

## NEGOTIATING THE LOCAL IN ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA

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While there are many studies on the new international norms developing to facilitate communication in English as a lingua franca (ELF), there are limited discussions on the ways local values and identities are negotiated. After reviewing the debates on the place of the local in ELF, this chapter goes on to address the new policy challenges for local communities. Then it reviews studies on the ways local values are represented in oral, written, and digital communication. I finally make a case for developing paradigms based on heterogeneity in applied linguistics to accommodate diversity in successful communication.

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“Retaining our indigenous cultures and language(s) while reaping the benefits of large-scale integration via a language of wider communication is the challenge many of us will no doubt have to come to terms with in the years to come” (Modiano, 2004, p. 225).

### Two Senses of English as Lingua Franca

There are at least two major senses in which English has served as a lingua franca, in relation to historical developments. When English spread to the colonies from England beginning from the 16th century, it served as a contact language between the colonizers and the colonized. It also served as a contact language *between* the colonized. However, after decolonization in the 1950's and, more significantly, in the recent forms of globalization marked by new technology, transnational economic and production relationships, and the porous nature of nation-state boundaries, English has become a contact language for a wider range of communities (outside the former British empire). In this article, I review the ways in which local values, identities, and interests are negotiated in the new role of English as a global contact language. As Marko Modiano reminds us in the epigraph, this is the dilemma facing all communities today.

Corresponding to the historical differences in the spread, English has also been treated differently in the scholarly literature. In the model of World Englishes (hereafter WE), scholars have considered the way English has been nativized in postcolonial communities (see Bhatt, 2005; Kachru, 1986). Though these varieties accommodate local cultural and linguistic influences, this form of localization is internal to each community. However, there is a different challenge for localization when English is conceived as a transnational contact language (what is known as ELF or English as a lingua franca). Even the intra-national varieties of WE face new challenges as they engage with other local Englishes for transnational communication. Postcolonial communities have to negotiate intelligibility when they use their own varieties with others. Though there are excellent state of the art essays on ELF (see Seidlhofer, 2004), this article is a review from a different specific angle. The focus of this article is the negotiation of local values and identities in ELF. On the one end of the spectrum are policy challenges as communities plan the status and acquisition of English relative to local interests. At the other end are challenges for personal relationships and identity representation as English is used in oral, written, and digital media.

A few caveats are in order. Since the scope of this topic is broad, the objective in this article is to cover the main strands of theoretical debates, scholarly exploration, and negotiation strategies with a selective illustration from relevant literature. We must also note that the term *local* is relative and, therefore, ambiguous. What is local to a whole nation may not be local to the diverse groups within the nation-state. For example, the mixed code of Singlish has been treated as expressing the local values of Singaporeans in general (Mei, 2001). However, as the older and educated speakers distance themselves from Singlish, it seems to represent mainly the interests of the younger and less educated people in the country (Rubdy, 2005). Furthermore, there is the interpenetration of the global in the local and vice versa. For example, global Hip-Hop culture represents an appropriation and production of local Englishes from diverse countries (see Blommaert, 2005 for Tanzania; Pennycook, 2003 for Japan; Omoniyi, 2006 for Nigeria). In fact, these forms of hybridity, creolization, and codemeshing are important modes of representing local identities (Canagarajah, 2005a).

### **Theoretical Debates**

The attitudes towards ELF and the theoretical positions related to it depend a lot on different descriptions of the model. With the realization of the new role of ELF, we have also moved beyond earlier models of global English. Scholars now generally agree that the WE model fails to accommodate the complexity of global English (see Canagarajah, 2006b; Hall, 1997; Jenkins, 2006b; Pennycook, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2004). Kachru's (1986) well known three circles model of WE charts the historical spread and functional differences of English by distinguishing the *Expanding Circle* (where English was used as a foreign language), *Outer Circle* (where English was a second language, with well established local norms since colonial times), and the *Inner Circle* (which claimed ownership and the establishment of norms). Kachru called the communities norm dependent, norm

developing, and norm enforcing, respectively, to indicate their relative status. However, the recent geopolitical changes have altered these relationships and assumptions:

- While the WE model legitimizes the outer circle varieties in their national context, they have now started leaking outside their borders, creating a need for inner circle speakers too to negotiate outer circle varieties in everyday communication.
- While the expanding circle was differentiated from outer circle as it was not considered to have local uses of English or localized varieties, scholars now challenge both assumptions (see Erling's 2002 argument that English has local uses in Germany and that there is a distinguishable local variety).
- While the expanding circle was considered dependent on the norms of the inner circle, we find from empirical research that multilingual speakers adopt independent norms to achieve intelligibility (see Seidlhofer, 2004).
- More importantly, as "native" speakers are outnumbered by multilingual speakers and the currency of English in the expanding circle outpaces the use of English in the inner circle (see Crystal, 1997, and Graddol, 1999, for statistics) the latter's ownership and norm-enforcing status are questioned.

