential, and not the mastering of a certain code. Indeed, he claims that ELF cannot be described *a priori*, as it is co-created by each set of interlocutors in specific social contexts.

Firth’s findings are in line with those of Meierkord who also notes that “ELF emerges out of and through interaction” (2004: 129). In her 1996 study she focused on conversations conducted at dinner tables by speakers of various L1s in a British student hall of residence. She audio taped the conversations and analyzed the opening and closing stages as well as topic management, politeness, overlaps, hesitations, and gambits. She arrived at a surprising conclusion that misunderstandings were a rarity, rather than a reoccurring problem, and that when they did occur, they were usually left unresolved and resulted in topic change. Additionally, Meierkord (*ibid.*) found in her data that ELF interactions are characterized by a smaller range of tokens, shorter, than in native speakers’ conversations, turns, a frequent employment of laughter as a supportive back channel.

In her 2000 study Meierkord also analyzed audio taped dinner talk among speakers of different L1s at a British student residence. This study allowed her to notice the speakers preferred safe topics, tended to pause for longer than usually both in-between, as well as within turns, used politeness phenomena, and relied on backchanneling, as well as supportive laughter. In conclusion, Meierkord (*ibid.*) notes that cooperation is a characteristic feature of ELF small talk.

House in her 1999 article, as noticed by Firth (2009), posed the same question regarding the existence of the lingua franca factor as he did in 1990. In her study, House (1999) looked at misunderstandings and similarly to Meierkord (1996) and Kaur (2011a, b), came to the conclusion that the occurrence of misunderstandings in ELF communication is not as common as it was thought (Scollon and Scollon 1995; Samovar and Porter 1991), and that those miscommunications that do take place are usually not grounded in the cultural background differences between the interlocutors. House’s (1999) findings also confirmed those of Firth (1996) regarding employment of the ‘let it pass’ or topic change strategies as reactions to misunderstandings.

Misunderstandings are, however, still present in ELF talk, and their main causes have been found by Kaur (2011a, b) to lie in ambiguity, mishearing (performance-related misunderstanding), and insufficient word knowledge (language-related misunderstanding). Kaur (*ibid.*) adds to the findings of Firth (1990, 1996), Gramkow (2001), House (1999), and Meierkord (2002) who all found that open or overt misunderstandings are rather rare, that “while ‘let-it-pass’ may explain the lack of overt displays of non-understanding by the recipient, it cannot likewise be attributed for the absence of open displays of misunderstanding” (Kaur 2011b: 97). The body of research shows that there is no link between culture differences and heightened risk of miscommunication, and that those misunderstandings which do happen, are usually caused by the same factors which may cause misunderstandings in one’s native language.

Creativity is one of the more important and observable features of ELF. House (1999) hypothesized that a specific use of discourse markers can be found in ELF speakers, with the reinterpretation and shift in function from being a “marker of intersubjectivity, cooperation, involvement, hedging politeness, smooth social interaction, or other interpersonal socio-centric purposes which have been found in literature (...) to characterize the use of *you know* in native English talk” (2009: 190) to speaker-supportive strategy. This hypothesis was confirmed by House (2009, 2010) where she looked at, among others, the reinterpretation of discourse markers *you know*, *I mean*, *I think*, *yes*, and *so*.

What is of great significance is House’s (2010) recognition of the importance of identity in ELF, and how its users create and maintain it by either relying on the pragmatic norms of their L1 community or create “new ELF norms to foster a sense of group identity in their local communities of practice” (p. 383). A similar finding, regarding the creative approach to English norms and domesticating them and their functions for ELF purposes, was Ranta’s (2006) observation of an abuse of the *-ing* form in ELF talk. According to Ranta (ibid.) the *-ing* ending is much more widely used by ELF speakers, and it carries a different meaning and function than that in native English. Namely, the *-ing* ending, because it prolongs a verb, draws the hearer’s attention, and therefore it has more prominence and is more explicit. Another study which focuses on the creativity of ELF, the creation of new discourse markers, creative use of chunking, was that of Mauranen (2009). She found that chunks, such as *in my opinion* and *in my point of view* (a combination of *in my view* and *from my point of view*) may play a convergent and divergent functions (maintaining discourse and shifting direction) for the purpose of, e.g. introducing a new topic.

