

perlocutionary effects – in terms of cognitive accessibility, socio-cultural and ethical acceptability and specialized intertextuality (cf. de Beaugrande & Dressler 1981) – produced by cross-cultural interactions on participants from both Western and non-Western speech communities.

In this sense, special attention will be paid to the possibility of transferring the conclusions, derived from the *phonopragmatic* approach and analysis, to everyday mediation contexts with the aim of providing European intercultural mediators with linguistic suggestions that may help them to be aware of the fact that even the use of certain prosodic features and behaviour facilitate, or even influence, the process of meaning construction (and mediation) and then of mutual comprehension from both communicative sides.

Actually, experts in intercultural communication should be aware of the processes at the basis of discourse construction in multicultural encounters and, consequently, of interpreting, and translation as well, which should not be a literal and automatic transferring of L1 semantic structures to ELF. Rather they should be involved into a cross-cultural mediation process by which all speakers' socio-cultural and individual identities are equally respected and properly communicated.

To fulfil these goals, the research is subdivided into three parts: Section 1 will carry out a comprehensive outline of the theoretical assumptions underlying the research hypothesis and objectives; Section 2 will provide a thorough exposure of the *phonopragmatic* model of analysis, thereby focusing on its rationale and multidisciplinary methodological approaches; Section 3 will deal with the *phonopragmatic* analysis applied to five case-studies of naturally-occurred cross-cultural encounters in specialized immigration contexts.

1. Theoretical Background: Focus on ELF Variations

The *phonopragmatic* model described and applied in the present research is grounded on theoretical views that justify its research focus and methodological approach. At the basis of the research rationale, a multidimensional correlation of scientific approaches is set, especially regarding: (i) the interaction between intercultural pragmatics and other components of linguistics, with particular reference to the theory of speech acts and illocutionary intentions (Searle 1969, 1983); (ii) the study of phonology with special attention to the adoption of prosodic strategies of speech segmentation and acoustic variations, and paralinguistic devices in the use of ELF; (iii) the analysis of cross-cultural communication with a careful consideration for specialized-genre conventions and socio-cultural

implications in specialized immigration contexts (Guido 2004b; 2006; 2008) where different sociocultural and pragmalinguistic backgrounds interact.

Therefore, in the following section a paradigmatic view of the actual state of the art in the fields of (i) ELF research, (ii) phonology and intonational prosody, and (iii) cross-cultural pragmatics, is provided in order to define the main theoretical grounds upon which the *phonopragmatic* model has been developed.

1.1. Changing perspectives in English as a Global Language

In the last decades a growing attention has been given by the scientific research community to the continuing spread of English worldwide and its ever increasing importance as a tool of cross-cultural communication and human interaction.

It is obviously true that neither the spread of English, which began with the migration of native English speakers to America and Australia at the beginning of the 17th century and continued with the colonization of Africa and Asia, nor the use of a language as ‘a lingua franca’ are new phenomena, but the actual spread of English in terms of scale and degree, socio-linguistic and socio-cultural effects is arguably unprecedented (e.g. Fishman 1987; Graddol 1997; Crystal 2003).

As a consequence, the spread of English as a language for international communication in the 20th century has added to the difficulty of describing ‘world Englishes’ and describing differences between the national ‘standard’ variations of English and the emergence of new varieties of English, especially in cross-cultural socio-linguistic settings where English is used as a contact language between non-native speakers of English of different L1 backgrounds (Seidlhofer 2001; Jenkins 2004; Dröschel 2011).

From a linguistic point of view, the spread of global English and its use by speakers of diverse L1s results in an increasing development of English varieties. Therefore, with the increase in the number of different L1 speakers involved in ELF interactions, even the amount and the nature of linguistic differences among their ‘Englishes’ is also inevitably bound to increase.

It is also true that English has spread worldwide because it has been appropriated to fulfil the social and communicative needs and purposes of communities of speakers beyond those belonging to what are known as the Inner or even the Outer Circles (Kachru 1992).

Nonetheless, Kachru’s famous categorization of English into three Circles (with the native speakers in the ‘Inner’ one; the non-native speakers of the countries which were colonized by native English ones in the ‘Outer’ one; and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) speakers of the countries where English is learnt and spoken but does not serve institutional purposes, in the

‘Expanding Circle’) needs to be reconsidered or even reformulated, due to the fact that the non-native speakers now outnumber the native speakers of English which, in the Expanding Circle, has become ELF managed by users able to appropriate the language and adapt it to their needs.

Moreover, the concept of ‘Expanding Circle English’ as involving communicative situations and contexts predominantly among NNSs (non-native speakers), rather than between NSs (native speakers) and NNSs, has become widely known if not widely encouraged. Actually, during the first decade of the 21st century, the term ELF has been eventually employed in a number of publications by ELF researchers (e.g. Knapp & Meierkord 2002; Mauranen 2003; Seidlhofer 2004). As a result, the term has begun to be increasingly used in publications even by scholars who are not directly engaged in ELF research, and has even achieved a sufficient acknowledgement to deserve to be included in the encyclopedia of language teaching and learning (Byram 2004).

Jenkins (2000: 10) claims that, as far as the term ‘EFL’ (English as a Foreign Language) is concerned, it does “not express the principal purpose of learning English today”, and even though it is widely “used to describe native/non-native interactions, the word ‘foreign’ carries a number of negative implications” as well. Moreover, according to Gika (1996: 15), English is taught to prevent communicative incomprehensibility among speakers, to “talk to each other without linguistic and even cultural boundaries, understand each other better [...] to bring people closer”, and therefore the term ‘foreign’ becomes evidently contradictory or even awkward, because something ‘foreign’ cannot be also “international, since people all over the world communicate using English” (Gika 1996: 15).

Therefore, Jenkins (2000: 11) suggests a possible alternative to EFL simply changing the second letter with the third one to obtain ‘ELF’. She also points out how this new term would be convenient and effective: first of all, because “ELF emphasizes the role of English in communication between speakers from different L1s”. Moreover, this new term “suggests the idea of community” instead of the quite unfriendly ‘foreignness’ of EFL, and underlines that instead “people have something in common rather than their differences”. Jenkins (2000: 11) underlines how ELF “implies that ‘mixing’ languages is acceptable and thus that there is nothing wrong in preserving certain features of the L1”. Even the employment of the Latin expression ‘lingua franca’ could contribute to draw attention on a radical shift in terms of considering the “ownership of English”, which as far as ELF is concerned clearly could not be assigned to the Anglo-Saxons.

