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Multimodal Corpora in Second Language Acquisition
of English as a Lingua Franca

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ABSTRACT

After exploring the characteristics of international English, its wide range of varieties comprehended in World Englishes, and the use it shows as a Lingua Franca (ELF); we realize that current English language manifest more variations, language changes and multilingualism than any other language. Departing from these premises, the logical path takes us to understand the impact produced in the ways we acquire English as a second language. Traditional SLA procedures denote obsolescence when approaching ELF. We are then incited to move in the direction of new models that achieve success in ELF. Here, corpora proves to be a useful tool, and particularly multimodal corpora, that shows inspiring results.

Keywords: *World Englishes* , *ELF*, *multilingualism*, *SLA*, *standard*, *multimodal corpora*

RESUMEN

Tras explorar las características del inglés internacional, el amplio rango de variedades que se incluyen en los *ingleses del mundo* y el uso que muestra como Lingua Franca, nos damos cuenta de que la lengua inglesa presenta más variaciones, cambios lingüísticos y multilingüismo que cualquier otra lengua. Partiendo de estas premisas, la lógica nos lleva a entender el impacto que se produce en la manera en que aprendemos inglés como segunda lengua. Las metodologías tradicionales de aprendizaje de segunda lengua se muestran obsoletas si entendemos el inglés como una Lingua Franca. De esta manera, se nos incita a buscar nuevos modelos que obtengan éxito a la hora de enseñar inglés como Lingua Franca. Así, los corpus parecen una herramienta útil, especialmente los corpus multimodales, que muestran resultados inspiradores.

Palabras clave: *ingleses del mundo*, *ELF*, *multilinguismo*, *SLA*, *lengua estándar*, *corpus multimodales*

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1. Introduction

All human beings present the innate capacity to develop a language, a system that allows all of us to communicate between each other in form of a language (Meyer, 2009). This language is very few times static, but dynamic; and suffers changes constantly. In order to understand this communication system, linguistics, the multidisciplinary study of human communication emerges. Saussure (1916) explained, in his posthumous work, that a language is just a part of a larger semiotic system; this meant a codification of ideas. He shed light over words considering that they were the arbitrary signs that real things, processes, and abstract concepts accounted for. However, we cannot use isolated signs without a context. To create expansions of meaning these units need to relate to other signs. In this way, larger structures appear to create more complex meaning. The combination of these structures forms a language that will be shared by a community or a country.

Sometimes, due to historic factors, a language spreads in different countries creating variations of that language. This is the case of English: it has undergone several processes in the last decades, to the point that it is now used as an international vehicle for communication. As we are going to see, there have been different stages of this event.

The objective of this dissertation is to produce an understanding of the current views of English in its international role, and more specifically, to relate those views to Second Language Acquisition. In this way, I will try to prove that current and mainstream methods in language learning fail to acquire the properties of English in a global situation. Once this is done, the next objective of this dissertation will be the one of proposing corpora to bring real language to second language learners following the three considerations of international English (i.e. English as an International Language, World Englishes, and English as a Lingua Franca). Finally, my last objective will be based on the description of multimodal applications of these corpora.

In order to fulfill these objectives, the first question that will be answered is whether English is an international language and what that means. Later, an explanation of the varieties that characterize this language will follow, explaining its extents and its implications; especially those related to language learning. We will need to analyze how this new form of language works, how its speakers behave and how they influence the language they use. Once English in its current state is explained, the next step will position it in regard of Second Language Acquisition. The aim of this section will be to analyze how the mainstream learning methods have tried to produce acquisition. This will result in an evaluation of whether traditional acquisition is still able to satisfy the necessities of English in an international context. Finally, I will propose specific methods of Second Language Acquisition that will focus on the learning of the characteristics of international English.

2. English language

Since the object of this dissertation is English, the first question that rises is what exactly such a thing is. We know that there are a lot of English varieties, some of them with the prestige enough to be considered Standards (i.e. American Standard English or Indian Standard English) and some others, on the other hand not so prestigious, are considered non-standard dialects, sociolects or idiolects (Herk 2012). These approaches to language are the object of study of descriptive grammar; while just the first one, the standardized forms, is the object of study of prescriptive grammar (Hinkel 2018). Although both realizations of language achieve communication in the same way, just the prescriptive grammar is used by traditional language teachers (e.g. ‘who’ should be used in subject position and ‘whom’ should be used in object position) (Hinkel 2018). In this way, non-standard forms have been left out of language teaching.

This way of teaching can be useful in a context where English learners will have to interact with English native speakers. English as second language (henceforth L2) speakers will produce the prescriptive grammar that was learnt in the classroom obtaining a good understanding by the English L1 speaker. Nevertheless, as we are going to see, English has

changed, has adopted a new role in the world, and its communication processes are not as simple as the previous example showed.

3. *Is English an International Language?*

Apart from the standard and non-standard varieties we have mentioned, we find English in many more circumstances in which no first language (henceforth L1) is present. Thus, English is used as a vehicle language between two second language (henceforth L2) speakers that use English as a common language. This is one of the cases of *English as an International Language* (henceforth EIL).