The studies presented in this section all point to the same conclusion and that is that ELF speakers are aware of their resources, have the ability to use them creatively, with what one may call, intercultural communication competence and sensitivity. To be successful, ELF speakers need to accommodate and be tolerant towards both their own shortcomings as well as those of their interlocutors. Not signalling what may be a linguistic mistake in native English, ELF speakers are supportive towards each other, if they do not understand something, they pretend to do so in order not to cause a problematic situation, and they ask for clarification and use other proactive strategies as repetition, self-repair, and paraphrasing (Mauranen 2006; Kaur 2009) to ensure the felicity of their conversations.

English as a Lingua Franca has just as many opponents as it has proponents. Among the main reasons lies its status and its place in English language teaching. Other reasons include among others, the use of a ‘lingua franca’ epithet, philosophical grounds and the variability with which different terms are used. Possibly the only commonly agreed matter is that there is indeed an observable English specific to Europe. What this English, this ELF, is, however, remains still debatable, as reported by Jenkins et al. (2011). In this section some of the more problematic and important issues concerning ELF will be discussed. Firstly, the status of ELF as a learner language will be discussed, secondly, its status as a variety will be examined, and thirdly, other conceptualizations of

ELF will be reviewed. Then, the place of ELF in the second language acquisition (SLA) framework will be discussed; the discussion of the question regarding the norm to which ELF learners should aspire if the native speaker competence is not the yardstick, will follow, along with an attempt to characterize a proficient ELF speaker.

One of the main controversies surrounding ELF is its status as a variety or set of varieties (e.g. Mollin 2006; Ferguson 2009). Before exploring this issue any further it will be useful to overview the definitions of the term variety, learner English and register—the three terms used by different scholars to refer to ELF.

One of the most common and repeatedly brought up accusations against ELF is that it sanctions forms different from the target language, widely perceived as errors and by doing so, it positions the imperfect user of a given standard English as a perfect user of ELF. The English ELF speakers use is different from the norms of the target language, but it is claimed not to be deficient. This is different from the traditional SLA perspective which views learner language as a developing system characterized by errors and developmental patterns.

Learner errors have been defined as “a deviation from the norms of the target language” (Ellis 1995: 51). Ellis (*ibid.*) goes on to say that “the description of learner errors involves a comparison of learner’s idiosyncratic utterance with a reconstruction of those utterances in the target language” (p. 54). This implies that although language learner is of interest for both research and pedagogical purposes it is always subject to assessment for the degree to which it matches the native speaker norm.

Before a learner reaches the target of native like competence s/he finds him/herself on an interlanguage continuum—on a continuum, where at one end of the spectrum is his/her L1 competence, and on the other the native-like competence in L2. The observation of the general patterns of language produced by L2 learners led to the formulation of the interlanguage hypothesis, originally proposed by Selinker (1972). Interlanguage was defined as a system containing elements caused by language transfer (that is elements of L1), transfer of training (that is the elements resulting from the way in which the learner was taught), strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication [“as identifiable approach by the learner to communication with native speakers of the TL” (Selinker 1972: 37)] and overgeneralization of the target language material. The interlanguage hypothesis assumed that learners construct and reconstruct their grammars in the process of learning, which makes it possible for the learner to move along the interlanguage continuum. However, as it was noticed that L2 learners generally find it unattainable to reach the native-like competence, some elements of their interlanguage have been claimed to fossilize.

When learning a language some deviations, identified as ‘persistent errors’ become a permanent part of a learner’s language system. The term fossilization has been used to refer to these stable errors, insensitive to further language instruction or experience. The concept of fossilization has been used in describing the process of SLA rather than in describing language usage. The observation of variability in the use of learner language caused further

development of interlanguage studies. Tarone (1979) formulated a variability theory in which she adopted the stylistic continuum and predicted that the more careful style would include more correct, target-like forms in interlanguage, at the same time being less systematic. However, the prediction that learners would produce most target-like forms when ‘on their best linguistic behaviour’ was not found to be supported by all studies. In some cases, particularly when associated with high prestige, learners were found to use more L1 forms in formal language (Beebe 1980). Having considered research in the field, Tarone (1983) reformulated her theory to include the possibility of increasing both target language and/or native language forms in careful style. Regardless of the stylistic conditioning, the target in interlanguage studies was firmly associated with native-like proficiency.

Despite Jenkins’ repeated claims that ELF is not to be treated as a foreign language (e.g. Jenkins 2006) and therefore cannot be conceptually linked to the interlanguage continuum and SLA theory, and despite the repeated attempts to re-conceptualize the notion of a proficient and developing ELF user, many remain unconvinced.

