



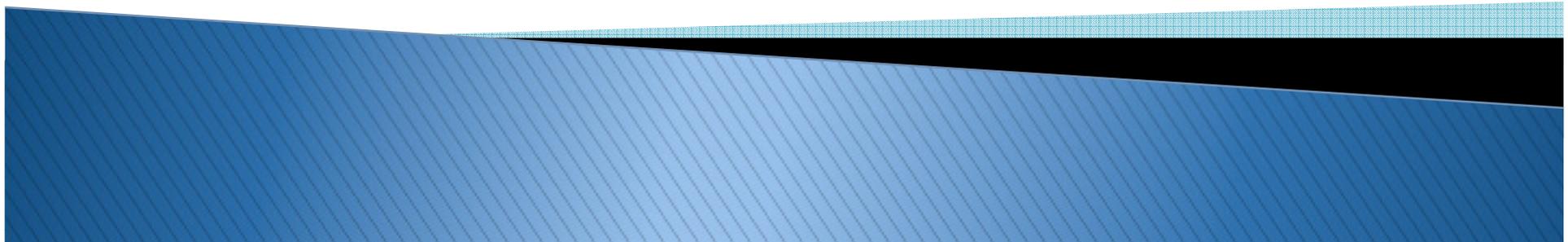
E n r i c o G r a z z i

University of *Roma Tre*

Questioning the Interlanguage Paradigm: ELF in the English Classroom

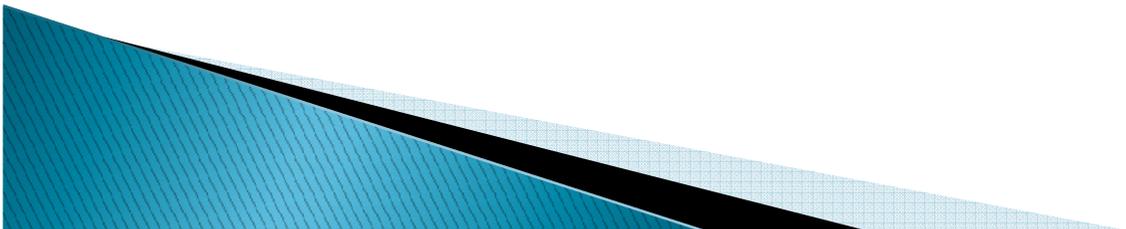
Rome

November 18, 2016



The aim of this presentation

The aim of this talk is to question the dominance of the *Interlanguage paradigm* in mainstream ELT, which is based on the *exonormative native speaker model* (Kirkpatrick, 2006), and propose a different conceptualisation of the process of teaching/learning English that is informed by Vygotsky's (1978) *sociocultural theory* (SCT), and that incorporates today's *glocal* dimension of English as a lingua franca (ELF).



Session plan

- **Step 1:** What is ELF?
- **Step 2:** ELF and Sociocultural Theory (SCT)
- **Step 3:** ELF vs the Interlanguage hypothesis
- **Step 4:** The case of ELF and Intercultural Telecollaboration
- **Step 5:** Integrating ELF into ELT

What is ELF?

Mauranen (2012: 29-30): “ELF might be termed ‘**second order language contact**’: a contact between hybrids [...] of similects.”

Jenkins (2011): “ELF communication is actually **very variable**. It's very context-bound, so it depends which group of people is speaking to each other, about what and where. [...] It's a global phenomenon [that] often involves electronic means. [It is] the process that motivates it.”

(BBC Radio 4, Sept. 5, 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b013q210>>)

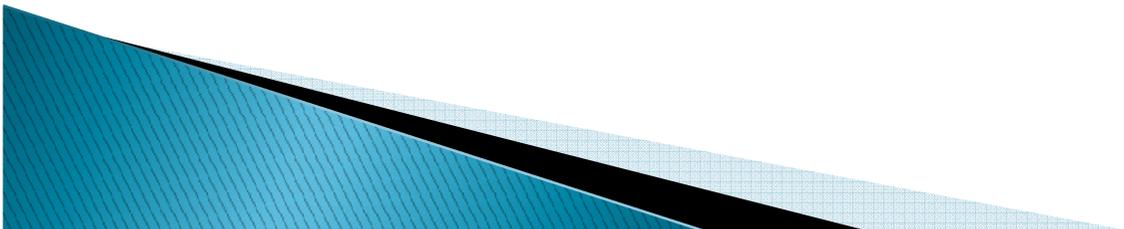
Jenkins (2014: 33): This is not to suggest that ELF is likely to develop into anything as regularized as the native and Outer Circle Englishes, let alone into a variety (or varieties). There is far too great a potential for diversity for this to be feasible. [...] It seems to be more a case of the **emergence and ad hoc use of certain features** that tend to be (but are not always) preferred by ELF users from a wide range of L1s.