Hence, ELF became the selected term for a new manifestation of English, which is a very different concept from both English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as Foreign Language (EFL). Unlike ESL varieties (proper of the Outer Circle), ELF cannot be considered as a contact

language within national groups but between and for them. And unlike EFL (proper of the Expanding Circle), it is not primarily a language of communication between its NSs and NNSs, but mainly among its NNSs.

However, the main differences between EFL and ELF should be carefully analysed and as much as possible categorized, since they consist of a number of elements and factors, such as their diverse (i) *linguacultural norms*: which, in the case of EFL, are appropriated in the teaching and learning process, while, in the case of ELF, norms and standards are constantly negotiated and reinvented; (ii) *objectives*: EFL serves as a socio-cultural integration tool and contributes to membership acquisition in a NS community, while ELF becomes a fundamental communication means in NNS or mixed NNS-NS interactions and seems not to be involved, at least in the majority of cases, in purposes of socio-cultural inclusion; (iii) *processes*: EFL implies processes of imitation and adoption of the standard ENL norms, while ELF shows and always produces evident signals of communicative accommodation and signs of linguistic adaptation processes.

With regards to this, Bamgbose (1998: 3-5) suggests a checklist of five parameters which could be generally used to prove whether an innovative linguistic form or habit could be considered normative. These are: demographical expansion, geographical spread, codification, authoritativeness, and acceptability. Of these five requirements, Bamgbose considers ‘codification’ and ‘acceptability’ as the two most important ones because “without them”, as often happens, “innovations will continue to be” regularly disregarded and dismissed as “errors” (Bamgbose 1998: 3-5).

In support of this new perspective, Widdowson (1997) rightly points out that rather than being adopted by its traditional native speakers, nowadays English has been spreading and adapting to suit its new uses as an international lingua franca. Therefore, ELF may be considered as the natural communicative consequence of the current and widespread phenomenon called ‘globalization’, and whoever attempts to prevent or arrest it actually reveals an anachronistic and unequal attitude towards the present age and its global communicative needs.

For most ELF researchers, then, ELF and EFL are two very different realities. ELF belongs to the global Englishes field where all English varieties are not considered as attempts to adopt a native speaker version of English, whereas EFL belongs to the modern foreign language system, according to which the teaching and learning of English are not different from those applied to any other foreign language, with the ultimate goal of learning an English version as close as possible to the standard variety spoken by the native speakers of the language.

Nonetheless, even though it is still often observed that English has become a global language, and that the majority of its non-native speakers (NNSs) use it as a lingua franca among themselves rather than as a ‘foreign’

language to communicate with its NSs, so far these important research achievements have not had an acceptable impact on English language attitudes and, above all, on English language teaching (ELT): the debate among users of English, NNS and NS, teachers, learners, English scholars is still lively and compelling, mostly because it seems particularly challenging to realize the conceptual bound needed in order to allow ELF variations to acquire an appropriate place on the same level as the Englishes of the three traditional Circles.

1.2. Changing perspectives in defining English as a Lingua Franca

In the light of the previous preliminary considerations, it is crucial to consider what Seidlhofer (2011) suggests about defining and describing languages and language varieties. She is convinced that the concept of ‘variety’ itself has changed, as shown by recent linguistic analyses. Moreover, the elevated mobility of the contemporary communicative dimension and the unlimited extension of interactions, above all thanks to the social network revolution, crucially challenge the concept of ‘community’ as an autonomous system of social encounters. In her words, “what it means to be communicatively competent in English can no longer be described with reference to norms of linguistic knowledge and behaviour that are relevant only to particular native-speaker communities” (Seidlhofer 2011: 92). Recent studies on the spread and use of English have shown how “conformity to these norms is neither necessary nor sufficient to meet the international requests for the effective use of English as a lingua franca”. Thus ELF users are not only less and less dependent on native-speaker norms, but also often capable of cooperatively elaborating norms and models of their own.

Therefore, the emergence of ELF as a global linguistic phenomenon without precedence has required a scientific reconsideration of some established concepts and assumptions, especially those related to ‘variety’, ‘community’, and ‘competence’.

Moreover, what is extraordinary and new about ELF is the interdependence with the unique and new socio-economic, political, and technological achievements in the globalized world so much that ELF seems to be both reason and effect of the new communicative dynamics, processes and requirements.

According to Jenkins (2011: 3) a good definition of ELF is available on the website of the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE): ELF is “an additionally acquired language system which serves as a common means of communication for speakers of different first

languages”. Seen from this perspective, it could be claimed that native English speakers are not excluded from ELF, but they are supposed to use it – like non-native speakers – as “an additionally acquired language system”. This could mean that native speakers should become familiar with it as well, since ELF is not the same as ENL, when they need to communicate in ELF international settings, rather than playing in cross-cultural interactions “their traditional role as norm providers” (Jenkins 2011: 3).

Moreover, Seidlhofer (2004) adds that the definition of ELF does not exclude NSs of English, but generally they may not be included in data collection, and should not deserve a special point of reference when they are participants in ELF interactions.

On the other hand, House (1999: 74) defines ELF interactions as being “between members of two or more different linguacultures in English, for none of whom English is the mother tongue”. Which is in line with Firth’s (1996) definition of ELF in which it is considered as “a ‘contact language’ between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication” (Firth 1996: 240) – that is to say that native English speakers would be excluded from ELF communication because English is not a ‘foreign language of communication’ for them.

It is also true that Firth (1996) aims at establishing to what extent English may be used as a lingua franca by low-skilled speakers as well, in spite of the “anomalies and infelicities” often “recognized by native-speaker assessments” and condemned as ‘errors’ (Firth 1996: 239), rather than discussing whether native speakers of English may share ELF with NNSs or not.

In line with the other researchers, Dröschel (2011: 40) assures that “the distinction between English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and Lingua Franca English (LFE) would solve the problem many ELF researchers have encountered in defining lingua franca communication”, especially as far as the question of native speakers is concerned. According to her perspective, it is evident that LFE, either as a single variety or as a range of different varieties, “is an additionally acquired form of English, even for native speakers of British or American English”, and therefore could not have native speakers. It is therefore necessary to redefine the concept of ‘ELF’ considering the nature of the speakers who very often employ it and for whom English may also not necessarily be their foreign or second language and whose degree of proficiency may vary from high to very low linguistic competence.