One of the main aims of the ELF theory is to remove the native speaker from the centre, to de-position him/her from the top of the hierarchy, to relieve the non-native speakers of English from the “view that NNSs are perforce deficient communicators who are perpetually, agonizingly, chronically struggling, like Sisyphus and his stone, to ascend the steep incline of their “interlanguage”, the goal being the promised land of “target competence”, that hallowed place reserved for the fabled and idealized native speakers” (Firth 2009: 151).

In ELF studies some of the features of non-native use of English that persist in the non-native data are regarded as elements of variants and not examples of fossilization. These include dropping third person *s*, confusing the relative pronouns *who/which*, or problems with prepositions and articles (Seidlhofer 2007: 220). These forms are no longer seen as proofs of incomplete learning, errors resistant to correction, instead they are postulated to function as characteristic features of ELF as a variety. House (2010) distinguishes ELF from interlanguage by stating that first, what is under investigation is “a learner (a concept emphasizing the developmental aspect) and a non-native speaker (a notion emphasizing the speaker’s knowledge as deficient in comparison to that of a native speaker.”, whereas “[t]he focus in ELF research is on language use (rather than on development) and on sociopragmatic functions of language choice” (House 2010: 366).

Jenkins (2009) believes that interlanguage theory “is entirely irrelevant to ELF, where lingua franca varieties of English are emerging in their own right and exhibiting shared features which differ systematically from NS English norms, regardless of the ELF speaker’s L1” (Jenkins 2009: 142). Jenkins is not the only one who opposes the anglo-centric conceptualizations and the view of the deficient learner (e.g. Firth 1996, 2009; Prodromou 2008). However, in her quest to liberate the defenceless non-native users of English from the oppression of native English speakers, ELF has been accused of sanctioning pidgin English,

condemning its speakers to the second-class status (Scheuer 2005). Here are some of the possibly more critical remarks, which Jenkins herself invokes in different publications:

- Sobkowiak (2005: 141) describes an ELF approach to pronunciation as one that will 'bring the ideal [that is, Received Pronunciation] down into the gutter with no check-point along the way'.
- Prodromou, in several similarly worded articles, describes ELF as 'a broken weapon' and its speakers as 'stuttering onto the world stage' (e.g. 2006: 412).
- Roy Harris, referring, in a letter to the Times Higher Education Supplement (14 September 2007, p. 14), to the fact that Korean Airlines had reportedly chosen to use French speakers of English, rather than British or American English speakers, because Koreans found the English of the French more intelligible, makes this comment: 'I couldn't care less what kind of English Korean Airlines inflict on their passengers.'

(Jenkins 2009: 203)

Refusing to view the language used by non-native speakers as an approximation to the native language system, Jenkins and others proposed to treat the English used for communication purposes among non-natives as a variety or set of varieties in their own right. ELF is therefore meant to be free of the native speaker proficiency yardstick.

The term 'variety' seems to be a particularly useful way of referring to concepts which many linguists would call 'language', 'dialect' or 'register' (Hudson 1980). As a cover term it has been employed by McCrum et al. (1986, 2002) in their description of English world-wide, as they say that "the English language is a continuum of speech. Using variety we avoid the pejorative overtone of dialect" (p. 5). The advantage of using the term 'variety' stems also from its shared usage and understanding in both within and outside the research community. In the context of ELF 'variety' has been defined in terms of shared features of idiolects (Mollin 2006) and by Ferguson (1971: 30) "any body of human speech patterns which is sufficiently homogenous to be analyzed by available techniques of synchronic description [...]". Taking all the definitions together, one may conclude that a 'variety' is a neutral, umbrella term which focuses on shared elements of a number of speakers without necessarily defining the boundaries, such as, for example, the difference between a dialect and a language.

Some of the agreed on criteria for calling a "bundle of idiolects that share certain features" (Mollin 2006: 43) a variety, are fore-mostly the existence of language use regularities displayed by a specific speech community, the standardization of these regular patterns, presence of norms accepted by a large group of speakers, and finally the possibility of its codification (Kachru 1985; McArthur 1998; Melchers and Shaw 2003; after Prodromou 2007). Some, such as Seidlhofer (2004: 212) claim that ELF "has taken a life of its own", that it is in the process of becoming a recognizable variety, undergoing nativization and that "first signs of something like a characteristic emergent European English" (2006: 9) could be observed. Seidlhofer is supported in her view by Jenkins (2006) who believes ELF to be an emerging variety of English, slowly coming to a point (which she hypothesizes could happen in possibly 15 years) of stabilization,



institutionalization and codification. Meyerhoff (2006) too, sees ELF as having a “variety potential”.

