“We still can convey our uhm ... meaning ... and that's okay then” – Introducing a new corpus of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) Skype conversations and its use in ELF-aware language teaching

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Why this talk?

- English as a **global communication medium** is shaped by its multilingual and intercultural environment

- Increased use of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), characterized by influences from the respective native languages, self-assured use of non-standard forms & wide range of adaptive and innovative strategies (e.g. Mairanen & Ranta 2009, Brunner et al. 2016)

→ **Importance** for academia & international business > teaching implications

**BUT:**

- Language classrooms are still mostly shaped by native speaker ideals, “with correctness and appropriateness still widely driven by NES [Native English Speaker] use regardless of learners’ current or potential communication contexts” (Jenkins 2012:485).
Communication strategies

Long tradition of research on communication strategies in learner contexts, e.g. Dörnyei (1995: 56) on non-native speakers’ language use: “They use their **hands**, they **imitate** the sound or movement of things, they **mix languages**, they create **new words**, they **describe** or circumlocute something they don't know the word for - in short, they use communication strategies.”
English as a Lingua Franca

- ELF as “preferred option for cross-cultural communication” (Seidlhofer 2003: 9)
- ELF as “spontaneous, creative, and flexible medium of communication between speakers of different language backgrounds who efficiently make use of their respective linguistic (and plurilingual) resources in order to achieve reciprocal comprehension rather than a ‘correct’ and ‘standard’ output.” (Brunner & Diemer 2018, see also Mauranen 2012, Jenkins 2015)
- “[H]igh degree of interactional robustness, cooperation, consensus-seeking behavior and affiliation” (Firth 2009: 149)
Challenges of teaching ELF

- Convince teachers (> curricula)

Decide ...
- which strategies to illustrate and which to teach (language & ELF awareness vs. concrete strategies)
- on which level: basic vs. advanced levels (complexity & required level of abstraction)
- how to teach these strategies
- how to evaluate success
The issue of integrating ELF into the curriculum

- Language classrooms still mostly shaped by **native speaker ideals** (Jenkins 2012).
- ELF-informed classroom strategies in Italian textbooks (Lopriore & Vettorel 2015, Vettorel 2016): still **little ELF (& World English) awareness in textbooks and curricula**
- Example: Saarland curriculum, Germany (2017):
  - Specific mention of **ELF conversational settings** alongside native speaker settings, both formal and informal beginning in first and second learner years
  - Focus on “**communicative competence**” – tolerating “grammatical and lexical incorrectness”
  - Training of **communication / ELF strategies** “to compensate for perceived communication problems”: circumlocutions, repair mechanisms, gestures and nonverbal resources, comprehension checks, placeholders

Source: Saarland Education Server (http://www.saarland.de/7054.htm; in German only)
The CASE project

- Compilation of Skype conversations between speakers of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) at Trier University of Applied Sciences
- International students from various European countries (e.g. Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Finland, Spain), native speaker component from UK, US
- 250+ hours of Skype conversations, video and audio data
- First encounters, informal, dyadic setting
- Topic prompts, naturally developing conversation of 30 – 60 minutes

Website: umwelt-campus.de/case
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- 20 ELF Skype conversations (12.5 hours), ca. 150,000 tokens
- Transcribed & annotated with basic prosody, paralanguage, non-verbal elements
- Available data sets: fully annotated, lexical, part-of-speech-tagged, xml annotation
- Also available: audios/videos and sociolinguistic background data

Access via: umwelt-campus.de/case
Our approach

- **Condition**: ELF language learning setting where creative and self-assured language use is supported not penalized to allow a focus on successful communication as key aim of instruction, abandoning the “native speaker ideal”/notion of correctness in favor of **communicative success in oral contexts**

- **Part I - Raising language and intercultural awareness** by demonstrating ELF use outside the classroom

- **Part II - Raising ELF competence** by providing concrete ELF strategies based on real language examples, applicable in the classroom, can be trained
Part I: Raising language and intercultural awareness

Meta-level, discussions, especially higher levels

- Focus on the demonstration and discussion of ELF as a set of discourse strategies in the classroom and how they can pre-empt and solve communicative issues, demonstrating the inherent flexibility of ELF, e.g.
  - code-switching (Cogo 2009, Klimpfinger 2009, Brunner & Diemer 2018),
  - approximation & regularization (Mauranen 2012, Brunner et al. 2016, Schneider 2007),
  - innovation (Brunner et al. 2016),
  - “let-it-pass”/ “make-it-normal” (Firth 2009)

- Also focusing on co-operative, multi-lingual, metalinguistic solutions & intercultural competence
07SB54ST04:
SB54: ... and uh in Germany we have uhm, {looks away}
   ... the uhm Christmas ... Krippe ((German (0.6)))? ((ehh))
I don't know how to say it in English?
h uhm there is Maria ((/ma'ri:a/)) Joseph ((/ˈjoːzɛf/)) [the three] holy-

Discuss why code-switches are used and what effect they have on the conversation.
Approximations and let-it-pass principle

Form-based approximation as regularization (Schneider 2007, Brunner et al. 2016)

06SB43ST14: I thought well, "she is from Germany so", she's got like all various pine trees and cool stuffs that she, might as well (go again),

07SB54ST04: well more- ... parents consider that, .t if they give the:, .t the the pre- the presents to the childrens.