As a result, scholars are now moving to alternate models of global English that chart the relationship between communities in more fluid and egalitarian terms. Many are adopting the position that English is a heterogeneous language with multiple norms and diverse systems. While all national varieties will be local, speakers will develop new norms for international communication. David Crystal (2004) proposes the notion of English as "a family of languages" (p. 49), predicting that "it may not be many years before an international standard will be the starting-point, with British, American, and other varieties all seen as optional localizations" (p.40). Others like McArthur (1987) and Modiano (1999) have also proposed models that level the diverse varieties (see Jenkins, 2003, pp. 14-21 for a review). The projected new international standard (i.e., McArthur's "World Standard Auxiliary English" or Crystal's "World Standard Spoken English") would presumably be common to all communities. In this article, the label ELF refers to these egalitarian models of English in general, and the new international norms in specific.

Though Crystal concedes that the international standard will be heavily influenced by the dominant American English (see Phillipson, 2003, and Modiano, 2004, for a stronger expression of this position), other scholars assume that ELF is culture-free and neutral. House (2003) holds that ELF is a "language for communication" rather than a "language for identification." In other words, multilingual speakers will use English for utilitarian purposes with a pragmatic attitude; they won't develop a cultural affinity with the language or attempt to represent their identities through English. Therefore, she argues that concerns of culture or power are irrelevant in ELF. Yet, there are indications that ELF raises cultural concerns among Germans. House shows how the revival of German folk music could be a reaction against the spread of English pop music. She goes on to argue: "Paradoxical as this may seem, the very spread of ELF may stimulate members of minority languages to insist on their own local language for emotional

bonding to their own culture, history and tradition” (p. 561). Such examples show that it is difficult to separate communication and identification in ELF. Any language, whatever the status of the speaker or objectives of usage, can raise issues of identification and representation in relative degrees.

An empirical activity to define the new norms of ELF is the attempt to describe the lingua franca core (LFC). This constitutes the phonological and grammatical options that multilingual speakers adopt to facilitate intelligibility, though they may differ from the norms of inner circle communities and local varieties (see the description of features in Seidlhofer, 2004, pp. 215-223). However, there is some confusion about LFC’s cultural status. Some have interpreted LFC as an independent variety of equal status with national varieties, but common to all nations, based on statements like the following: “The option of distinguishing ELF from ENL [i.e., English as National Language] is likely to be beneficial in that it leaves varieties of native English intact for all the functions that only a first language can perform and as a target for learning in circumstances where ENL is deemed appropriate, as well as providing the option of code-switching between ENL and ELF” (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 229). In other places LFC researchers have clarified that they are focusing more on the negotiation strategies of multilingual speakers and that they are not constructing another culture-free variety of English (see Jenkins, 2006b). In fact, as we see in case studies below, LFC may facilitate the expression of local identities and cultures.

Meierkord (2004) adopts the explicit position that ELF has nothing of the stability, homogeneity, or system projected by McArthur’s “World Standard Auxiliary English” or Crystal’s “World Standard Spoken English.” She characterizes ELF as “a variety in constant flux, involving different constellations of speakers of diverse individual Englishes in every single interaction” (p. 115). In her syntactic description, she defines ELF as a heterogeneous form of English characterized by:

- overwhelming correspondence to the rules of L1 Englishes
- transfer phenomena, developmental patterns and nativised forms
- simplification, regularization, and leveling processes (p. 128).

Based on data from international students in Germany, she goes on to demonstrate the expression of speaker identities and cultures in ELF. Sampson and Zhao (2003) treat ELF in somewhat similar ways as a pidgin variety based on data from multilingual sailors. They find the existence of Singaporean, Indian, and Phillipino Englishes in the ELF of the sailors. They consider the way in which sailors borrow from the peculiar usages of each other, both transfer items from other L1’s as well as versions of local Englishes. While confirming House’s view of ELF as a non-system then, Meierkord and Sampson and Zhao still accommodate local forms of English and, by extension, local identities in ELF.

We can understand the desire of scholars to define ELF as neutral and egalitarian. Kayman (2004) traces attempts throughout history to define English as a

culture-free language. He finds the postmodern attempts to define ELF as neutral even more pernicious. He argues that if ELF doesn't belong to a specific national culture it doesn't mean that it has no culture. We simply have to define new ways of talking about culture at a time when transnational relations are dominant. Culture may find expression in transnational domains and agencies. Kayman raises the possibility that digital media and technologies of communication might infuse English with "cultures" of their own: "To the extent that English is promoted as a global language of communication it is likely to serve as the privileged vehicle for such cultures of communication" (p. 17). As in the past, when lands like America were defined as *terra nullius* where settlers can impose their culture at will, he finds that Global English is defined as "a utopia of communication in which 'English' becomes the very image of a desire for global networks where informational and symbolic messages flow without resistance across frontiers" (p. 18).