Moreover, since any definition of Lingua Franca English should also include its typical pragmatic nature of serving a number of varied communicative purposes by sociolinguistically heterogeneous speakers, Dröschel (2011) suggests that, in order not to focus the definition of lingua

franca communication only onto the question of interactions between native or non-native speakers, it would be more convenient to “redefine the term ‘lingua franca’ as an additionally acquired language system that serves as a means of communication between speakers of different first languages. Lingua franca English, then, can be understood as a contact language used by native and non-native speakers alike but which functions as an independent system which as such has no real native speakers”.

On the other hand, other scholars, such as James (2000), consider Lingua Franca as an autonomous variety, which mainly derives from a mixture of a reduced standard English structures interfered with speakers’ L1 varieties.

Actually, Dröschel (2011: 42) also adds that ELF may not be compared even with pidgins, in spite of certain formal similarities, since they are used as lingua franca for restricted communicative purposes and are linguistically very simplified varieties of the source language which cannot be compared with ELF. On the other hand, “Lingua Franca English (LFE) affects a large variety of domains, such as international relations, trade, tourism, banking, and so on, and covers a range of more or less simplified varieties, depending on the sociolinguistic background of its speakers” (Dröschel 2011: 42).

As Seidlhofer (2011) points out, the new term ‘ELF’ should be preferred, but not only because most ‘lingua franca’ definitions restrict it to communication among NNSs, rather because within this acronym it is much better signalled the NNS autonomous responsibility for the authorship and the growing of ELF worldwide among speakers involved in global communication. That is, ‘ELF’, more than any of the other alternatives, underlines that it is NNSs rather than NSs who are leading linguistic and communicative innovation and change all over the world throughout the original lingua franca English.

Seen from this perspective, it seems evident that formal differences from native English may be arguably considered as legitimate ‘variations’ according to ELF, but they always remain ‘errors’ according to EFL. It is also true that ELF speakers are very often still learners or have just ceased learning; but the crucial point for Jenkins (2011: 4) is that there is a need for a sociolinguistic and pragmatic distinction between “ELF learners’ errors and the innovations of proficient ELF users, even though the two sometimes result in the same forms”. Concerning this aspect, she provides the example of ELF metaphors which are a result of “language contact and evolution”, unlike EFL metaphors are an outcome of “interference and fossilization”. Again, code-mixing and code-switching may be considered as “bilinguals’ pragmatic strategies” in ELF, while in EFL they are “evidence of gaps in knowledge” (Jenkins 2011: 4).

Moreover, it is important to stress that the main aim of an ELF speaker is to communicate with other non-native speakers whereas EFL, which is still typically learned at school, takes the native speaker as a target and includes components of English native-speaker language and culture. According to this conceptualization, indeed, it is possible for a speaker to be in the position of an ELF user at one moment and of an EFL user at another moment, depending on who s/he is speaking to and for what purpose.

Actually, research data confirm that ELF speakers with a high level of English proficiency are able to change and modify the English variety learnt at school, employing also a number of multilingual resources and code-switching or mixing in order to achieve and guarantee mutual comprehension with their interlocutors. Moreover, as shown by Jenkins (2011), ELF communication process occurs in a successful attempt to preserve cultural identity despite the extensive use of the accommodation strategies. That is to say, this use of ELF seems to respond perfectly and adapt easily to different communicative settings and according to the interlocutor's requirements.

As it will be demonstrated later on, speakers regularly change their language in different settings in order to accommodate to their interlocutors and to facilitate intelligibility. According to Seidlhofer (2011: 81), "in ELF situations, speakers of any kind of English variety, from EFL, ENL and ESL contexts, need to modify accordingly to the requirements of intercultural communication", often adapting their communicative outcome and switching from ELF to EFL or ESL, according to a number of different pragmatic purposes or reasons.

Moreover, ELF scholars have always underlined that if English is likely to fulfil its role as the world's international 'lingua franca', it is obvious that it should be able to achieve 'mutual intelligibility' among speakers and writers from all first language backgrounds who wish to communicate in ELF, otherwise communication failure and breakdown occur. The main obstacle to such mutual intelligibility is indeed 'identity', as actually pointed out by Crystal (2003), who claims that the need for intelligibility and the need for identity often walk in opposing directions. However, he also argues that they could successfully coexist considering a world of linguistic diversity – where identity is preserved – continuing to exist within a world united by a common communicative tool, namely ELF.

To achieve comprehensibility, ELF should be – Jenkins (2000) claimed – constantly in a certain pursuit of mutual intelligibility among its speakers, which depends on a decrease in phonological differences among speakers from different L1 backgrounds. This, however, does not necessarily involve supporting L2 learners to imitate a native-speaker accent. Indeed, such attempts have often failed, because accent and intonation are closely related to idiolectal and sociolectal attitudes and

feelings related to community identity, which implies that people tend to resist such attempts of emulation, whether consciously or not. On the contrary, it usually happens that either they try to preserve their mother-tongue accent in their L2 English or they simply do not identify, through mimicking an L1 English accent, with native speakers of the second language. And in the case of EIL (English as an International Language)¹, and even more for ELF, this is particularly true since there is a strong socio-linguistic motivation for not conforming to the accent of a native-speaker group. The EIL community indeed is by definition international rather than associated with any national speech community, contrary to what very often still happens in the Outer Circle with the phenomenon of ‘acculturation’ (Schumann 1978). In this case speakers wish to drop their local-English accent to acquire an ENL pronunciation in order to be socio-culturally accepted by NSs.

Besides, while ELF is usually seen as a global development, in the first decade of the 21st century a new scientific trend has begun to study it from a local or regional perspective. One good example is English used as a lingua franca in Europe (cf. e.g. James 2000; Jenkins and Seidlhofer 2001; Jenkins *et al.* 2001; Mollin 2006).

These studies aim at investigating and establishing whether it is possible to claim that the English lingua franca commonly used in European communication settings is a new and autonomous variety of English, typically European, which is called therefore ‘Euro-English’. Actually, Jenkins *et al.* (2001) suggested and demonstrated that a variety of European English is emerging as a linguistic reality with its own autonomous and peculiar features, and its development may be arguably compared to that of New Englishes of the Outer Circle. Jenkins (2003: 42) assumes that “the linguistic outcome of European political and economic developments is predicted by some scholars to be a nativised hybrid variety of English. In effect, European English contains a number of grammatical, lexical, phonological and discourse features found in individual mainland European languages along with some items common to many of these languages, but not to standard British or American English” (on the debate about Euro-English e.g. Berns 1995; House 2001; Cheshire 2002; Phillipson 2003).