08SB106HE03: he's from Germany. and so he when he hearded about this CASE he said, well we can just speak German for half an hour. ((laughs))
Co-construction of meaning (Brunner et al. 2016)

CASE 07SB54ST04
ST04: ... Reyes Magos ([(Spanish (0.9))] do you know what the three ... magic-
-k_uh:m,
(1.0) kings are or not.
SB54: the three what? {moves closer to screen} 00:23:31-5
ST04: [(hehe)] no this is well-
this is something similar to Santa Claus but with [the] three uh queens that go to:,
SB54: [°mhm°],
ST04: to (Belen) to Bethlehem to give Jesus,
uh,
SB54: the three holy holy KINGS [you mean].
ST04: [ah yes] holy kings.
SB54: ... mhm [yeah] I know them. [...] 
ST04: uh the three holy kings are similar to:,
>Santa Claus< in the sense that,
.h they also bring- .. uh toys to children.
SB54: m mhm? {nods}
ST04: but we prefer .. the three holy k_i:ngs,
Here, the German and the Spanish student talk about life at university.
Which preposition would you have used?

**On, at or in? (03SB66ST17)**
SB66: so uhm we have uhm a huge university,
and some people live at university on the campus,
do you live at [campus]?
ST17: [yeah] yeah yeah I live in the campus.

**Discussion:**
Do you think there is one correct answer? How could you find out?
In the example, does the use of three different prepositions hinder or influence understanding in any way?
Comparing languages

Here, the Spanish student describes his Galician dialect to the German conversation partner.

**Dog is can** (03SB66ST17)

ST17: or for example dog.
you know dog in Latin is canis ((Latin (0.3))).

SB66: (1.2) mh hm.

ST17: and Ga- in: Spanish it's perro ((Spanish (0.3))).
but in Galician it's can. ((Galician (0.2)))
no canis ((Latin (0.3))),

can. ((Galician (0.2)))

Can you think of cases where a word in English is similar to a word in French/Spanish/German/Latin...?
Notions of cultural concepts

SB48: maybe that's a German invention, I don't know. do you have Spaghetti ice cream?

FL32: ... no. ((laughs))
SB48: you don't have that? [[(laughs)]]
FL32: [(what is it.)]
SB48: that's -
FL32: no.
SB48: uhm, that’s vanilla ice cream? that is.. uhm pressed? in a certain form, so it uh looks like spaghetti.

FL32: uhu?
SB48: and.. little pieces of white chocolate.
FL32: yeah .. [really? ((laughs))]
SB48: [yeah and that’s delicious. ((laughs))]
FL32: [wow .. I must try it] ((laughing)) and uhm, SB48: I always wondered, if you had that in Italy too, or if that’s. a German [invention.]
FL32: [[shakes head] no.] no no no, here,
SB48: and .. [really?] ((laughs))
FL32: yeah .. [really? ((laughs))]
SB48: and .. little pieces of white chocolate.
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FL32: [wow .. I must try it] ((laughing)) and uhm, SB48: I always wondered, if you had that in Italy too, or if that’s. a German [invention.]
FL32: [[shakes head] no.] no no no, here,
SB73: (1.4) is uhm do you still celebrate this uhm <bull racing>?
... uhm,
ST14: ... OH the bull fighting,
SB73: yeah,
ST14: yeah,
(1.0) {{clears throat}} [well,-]
SB73: I think it's a celebration for you or?
isn't it?
ST14: (1.0) well. {rolls eyes}
(1.5) okay.
... uhm ... <Spain is a (/et/)) very: diverse country.
... and it might not look like so. {{clears throat}} {left hand to mouth}
... because it's not very big, {stretches arms, palms facing inwards}
... but it has a lot of cultures. {raises hands, waving back and forth}
... very different cultures. {moves hands to front, fingers pointing downwards}
... and where I am from? {both hands on chest}
we don't bull fight. {shakes head}
{interruption of recording (7.9)}
(would you?{{(hehe)})
... that's,
(2.1) (in the south of Spain?)
... or towards the east of Spain.
and_uhm,
SB73: [yeah I think so] too,
(1.0) I've seen a lot of uhm, {right hand on forehead}
... things about it in magazines and on [TV]?
ST14: [yeah], {{(clears throat)}}
SB73: and it's just cruel.
ST14: ... [yeah],
SB73: °[that's the point] yeah°,
(1.0) but .. yeah I think if it's a tradition?
{ST fixes hair with left hand and shakes head}
ST14: (2.3) uhm.