However, many have agreed that the term ‘variety’ cannot be used to describe ELF (Mollin 2006; Ruby and Saraceni 2006; Prodromou 2008; Berns 2009; Jenkins et al. 2011). One of the arguments against is that “[i]n ELF there is no consistency of form that goes beyond participant level” (House 2006: 88) and that “ELF situations have the frequent attribute of occurring between ever new conversation patterns, so that its speaker community is constantly in flux rather than remaining stable and fixed” (Mollin 2006: 45). Seeing that ELF is characterized by variability (e.g. Canagarajah 2007; Firth 2009; Jenkins et al. 2011) there can be no talk of “a negotiation towards a common standard in all of these ever-changing conversation situations” (Mollin 2006: 45), of homogeneity, which would assure ELF variety status. This in turn points to issues with codification. Among others, James (2006), as well as Ferguson (2009) express their doubts about the possibility of codifying ELF. Additionally, Smit (2010) Prodromou (2006) and Gnutzmann (2005) point to the association of varieties with communities which share historical, linguistic and cultural backgrounds and consequently linguistic features. Finally, even Seidlhofer (2006) voices her doubts about the rightfulness of calling ELF a variety, calling it an “open question” (p. 46). The question “whether ELF can be considered a language variety or even a group of varieties in the traditional sense of notion” is finally answered by Jenkins et al. (2011) “[w]e would argue that it cannot” (p. 296).

Bearing the above in mind Pennycook (2009: 195 in Jenkins et al. 2011: 296) notices that ELF looks to try and “come to grips with a non-centrist understanding of English as an international language that is dependent neither on hegemonic versions of central English nor on nationally defined new Englishes, but rather attempts to account for the ever-changing negotiated spaces of current language use”. Both Seidlhofer (2009) and Smit (2010) agree that in order to capture the nature of ELF it is paramount to abandon the old terminology as “terms ‘community’ and ‘variety’ are, by and large, still used in the same way as they were long before the days of mass international air travel, let alone electronic communication.” (Seidlhofer 2009: 238). They also accept the fact that ELF is “a truly new phenomenon with new requirements” (Smit 2010: 61) and that it is time to “embed ELF in a new, more appropriate conceptual frame (Dewey 2009)” (Smit 2010: 61).

Rather than talking about a variety, Seidlhofer (2009: 238) suggests adopting the concept “of *communities of practice* characterized by ‘mutual engagement’ in shared practices, taking part in some jointly negotiated ‘enterprise’, and making use of members’ ‘shared repertoire’.” In a similar vein, Smit (2010), develops what she calls ‘a sociolinguistic descriptive frame of oral ELF practice’ (p. 66) where she talks about “individual repertoire, communicating and established practice” as inter-related elements of communication. Her way of conceptualizing communication in ELF grows out of the framework originally put forward by James (2005, 2006). His model includes three different dimensions of language use which correspond to the user (dialect), use of the language (register), and the

actual using of the language in a particular situation (genre). The advantage of using James' model to describe ELF is that it allows for a multi-dimensional account of its variability. There are different sources of variability and recognizing them makes the task of investigating them easier. Noticing three dimensions of social language usage James distinguishes between communities and positioning of the speaker with respect to a given situation. The first perspective is that of a user belonging to a particular speech community or communities, for example a Polish user of English is a member of a general community of English speakers with the background of Polish and depending on his or her gender, age, education, social status, language proficiency level etc. may belong to other, more finely defined speech communities. This perspective is non-situated in the sense that it does not refer to a specific language use in a particular language situation but to the language available to the user. The second perspective is referred to as semi-situated, as it refers to conventionalized language, that is register specific to particular discourse communities (who one speaks to and about what). The final perspective is most embedded in actual communication as it refers to a particular use of language in a given situation. James refers to it as genre used within communities of practice.