Tibor Frank (2004) also raises the paradox of a culture-neutral English actually serving the interests of dominant institutions and agencies. Terming ELF as "airport English," he observes that "its complexities have been eliminated and its substance undermined. . . . with the aim of delivering (often commercial) messages in the shortest, most economical way" (p. 81). Labeling this a "culture-deprived, neutral English," He goes on to express his concerns: "This. . . Supranational English pervades national languages and inundates them with its expressions and distinct style of communication" (p. 82). Yet, he considers ELF "an American genre" (82), presumably influenced by values of pragmatism, economy, and commercialism.

Dor (2004) raises the even more ironic possibility that the very fluidity and diversity of ELF may serve dominant interests. Labeling this "imposed multilingualism," Dor argues that English is used by multinational organizations and software companies to encourage a culture-neutral fluidity that suits their purposes. Dor states: "The forces of economic globalization do not have a vested interest in the global spread of English. They have a short-term interest in penetrating local markets through local languages and a long-term interest in turning these languages into commodified tools of communication" (2004, p. 98). For example, linguists, scholars, and policy makers are left out of the decisions many software companies make about the new language practices and conventions they adopt. In opposition to this *imposed multilingualism* of commercial and technological agencies, Dor calls for a *negotiated multilingualism* whereby local policy makers, scholars, and people will make spaces for their own interests through the pluralization of language.

So, is ELF culture-neutral (House), representative of dominant interests (Dor, Kayman, Frank) or supportive of local ethos (Meierkord, Samson and Zhao)? Perhaps we need to acknowledge that the character and effects of language practices cannot be described universally or absolutely. We need to consider them in specific social and historical contexts. English can have all these effects in different contexts at different times. The interests motivating a language are always contested by competing agencies and communities. This contestation is not a zero sum game, where one party wins with finality. It is ongoing, shaped by the shifting conditions of different stages and periods of development. However, this doesn't mean that

language is value free. English does come loaded with the associations from its imperialistic history. This historical baggage demands negotiation. Communities and individuals should exert their agency to negotiate with English and preserve their interests. (I borrow these insights from Hall, 1997, and develop them more fully in Canagarajah, 2006b.) Hence the discussion in the following sections on how states construct policies in relation to ELF and how individuals negotiate their interests in oral, written, and digital ELF communication.

### **Local Interests through Policy Intervention**

ELF presents communities with a dilemma. To consider postcolonial communities first, while they were busy with the project of decolonization, they suddenly find themselves addressing the demands of globalization. These two historical movements present different challenges for the nation-state: while the first involved affirming the local language against the neglect suffered during the imposition of English during the colonial period, globalization reinserts the need for English for postmodern life. While decolonization focuses on language practices within the nation-state, globalization makes national borders porous and brings in linguistic influences from outside. It is as if one historical process got subsumed by another before the first process was complete. To some extent, these challenges are experienced also by countries that didn't experience sustained Anglophone colonization (see Riazi, 2005, for Iran; Reagan & Schreffler, 2005, for Turkey; Rajagopalan, 2005, for Brazil). With the formation of the European Union, member countries are facing a similar challenge. Paradoxically, the claim of multilingualism has resulted in English gaining more power here (see Phillipson, 2003).

Non-western communities are responding to the dilemma in different ways. Many communities are revising their earlier nationalistic policy in the face of globalization. So Malaysia now finds that its Bhasa Malaysia policy is misdirected. Monolingual Malays are losing out in the competition for jobs and resources even at the local level. The minority communities in Malaysia—Chinese and Indian—who emphasized English education as they felt discriminated by Malay, now enjoy material and symbolic advantages by virtue of their English proficiency (David & Govindasamy, 2005). Local states are forced to respond to their people's demand for English, as in Iran (Riazi, 2005) and Turkey (Reagan & Schreffler, 2005). However, in the face of the importance of ELF, there is a resurgence of linguistic nationalism in many communities—as in India (Ramanathan, 2004) and Brazil (Rajagopalan, 2005). A reason for local resistance is the fact that the acquisition and spread of English is uneven. Rather than being a democratizing force, English serves the vested interests of the elite in India (Annamalai, 2005), Singapore (Rubdy, 2005), and Hong Kong (Lin, 2005).

It is clear that it is difficult for states to form policies that accommodate ELF in a manner that would facilitate the local interests of all the communities in a nation. Scholars now find that different social groups are taking efforts at the local level to acquire/use ELF to suit their own interests. Blommaert (2005) shows that while the state in Tanzania forms policies favoring Swahili, the local people see the need for

English. However, they appropriate English in their own fashion, as they don't have access to the educated varieties. The codemixed forms of English that youth use in hip-hop and businessmen use for attracting clients are treated by Blommaert as the local interpenetration of the global. I have analyzed the case of Tamils in Sri Lanka in a similar way to show how local people negotiate the nationalism of the political leaders and international resources afforded by English through codeswitching (see Canagarajah, 2005a). Thus local people develop hybrid codes and identities to reconcile their dilemmas. In the context of schools, students and teachers have been developing similar strategies to manage local values and identities in the face of competing policy discourses. In classrooms in Eritrea (Wright, 2001), India (Annamalai, 2005), South Africa (Probyn, 2005), Tanzania (Brock-Utne, 2005), Kenya (Bunyi, 2005), Brunei (Martin, 2005), and Hong Kong (Luk, 2005), to mention just a few, the local language is introduced in many subtle ways to negotiate the desired values, identities, and interests. Therefore, many scholars are challenging the stigmatized status given to mixed varieties of English, and proposing that they be given a place in education and other institutional contexts (see Blommaert, 2005; Pennycook, 2003).