However, despite very important scientific achievements and improvements, ‘English as a lingua franca’ seems that it has not entered speakers’ and sometimes scholars’ consciousness as a new and alternative reality to traditional EFL, or EIL, at least at a theoretical level. Therefore,

¹ In Jenkins (2000) the Author decides to continue to use the more widely, at that time, acknowledged term ‘EIL’ instead of ‘ELF’, although actually she intended to discuss the phonology of English used as a ‘lingua franca’, rather than as an international language as such.

Seidlhofer (2011:14) calls this acknowledgment vacuum a “conceptual gap”.

Indeed, the general scientific scenario still suffers from a controversial debate in which a missing ELF acknowledgment derives and is fuelled by anachronistic attitudes towards native-oriented perspectives and norms, which hinder the realization of the fact that – as Brumfit (2001: 116) argues – “the ownership of any language in effect rests with the people who use it.” On the contrary, so far in ELF research it is often defended and applied a rooted and established model based on the native-speaker influence and perspective.

For the theoretical baseline of the present research, what is most important to realize, and which is clearly inferable by the previous complex outline of different positions and voices in defining ELF, is that English as a lingua franca is a concept that needs to be included in the theoretical repertoire as an addition to other Englishes, either ENL, ESL, or EFL, either local or global.

In other words, English as a Lingua Franca should be intended as a means of intercultural communication not tied to particular countries or speech community, or depending on an ENL context. Indeed, ELF seems to be a linguistic pragmatic resource that should not or may not be enclosed in, or restricted into the common attitude of traditionally intending ‘language’.

It is also true that in the latter part of the 20th century, scholars using terms such as ‘lingua franca English’ and ‘non-native/non-native speaker’ were not considering ELF in the sense in which it is nowadays conceived and understood by most current ELF researchers. Actually, the current ELF research tends to investigate the phenomenon in its own dynamics and not by comparison with ENL.

Indeed, apart from the debate about definitions and acronyms, what is relevant about ELF research is the considerable scientific strength it has recently gained, with a prevailing research focus on three main areas: (1) mutual intelligibility between ELF interlocutors; (2) analysis of lexical, grammatical, and phonetic features that may distinguish ELF from ‘English as a native language’ (ENL); and (3) pragmatic features of successful ELF communication.

1.3. Needs for ELF codification and the future of ELF Studies

In the last decade, moved by her enduring research on the phonology of ELF and its effects, Jenkins (2000) perceived the need for a sort of international core for phonological intelligibility in ELF, namely a series of unifying features which could guarantee that ELF pronunciation do not hinder successful communication in ELF settings.

The following section will provide an in-depth comparative analysis between ENL phonological structures and the recent conceptualization of ELF phonological profile. Anyway, a worth theoretical outline of the scientific achievements in ELF research cannot overlook the debate around the idea of an ELF core developed from the consideration that – according to Jenkins – participants in ELF need to be able to accommodate their accents and adjust both their phonological production and their perceptive expectations according to the communicative situation, with the consequence that the phonological features cannot be the same as those of their L1 or L2 variety of English.

The pronunciation model, described by Jenkins (2000), defined which English pronunciation features are core and non-core for non-native speakers of English. This pronunciation model, including the elements that emerged as necessary for intelligibility for ELF, is called the Lingua Franca Core (LFC).²

Actually, according to Jenkins (2000: 234) so far, “no pronunciation books gives learners practise in adjusting their pronunciation to suit the needs of different interlocutors or speech situations, or even discusses the need for them to do so. And nowhere are there publications addressing L1 speakers of English and the productive and receptive adjustments they too could be making to facilitate international communication” in ELF. In the USA especially, the attitude persists that if L2 speakers on English wish to succeed in securing and retaining employment, then they must “adjust their accent” and assimilate it to a certain ‘native-likeness’” (Jenkins 2000).

However, negative reactions to the LFC (and to ELF in general) from both NNSs and NSs often seemed to involve strong attitudes towards NNS English. In particular, according to Jenkins (2007) negative criticism towards LFC implies the enduring existence of deep-rooted attitudes towards issues such as ‘good’ and ‘bad’ levels of proficiency in English pronunciation, and moreover, a prejudice that NNSs own a poor English accent, and that NSs of English have special rights over the language, even when it is used in ELF contexts.

Some scholars have noticed that, until not long ago, the corpus research which, implemented by computer technology, may considerably help linguists to gather and analyse increased amounts of conversational and other linguistic data, has largely withdrawn the growing spread of ELF

² Jenkins (2000) gathered data from different situations of communication breakdown in ELF among speakers of different L1s. She deduced that, although there may have been other reasons of non-comprehension and misunderstanding, most communication failure in ELF is caused by pronunciation errors, considered as the result of the transfer of L1 phonological patterns, rather than evidence of low proficiency in English. Moreover, she concluded that in ILT (English Language Teaching) speakers tend to reduce the use of L1 phonological transfer only when they manage to do so and particularly when intelligibility for their interlocutors is particularly easy.

around the world (Firth 1996; Firth & Wagner 1997; James 2000; Seidlhofer 2001). However, very important ELF corpus projects have currently been developed in Europe (James 2000; Seidlhofer 2001; Mauranen 2003). Such corpus data help provide empirical evidence on some important and interesting findings about characterising syntactical or lexical features of ELF, such as, for instance, loss of third person -s (Jenkins *et al.* 2001) and phonological ones, e.g. the tendency towards non-reduction of unstressed syllables (Alexander 1999; Jenkins 2000).

So far, ELF research has focused chiefly on spoken interactions, and while earlier ELF research focused mainly on surface linguistic features, more recent ELF research has shifted its attention to the participant's pragmatic skills and strategies that underlie these features. Therefore the crucial role of accommodation, which is emerging as the most important pragmatic tendency in ELF communication, was identified even in the earliest research about ELF phonology (Jenkins 2000; Cogo 2009).

Jenkins *et al.* (2001), for example, explored a number of characteristics of ELF that have been identified in empirical research. However most of their findings are gathered from a restricted area of researches carried out in formal and informal academic settings, thus their research focus is concentrated mainly on ELF communication contexts occurring in the European university field whose participants often share also an amount of common socio-cultural background knowledge.