What is the problem here? How does the Spanish student show that she does not agree with this cultural practice? Can you think of topics that might be equally problematic in a German/French/English/American ... context?
Part II: Raising ELF competence

Exercises, concrete strategies, all levels

- Teaching a self-assured and creative language use
- Integration of selected ELF-associated discourse strategies into students’ communicative inventory, e.g.
  - metadiscourse, explicitness, (Mauranen 2006, 2012),
  - repetition, rephrasing (Kaur 2009, Mauranen 2012),
  - definitions, metalinguistic comments, paraphrases (Brunner, in preparation, Poplack 1988, Klimpfinger 2009)
  - new word formations (Brunner et al. 2016)
  - non-verbal resources (Brunner et al. 2016, 2017)
Repetition and explicitness

SF13: .. so where are you located in a dorm or something or,
SB14: .. in a what i-
€€€
SF13: i- in a DORM?
[like a student dorm?]
SB14: [no no I actually live uh],
I- I've got my own flat.
uhm ... [so uhm],
SF13: [o:h],
SB14: yeah that's w:here I live,

(02SB14SF13)

The two conversation partners seem to have some problems. Can you help to make the meaning clearer?
Defining and rephrasing

Vagueness as a communicative strategy, word formation patterns

07SF03SB46:
SF03: okay, 
u:hm uh is there something typical from that region?
SB46: u:hm yeah <it's> .. uh ... kind of ... potat- potato=
SF03: =uhu.
SB46: uh .. hh potat- uh pancake pancakish potato,
SF03: [ah okay].
SB46: [()] is] it's not ... not quite a pancake, 
because it's like very .. uh rough pieces of potato,
SF03: uhum.= [...] 
SB46: and then you just like .. make them into pancake style shapes, 
... a:nd uhm .. fry them in- in a pan, 
and you usually eat them with .. uhm ... with applesauce with like .. uhm ... mashed apples.
SF03: ah cool, 
is it s- something like Kaiserschmarn?
SB46: (1.2) uhm .. a bit similar .. out of potatoes yeah. 
[...] ... it’s called Dibbelabbes ((chuckles)).

Can you help refining the definition? How would you have explained it? 
Explain another typical regional dish to your partner.
Defining and rephrasing: Pre-emptive use

SB25: every time the door bell rings she gets crazy. she gets °really crazy°,
SF01: .. o:h,
SB25: yeah=
SF01: =poor thing ((thin/k/)).
SB25: (1.4) so is she adopted or?
SF01: ... mhm,
SB25: °at a° at a dogs home,
Defining: Sense relations

Generalization & analogy

ST04: ... polvorones ((Spanish (1.1)))?
(1.5) this is I- I don't like polvorones ((Spanish (0.7))). {shakes head}
... uh this is another kind of typical: sweet dessert for,
... for Christmas but I don't like it.
it's like a biscuit or something like that,

Prototype & exemplification

FL34: u:h I- I think,
Germany- German beer it’s like WEISSBIER ((German (1.0))),
SB50: [yeah].
FL34: [like uh] Erdinger or Franzisk- oooh,
that's S:O: [goo:d],

Which strategies of defining are used in these examples? Would you have understood these definitions?
Explain the following terms with the help of analogy/prototypes/co-hyponyms or a superordinate term …
Creativity & analogy: “It’s like a spinning barbecue”

07SB51ST01: SB51: [uhm we've] got the Schwenker (German (1.7)). [...] yeah it's pretty weird if you think about it. you've got this kind of strange barbecue (barbe/g/ue)? barbecue, and it has .. three legs. and then you've got like a plate, hanging down, and you can spin it. it's like a spinning barbecue. ([laughs]) that's e:h .. a very Saarlandish thing. many people say that we invented it. ((ehh))

Did you understand how it works?