Policy discourses on ELF are further complicated by philosophical changes in the way communities and cultures are perceived. Postmodern thinking prevents us from thinking of identities in essentialist terms (as belonging exclusively to one language or culture), languages and cultures as pure (separated from everything foreign), and communities as homogeneous (closed for contact with others). As these constructs are losing their status as bounded and objective entities, and we recognize their constructed, fluid, and hybrid nature, scholars are beginning to doubt that local languages, identities, or communities have to be protected against English (see Brutt-Griffler, 2002). There is a general consensus that we have to go beyond the traditional dichotomies that have stultified policy debates: English or mother tongue? Individual rights or group rights? Mobility or rootedness? Modernization or preservation? We are beginning to see that these constructs are not mutually exclusive. While English proficiency can be integrated with local languages, even the English we speak can reflect our values and interests. For such reasons, scholars have criticized policies made against English and in favor of group rights and language preservation as misdirected, preferring instead a *laissez faire* attitude (see Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Edwards, 2001). They argue that individuals and communities should choose the language and communicative practices they desire, without efforts by states to protect local interests. Yet, there are dangers in failing to intervene on behalf of local interests (as argued in the previous section). May (2001) articulates a balanced position for a multifaceted policy that protects local interests while encouraging multilingualism. This involves preserving individual language rights, while protecting group rights; distinguishing languages to be tolerated from those to be promoted; and identifying diverse languages for different social domains.

### **Local Interests in Communicative Interactions**

While there are issues for communities in the postmodern world to negotiate the place of English in their collective life, individuals find ways of accommodating

their interests into English in interpersonal relationships and everyday performance. While some scholars insist that it is at the state level that communities can negotiate their interests against English effectively (see Sonntag, 2003), others find that state policies are limited and prefer to factor in the role of individuals and everyday negotiations into language politics (see Blommaert, 2005; Canagarajah, 2006a). Therefore, it is important to consider how individuals modify, resist, and reconstruct dominant policy discourses and historical contingencies to achieve their local interests in different modalities of communication.

### Oral Communication

Though face to face speech interactions in ELF communication has recently received a lot of attention, the nature of the research doesn't always enable strong insights into the accommodation of local interests. Many of these studies are based on a large (and relatively impersonal) corpus, and seek to identify the core phonological and grammatical features (in the LFC tradition) that facilitate communication among multilinguals (eg., Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English or VOICE, see Seidlhofer, 2004). Even studies on domain-specific language—such as the one being developed for academic communication, such as ELFA or English as a lingua franca in academic settings (see Mauranen, 2003)—classify the common features. The ways in which values and identity are negotiated in ELF communication are demonstrated mostly in qualitative studies in localized contexts.

However, even the research on LFC has implications for how multilingual people resist the norms of dominant communities and attain their personal goals. Multilingual people use phonological and grammatical norms that reduce ambiguity, enhance redundancy, and focus on intelligibility as they seek to accommodate their social and cultural objectives. These are largely convergence strategies (in the framework of speech accommodation theory) employed to facilitate contact (see Jenkins, 2006a; McKay, 2005). In relative terms, this is a localization of English—an establishment of interpersonal norms suitable for each context of interaction.

A more promising area of research for our purposes is the focus on pragmatic strategies that facilitate the use of local varieties each interlocutor may bring to the communication. Paradoxically, these strategies enable speakers to maintain their own varieties and still communicate without hindrance. This finding goes against the dominant linguistic assumption that it is homogeneity that facilitates communication. Seidlhofer (2004) summarizes the pragmatic strategies that have been identified in ELF research:

- Misunderstandings are not frequent in ELF interactions; when they do occur, they tend to be resolved either by topic change, or, less often, by overt negotiation using communication strategies such as rephrasing and repetition.

- Interference from L1 interactional norms is very rare—a kind of suspension of expectations regarding norms seems to be in operation.
- As long as a certain threshold of understanding is obtained, interlocutors seem to adopt what Firth (1996) has termed the “let it pass” principle,” which gives the impression of ELF talk being overtly consensus-oriented, cooperative and mutually supportive, and thus fairly robust (p. 218).

Even attitudinal resources, such as patience, tolerance, and humility to negotiate differences can help speakers decode the unique features of the interlocutor and sustain a conversation. Such are the resources that Higgins (2003) finds multilingual students employing to decode vocabulary from World Englishes. Anglo-American students have difficulties in such tasks, as they don't bring a tolerant attitude.