ELF and Sociocultural theory (SCT)

The progressive differentiation of the lexicogrammar system of ELF from other varieties of NS English is embedded in a *sociocultural process of change and adaptation* within intercultural and multilingual communicative contexts.

Hopper (1998: 5): “The notion of Emergent Grammar is meant to suggest that structure, or regularity, comes out of discourse and is shaped by discourse as much as it shapes discourse in an on-going process. [...] Its forms are not fixed templates, but are *negotiable in face-to-face interaction* in ways that reflect the individual speakers' past experience of these forms, and their assessment of the present context, including especially their interlocutors, whose experiences and assessments may be quite different.”

Lantolf and Thorne (2006: 11): “For speakers, what matters with regard to linguistic forms is not their stable and invariable identity across contexts of use, but their *adaptability to the speaker's specific communicative intentions.*”



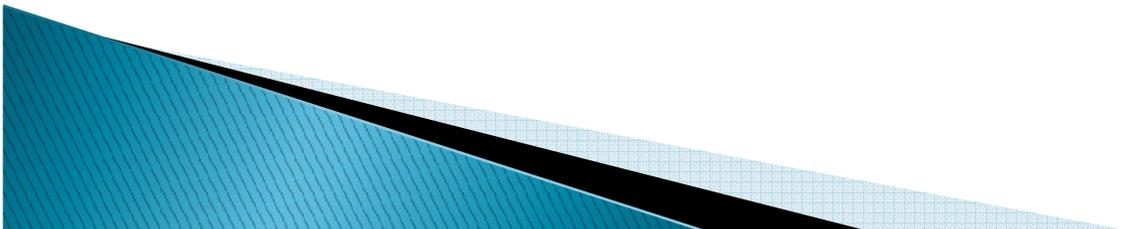
ELF and Sociocultural theory (SCT)

Tomasello (2003: 13):

“Processes of *grammaticalization* and *syntacticization* [...] are cultural–historical processes, not biological ones. [...] The specific items and constructions of a given language are not invented all at once, but rather they emerge, evolve and accumulate modifications over historical time as human beings use them with one another and adapt them to changing communicative circumstances.”

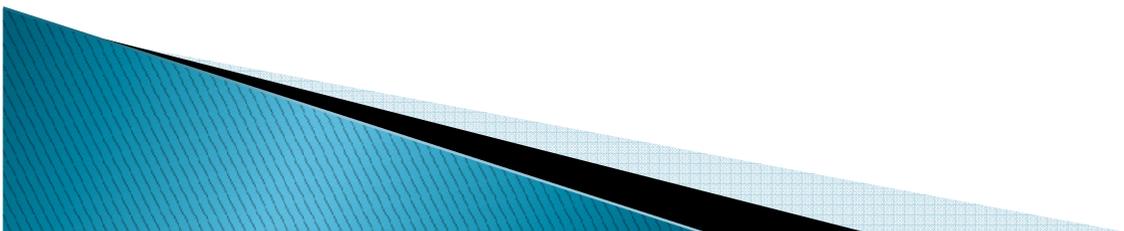
van Lier (2004: 85):

“Speakers want to embroider and invent, sounding new and different, signalling their individual and group identity. On the other hand, speakers (and often official agencies and institutions, such as schools) wish to establish official standards and guidelines for ‘correct’ language, thus attempting to reduce variations in use. [...] *‘Language’ in its more general sense, is emergent, not fixed, in flux rather than static.* Like culture [it is] open to processes of *inclusion and exclusion, prescribed and proscribed patterns of use*, permeated by value judgement, markers of identity, and signs of success.”



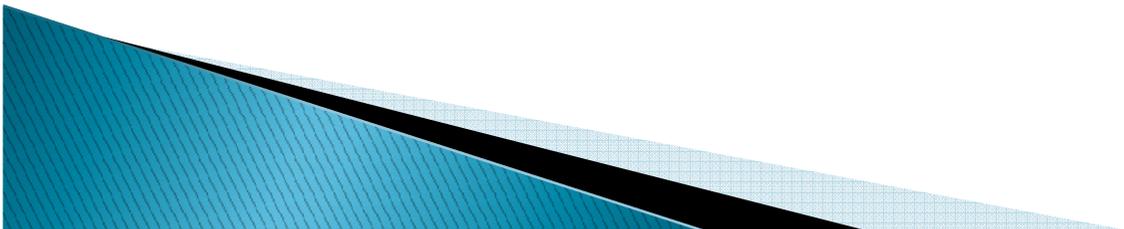
ELF and Sociocultural theory (SCT)

- ELF is a ***shared symbolic mediational artifact*** (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) that serves the needs of its speakers in social interaction and that is ***emergent*** in authentic communicative contexts.
- L2-users make ELF their own through ***participatory appropriation*** (Rogoff, 1995), e.g. on the Internet.
- ELF is used as an ***affordance*** to carry out communicative tasks in a real intersubjective and intercultural dimension, where the interlocutors' identities concur in their attempt to construct and share meanings.