When one is approaching EIL, another related concept is present in many researches, *Interlanguage*. This concept refers to the language of the learner. These ideas are sometimes confusing as both reflect a perspective in which native speakers take a second role. In this way, an explanation is required of what EIL and interlanguage mean; Davies (1989) defines them by stating that:

EIL is seen as a recognizable thing, whereas IL is seen as a development process. The fact is that EIL is best seen as a continuum or even as a process (and therefore not unlike common views of IL), whereas IL, which has been defined as the learner's systematic approximations toward the target language, is best seen and increasingly is seen as a product or set of products (goals or targets to be achieved) that mark out the learner's path as a member of a second language speech community. (448)

According to Davis, we can determine interlanguage to be the process that an English learner follows when developing a second language. Something that needs to be considered a language in the same way that a child's utterances are considered a language, although the young kid produces errors; it is undeniable that what it is being spoken is a language. The language of a L2 learner is similar; it is found in a developmental stage, and errors or differences from the standard version do not stop the speaker to consider his utterances a language. The author then, points that the interlanguage speaker will be part of a second language speech community. Does this mean that interlanguage learners will group in

different developmental stages? As we will see, it is not the proficiency level of the English L2 what will group these learners, but the geographical features what will do it.

On the other hand, EIL is presented to be a continuum, a range of all the variations in the English language; a product of different cultures and peoples speaking the same language, but doing so with different purposes, particularities and motivations. This definition makes us think about why English can be considered an international language? Also, what variety of that continuum is used as the Standard English? And if that variety can be the referent of an international language or just a dialect of said language? In this way, we must firstly ask ourselves what English has that other languages do not.

Crystal (1988) answers this question by explaining that English has all the characteristics to be considered an international language: English has a large number of mother tongue countries in different continents (e.g. United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, or New Zealand); English has a large number of second language countries (e.g. Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, India, and Pakistan); and finally, English has a large number of countries where it is used as a mediating language (e.g. Germany, Italy, Japan, China, and Thailand). Furthermore, he gives examples where we can appreciate how the internationality of the English language is undeniable:

English has become the dominant language of world communication. Textbooks on English these days regularly rehearse the litany of its achievements. It is the main language of the world's books, newspapers and advertising. It is the official international language of airports and air traffic control. It is the chief maritime language. It is the language of international business and academic conferences, of diplomacy, of sport. Over two-thirds of the world's scientists write in English. Three quarters of the world's mail is written in English. Eighty per cent of all the information stored in the electronic retrieval systems of the world is stored in English ... Statistics of this kind ... make the point that it is not the number of mother-tongue speakers which makes a language important in the eyes of the world ... but the extent to which a language is found useful outside its original setting. (Crystal 6-7)

This description is interesting from two points of view. First, Crystal captures the meaning of EIL by enumerating its extents and uses with international purposes; then, he comments that English is important for the range of fields it covers and not for its number of native

speakers. If we accept, as Crystal does, this premise; speakers of English as a second or a foreign language must be taken into account. In this way, speakers of English as a second and foreign language are the ones in charge of using English as a medium for a specific communication, and at the same time, of transforming English into an international language.

In any case, how can English be considered the international language if it is not the most spoken language in the world? Should not the most spoken language the one considered international? The most spoken language, Chinese, is that it is used intranationally, inside the frontiers of the same nation rather than internationally, hence, considering it of international use would not make much sense. Swahili and Spanish are a similar case, although their speakers are distributed in different countries, they work similarly as in the Chinese case, but inside a *multipolity* (Davies 1989) (i.e. several countries working as one due to their similarities and geographical distribution). This means that these languages behave inside similar countries and that they are not distributed globally with the uses English has just showed.

Thus, English has proved to be an international object, so where do standards stand for in this situation? Davies (1989) positions standards as the referent of the non-native speakers: “most EIL uses involve this standard educated English, the more formal code in its written mode” (460). By this view, we should consider that EIL uses have one standard or another as referent. All variations will look up for the standardized forms to create the interlanguage that will be employed. Yet, after having mentioned that English counts with many standards, non-standards, and variations; how can we consider one only standard to be the referent?

“Who is to say when a variety of English has the prestige to make it into a standard and therefore a potential teaching target? My view is that it is the users themselves. Just as Americans decided that their target was no longer British English, so Indians and other nativized English speakers will-or will not-make the same decision.” (Davies 1989: 464-465)

This is the conclusion that Davies proposes, users deciding on their chosen target for education purposes. However, this is pointless since we are talking about an international language that is learnt almost in every country in the world. The conclusion should point in the opposite direction: a shared methodology that allows its learners to interact with learners from other countries and still be understood.