In a paradoxical case, House (2003) demonstrates how students of English from different countries in Germany bring pragmatic strategies valued in their own communities to facilitate communication with outsiders. In other words, these are culture-specific pragmatics that complement intercultural communication. For example, House finds that “Asian participants employ topic management strategies in a striking way, recycling a specific topic regardless of where and how the discourse had developed at any particular point” (p. 567). This discourse of “parallel monologues” actually facilitates nonproficient English speakers as it helps them focus on each move as if it were a fresh topic. The second trait is an echoing of the previous speaker's statement, which House calls “represents,” done with the purpose of affirming contributions according to the politeness convention of Asian cultures. This strategy too serves to remind the threads of discourse and facilitate ELF communication. The third feature is a “strong demonstration of solidarity and consensus-orientation” (p. 569), which is also influenced by Asian cultural patterns of group orientation. In all these cases, while the local cultural ways of interacting are alive in English, paradoxically they serve to negotiate difference and ensure intelligibility.

Such findings lend credence to Khubchandani's (1997) claim that multilinguals bring with them intuitive strategies that facilitate healthy negotiation. “With a view to grasp the essence of Indian plurality” (p. 87), he lists values such as learning to hold language boundaries and identities in fluid terms, balancing distinctive features of identity with collaborative needs of communication, and managing intra-group solidarity with inter-group harmony. There are new orientations to community in the discipline that might accommodate such orientations to ELF communication. The communities of practice perspective of Lave and Wenger (1998) posits that members in a community don't have to share anything common. What they bring are negotiation strategies and practices that help them to collaborate on common objectives.

In addition to pragmatic strategies, ELF speakers use discourse strategies (at the textual or syntactic level) to accommodate local variants. Focusing on syntactic variation, Meierkord (2004) finds that individuals retain the characteristics of their own English varieties, facilitating communication through syntactic strategies like segmentation and regularization. Though she finds mostly less competent expanding circle speakers producing localized forms, they manage to communicate effectively thanks to skillful discourse strategies. Of the two strategies she illustrates, the first is simplification strategies such as segmentation. Utterances are shortened into clausal or phrasal segments which form the basic informational units. The second, regularization, involves selection of forms that are explicit. Topicalization is one such strategy of regularization. This involves the movement of focused information to the front of the utterance.

Such research needs to be conducted in more diverse domains of ELF use. Sampson and Zhao (2003) show how sailors from different countries working in merchant vessels negotiate Maritime discourse. They find a pidgin-like use, where words and phrases from specific local Englishes are borrowed and used by others. So phrases that are direct translations from Hindi, used by Indian captains, then become common usage in English for speakers of other languages. Sailors borrow many forms of peculiar usage from each other--both transfer items from other L1's as well as versions of local Englishes. To facilitate comprehension even when they maintain their idiosyncratic linguistic features, they develop certain discourse strategies—such as topic fronting. Though Maritime English has been developed in the ESP tradition to train sailors, the authors find from their ethnography that “communication does not depend on a technical grasp of language but also relies on an ability to penetrate accents and indeed to understand new and particular forms of English” (p. 40).

Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, and Kankaanranta (2005) analyze the emerging genre of business English lingua franca, BELF. They study the way English is negotiated when two companies with Swedish and Finnish workers merge and adopt English as their medium of communication. What Swedes and Finns self- and other-identify as the cultural tendencies of each group do manifest themselves in their communication. Swedes tend to be discursive, wordy, and dialogic while Finns tend to be laconic, factual, and direct. In general, Finns tend to be more issue oriented and display less interpersonal orientation than the Swedes. Furthermore, Finns tend to rely more on shared information than the Swedes. Yet, the more surprising finding is that both groups negotiate their differences smoothly: “In spite of differences possibly attributable to national culture, there was no evidence of conflict or misunderstandings. Quite the contrary, meeting discourse demonstrated conversational cooperation and understanding of the discourse even when it relied heavily on what the speaker assumed to be a shared value although this as not necessarily explicitly stated as such” (p. 418). Though the phonological and syntactic levels of English were nonnative, the smoothness in ELF communication resulted from the pragmatic skills speakers employed to negotiate their differences.

In a research on sales negotiation, Planken (2005) compares the discourse of professionals and learners. She finds that professionals engage in “safe talk” to develop rapport and thus facilitate ELF communication with multilingual speakers. In many cases, the topic of the safe talk relates to “interculturalness” (p. 397). These are reflexive comments on their own cultures, peculiarities, and differences. Planken states, “It would seem that by pointing out and acknowledging cultural differences, participants try or create a temporary in-group of (fellow) non-natives, whose common ground is the fact that they differ culturally” (p. 397). Comments about their nonnativeness enabled them to build a solidarity that probably facilitated non-conflictual communication when gaps or mistakes occurred. Thus the interlocutors distanced themselves from their own cultures as they created a third space—“a no-man’s-land” (p. 397)—activating flexible norms and practices that facilitate communication.