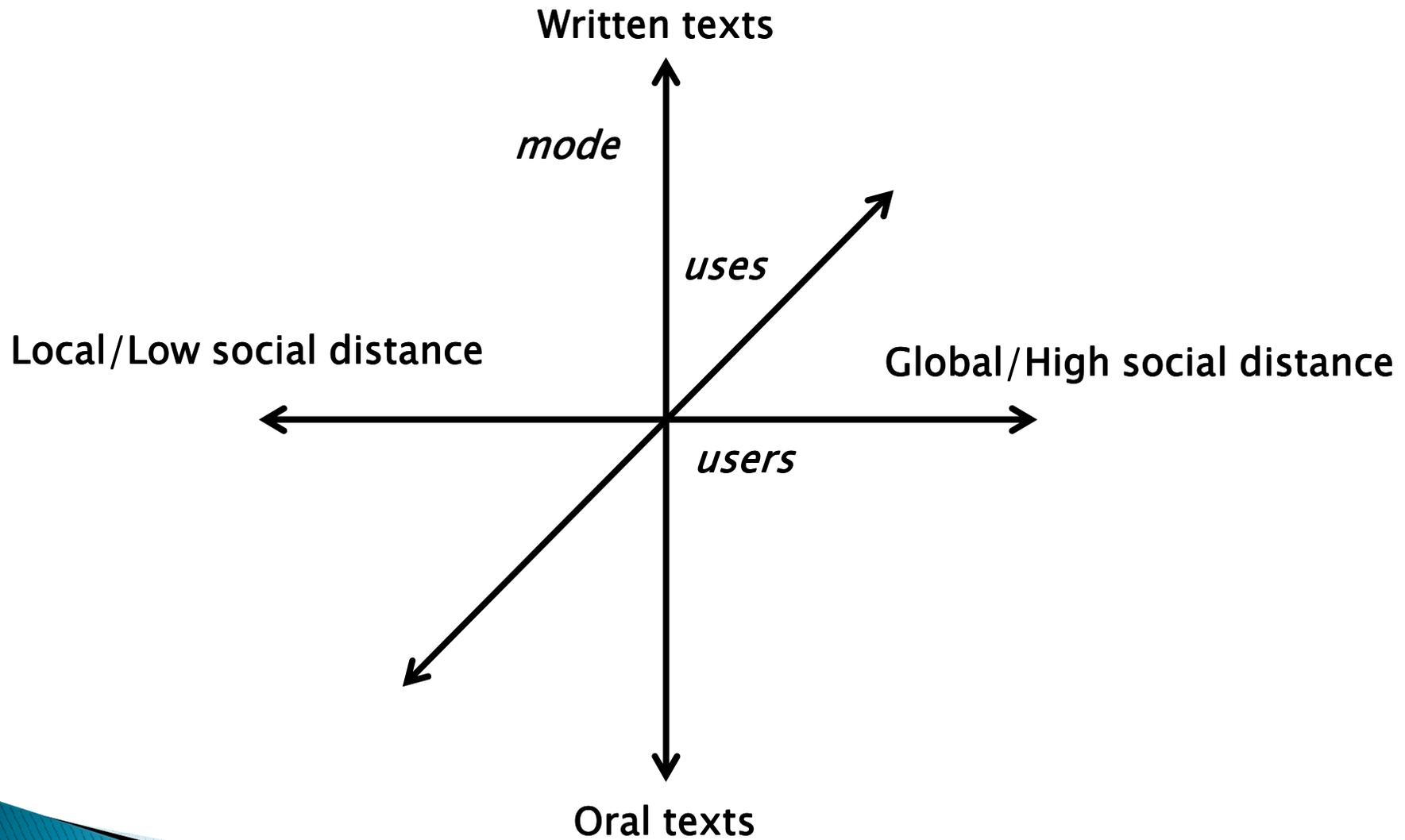


ELF and Sociocultural theory (SCT)

- The divergence of ELF from standard English (SE) is a process that is ingrained in sociolinguistics.
- It entails the L2-users' *adoption* and *adaptation* of English to their sociocultural identities, to cope with a wide range of communicative needs.
- In a diachronic perspective, the polycentric nature of ELF defies the classification of non-standard uses of English as *deviant* or *erroneous*, and questions the notion of *standardness* (Coupland, 2000).
- Variations in ELF use are instances of *language continua* (Thrudgill, 1999), rather than a defective form of *interlanguage* (Selinker, 1972), or *idiosyncratic/transitional dialect* (Corder, 1981).