On the other hand, at the level of lexico-grammatical and morphological features ELF is revealing some interesting phenomena as well, which have involved the special research focus of Seidlhofer. For this purpose, she and her colleagues have been compiling a corpus of interactions in English among fairly fluent speakers from a variety of first-language backgrounds. This corpus, available online as a free resource, is called Vienna-Oxford ELF Corpus (VOICE) and is compiled by a research team of the University of Vienna.³

VOICE data confirm a number of innovative forms at the lexical and morphological level. More precisely findings reveal that ELF speakers create new words and collocations such as 'space time' and 'severe criminals'; they are also able to assign a new meaning to the so-called 'false friends' which may be different from the traditional meaning attributed by

³ VOICE is a corpus of over one million of words collected from naturally occurring, face-to-face interactions via ELF, in different communicative settings (educational, leisure, and professional, with the latter subdivided into business, organizational, and research-science). The recorded interactions range from various types of speech events, conversation, interview, meeting, panel, press conference, question-answer session, service encounter, and workshop discussion. The speakers involved come from almost fifty different first-language backgrounds and include also a small percentage of English native speakers of English. All the transcribed ELF events are supplied with detailed descriptions of both the kinds of the speech acts and interactions, as well as about the participants involved.

native speakers of English (e.g. ‘actually’ meaning ‘currently’ rather than ‘in fact’, since Hülmbauer (2007) suggests to call them “true friends”); and that they make original use of morphemes, devising forms such as ‘boringdom’, ‘discriminization’, ‘forsify’, ‘levelize’ and so on (Björkman 2008).

Another frequent finding in lexico-grammatical research is that ELF speakers tend to change uncountable nouns into countable ones, such as ‘informations’, ‘softwares’, ‘fundings’, ‘evidences’, ‘feedbacks’. And perhaps the most frequently reported feature is zero marking of 3rd person singular -s in the present tense. Concerning this aspect, Dewey (2007) demonstrates that the ‘omission’ of 3rd person -s cannot be attributed to a lack of proficiency. Actually, he also proves that when ELF students encounter a native English lecturer, they tend to replace the omitted -s. In other words, their communicative new habit among themselves is zero marking, but since they are aware that its use is still dismissed and stigmatized by native English speakers, they tend to activate a process of pragmatic self-regulation which enables them not to choose the ‘new form’ in native vs. non-native interactions, particularly if the native speaker belongs to a socio-linguistic higher position.

Even if they are not directly involved in the research focus, it is important to notice that – as extensively pointed out by Jenkins *et al.* (2011) – huge research effort is currently devoted to the investigation of ELF used in academic and business settings as significantly demonstrated by (i) the ELFA corpus (English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings)⁴, consisting of data collected specifically in higher education settings, which have enabled its researchers to deduce interesting considerations (cf. e.g. Metsä-Ketelä 2006; Ranta 2006; Cogo 2007, 2009; Klimpfinger 2009; Mauranen 2009; Jenkins 2011); and (ii) the exploration of business ELF (BELF) as corporate language (cf. e.g. Ehrenreich 2010; Kankaanranta & Planken 2010; Koester 2010).

The aspects, emerging from data collected in formal ELFA settings, raise awareness of the particular pragmatics of ELF, since the various use of these features demonstrates and confirms the speakers’ consciousness of ELF potential to achieve particular communicative goals according to different interactions, even though they are still not aware of ELF status as a variety deserving scientific acknowledgment. As a result, ELF research, in the last decade and in the meantime, has shifted its attention from a descriptive approach to a deeper pragmatic investigation enabling researchers to analyse the employment and the effects of some particular

⁴ ELFA website: www.eng.helsinki.fi/elfa/.

structures and uses in ELF and to define better the dynamics of intercultural communication in different settings.

For example, in her analyses, Seidlhofer (2007a and b; 2008; 2009; 2011) shows that in a variety of interactions, ranging from casual interactions to formal academic discourse, speakers are able to exploit a wide amount of language resources and creative possibility. In those cases, she notes that no important breakdowns or miscommunication occur, even when speakers repeat certain grammatical ‘errors’, such as: (i) using the same form for all present tense verbs; (ii) not putting a definite or indefinite article in front of nouns; (iii) treating “who” and “which” as interchangeable relative pronouns; (iv) using just the verb stem in constructions where conjugation in tense and aspect is required; (v) using “isn’t it?” as a universal question tag.

These characteristics are described by Seidlhofer in a ‘neutral’ and unconditioned analysis, but obviously this is not the way these ‘mistakes’ are usually treated in English classrooms and assessments around Europe. It is well-known that EFL teachers’ effort spent during their lessons on such features as the “third person –s”, the correct use of articles and verbal aspect is often considerable, and nevertheless many learners still fail to use them ‘correctly’ after years of learning, especially in spontaneous speech.

Indeed, Seidlhofer (2011: 108) claims that speakers in ELF communication are “not just calling up elements of a foreign language as they were learnt at school and force them into use as ‘correctly’ as possible in a successful error-free language. Rather participants are making use of their multi-faceted multilingual repertoires influenced by the communicative purpose and the interpersonal dynamics of the interaction. In many speech events, boundaries between languages also seem to be perceived as flexible or even irrelevant, as if speakers were reinventing their languages”.

Furthermore, seen from this perspective, it would be self-evident that the most important consequence of the global spread of English will naturally affect the teaching of English, above all because there is an urgent need to establish to what extent ELF has recently challenged the native speakers’ ‘ownership of English’, as pointed out by Brumfit (2001) and Widdowson (1994, 2003).

Seidlhofer (2011: 12) rightly claims that “changes in the perception of the role of English in the world have significantly influenced thinking about approaches to teaching and led to an increased socio-political and intercultural awareness”, as it also testified by the amount of studies and research about issues and effects of EIL on ELT and on intercultural awareness in the last decades (e.g. Brumfit 2001; Kramsch 1993; Canagarajah 2007; Gnutzmann 1999; McKay 2002), which, according to

Seidlhofer (2011: 12) anyway suggest idea and approaches still determined and influenced by “native-speaker models”.