A fascinating development is the way members of diaspora communities shuttle between varieties in order to represent new identities. They display immense creativity as they borrow from neighboring communities for their purposes even if they don’t have good proficiency in the other English varieties. To distinguish this practice from codeswitching, which requires bilingual competence, Rampton (1995) labels it crossing. This is largely an act of performance—limited to surface level deployment of linguistic codes to convey temporary identities and messages. One might consider this a convergence strategy of adopting the language variety of another group to express solidarity and facilitate intelligibility. Harris, Leung, and Rampton (2002) show how a Bengali student in London picks up Rastafarian English from the Jamaican communities in his neighborhood. Bengalis in London probably find that Rasta English facilitates friendship and other social transactions with the Jamaican community. Similarly, Ibrahim (1999) finds that Somali students in Toronto adopt hip-hop English. They would find Afro-Canadian identity and cultural features important to develop a more urbane and local identity.

We need more studies on the new contexts of communication spawned by globalization—i.e., in the domains of diaspora, outsourcing, and business and production networks. Such interactions must be observed closely to develop a taxonomy of the strategies multilinguals employ to represent identities in ELF.

### Written Communication

Though English has served as the lingua franca for written communication for a long time (as texts can travel far and wide without authors having to communicate face to face), issues of localization are being addressed only recently. The code for writing is still considered to have a universal standard, referred to as SWE (standard written English—see Elbow, 2002). There is greater tolerance for diversity in creative writing as license is given for literary purposes. Postcolonial creative writers have managed to mesh local values, discourse patterns, and rhetorical preferences in English (see Canagarajah, 1994). However, the post-Enlightenment realization that languages and texts don’t provide direct access to the real world has created a readiness to address textual diversity in other genres such as

academic and business writing. (For a discussion of these changes in orientation to text, see Canagarajah, 2002a, pp. 2-16.) We are now prepared to accept that all texts are mediated by the beliefs, values, and subject positions of writers. Though there are recent examples from bureaucratic or diplomatic texts (House, 2003) and sales correspondence (Connor, 1999), I will focus here on academic writing.

Academic writing of advanced multilingual scholars has recently begun to show marks of localization. Since this is a high-stakes writing activity, where publication is gate kept and assessed for professional success, multilingual scholars have been slow to culturalize their writing. There are debates around the extent of localization permissible. Some scholars feel that though local varieties of English and discourse patterns are permissible in oral academic communication, they should be eschewed in writing. Barbour (2002) insists that multilingual writers must get the help of native-speaker editors to correct whatever is local in their writing. He adopts this position because he feels that writing lacks the contextual cues and interpersonal resources that oral communication provides to negotiate difference. However, Ammon (2000) argues that it is a matter of linguistic human rights that the peculiar structures and usage of multilingual speakers be accepted in English writing. When English is the universal medium for academic communication, it is unfair for one community to define the norms. Others exaggerate the tolerance for divergence. Articulating what she calls the transculturation model, Zamel (1997) argues that academic genres shouldn't be essentialized as having only a closed set of rules and conventions. There are in fact strong expectations about the language and genre of academic writing (applied punitively by refereed journals, for example). However, we do find examples of multilingual authors deviating creatively and succeeding in publishing.

Applied linguists have started employing the label *multiliteracies* to refer to text construction practices that negotiate different styles, genres, and codes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). This development is exemplified by recent book titles like *Reflections on Multiliterate Lives* (Belcher & Connor, 2001). The first-person reflective essays in the collections by Belcher and Connor (2001), Braine (1999), and Casanave and Vandrick (2003) relate the implications for textuality when writers shuttle between competing discourses. Writers can bring the strengths from alternate backgrounds—Chinese and English, or American English and Sri Lankan English, for example—to enrich their texts in English. More objective textual studies can be found in Belcher (1997), Canagarajah (2002b), Kramsch and Lam (1999), and Prior (1998). Though the writers presented in these studies adopt different strategies to negotiate their challenges in academic text construction, they find their multilinguality a resource for the construction of a unique and striking voice in English writing. In the process, they creatively complicate the accepted conventions and codes of academic texts in Anglo-American settings.

We can identify different ways in which multilingual writers mesh their local identities with English. Some writers like Xiao Ming Li (1999) struggle through the competing traditions of Chinese and English to develop an alternate discourse that integrates the strengths from both languages. This synthesis creates a

“thirdness” that resembles neither language (see Kramsch & Lam, 1999). This strategy can be labeled *transposition* (see Canagarajah, 2004 for definitions of this and the following strategies). Others accommodate the English language to adopt orality based, narratively structured, person-centered discourses that are more resembling of local traditions. This strategy can be labeled *appropriation* as the authors are making English adopt local values. Belcher (1997) discusses the example of two Asian female graduate students who adopt a less agonistic, more affirming rhetoric in their dissertation as they feel uncomfortable with the confrontational style of typical English academic writing. For other examples, see Lin and Martin (2005) for Asian scholars, and Mauranen (1993) on Finnish scholars. Still a third approach—*hybridization*—engages directly with the dominant discourses in English to infuse elements from the local culture while preserving other features of the established rhetoric. This could appear as a combination to two rhetorics. I discuss the example of Sri Lankan scholars who don’t spell out the thesis in the introductory section (as they prefer a more indirect approach). They do take care to indicate their argument non-explicitly, thus deferring to the expectations of Anglo-American readers in a subtle way (Canagarajah, 2002a, 2002b). See also the hybridization in the dissertation of Prior’s (1998) student Theresa.