Interconnected continua



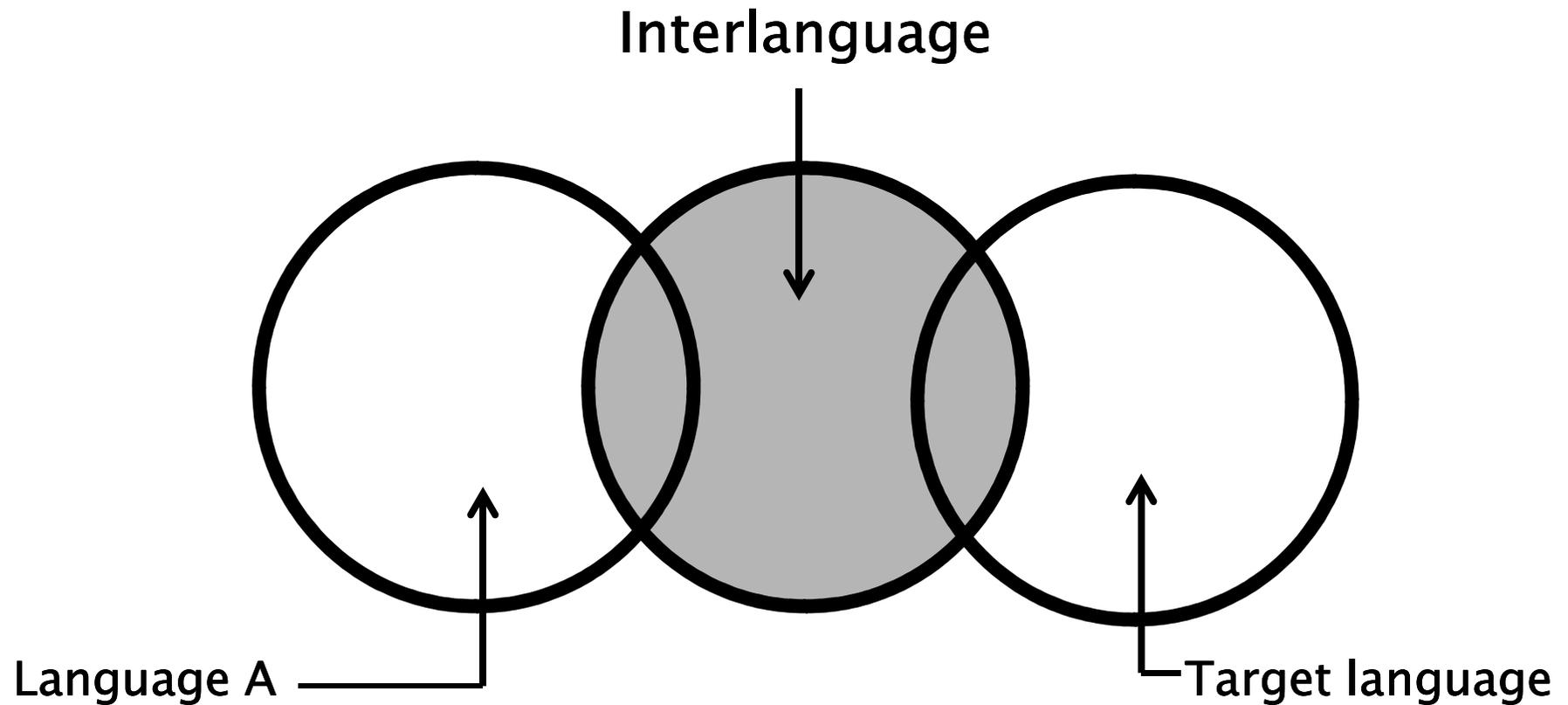
(Mahboob's language variation framework, 2014)

The Interlanguage hypothesis

Corder (1981: 17):

[A] class of *idiosyncratic dialects* [...] It is regular, systematic, meaningful, i.e. it has a grammar, and is, in principle, describable in terms of a set of rules, some sub-set of which is a sub-set of the rules of the target social dialect. [The learner's] dialect is unstable (we hope) and is not, as far as we know, a 'langue' in that *its conventions are not shared by a social group* [...] and lastly, many of its sentences present *problems of interpretation to any native speaker* of the target dialect. [...] An alternative name might be *transitional dialect*, emphasizing the unstable nature of such dialects.