4. World Englishes and Standards

We have stated that English was already considered an international language by Davis and Crystal back in 1989. Davies stated that the continuum of Englishes looked at Standard English forms, but he did not propose a standard form to guide L2 learners to. This leads us to an ambiguity of the referent language; if there is no model to look at, no real input is received. In order to solve this riddle we will have to take a look at the history of English and move to another concept denominated World Englishes

A symposium of authors working together in ‘The Handbook of World Englishes’ tried to enclose most of the processes of English through frontiers and history. These steps could be understood as the first stages that have led English language to its current enigma state when we say that English is found in an international context. In this work, the first consideration is written by King (2008), who described the first broadening that English took in its expansion. He introduced the First Diaspora (i.e. the first international expansion of English) beginning in Ireland and Wales, the first examples of one language assuming the place of another. The expansion continued, as Schneider (2008) comments, with the Second Diaspora in the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Then, the Third Diaspora was added by several authors (e.g. Gargesh , Honna, Bautista, Rajagopalan,) due to the vast number of expansions that were produced in the following period. These authors commented on the territories in Asia, Africa and Europe and the received influence of English. In all these works, the authors analyze the countries and regions in which English has been adopted as a second language.

However, these facts are only relevant to our topic since they set a bed in which World Englishes, the next step of these descriptions, lay. The relevant inquiry is the next expansion period: *World Englishes*. So, what was denominated World Englishes? Such concept became subject of study in two conferences held in April and June-July of 1978. The content was, in short terms, a discussion about the sociopolitical contexts of English, how English was used in Anglophone colonies, and how did they influence each other (Kachru, 1992). Kachru, one of the main promoters of the term World Englishes explained:

The term symbolizes the functional and formal variations, divergent sociolinguistic contexts, ranges and varieties of English in creativity, and various types of acculturation in parts of the Western and non-Western world. This concept emphasizes “WE-ness,” and not the dichotomy between us and them (the native and non-native users.) (2)

With this statement, Kachru tried to expand the idea that English, in its native speakers, was the referent to look at by the rest of the world. Instead, he appreciated the creativity and acculturation that these new English variations added to the whole concept of English language. Also interesting is the model he proposed to understand the situation of English language in relation to its purposes and geography. He suggested a three circle method in which he addressed the extension that English covered: English as a Native Language, inner circle; English as a Second Language, outer circle; and English as a Foreign Language, expanding circle. In this interpretation of English, no standard or specific English is above any other. They are enclosed by the function they provide.

Although his was the major study in the field of World Englishes, other realizations of English as another kind of language were already flourishing progressively by several authors in the decade of 1980s. English as a language in a spreading state was included in works by Quirk (1985), McArthur (1987), or Llamzon (1983). Each of them proposed new views of World Englishes, seeking to expand English language from traditional frontiers. Most of them were proposing that World Englishes added cultural features to the language, enriching the language (LLamzon 1983). Others, like Quirk, approached World Englishes criticizing the problems that came along with the neglect of the traditional standards. He was not quite ready to accept the diminishment of standards, as he comments,

It seems likely, indeed, that the existence of standards (in moral and sexual behaviour, in dress, in taste generally) is an endemic feature of our mortal condition and that people feel alienated and disoriented if a standard seems to be missing in any of these areas. Certainly, ordinary folk with their ordinary common sense have gone on knowing that there are standards in language and they have gone on crying out to be taught them (5-6)

Standards here are granted to be part of human being, a requisite to obtain a behavior. Nevertheless, standard forms are static systems that try, in this case, to represent very dynamic language. As we are going to see, the most relevant characteristics of English in its most wide use will be multilingualism and rapid language variation. If we consider (that we must) the fact that English has come to a point where most its uses happen in the absence of native speakers (Dewey, 2007), we should move our eyes towards these interactions rather to native speakers standards.

5. *English as a Lingua Franca*

It was these discussions on World Englishes by Kachru and Smith in the 80s and 90s that influenced new proposals regarding language with international use. The most prominent and still being widely used is the nomenclature that considers English a *Lingua Franca* (English as a Lingua Franca, henceforth ELF). This denomination was firstly used by Jenkins (2009). She used it to describe the communication coded in English between speakers of different first languages. This definition, along with other two, are the ones researchers often look to: Seidholfer (2011) considering it “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (7), and Mortensen (2013) considering it the use of English in a lingua franca scenario:

In an L1–L1 language scenario, or what may also be called a shared L1 scenario, there is overlap on the speakers’ first language (L1), but in a lingua franca scenario this is not so. In this case, there is a distinct (mis)match between the participants’ individual language repertoires: There is either no overlap at all on the speakers’ L1 or only partial overlap, but there is total overlap on the language that they choose to use as a lingua franca (36).

In these definitions, nothing stands in the way of one of the interlocutors being a native English speaker (always that the other interlocutor is not English L1). However, interactions between two native speakers are not included; this is the main difference between ELF and EIL.