The examples of localization presented above occur largely at the level of rhetoric and discourse. There are few studies on how authors mesh their own varieties of English at the lexical or grammatical level. Perhaps few authors do. Recently, Peter Elbow (2004) has argued that he will encourage multilingual students to use their local Englishes in their early drafts or in limited spaces of the text (in low stakes environments for effect) in his pedagogy for Hawaiian students. Drawing from the examples of African-American authors who mesh their vernacular Englishes with SWE (see Smitherman, 2003, for an example), others have made a case for mixing diverse varieties of WE (see Canagarajah, 2006c). A rare example of such a case from student writing is Lu (1994). Yet, though localization is permitted in the writing of advanced scholars, writing pedagogies in school and college contexts are not ready for this experimentation.

The research hitherto on multiliteracies has largely been qualitative, naturalistic case studies. We are still in the formative and descriptive stage of observing how such text construction practices work in small settings or few subjects. Teachers like Lu (1994) and Auerbach (1996) have used methods approximating action research to address the literacy challenges faced by their multilingual students. Studies of advanced scholars—such as Canagarajah (2002b) and Prior (1998)—are ethnographic. To encourage reflective data from multilingual writers on their writing experience, Belcher and Connor (2001) have developed a set of heuristics that would lead subjects to write their own literacy autobiographies. Some boldly employ eclectic approaches that border on literary criticism (see Kramsch, 2000). Swales’ approach of textography—which he defines as, “something more than a disembodied textual or discursal analysis, but something less than a full ethnographic account” (1998, p.1)—has also been used (see Canagarajah, 2002b). However, there is a need to move beyond these qualitative

case studies and analyze larger pools of writers and compare case studies to develop a typology of strategies used to negotiate the local in English writing.

### Digital Communication

We have to consider digital communication separately because it straddles orality and literacy (see Murray, 2000). While there are excellent state of the art essays on digital literacy (see Kern, 2006), I consider the topic specifically from the perspective of localization and ELF.

The new conventions of communication have created new resources for multilinguals to negotiate their differences in English. However, here again, there is a need for employing critical and creative strategies. Some scholars feel that the dominant discourses of digital media still reflect ethnic, gender, and class biases (see Murray, 2000; Luke, 2000; Selfe & Selfe, 1994). Others feel that the suspension of conversational maxims and norms of face to face interaction can reduce the motivation for negotiating differences. Far more troubling than miscommunication is “missed communication” as interlocutors have the ability to ignore or refuse to negotiate difference (Ware, 2005). Though the new conventions of the Internet provide a flexible forum where multilinguals can represent local identities and values, the cause/effect relationship can be ambiguous. Is it the non-standard nature of digital discourse that accounts for local codes, or vice versa? Crystal (2001) feels that simplification in Internet discourse (e.g., omission of prepositions, copula, auxiliary verbs) is not just a matter of typing economy but represents dialect features, reflecting the pressure to accommodate many diverse group members (p. 188).

Eva Lam (2000) shows that though her Chinese-American subject Almon feels silenced in the classroom, where standard American English is enforced, he feels empowered on the Internet to use his own variety of English and negotiate the varieties his multilingual friends bring for communication. Lam says that the shift in framework from the norms of the “native speaker” speech community in the classroom to the global community of English speakers on the Internet emboldens Almon and his friends. As they engage in purposive communication, sharing information and feelings about their idol, Japanese pop singer Ryuko, the friends are motivated to negotiate their linguistic differences.

Some have documented the pragmatic strategies that help users negotiate cultural differences. O'Dowd (2003) reports variable success in a year-long e-mail exchange between classes in Spain and Britain, but notes that successful pairs tended to invest a lot of time in their messages. She found that as each group focused on the personal side of their messages, they negotiated their differences better and experienced a pedagogically useful activity. Specifically, they were sure to include personal (i.e., off-task) messages, to acknowledge their partners' comments, and to respond to their questions. They also tended to take the socio-pragmatic rules of each other's language into account and included questions that encouraged feedback and reflection. Students were more interested (and tended to write more, to learn more, and to change their attitudes towards the other culture) when they received

reactions from partners after having explained aspects of their culture. Similarly, Louhiala-Salminen, et al (2005), studying the email communication between Finns and Swedes in the business context (as part of the study mentioned earlier), find that though there are many commonalities in discourse, there are also some differences. In making requests, the Finnish writers tend to be more direct than their Swedish counterparts. Though this is in keeping with the discourse differences observed as typical of both groups, the researchers also find that writers negotiate their differences effectively.