The interlanguage hypothesis



(Corder, 1981: 17)

The Interlanguage hypothesis and ELF

It is misleading to categorize ELF as an *interlanguage/idiosyncratic dialect*.

1. This definition refers to the *individual student's process* of learning EFL, without taking into consideration the *intersubjective dimension of learning* in schooling (i.e. social relationships within the English classroom).
2. The interlanguage paradigm presupposes that the learner's native tongue *interferes* with the acquisition of the L2 and may result in the *fossilization* of deviant forms.
3. Learning English is considered a *progression between two opposite poles*: the student's native tongue and the target language (TL), that conforms to an abstract NS's model.
4. Communicative competence is defined in terms of intermediate stages (the *interlanguage continuum*) (Corder, 1981), to reach the prototypical NS's competence.

ELF users as languagers

Seidlhofer (2011: 98):

ELF users too are seen to be *languagers*. [...] They are focused on the interactional and transactional purposes of the talk and on their interlocutors as people rather than on the linguistic code itself. [...] The focus is on establishing the indexical link between the code and the context, and a creative process in that the code is treated as malleable and adjustable to the requirements of the moment. These requirements have to do with the message speakers want to convey as well as a host of other factors impinging on the accessibility and acceptability of what is said in terms of clarity, time constraints, and on-line processability, memory, available repertoires, social relationship, and shared knowledge.

Focus on...



EFL

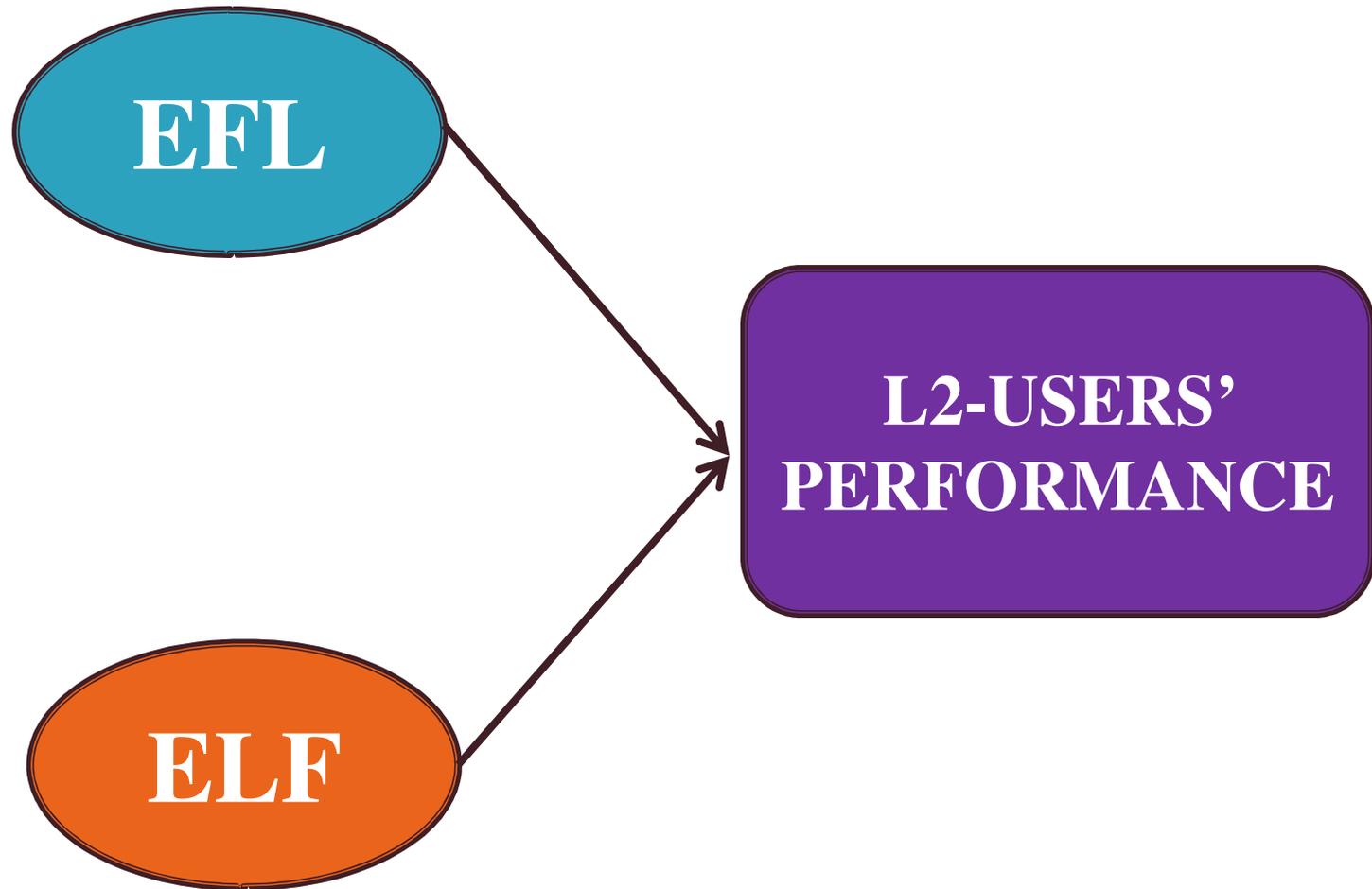
- The components of the institutional EFL curriculum (e.g. language syllabuses, teaching materials, assessment tests, CEFR, etc.) are inspired to *native speakerism*.
- Interlanguage: the learning continuum and the students' *transitional competence*.