Think of other creative ways of describing regional specialties...
Non-verbal explanations

Co-construction of meaning with (non-)verbal means

06SB73ST14:
ST14:  (1.1) okay? {nods}
SB73:  ... and uhm: they have,
        (1.1) {cat meows}
        **how do you call it uhm,**
        (1.3) {cat meows}
        uhm, [[[hehe]]]
        [{cat meows}] the- it's uhm,
        **... uh like a rubber band?**
        **it goes [on your trousers?]**
ST14:  [two things,]
SB73:  yeah,
ST14:  right okay,
SB73:  yeah [just I didn't,]
ST14:  [>almost,<] {looks to upper corner}
        **... I don’t know what it’s- what's the name for it right {cat meows}**
        yeah {looks back to screen} I know what you mean, ((chuckles))
Non-verbal explanations

Co-construction of meaning with (non-)verbal means

06SB73ST14: 
ST14: (1.1) okay? {nods}
SB73: ... an:d uhm: they have,
(1.1) {cat meows}
how do you call it uhm,
(1.3) {cat meows}
uhm, [((hehe))] {imitates braces with both hands}
[{{cat meows}}] the- it’s uhm,
... uh like a rubber band?
it goes [on your trousers?] 

ST14: [two things,] {imitates braces with both hands}
SB73: yeah,
ST14: right okay,
SB73: yeah [just I didn't,]
ST14: [>almost,<] {looks to upper corner}
... I don’t know what it’s- what’s the name for it right {cat meows}
yeah {looks back to screen} I know what you mean, ((chuckles))

Try to explain the following words to your partner by using gestures to imitate what you mean (you may use indefinite noun phrases such as thing and stuff) ...
FL34: .. they have **polenta**, 
I don't know how to call it in English, 
its like something made with potatoes but its like .. almost, 
... I don't know how to call it, 

SB50: You do it in an oven right? 
d-you put potatoes and something on there and you put it in an oven? 

FL34: It's like >wait wait wait wait< .. I sh- I sh ..-ould be able to find na:me .. in English, 
{typing sound} 
(2.0) hmmm ... now .. its just .. I think .. polenta, 

SB50: oh okay, 

FL34: it's like (2.0) u::h it says,  
... **WIKIPedia says**, 

SB50: .. ((laughs)) 

FL34: **polenta is CORNmeal boiled into a porridge and either the-** 

SB50: oh po[rridge, ok] 

FL34: [either then baked] 

SB50: okay,
SB93: is it true that alcohol's (ˈælkəls/) so expensive there? or is it, is was that just Norway, 
HE19: oh which one? {leans forward} 
SB93: alcohol (ˈalkəl). [was that just in Norway], HE19: {[shakes head once, leans forward]} what is it, 
aikai (/aikai/)? {leans forward} 
SB93: so, alcohol (ˈalkəl/), <alcohol> (ˈalkohəl/). {imitates breathalizer by blowing into end of pen} 
[what you drink]. {holds pen to mouth} 
HE19: [oh: the], {scratches head with left hand} the brand? 
SB93: no, what you drink, {imitates drinking} in, what's in beer, 
[and wine]. 
HE19: [oh: sorry], {laughing}, {closes eyes, leans back, raises both hands in a throwaway gesture} 
SB93: [alco], {laughing}, {leans forward} 
HE19: sorry °sorry°, {laughing} alcohol, {nods} 
sorry, {nods} now I understand, {nods} yeah yeah yeah, {nods} 
HE19: oh it's very expensive in Finland, 
SB93: I think we have a very high tax on alcohol, {raises right hand, pressing fingers together} 
HE19: [yeah]. 
SB93: [so that] wasn't just in Norway, 
HE19: no, {shakes head} yeah.
Application

- **Two small-scale classroom studies** (4 groups of students, grades 7&8, 3rd and 4th learning year) in Saarland (Germany) classrooms with pre-and post tests (oral exams with communication situations)
  - Positive perception by students
  - In both (limited) studies marked increase in communicative competences
- **Use in intercultural trainings** for university administrative staff (Brunner & Diemer 2018)
  - Positive evaluation by participants
  - Application in interactive settings currently under way
→ Further application studies planned
Conclusion: Opportunities and challenges

- Convince teachers (> curricula)
  - Increasingly part of German curricula

Decide ...

- which strategies to illustrate and which to teach
  - illustrate and discuss (with exercises) complex ELF issues
    - effects of code-switching, language flexibility/creativity, let-it-pass principle, multilingual repertoire, intercultural issues
  - teach communicative strategies (with concrete examples)
    - explicitness, rephrasing, defining, (creative) word formation processes, non-verbal means of communication
Conclusion: Opportunities and challenges

Decide ...

- on which level: basic vs. advanced levels
- complexity & required level of abstraction have to be adapted to different levels of knowledge
- tendency: general discussions regarding language/intercultural awareness for higher levels; ELF strategy training for all levels; intercultural competence for all levels, if adequately adapted

- how to teach these strategies
- raising students’ ELF awareness, setting communicative success as a goal, encouraging flexibility, creativity, co-operation

- how to evaluate success
- based on strategy use and comprehensibility in realistic situations (cf. e.g. Polzin-Haumann, Reissner, Diemer & Brunner 2016)
References

References

Thank you!

ViMeLFE
Video Mediated

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