Cauldwell (2006) states that even if British and American native speakers and British and American accents have become the standard points of reference for proficiency in pronunciation and speaking, recently the ownership of these points has been challenged. The NNSs are often expert communicators as well as or even better than many native speakers, while preserving and defending an important part of their personal, social and cultural identity. Nonetheless Jenkins (2007: 238) asserts that it is “too early to talk of ‘teaching ELF’ as such. Before this can happen” – she recommends – “we need comprehensive, reliable descriptions of the ways in which proficient ELF users speak among themselves, as the basis for a codification”.⁵

However, Jenkins (2007: 252) also optimistically concludes that only if ELF is properly codified and “its status as a legitimate and effective means of communication is acknowledged, then it could be also possible to talk about Teaching English *of* Speakers of Other Languages” (as suggested by Howatt & Widdowson 2004: 363); which will mean a teaching of ELF used by speakers with high level of ELF ‘proficiency’ as well.

According to Jenkins (2007: 252), “if ELF will be established and recognized in this way, it is reasonable to suppose that the majority of English users in the Expanding Circle would rethink their attitudes and identities, and choose to learn and use this kind of English” because of its communicative and pragmatic opportunities and resources, as it is already well documented in a number of researchers of the last decade (e.g. Crystal 2003, 2004; Jenkins 2003; Graddol 2006; Kachru *et al.* 2006; Seidlhofer 2011).

Seidlhofer (2011: 24), on the other hand, fixes the points for the future research effort. Firstly, because she is convinced that “there is the need to accept that ELF is not a kind of fossilized interlanguage used by learners failing to conform to the conventions of Inner Circle native norms, but a legitimate use of English”, which should be considered as an unavoidable outcome of the globalized expansion of English. Secondly, according to Seidlhofer (2011: 24), “there is a need for descriptions of the functions and forms of ELF”, which may be then applied to the teaching of ELF as well. And in order to achieve this goal, all the essential and significant research achievements should be applied, using approaches and

⁵ Actually, concerning this aspect a certain linguistic insecurity, indeed, is still perceived and testified by the many worldwide adverts for NS teachers, which may include: minimum qualifications of ‘Native English Speaker’, ‘English Native Speakers standard only’, ‘qualified native English teachers only’ (for instance, in Japan where no teaching experience or qualifications are required, but only to be ‘a NS English graduate’ – Kirkpatrick 2006).

methods at the same level of those traditionally employed for describing and analyzing ENL.

Nonetheless, she also points out that a new and native language-independent perspective is required, and since the employment of ELF by non-native speakers of English for communicative purposes is already evident and doubtless, “it would seem reasonable and uncontroversial that they should be accorded the right to take an active role in the development of the language, and to be taken seriously as legitimate users, not just learners or speakers of an interlanguage in the need of improvement towards the norms of a standard native variety” (Seidlhofer 2011: 9).

However Jenkins (2007) supposes and wishes that some still enduring negative reactions to ELF may reveal attitudes, prejudices, ideologies, and identity conflicts which may (and perhaps must) be undisclosed and acknowledged. This could enable researchers to be inclined to consider ELF, one day, as an appreciable pedagogic alternative to traditional EFL teaching.

For the present research, however, as it will be shown later on, the debate on ELT processes and the future of teaching and learning English and its emerging varieties is interesting as far as it could be of hint and impulse for better defining and describing the education and training system of ELF intercultural mediators, who are responsible for much of the communicative process and outcome in cross-cultural encounters, especially the unequal and unbalanced ones which are very frequent in migration contexts and borderlands.

1.4. *Toward a Pragmatics of Intercultural Communication in ELF*

Besides, the complex and heterogeneous scientific debate concerning the definition and the possible codification of ELF and its teaching and learning processes, further considerations may concern the communicative and pragmatic purposes involving ELF, from the simplest utterances to the highly elaborate arguments especially in cross-cultural settings.

More recently, the focus of research, above all on ELF intelligibility, has tended to move from the speaker’s perspective towards the listener’s one, and to consider also the contribution of factors such as the listener’s socio-cultural background and processing skills.

For example, Bamgose (1998: 11) defines intelligibility as “a complex of factors comprising recognizing an expression, knowing its meaning, and knowing what that meaning signifies in the sociocultural context”. In this sense ‘intelligibility’ is used to imply a number of actions carried out both by speakers and listeners, meaning that in the interaction,

both contribute to “the speech act and its interpretation” (Bamgose 1998: 11).

On the other hand, Jenkins (2000) suggests that ‘intelligibility’ should concern particularly, not only the production and recognition of the different properties of words and utterances, but first of all a certain competence in dealing with the phonological structure both in production and in perception. Obviously, the recognition and perception of a phonological form is not a simple and unproblematic process. Actually, the pragmatic negotiation of meaning implies “a two-way process involving both speaker and listener at every stage of the interaction” (Jenkins 2000: 78). Speakers and listeners of ELF are forced to evaluate constantly “the extent to which their phonological output appears to be comprehensible to their interlocutors, and make adjustments and corrections as they judge necessary” (Jenkins 2000: 79).

Therefore, most ‘ELF intelligibility’ research has analysed ELF interactions in terms of what could avoid or cause problems in understanding, especially with regard to pronunciation and vocabulary use, collecting data from different professional settings, such as language classrooms (Jenkins 2001), conferences (House 1999; Deterding & Kirkpatrick 2006), and professional training courses (Meeuwis 1994). So far, however, such research has been mainly centred in Europe, although Deterding & Kirkpatrick (2006) have analysed intelligibility issues for ELF speakers in Southeast Asia.

Thus, as already noted, pronunciation has taken central place in ELF intelligibility research, due mainly to the extensive work of Jenkins (among others 1998; 2001; 2002). She regularly observes students and teachers from different language backgrounds engaging in classroom conversations, information exchange activities, and problem-solving tasks, and she analyses the possible reasons for comprehension problems in their use of ELF (e.g. Jenkins 2001).

However, of greatest relevance to the current study it is also a growing number of more pragmatics-related studies on ELF. Again, most of this research has taken place in a variety of European communicative settings, though with participants from most regions of the world. Researchers have analysed data including international phone calls between northern European, Middle Eastern, and South Asian businesspeople (Firth 1990; 1996; Wagner & Firth 1997; Haegeman 2002); interactions among attendees at international meetings in Europe (House 1999; Lesznyák 2002; Knapp 2002); conversations among international students across the dinner table at a British hall of residence (Meierkord 2002); and encounters from a range of other educational (House 2002; Pözl & Seidlhofer 2006; Mauranen 2006), business (Suh 2002; Pitzl 2005) and domestic (Pözl 2003) situations.