Commenting on James' (2005, 2006) suggestions, Smit (2010) notices that by referring to traditional, categorically defined sociolinguistic notions, the model suffers from the baggage of the terms used, e.g. a dialect is specified for features of phonetics, phonology and grammar, but not semantics, suggesting stability of meaning across discourse communities, not to mention communities of practice. She claims that the postmodern nature of language use requires a different labeling system, and therefore proposes referring to the dialect, variability of user as 'individual repertoire', to variability according to use as 'established practice', and to variability according to using as 'communicating' (Smit 2010: 63). This labeling grants ELF a fresh start, without any bias.

Fairclough (1989) made a point regarding the responsibility language teachers bear for maintaining the power imbalance. If none of us consented to accepting the established practice which favours the British or American culture over any other, we, the non-native speakers of English would not be lower in the hierarchy of English. Llurda and Huguet (2003) found that teachers from Catalonia still have an anglo-centric mindset, and attribute greater value to the knowledge of the British culture, than their own or that of any other European country. Llurda (2004: 319) notes what many had already observed, that "many teachers in EFL settings (particularly non-native teachers) do not seem to be very sensitive to the new perspectives that are opening up in front of them, and are still anchored in the old native-speaker dominated framework in which British or American norms have to be followed and native speakers are considered the ideal teachers". Llurda (2004) calls for non-native speakers to stop seeing themselves as deficient users of English, but rather as speakers of English in their own right, because it is only then that it will be possible to take the control over English from the native speakers and "feel entitled to the authoritative use of a variety of the language that belongs to them" (Llurda 2004: 320).

The case of teaching phonetics and phonology is possibly most straightforward as LFC has been precisely specified. As mentioned earlier, LFC follows the line of thought developed by a number of scholars who have realised that maintaining a native-like model as a target for a growing community of non-native speakers is not realistic. While the claim that it is comfortable intelligibility that is a better formulation of the aim in pronunciation teaching has been generally accepted, there has been still a tendency to promote the native speaker model in teaching pronunciation across Europe. Studies conducted in an academic setting showed that students saw fluency as the main aim, while not convinced about the attainability of reaching native like pronunciation (Waniek-Klimczak 2002; Waniek-Klimczak and Klimczak 2005). This may suggest that there is a positive ground for formulating the pronunciation priorities that could guarantee “comfortable intelligibility” as the first phase of pronunciation education. In fact, this is the view of ELF that Jenkins et al. (2011) put forward, that is they treat ELF not as a model or target, but a set of priorities.

With reference to Polish, the assumed ease in teaching elements of ELF were investigated by Szpyra-Kozłowska (2005). Having analyzed the LFC, phonetic universals and the elements of the Polish sound system she concluded that many LFC features cannot be treated as simplification for a Polish learner. Addressing this conclusion, Jenkins (2005) responds that LFC is not meant to provide easier solutions in pronunciation teaching, as it aims to single out those elements which are crucial for communication regardless of their relative ease for language learners from different language backgrounds.

There are a number of controversial issues when individual elements of ELF are considered, for example, Jenkins (2005) includes in LFC such elements as vowel length, aspiration and fortis-lenis distinction in word final consonants. All of these features are specific for English (although aspiration is not present in all English varieties e.g. Scottish) and relatively rare across other languages (Szpyra-Kozłowska 2005). Another questionable decision is that of exclusion of word stress from the LFC on the basis of its assumed unteachability.

The above considerations lead to the conclusion that accepting LFC as a set of priorities may be difficult in the teaching context. Apart from problems of a more theoretical nature, there are also good practical reasons for maintaining a native speaker model in the school system. As noticed by Trudgill “[t]here is nothing special about RP and no particular reason to use it except that courses and recordings and materials are already massively available, which is a powerful pragmatic reason, particularly in Europe” (Trudgill 2005: 93).

A possible solution to the controversy may be offered by a distinction between the model presented in course of language instruction and the specification of realistic targets aimed for by the students and the teachers. One cannot fail to notice that in solving this controversy it may be suitable to allow the learners to decide. As Jenkins et al. (2011) stress—the aim of ELF is not to impose on learners a specific model, but to give them and the teachers a choice.

Matsumoto (2011) advocates exposing learners to a range of Englishes and ELF users and raising their awareness to better prepare them for communicating

with everyone, and not just the speakers of a specific standard. He insists “that ELT models should encompass more variety rather than use a single model that is mostly based on the native speaker norm as a yard stick” (Matsumoto 2011: 111). The choice of the model should be an informed decision based on the ELT programme, learners’ choice, and the teacher’s decision. Ur (2010) rightly observes, however, that despite the fact that “people prefer, in these post-modernist times, to reject single standards or any kind of unified model, in favour of pluralism, diversity and heterogeneity (...) it is simply not a practical model for classroom teaching purposes. English teachers cannot teach a variety of usages: they simply do not have the time” (Ur 2010: 89).