Since no two same-L1-speakers are included in this language use, one of the main characteristics of ELF needs to be *multilingualism* (Jenkins 2009: 63). This phenomenon supposes that in conversations where ELF is being used, several languages are in contact, adding features to the mediating language, or modifying each other. So relevant is this feature, that Jenkins (2015) had to retheorize what she proposed: multilingualism is not a part of ELF, but its whole:

it will come as no surprise that the alternative I am going to suggest is a view of ELF that positions it within multilingualism, rather than the current view which sees multilingualism as an aspect of ELF. In other words, what I am talking about could be called ‘English as a Multilingua Franca,’ with the following working definition: Multilingual communication in which English is available as a contact language of choice, but is not necessarily chosen. (73)

In this light, Jenkins considers that English as a Lingua Franca occurs in communications that are in a multilingual context, and not the other way around, as it was previously thought. After this statement, she adds another characteristic: the presence of the L1 of a non-native speaker is going to influence their own English speech (e.g. An Italian speaking English will show Italian features). Following, she expounds the concept *repertoires in flux*; this denotes the influence of others’ L1 in the course of the discourse, influencing others’ output (e.g. An Italian speaker of ELF will produce Italian features that are going to influence his interlocutors’ speech). Thusly, we see how this type of communication is influenced by changes constantly, adding external elements. Finally, she calls for a further description of how ‘contact’ influences this type of language. This call is answered by Mauranen, proposing three different perspectives of how contact influences ELF.

6. Contact in English as a Lingua Franca

In the 80s, English as an international language presented itself as a continuum of varieties in different regions in the world. Then, the studies considering all the World Englishes were included. And now, the recent approach towards English as lingua franca has proposed new visions of this idea.

Following Kachru's terminology, inner circle countries are not exempt of multilingualism as well. Schmitz (2014) explains that, for example, United Kingdom is a society where many languages are in contact (i.e. Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Arabic, French, Chinese, Portuguese and Spanish: a total of 2,222,000 non-native speakers in 2013); and in the case of United States there is no big difference in terms of proportion (i.e. Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, French, German, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Italian, and Portuguese: a total of 42,642,890 non-native speakers in 2013). It seems that multilingualism is something that affects English in most circumstances where this language is found. Mauranen (2018) points that 'Inner circle' countries have demonstrated to be multilingual, 'outer circle' countries are not English-speaking monolingual, and the 'Expanding circle' has used English as an extra element in their multi-faceted linguistic scenario. According to this statement, English in a monolingual static place is difficult to find, it rather finds itself surrounded by other languages and contexts. People communicate through different variations all the time, and, at the same time, language contact is one of the key features of language dynamism, speakers leave a trace or an influence in each other. As Mauranen (2018) comments, "language contact, or exogenous change, is one of the most widely recognized and accepted engines of language change" (4).

Bearing in mind these two statements (i.e. ELF's characteristic multilingual context and language contact as a recognized language changer), the concept of Standard English that many authors tried to allocate is now facing problems as standards tend to be static. It is not that previously there was not language change and standards could be used, it is that language change is currently happening in an exponential way.

Now, describing how multilingualism is affecting English should be our next step. In order to fully describe this event, I am going to follow what Mauranen has proposed this year. She analyzes the multilingualism from three perspectives in which she explains the main characteristics of the influence: macro-social, micro-social, and cognitive. The following part will synthesize what Mauranen explained:

a. Macro-social Perspective

From a macro-social perspective, we first notice that ELF communities (i.e. as speech communities) do not need to be physically in contact, but rather its communities interact with each other in a non-traditional way. Its major contacts happen from transient encounters (Jenkins 2015) to permanent communities such as international companies, organizations, or research collaborations; including as well other institutional uses. New technologies have also produced advancement in the communication for which English is the mediating code. As Pietikäinen (2014) pointed out, these contacts also extend to durable and intimate relationships. In this manner, we could consider that English as a Lingua Franca presents its language communities relatively diffuse with some more ‘focused’ points (LePage & Tabouret-Keller 2009) whose members will accommodate to each other to develop convergence towards group norms (Hynninen 2016). It is these norms the result of the changes that were previously mentioned in ELF section.

Since the most important of the characteristics of ELF is its multilingualism, how will it affect speakers? Mauranen (2018) comments that speakers with a similar background show alike and recognizable features (i.e. pronunciation, lexis, intonation...) often considered *learner varieties*, these communities are denominated *similects* by Mauranen (2012). This idea was already mentioned by Davies (1989) under the name of interlanguage. Similects are the variations of English that L2 speakers use in an ELF context, when, for example, a Dutch-based speaker interacts with an Italian-based speaker (i.e. a Dutch-based similect and an Italian-based similect). The contact that these similects will introduce is like that of dialects (although they differ in some respects like changing with time, forming registers or

diversifying as dialects do). They both suffer from the same influence when talking about contact (Mauranen 2018).

b. Micro-social Perspective

The micro-social perspective focuses on the way the transmission of changes occurs. The author includes two main methods in which speakers modify their speeches: *collaboration* and *accommodation*. Seidlhofer (2011) considers collaboration as one of the main features of change transmission. This author defines the concept not by a consensual agreement, but by a method that ensures comprehension and the continuation of the communication (i.e. collaborative completion). When it comes to accommodation, cognitive brain research has been made; based on mirror neurons, Meltzoff and Brooks (2007) note that “the duplication of the action patterns, mannerisms, and gestures others use is part of the fabric of human communication” (152). This means that humans copy those language activities that they see in their interlocutors, adapting their own language. This activity was also found in sociolinguistic research on dialect contact. Now, we will see its impact in the cognitive perspective. What is clear is that these characteristics of ELF are mainly related to oral speech or, at least, dialogical skills.