Through such processes of negotiation, some users can go on to create new hybrid discourses. For example, Lam (2004) documents the socialization of two bilingual immigrant Chinese girls in a chat room in which participants develop a hybrid language variety that distinguishes them from both their English-only peers and their Cantonese-only peers. Similarly, Bloch (2004) shows how Chinese learners of English drew on the Chinese rhetorical tradition when communicating in a Usenet group in English, thereby creating a hybrid form of English for that particular context. These discourses resemble the textual strategies of transposition that we discussed in academic writing and the pidginized forms of mixed language in the speech of the sailors in Sampson and Zhao (2003).

### **Conclusion**

The hybrid genres and mixed varieties of English in lingua franca communication create significant challenges for applied linguistics. There is still a bias in the field toward “systematized” varieties of languages. Furthermore, there is a purism in the field that is condescending toward texts that irreverently mix languages. The pidgin-like varieties of English that we find in much of the ELF research discussed above need to be taken seriously. They are not accommodated even in the varieties legitimized in postcolonial communities (as described in Kachru’s WE paradigm). Pennycook (2003) considers the mixed varieties of English (while analyzing Hip-Hop in the expanding circle) as an example of a globalization from below, especially as they represent the identities of less-educated subjects. ELF research also challenges the dominant disciplinary constructs based on homogeneity—i.e., homogeneous grammatical system, homogeneous speech community, homogeneous competence. What we find is a heterogeneous global English speech community, with a heterogeneous English, and different modes of competence. Despite this heterogeneity, the speakers across national borders achieve effective communication. What helps them are sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and discourse strategies of negotiation. We have to consider, therefore, how effective communication may be based not on a uniform grammar or formal competence, but pragmatics and performance. Such an orientation will help us reconcile ourselves to the reality of English as a heterogeneous language with a plural grammatical system and norms, accommodating the expression of diverse local values and identities. For a fuller discussion of the changes in disciplinary discourse along these lines, see Canagarajah (2005b, 2006a). Such is the direction we have to travel if we are to meet the challenge posed by Modiano at the beginning of this discussion.

### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Canagarajah, A. S. (Ed). (2005). *Reclaiming the local in language policy and practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

This book not only inserts a place for the local in policies and practices related to English language in the context of globalization, it also attempts to reconstruct knowledge in applied linguistics to accommodate such possibilities. Authors consider ways in which language acquisition can accommodate hybrid and codeswitched forms; English teacher identities can accommodate local knowledge of nonnative and migrant professionals; and language policies adopt plurality as a resource. The editorial introduction develops a model for teaching English as a global language by accommodating local interests, identities, needs, and professionalism.

Lin, A., & Martin, P. (Eds.). (2005). *Decolonisation, globalisation: Language-in-education policy and practice*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

The collection features articles from diverse countries on how local communities are orientating to the place of English for global communication with sensitivity to local interests. The countries featured are India, Singapore, Hong Kong, Tanzania, South Africa, Iran, and Turkey. The dialectic of decolonization and globalization creates dilemmas in planning education and acquisition for many of these countries. Though most authors are interested only in bringing out the challenges descriptively, those who proffer alternatives advocate a multilingualist policy that accommodates a combination of local languages and English, with different statuses and functions allocated to each of them. Many of the ethnographies show how codeswitching and other bilingual communicative strategies are used to resolve cultural conflicts.

Sonntag, S. (2003). *The local politics of global English: Case studies in linguistic globalization*. Lanham, MA: Lexington Books.

The book compares the attitudes toward English in United States, France, South Africa, India, and Nepal. After emphasizing that globalization is expressed most distinctively through language, specifically English, the author goes on to show that the state is still the critical player in resistance to English whether in favor of local languages or local Englishes. In India and France, the author points out that the resistance against English in favor of local interests is anti-democratic as it is conducted in a chauvinistic manner in favor of the local elite. On the other hand, in South Africa and Nepal, English plays a democratizing influence because it is favored by the masses against the elite enjoying the capital from dominant local languages.

*TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), September 2005. Special Topic Issue: "Reconceptualizing Pronunciation in TESOL: Intelligibility, Identity, and World Englishes."

The articles in this special topic issue bring a much needed research focus on social and communicative considerations in pronunciation that can lead pedagogy in constructive new directions. The authors relate pronunciation to issues of identity, group membership, interpersonal negotiation, and the plurality of World Englishes. Many of the articles shift the focus from the speaker to listener as they explore the ramifications of negotiating intelligibility. The articles raise new questions for pronunciation as we are compelled to treat "deviant" accents as legitimized in other speech communities. Speakers of various institutionalized local Englishes do experience conflicts over which accent is preferable. Also, issues of identity complicate pronunciation. What is socially prestigious or pedagogically correct is not always the preferred option for many speakers.

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