Focus on...



- An emergent language system determined by variable circumstances and affordances (e.g. the globalization of trade, Web-mediated intercultural communication, etc.) in real sociocultural practices.
- The verbal outcome of L2-users' real social practice, that cannot be taught as such.

The convergence of EFL and ELF



Intercultural Telecollaboration: Italy–Finland

•2014–2015 school year:

Participants:

- 12 volunteer Italian high–school students of English (6 boys; 6 girls).
- 14 volunteer Finnish high–school students of English (2 boys; 12 girls).
- Four project coordinators:
 - Enrico Grazzi (University of RomaTre)
 - Rosella Manni (Liceo Classico “E. Q. Visconti”, Rome – Italy)
 - Jari Aalto (Kallio secondary high school, Helsinki – Finland)
 - Päivi Meinander (Kallio secondary high school, Helsinki – Finland)



Main objectives of my research

- To integrate *intercultural telecollaboration* into ELT and bridge the gap between the scholastic dimension of EFL and the thriving reality of ELF on the Internet.
- To exploit the high affordance of intercultural telecollaboration and provide learners with a *zone of proximal development (ZPD)*.
- To reconceptualise the ELT syllabus and the role of the teacher of English.

The main goals of my project

- Improve the Italian and Finnish learners' *intercultural competence* by fostering their mutual understanding and by supporting cooperative practices through web-mediated communicative activities.
- Interconnect Finnish and Italian students of English through the Internet and create a ***community of practice (CoP)*** that uses ELF as a mediational tool to discuss a variety of topics concerning the participants' different sociocultural backgrounds and lifestyles.

Examples of learners' use of ELF

- These examples elicit some typical lexicogrammar features of *ELF usage*.
- They instance some interesting issues as regards *intercultural telecollaboration*.

Aspect

1. I've been to Canada last year with an exchange program and I studied there for 5 months. (*transfer*) (I)
2. I have been to Finland when I was really little and I visited Helsinki and I liked it a lot except for the weather! (*transfer*) (I)
3. I already told something about my relation to sports and hobbies but repetition never hurts! (*transfer; Finnish distinction between telic and atelic actions; the aspect is indicated by the case of the object: accusative is telic/resultative and partitive is atelic/irresultative*). (F)
4. when I lost my turtles I've been down for several days. (*transfer*) (I)

Lexical transfer

1. When you come back home you fall asleep like a hibernating bear! Then we came back home and we slept for 3 and a half hours! (I)
2. How to start? Well, I have interest in a lot of things and this would be a quality if I didn't have the terrible habit of getting annoyed of almost everything after a while.
(false friend) (I)
3. My favorite singer is Celine Dion: her voice is perfect and limpid. *(collocation)*
(I)
4. Tell me if you prefer starting a new topic, because I could keep on this without problem, at least for a little more. (I)
5. Finland don't have pretty much traditional food. We are like English kitchen. (F)

Unilateral idiomaticity

1. I spent the last year in Argentina as an exchange-student and that's the reason why I'm lagging a bit behind my fellow students. (F)
2. Off the top of my head I can't remember any Italians present at the award show this year. (*from quick recollection*) (F)
3. I hope we'll start writing each other again, because I liked it, but sometimes I'm fought by the laziness or the stress. (*reverse unilateral idiomaticity*) (I)