c. Cognitive Perspective

In this perspective, Biber et al (1999) consider speech “as ‘dynamic’, in the sense that it is constructed and interpreted under real-time pressure, and correction or reformulation is possible only through hesitations, false starts, and other dysfluencies” (qtd. in Mauranen: 111); with this view, they explained that spoken language includes ‘errors’ such as hesitations, false starts or pauses in L1 speaking. We may then consider that these characteristics are not exclusive of a L1; and although L2 is harder in working memory than L1, “this is a difference of degree, not a dichotomy” (Mauranen: 111). Another aspect that has to do with processing is related to mistakes, Levelt (1989) noted that most lexical and grammatical errors passed unnoticed by speakers with a similar level of proficiency of a language, just like in L2. After these analyses, Mauranen concludes that “ELF speech is much like any speech” (111). Being aware of these phenomena helps us understand that L2

learning should be advocated to communication success rather than the perfect and exact L1 norm; if errors or dysfluencies do not stop communication to create understanding, they should not need to carry so much weight in L2 learning.

In regards to ELF's specific features related to cognition, the author mentions that the most prominent is *approximation*. This phenomenon occurs when "unusual items are recognisable in the discourse on the basis of their functional fit, identifiable meaning, or similarity of form" (Mauranen 2018: 112); she adds that this adaptation is present in all linguistic areas: "phonology, morphology (fought, unexperienced, categoration), semantics (the war has finished now), syntax (properties and relation are belonging to the same...area), lexical choice (what meant basically for them is economic and political mercantilism), and perhaps most interestingly on phraseological units of meaning, (but going to the matter so here we have the following situation, it would be in relation of getting protection)" (2018: 112). On the other side, another technique that is used by ELF speakers is quite the opposite of approximation: fixing, this is "settling on a preferred expression for a given meaning" as Mauranen defines it (112). Fixing arises when a speaker utters expressions like 'quite on the contrary', 'on my point of view', 'on the other side' and many more that are copied from other speakers.

Muti-words units' (i.e. collocations and idioms) are also relevant since Nattinger and deCarrico (1992) claimed that L2 learners failed to show a good understanding (even when they were close to near-native levels of proficiency). Nevertheless, Mauranen looked at ELF data and realized that multi-words units abounded, stating that the most frequent ones were very similar to the ones of English as a native language. In this way, she tried to show that not only prescribed units from the inner circle were the ones that counted.

In summary, similects (or ELF speech communities) behave like dialects in the sense that they are influenced by other speeches when they are in contact. Also, techniques such as collocations, accommodations, approximations, and fixings are often used by ELF speakers to achieve the level of proficiency that is required for communication. In this way

conversation is successful and the errors pass unnoticed by most its interlocutors. The use of multi-word structures also proves that this type of speech is prosperous, although they sometimes differ to those used by standard speakers.

Hence, why is the process of learning English as a second language based on acquiring near-native levels of language? We have stated that learning English standards is not helpful in the context of internationality that is found, surrounded by large numbers of World Englishes. The use of English as a Lingua Franca has now explained that speakers of this language form groups of similects that interact with other similects. So, why second language acquisition has not changed if English is something different from what it used to be?

7. Implications of ELF in Second Language Acquisition

At this point, it seems obvious that English is not now the same ‘English’ it was fifty or sixty years ago (the new-born realizations of English as international come from the early 60s), but an evolution of that. In recent and current research, it is showed how English has evolved into an international language, with a wide variety of World Englishes and that is used as a Lingua Franca (i.e. a vehicle language for speakers with different L1s). When it comes to Applied Linguistics, one of the main impacts that ELF produces is the one related to Second Language Acquisition (henceforth SLA).

Sridhar & Sridhar (1986) defined SLA’s objective as the pursuit of native-like competence of the target language; nevertheless, this definition was thought for interactions between learners and native speakers of a language, a practical scenario that has little to do with the concept that we are now handling. Gass (2018) gives recently a more in-depth view:

“SLA as a discipline refers to linguistic factors, but also social contact/context, power relationships, identity, motivation, aptitude, anxiety, gestures in relation to learning, emotions, to name a few (...) In general, it deals with change (not necessarily linear) and how change does or does not come about” (2018: 122),

With this sight, other aspects like context, power relations or gestures are taken into account. It is interesting to note the relevance that Gass gives to change and how change is presented to learners. In this line, Mauranen (2018) also comments on change, in this case, in the change that comes along with ELF: “we are learning to appreciate the change in language and the perception of language that follows from the presence of second-language speakers, constant mobility and ubiquitous language contact” (114). We see how change is relevant at the same time that it is one of the main characteristics of ELF. What seems continuous after these declarations would be an emphasis on change transmissions and special attention to learners’ adaptation of the different varieties that an ELF user will encounter.