This part of ELF research has investigated numerous aspects of pragmatics, including turn-taking (Pözl & Seidlhofer 2006) and topic management (Lesznyák 2002). These data have shown, for example, that ELF interlocutors often use long pauses to indicate topic changes or their desire to end a conversation, whereas native English speakers tend to use verbal patterns for these purposes (Wagner & Firth 1997). In addition, Meierkord (2002) and Lesznyák (2002) have noted that ELF speakers frequently use laughter as an innovative backchannel, something that it is not common in standard English discourse. On the other hand, Böhringer (2009) provides an insight into the potential functions of silent and filled pauses in ELF, showing that apart from serving as a means of gaining time for speech encoding, pauses may also play a role in the interactive creation of meaning or even act as structural markers of the speech event.

Other researchers, meanwhile, have highlighted a wider range of factors in ELF intelligibility just beyond accommodation strategies, underlining that communication failure may occur as well, and which strategies may be applied to solve it.

One of these research approaches in studying ELF pragmatics in the last part of the 20th century is represented by the conceptualization of “communication strategies” (CS): “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where meaning structures do not seem to be shared” (Tarone 1980: 419). According to this theoretical position, ELF speakers use a range of strategies to solve problems in understanding, and this generally prevents communication breakdowns and even communication conflict (Meeuwis 1994). Lesznyák (2002) reports that in cases of miscommunication in student conference data, participants directly cooperate to overcome these problems, and more competent NNSs readapt unsuccessful linguistic outcomes of less competent speakers in a more effective form. This kind of cooperative process among ELF speakers, which would enable participants to avoid embarrassing reactions, is also noted by House (2002) and Firth (1990).

Other scholars have produced findings in ELF pragmatics research on different aspects of successful communication, which may include strategies to deal with lack of shared meaning (Tarone 1980; Long 1983; Bremer & Simonot 1996b), as well as new patterns used by speakers to facilitate the ongoing conversation and directly or indirectly support their conversational purposes (Edmondson 1981; Long 1983; Bremer & Simonot 1996a; Mauranen 2006) avoiding communicative problems.

Moreover, Deterding & Kirkpatrick (2006), for example, note a number of cases where lexis rather than pronunciation cause problems in understanding. Meeuwis (1994) and House (2002), instead, highlight other pragmatic causes for miscommunication, such as disfluencies in question-answering norms (Meeuwis 1994) and a lack of pragmatic ability in turn-

taking, which leads ELF users even to interact in an unequal ‘parallel talk’, without taking care of their receivers (House 1999). On the other hand, Pitzl (2005) investigates non-understanding in ELF, arguing that through cooperative behaviour and negotiation of meaning lingua franca speakers are capable of using the linguistic means creatively to solve problematic situations.

Throughout the previous research outline one common factor emerged, which confirms that in ELF interactions English is viewed as being quite suitable as a means of intercultural communication. This would allow researchers to study and analyse the most fundamental aspects of language contact and change, and of cross-cultural communicative interactions in which standard sociolinguistic rules or habits may very often be challenged, as noticed also by Mauranen (2005).

Actually, with ever more changing lexical forms and syntactical patterns employed by ELF speakers for varying purposes and cross-cultural communicative situations, ELF seems constantly dynamic, constantly under construction. Therefore, the investigation of ELF has shown to involve not only the features of linguistic development concerning the English language, but also socio-linguistic aspects of intercultural competences and performances. Conducting ELF research on communication, then, is important to go “beyond the specifics of English” (Mauranen 2005: 270).

As Seidlhofer (2009: 240) claims, on the one hand codification is still considered fundamental as is proved by “descriptions of certain observed regularities”. But on the other hand, the typical fluidity and instability of ELF, which contribute to hindering a proper normative codification, cannot be dismissed. Actually, ELF users seem to be mainly focused on the purpose of talk and on their interlocutors, often applying a pragmatic negotiation of meaning which enables them to use elements of the foreign language they learnt at school and adapt them pragmatically as correctly as possible to other linguistic features derived from L1, or even L2, backgrounds.

Some scholars indeed make similar considerations about the fluidity of ELF, like Pennycook (2009: 195) who explains how ELF research confirms the use of English “under negotiation” and in the attempt to “address precisely the gap left” by World Englishes system. Similarly, Canagarajah (2007: 926) argues that ELF is “intersubjectively constructed in each specific context of interaction” by speakers according to each kind of communicative purposes.

Therefore, empirical research demonstrates how ELF involves not only the frequent and systematic use of new forms that are not found in native English, but also the speaker employment of a number of pragmatic processes determined by socio-cultural and idiolectal forms or attitudes to be exploited in any given interaction.

Seen from this perspective and from the previous discussion of ELF definition and need for codification, ELF varieties change according to speakers' L1 backgrounds and cultures, but also according to specific contextual factors which may affect accommodative and intelligible behaviours.

Hence, according to Seidlhofer (2011: 101), all the accommodation strategies identified “can be understood also in social-psychological terms as a strategy ‘whereby individuals adapt to each other’s communicative behaviours using a wide range of linguistic/prosodic/non-vocal features’ (Giles & Coupland 1991: 63) to make them more able to communicate efficiently and in order to achieve their interlocutors’ approval”.

Thus Jenkins (2011) claims that for English the traditional nation-specific view of language varieties and speech communities is no longer acceptable and an alternative view is needed to replace it with the acknowledgement that a great number of ELF users skilfully adapt English for their own purposes, as a shared communicative resource within which they have the freedom to accommodate to each other, code-switch, and create innovative forms that differ from the native norms and do not require the approval of native English speakers. This means that as far as intercultural communication is concerned, a skilled ELF user is not only or not necessarily someone who has acquired a proficient knowledge of the forms and structures of a particular native variety of English, but someone who has acquired the pragmatic skills needed to adapt their English use in line with the needs of the current lingua franca context, and his/her communicative goals.

However, it is also to be underlined that the investigation of ELF has revealed that it could not be regarded as a fixed suitable means of communication in any kind of situation and encounter. Actually, language users have at their disposal a multi-faceted linguistic repertoire and very often select the most effective form and variety for their particular purposes, and according to the communicative circumstances, ranging from flexible ELF to any other code or variety that enables the mutual understanding.

Therefore, seen in terms of a process within a wider communicative universe rather than as a linguistic result, ELF plays a special role in promoting the raising of intercultural awareness in communication and the importance of strategies like linguistic accommodation and negotiation of meaning, giving more prominence to mutual understanding, especially in particular professional settings involving unequal encounters or gate-keeping situations.