Creative use of English

1. I love Finland and the Finnish people and culture, but somehow my heart longs abroad. (*lexis*) (F)
2. for my 18 years old I gave a very big party where we danced a lot. (*lexis*) (I)
3. I could say my adolescence was very centered in music. (*extension of semantic field: from physical centre to figurative meaning; re-metaphorization (Pitzl, 2009)*) (F)
4. At the moment I don't have any life-controlling hobby, as I'm trying to focus on the schoolwork. (*open-choice principle in complex word formation; re-metaphorization*) (F)
5. I've done karate for eight years and this is the ninth one. It's a very beautiful activity which allows me to get the stress off my chest and be more calm, in a peaceful state of mind. (*lexis: re-metaphorization*) (I)
6. I think that it's important and formative to do a sport which motivates you and better and color your life. (*re-metaphorization*) (I)
7. Music in general is really important to me, too, and most often if I'm alone, I'm either playing or listening to music. Don't ask me what kind, I have no clue what I'm listening to most of the time, I just wallow in the melodies :D (*figurative language, inappropriate semantic prosody, usually negative, e.g. wallow in the mud*) (F)

Lexicogrammar forms

1. I live more or less in the centre of Rome that, even if it is really nice, sometimes is too much chaotic. (I)
2. I agree with them about the suspicious looks that some of the foods have, mämmi for example, but in my opinion the shell of the food is not the main point. (F)
3. I'm also guitarrist/vocalist at band called Above Apes, we play mostly metal and rock. (F)
4. What else could I tell? (F)
5. It is nice to "meet" you. (F)
6. He maybe jokes too much. (I)
7. It was so sad when Cory pasted away. (F)
8. Oh I'm so sorry for your lost! (I)
9. A food I really can't eat is cheese. (...) I wouldn't eat them even if etc. (I)
10. We have also 2 shops very popular that are "Brandy and Melville" and "Subdued" (I)

Intercultural issues

1. What I'd like to know is how big is American cinema in Italy, because by what I've understood is that historically speaking Italy has been an influential country in the development of cinema, and the industry is big today as well. Do you need Hollywood movies then? (F)
2. Our own movie industry is not huge, and we are a globalized country, which undoubtedly is also reflected in films. (F)
3. The languages and cultures of the world fascinate me and I wish to get to know many places all-around the world during my life. (F)
4. I like also meeting new people and knowing better the culture of people of different nationalities.
5. My passion is to learn about other cultures and I love to travel. (F)
6. I am really excited for this opportunity to communicate all the way to Italy. Hopefully we all will learn a lot about this telecollaboration. (F)
7. It's great to share this experience with you and I hope it will help me discover something new about another culture. (I)

Intercultural stereotypes

Team 5, Project 8 Italy and the Italians. Finland and the Finns.

I know almost nothing about Finland... I mean I know where it is and that is cold, full of trees, elks and snow in winter and other few things :D

The image that I think italians have of the Finns is tall, blond, white skin, skinny people! (I)

Finland... Yeaaaah.

Here is not cold, here is freezing. And dark. And there were in news last year that some elks had been running in the central of Helsinki... so I think your ideas of our country is more or less correct ^_^;;

Finnish people are pretty shy. And it is a common knowledge that it is forbidden to talk random people. If someone even smiles to you when you are walking on the streets they probably have some kind of mental disorder or they are not native...

Italians talk like they are almost singing and they have lots of nonverbal communication such as moving hands. And there is some strange stereotype that everyone has a grandmother who does nothing but cooking. o_O (F)

Use of ELF

Team 5 Project 9 Using ELF

Well what to say. Having a language that is known all around the world it's obviously a useful and great thing! Nowadays the relation, communication, and contact between countries grows larger and larger (thanks god!) so it's extremely necessary to have a way to communicate and understand.

If the problem is why english and not other language.. well I don't know. But, I mean, I dont have problems with this language, that I really like!

What do you think?

The problem here in Italy is that English is taught awfully and very few people know it well. At school we rarely have good teachers and we never have mothertongue ones. in your country I think you study it better than us, isn't it? How many hours do you study english at school? (I)

Intercultural telecollaboration

Team 4 Project 7 Travelling around Europe

Oh!!! It would be so wonderful if we could meet!!!

And you shouldn't worry your English at all!! For me it seems flawless! I'm not sure how much longer this project will go on so I will try to find you in Facebook. If you have one? :) I have really enjoyed talking with you and this is a new record for me. I have never talked with a pen friend for this long because I always get bored at some point. This is a good way to improve English as well travelling is so just keep doing what you do.

I can't wait my trip to Rome!! I will let you know when I come if I come :D

Love (F)

Use of empathetic language: affective feedback

(Ware and O'Dowd, 2008: 47)

Oh I'm so sorry for your lost! I know how it feels: when I lost my turtles I've been down for several days :(

Losing a pet, even if it's not a cat or a dog, is sad just the same, even if some people can't understand your pain or your emotional implication. One friend of mine didn't feel anything when her fish died, after having spent 2 or 3 years with it!