Still, mainstream SLA centers and teaching centers make emphasis on prescriptive uses of language. These usages are often considered to be the principles of grammar, employed to be the rules of language in teaching of the first and second language speakers, establishing right and wrong utilization (Carter & McCarthy, 2006). Furthermore, recent studies in SLA still focus on normative input in the student; Gass (2009) comments on *evidence* (i.e. abstractions of grammar for learning input), which she divides in two groups, positive and negative:

positive evidence refers to the input and basically comprises the set of well-formed sentences to which learners are exposed (...) positive evidence is referred to as models (...) Negative evidence refers to the type of information that is provided to learners concerning the incorrectness of an utterance. This might be in the form of explicit or implicit information (226)

What is intended from this excerpt is that norms in SLA are important, and to some extent they are. However, VanPatten and Oikkinen (1996) proved that structured input was more beneficial than explicit information. In this line, Pitzl (2015) pointed out that greater accuracy in grammatical rules does not mean a higher communicative success. Also, as we saw, errors do not stop communication to take place and they most times pass unnoticed. Learners should then see diminished the relevance that right and wrong uses of language are presented in learning situations.

On the other side, to produce prescriptive grammars, one standard or variation must be selected, and here we find a problem that collides with World Englishes. There are too many variations, as mentioned, to select just one as the referent. From the point of view of ELF, standards do not play any important role, as, most times, two different similects are used with different backgrounds and features. They borrow information from one another, forgetting prescriptive uses for the encounter, as the abundance of multi-word units in ELF showed.

In this way, I propose that the direction that SLA is taking should be moved to World Englishes and ELF. The result should produce new techniques to achieve a new proficiency in English, a proficiency that is based in communication success and understanding rather than in near-native competence. The reason for which this is necessary is the relevance of World Englishes and ELF in the English language current situation; to the point that

it has for some time now been widely acknowledged in applied linguistics that non-native speakers have come to outnumber native speakers, that in fact most interactions in English take place in the absence of the latter. (Dewey, 2007: 333)

Additionally, we need to bear in mind that standardized national languages, when talking about history, represent a very short period of time, while multilingualism has occupied a big part of the human history (Romaine, 1989). This indicates how standards are not necessary for multilingualism and plurilingual coexistence (i.e. the base of ELF). Here, I am not trying to critique prescriptive uses of a language, for many reasons they are fundamental and take a big role in institutional and academic usages. What my thought tries to criticize is the prescriptive totalitarianism over descriptive usages. In this way, new methods should derive from ELF and World Englishes to seek for better and easier understanding. Innovative procedures should be used to serve as an engine of ELF learning.

Back in 1930s, some new programs tried to explore a new language teaching. The search for an international language led to the creation of artificial and treated international languages with educational purposes. Basic English was one of these languages. Richards (1943) proposed this language that was based in just 850 words and no apparent grammar

rules. This language system was invented to create a language that could be used in everyday situations, business, trade, industry and many more fields by uttering very simple ideas. However, Davies (1989) comments that these languages fail to understand two central language facts:

that a language is made up of more than words and that its lexicon includes all the compounds and derivatives, not just the basic ones (thus, milk-man and work- ing make up eight possible words not two) and (b) that language learning is not mainly about words. It is about the relation of words to one another and to things, the relation of signs to meanings. (452)

We could not, then, consider these systems to provide an option of an international language as they are static and do not represent real language with more complex ideas.

What seems to be needed after these analyses is a methodology that targets firstly towards understanding, and secondly, towards adaptation to different variations (i.e. similects). Breaking with the ideals of prescriptivism, new SLA procedures should forget the traditional systems of focusing in right and wrong uses of inner-circle, native language.

Some procedures have already been discussed: Vettorel (2013), for example, noted that international collaborations (i.e. students engaging in interactions with students from other countries through school expeditions and exchange programs) were a useful way to make students adapt to other variations of English. In any case, even if this case is beneficial, its circumstances are difficult to reach in many cases due to economic factors. In this dissertation, the proposed solution is based on a remarkable useful tool when translating real language to the language classroom: corpus-based language learning.

8. SLA of ELF by means of corpus

Corpora are the actual expression of real language, the same thing that ELF learners will encounter (all the studies I have mentioned led me to use ELF learner instead of L2 learner). In this way, using them in the classroom would improve the skills of the learners

thanks to cognitive procedures like accommodation (Meltzoff & Brooks, 2007) . Since most uses of English are in an ELF context, the ideal learning scenario should look to ELF communication as a base. Comprehensibility between similects and variations should be the focus. This move does not exclude other beneficial purposes of acquiring prescriptive English, as for example learning standards with academic purposes. However, these further purposes could be included in more advanced learning development, once the learner is able to understand and be understood in the context where they most probably will interact.