That is why some scholars have talked about a “paradigm shift” (Carson 2003: 110; Lüdi 2002: 22) in studying ELF, which consists of (i) intercultural awareness of the culture-specific interdependency of beliefs and attitudes; (ii) shared knowledge of general socio-cultural parameters

and schemata derived from culture-specific religious or gender policy; (iii) “interpersonal sensitivity”, that is the ability to properly understand a person; (iv) “cognitive flexibility”, namely the capability to be open-minded towards innovations and new trends; (v) “behavioural flexibility”, seen as the ability to change one’s own behavioural inclination (Gnutzmann 2000: 358).

Actually, Seidlhofer (2004; 2007a) recognizes a certain “interpersonal sensitivity” and “cognitive flexibility” that ELF users can achieve by means of different processes of cooperation, accommodation and simplification strategies, along with the ability to signal communicative breakdown, lingua-cultural awareness and identity, and openness towards new linguistic flexibility rather than standard linguistic rules.

Therefore, “it is the purpose of ELF research” – and interculturally oriented research in general, as the present study – “to raise awareness of these codes of communication also in the context of language teaching” (Hülmbauer *et al.* 2008: 9).

According to Brown (1995: 232-233), interlocutors share a number of background information which allows them to communicate on “a structure of mutual beliefs”. Therefore, communication and comprehensibility occur because speakers naturally build and interpret utterances according to attitudes, beliefs and even prejudices derived from the other’s degree of knowledge. Besides, Brown claimed that speakers mutually assign to each other the communicative purposes which they “would expect to experience in uttering the utterance just heard in that particular context” (Brown 1995).

However this would imply that interlocutors always are “playing the same game” in interaction (Brown 1995). Actually it will be demonstrated that is not a common rule and it would be interesting to find out how this happens and how this may not happen, especially in intercultural communication domains.

It is obviously true that successful communication involves not only an accommodation process towards the ELF phonological and linguistic outcome, but also a considerable degree of shared knowledge from a socio-cultural perspective. Actually, socialization processes activated through a persistent contact with a certain community enable fluent speakers of the target language to develop automatic mechanisms gathering data from a knowledge repertoire acquired through experience and interpreting of communicative behaviours and habits in each specific context in that community.

Moreover, Seidlhofer (2011: 109) optimistically argues that studies on ELF users reveal a powerful and productive “resource that enables communication across linguacultural and geographic boundaries. Empirical research into such complex and sophisticated interactions further confirms the need to question the traditional terms ‘community’ and ‘variety’ and to

reject the idea that there is a precise definition of ‘competence’ in a language that speakers either acquire, possess and perform or the don’t”. In other words, “ELF speakers can clearly be communicatively competent in English without conforming to norms of ENL competence” (Seidlhofer 2011: 109).

Research confirms ELF hybridity, dynamism, fluidity and flexibility in its performances and creative realizations, according to context, purpose, speakers and their linguacultural backgrounds. ELF participants, indeed, are able to speak and defend their identity by using different underlying resources and devices, while adjusting and accommodating them for their interlocutors’ advantage, even though there are cases in which this may not happen and it is necessary to understand how and why they occur.

Actually, the interactions recorded in the VOICE corpus or in the ELFA one occur basically in a communicative context of mutual understanding and successful agreement, where participants aim at cooperating and co-building conversational events at the same pragmatic level. Seidlhofer (2011: 107) assures that the nature of the VOICE corpus enables researchers to establish and evaluate “who the interlocutors are, why they meet, what they are talking about, and so on, and this makes it possible to a certain degree to look at the interactions from the participants’ perspective. This in turn makes it easier to go beyond the description of the forms themselves to develop some understanding of what may have led speakers to use particular forms in the creative processes of communication”.

However, there are occasions where such optimistic willingness of mutual comprehension is absent and where the use of ELF turns out to have controversial effects (cf. Guido 2008; Provenzano 2008). In these cases encounters are unequal because there is an evident inequality of participant status between, e.g. migrants, or asylum seekers and refugees and their interrogators, and as a result it must be admitted that a mutual, successful understanding is not always guaranteed. This means that ELF has also its problematic features and there is a need for a deeper description of cases in which Outer Circle and Expanding Circle speakers may contrast.

As shown later on, ELF encounters in specific professional contexts, occur without the speakers’ common linguacultural background that facilitates the achievement of the pragmatic goals of the communicative process. And this is a crucial point to avoid severe cases of communication failure: to facilitate a successful encounter, it would be necessary to extend the amount of shared background, which may include shared historical, socio-cultural and even ethno-semiotic background knowledge. Since this could not be obviously an automatic and self-regulating process, a proper ELF intercultural mediation may represent a good chance to achieve this goal as a bridging point between two or more ELF entities.

1.5. Conclusion

The previous outline and discussion of the most recent achievements in the research on such a wide and complex area as ELF is revealing to be, have been necessary and fundamental for the objectives of the present study. Because of its unprecedented dimensions and domains, ELF feeds opinions, ideas and perspectives on a worldwide scale that may be interesting, if not in certain cases fundamental and inspiring. Moreover, the research outcomes may trigger further investigation. One of these is a deeper and extensive analysis of cases in which ELF is not a means of cooperation and mutual intelligibility, but of unequal encounters and miscommunication with pragmatically negative consequences for (all or part of) the participants in the interactions.

Actually, the objective of this research is concerned with the investigation of these ELF encounters, seen from both phonological and pragmatic perspectives, in order to understand how this may happen, which phonopragmatic reasons and interferences they derive from, and whether and how they can be avoided, above all with the intervention of intercultural mediators.

However, in order to properly define the theoretical background of this research and its aims, it is essential to provide a correlation among (i) the latest ELF research achievements, (ii) those in the phonology of English and (iii) those in intercultural pragmatics, in order to make clear and demonstrate how ELF can interlace pragmatics and phonology in the *phonopragmatic* approach.

2. Theoretical Background: Focus on ELF Phonology

2.1. The Science of Speech and the Phonology of ELF

As already pointed out, this research is deeply rooted into the empirical study of phonology and in particular into the relationship between intercultural pragmatics and the use of phonological means in ELF spoken discourse.

At the basis of the different interdisciplinary objectives and subjects under investigation from a *phonopragmatic* perspective, there are, firstly, several constructs, models, contributions and advances coming from different areas of research in English phonology in the last decades, which will reveal all their relevant importance for the present research focus and which are here briefly outlined.