Additionally, language teachers have been known to be resistant to change. Sifakis (2007) believes teachers need to be educated in a new way, one that would involve more than just familiarising them with ELF theories and research findings, in fact, he believes, that such an approach could be detrimental and lead to oversimplification, and reinforcement of stereotypes. Since a vast majority of teachers in Europe are very much set in their mindset regarding the prestige of British English, Sifakis (2007: 370) believes that in order to make teachers aware of what ELF is and what it entails, as well as to help them to “open up to change by realizing and transforming their worldviews and perspectives about ESOL teaching” a five phase framework for teacher education, based on Mezirow’s transformative adult learning paradigm, could prove immensely useful. The first phase, called preparation, involves learning about the teachers in the group, about their teaching experiences and English use. The second phase, which Sifakis (2007) refers to as ‘identifying the primary issues of ELF discourse’ is one during which the teachers get to know each other and slowly discover ELF. During the next phase, ‘raising awareness of secondary issues in ELF discourse’, the teachers learn about (through familiarizing themselves with specific ELF-related texts) and discuss, among others, issues involving multilingualism, personal plurilingualism, language policies, and the role of English in the EU. Phase four, ‘ELF and pedagogy’, focuses on the reflection of the teachers on their professional identity and their teaching situations. The final phase, ‘formulating an ELF action plan’, brings together the newly acquired knowledge and awareness of the teachers about ELF and focuses on teachers to design, implement and evaluate an ELF action plan. Such “transformative learning in ELF teacher education will result not only in whole-hearted engagement with the issues raised in ELF research but also in participants’ essential empowerment as users of English and pedagogues.” (Sifakis 2007: 358–359).

Sifakis’ (2007) proposal on how to educate teachers is one that may be implemented without the full description of ELF. Seidlhofer (2004: 227) agrees that “[t]eachers of English need to understand the implications of the unprecedented spread of the language and the complex decisions they will be required to take” and that the education the teachers will need is one that “would foster an understanding of the processes of language variation and change, the relationship between language and identity, the importance of social-psychological factors in intercultural communication and the suspect nature of any supposedly universal solutions to pedagogic problems” (p. 228).

## 2.4 Conclusion

Having discussed different views on English used by non-native users of English, and particularly English as a Lingua Franca, several conclusions can be drawn. Foremost, it needs to be stressed that Seidlhofer and Jenkins were catalysts in the discussion of the role and characteristics of English in Europe. However important their contribution is, it is beyond any doubt to the author's mind that ELF is not and will never be the solution to the European linguistic dilemma due to several factors. Firstly, ELF is not a viable candidate because it comes with a 'baggage' of being perceived by some as a negatively stereotyped 'pidgin', placing its speaker in a disadvantageous position. Secondly, the decades long work of British Council cannot be undone quickly; most teachers and learners have a deep devotion to the 'purity' of Queen's English and the need to pursue a native-like target. The shift from idealised standard English as a target to ELF norms is not one that can be seen as realistically possible. Thirdly, in spite of what its proponents may claim, ELF bears close similarity to the fossilised interlanguage, with lexico-grammatical and phonological features in the centre of attention. The focus on form overshadows the focus on culture, and since language is the main carrier of culture, it seems unreasonable and unthinkable that a language that could potentially be used as a main means of communication between EU citizens would not provide means for expressing a diversity of European cultural heritage without running the risk of being treated as inferior due to the linguistic form used in communication. Europe is intrinsically hierarchical and therefore even a suggestion that ELF, a 'simplified', meaning in fact incorrect language for the less capable, provokes the reactions of disbelief and anger (see the discussion in Dziubalska-Kołaczyk and Przedlacka 2005).

The final conclusion to the discussion presented in this chapter is that a key factor in the successful use of language is cooperation and knowledge of how to interact with other non-native speakers with whom we do not share the same cultural and/or linguistic background. Consequently, one needs to distinguish between learning a language with the purpose of interacting with native speakers of the language in the context of their culture and learning a language for intercultural communication, as the two are not the same. Since it is assumed here that there is a possibility of specifying English for European Communication, it is the second type of learning that is discussed in the following chapter.

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