In this way, the utilization of corpora is useful to adapt learners to real situations with real language. What is most interesting about this type of input is the facility in which they can show different variations of speech. As we stated that one of the main characteristics of ELF is multilingualism and, consequently, language variation, corpora shows itself as one of the best tools to transfer ELF to the language classroom.

Perez-Paredes (2010) gives an overview on how the decade of the 2000s has been loaded with studies that search to implement corpus-based linguistics in language teaching. Some examples of this are Wang and Bai's (2007) analysis of medicine article titles to provide a detailed syllabus of different nominal groups, Hyland's (2008) analysis of lexical bundles (i.e. extended collocations), Henry's (2007) analysis of corpus-informed web-based materials for the teaching of business letter writing and many more. All of them confirmed that the use of corpus is predominantly useful; especially when establishing links between the semantical, morphological, and syntactical analyses and their context (the situation some elements occupy in the discourse). As Hyland (2008) commented, corpus linguistics methods can help learners' "understanding of the features of the discourses they will encounter in their particular courses" (20). As already said, a real input will provide learners with a facility to adjust to the situations they will face.

In an opposite view, although most of these analyses proved to facilitate learning with the use of corpora, the corpora tasks were introduced to learners in the same format as well-trained professional linguists used them. This means that only the learners with a high rank

education, as university language learners, could use these teaching techniques. In this manner, we should look to new ways to transfer corpora to the learning situation. ELF is a type of language that is developing with time, especially thanks to the technological advances. And are the young generations the ones that are receiving technology as a natural element in their developmental process. In this light, our thoughts should consist on taking advantage of technology and produce language learning along with this technology adaptation. Thus, corpus-based teaching should focus on younger and less trained students.

A further specification must be added to the concept of corpus. The traditional realization of corpus, the one that most linguists work with: written corpora, has proved to present many inconveniences in classroom application. Other types, then, should be considered to solve the problems that written corpora could not.

As most young generations are incorporating new technologies to their lifestyle, they find new ways of interpreting the world. We could then look at their ways of interacting with each other, obtaining information, or entertaining; and realize that the written format has taken a second place. Interacting with relatives or friends in a non-present conversation was previously done by means of letters or other written formats; now, audiovisual means have practically replaced them (i.e. Facetime, Skype, voice messages...). When looking at their way of obtaining information, we see that some written journals are still being used in the web, but it is getting more usual to see people getting informed via YouTube videos about journalism, sciences, politics or other topics. Finally, entertainment is the most relevant one since it occupies the most time of these younger groups. Also, entertainment is one of the most recognized elements to help learning development as it encourages engagement in learning (Pastor 2012). Films, Music, TV shows, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, or Youtube have filled the cathartic purpose that books used to. So my next question is why should we not use these advancements in favor of language learning?

In all these formats language is present, but in a different way to the previous traditional language in what teaching input was based (i.e. written formats). These contemporary

formats create a new way of corpus. These corpora present visual, spatial, auditory and gestural information apart from linguistic. We should then consider them multimodal corpora. In this discussion, films will be used, although the other formats would also be interesting to work with, films will be analyzed as an example of the many available resources. The main point of this dissertation is to propose that audio-visual aid in SLA benefits language acquisition and specifically ELF's characteristic variation adaptation.

9. Multimodal Corpora in SLA of ELF

Despite the fact that films seem a tempting resource to provide students with real input in language classroom, we have to accept that films follow a script that has been previously written; then, is it possible to consider this real language, real structures, or real corpora?

Rodríguez Martín (2010a) made a research where she compared the British National Corpus (henceforth BNC) of face-to-face conversation with a micro-corpus of films. She compared conversational features in both sources. The results proved that language in films was closer to spontaneous conversation corpora than written corpora. These results showed that the traditional and conversational features appeared in movies: the 50 most frequent items in face-to-face conversation were quite similar to those in movies. The objectives of this study sought to prove or reject the validity of film corpora as real conversational corpora; in regards to this, they concluded that everything pointed in the direction that film language was not relevantly different to face-to-face actual conversations.

Later on that year, Rodríguez Martín (2010b) extended her previous work by analyzing the parts of speech and semantic domains of the same corpora (BNC and film corpus). With this study, she tried to compare the similarities and differences between both corpora to, later on, check if film language followed the five features that Rülhemann (2007) proposed. These features were established after an analysis of the BNC, and later used in Rodríguez's research as the basic conversational principles: "shared context" (person, place, and time deixis), 'co-construction' (turn-taking and adjacency), 'discourse management' (discourse

markers), ‘real-time processing’ (silent and filled pauses, restarts and substitutions, headers and tails, contractions, and grammatically reduced forms), and ‘relation management’ (first-names, endearments and familiarizers, introductory ‘this’ and historic, and tails)” (Rülhemann 2007: 216). The aim of her work was to prove that these characteristics were included in film language in a similar way that in face-to-face conversation.

After comparing both corpora, the results that the author obtained confirmed again her hypothesis; film language is quite alike to real conversation language. She first realized that the shared context: deixis components (i.e. elements in the discourse that point to places, persons, situations or other features in regards to the speaker’s point of view) were overused in films in comparison to those in real conversation data. Regarding co-construction, although third person forms were underused (due to the fact that real conversations focus on other people while film focus on actual speakers [Rodríguez Martín & Moreno Jaen, 2009]), first and second person forms are overused, so it accomplishes the proposed features of real conversation. She also found that there was an overuse of content words (general adjectives and singular and plural common nouns); according to Taylor (1999) film language needs to introduce engaging dramatic or intriguing language, to do so, vocabulary in this format tends to be dense. Relation management occurred too in film language as proper nouns were once more overused in movies (i.e. to identify the characters in different scenes).

When it came to real-time processing, interjections (i.e. “oh”, “uh”) and pause fillers like backchannels (i.e. maintaining the conversation: “yes”, “uh-huh”) are underused in movies, not like in conversation standards. The author adds that this is produced due to brevity and rapidity of films. Also, in the case of discourse markers (i.e. relating previous speech to current conversation), the author explains that words like “say” and “said” are the most frequent ones, but they are underused in comparison to actual conversations.

Regarding the semantic domains, most results were not satisfactory as movies tend to point to specific topics depending on the plot of the narrative, so we could state that movies integrate more specialized language (i.e. a film with a musical plot will include musical specialized terms like guitar, bass, rhythm, Jazz or other words belonging to the same semantic field). What appears to be interesting in this section is the pragmatic approach featured by ‘Speech Acts’, in this category, along with ‘Polite’, the author looks for the semantic fields that represent “more or less automatic responses to recurrent features of the communicative situation” (Aijmer 1996 qtd. in Rodríguez Marín 2010b) including in this group requesting, greeting, apologizing, complementing, etc. These elements appear regularly in movies (e.g. “apologize”, “sorry”...), providing film corpora with the last conversational feature.

After these results, it is obvious that the film language is not exact to face-to-face conversations; however, this fact does not mind the success in filling the conversational features of language proposed by Rülhemann. Hence, nothing prevents films to present real language with real conversational characteristics.

We can conclude thus that movies show an input very similar to the language in conversations. Taking into account that they add the entertaining characteristic that is favorable for learning, no relevant inconvenient comes to mind when considering them for learning opportunities. It is true that movies have been already used by many practitioners of SLA, but after the relevance that SLA shows in general English use, these types of corpora should be used as a base for the fulfillment of the new emerged necessities.

10. Conclusion

Until our current days, in academic areas, the SLA of English has been focused in very purist correction criteria, based on the normative uses of English. Standard varieties of a language seem most times productive in the role of serving as input in SLA. They show a target to what learners from different countries can look at. However, by definition,

standards settle on static language behaviors, but ELF behaviors cannot be static, they are changing while being used. This leads us to reconsider some methodological procedures and let more pragmatic objectives be at the center stage.

Throughout this dissertation, the emphasis has been made on the language acquisition of English in its current state. It seemed that SLA and ELF fields do not share many spaces in the research world. Gass (2008) comments that this is due to the high level of expertise these fields require. My view, however, tries to accentuate the necessity of broadening our thoughts of traditional language learning by showing the scarcities of the prescriptivist monopoly in language education. Normative English sees itself diminished when it is found in the international context of World Englishes. And apart from the vast number of varieties of English, its international use provides it with the characteristic of multilingualism, and along with it, of language change. How can then language learning adapt to a so changing language? I have answered that it is pointless to learn English as static language, instead, the most beneficial move needs to point to variation adaptation. If someone wants to adjust to different speeches, the received input should include as many language realizations as possible. Corpora appears here as, firstly, it shows language in its most pure nature, and, secondly, it allows learners to receive all the language variations needed. Nevertheless, previous applications of corpora in the classroom, although they were advantageous, were planned for advanced students. The solution should rest in a type of corpus that is closer to not-so-prepared students. After knowing the gains of entertainment in learning, different types of corpus appeared to fulfill all the requisites: multimodal corpora. No research has been made upon the types of corpus that I have proposed, but in films. In this study, film language has proved to include all the characteristics of language, specifically of spoken language.

These methods can be branded to be excessively utilitarian and not so much rigorous, and, from the academic point of view, they are. Nonetheless, I believe that academic use is not the main point in English nowadays. As I said, ELF major requirement is communication success, and this then should be translated to SLA

Further studies that try to put together SLA and ELF, should, in my opinion, focus on the wide variety of corpus that offer English language in everyday situation. It is no coincidence that English, in its Lingua Franca circumstance, is bombed countries with cultural ehre it is not the first language with elements such as music, TV shows, academic content and many more. SLA should take advantage of this phenomena and evolve with its context.

In this way, I can conclude by stating that English, as we know it today, works as a Lingua Franca, and it should be reflected in the way we learn it. However, as some recent authors comment, English may not still be a Lingua Franca tomorrow, it may leave a path for emerging countries such as China. If this is speculation or not will not be answered here; but in any case, in the meanwhile, it seems inappropriate to waste the opportunities that modern times are offering to approach English as a Lingua Franca.

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