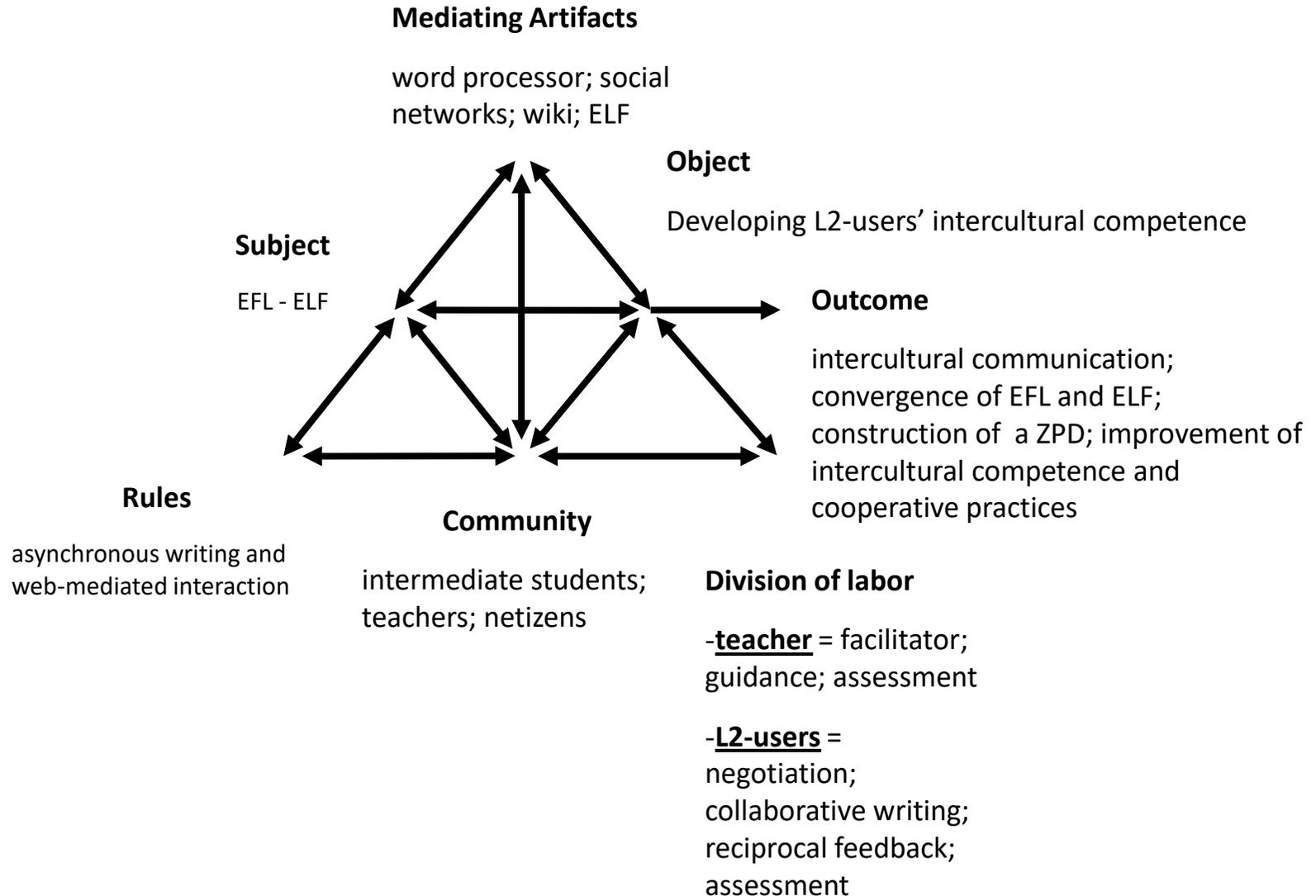
About my concern, you're right, I think we can discuss different topics at the same time.

Bye, (I)

Thank you for your words! They mean a lot to me! <3

It is so nice that someone understands because many doesn't, due to the -He was "just" a degu, thinking. So thank you, really! (F)

The process activated through telecollaboration



Pedagogical implications

- The emergence of ELF entails **that an alternative approach to mainstream ELT** is necessary in key areas such as phonology, lexicogrammar and discourse, which should incorporate the uncoded forms that distinguish and characterize successful intercultural between L2-users around the world.
- ELF features should be presented to the English learner as **authentic and legitimate**, instead of being stigmatized as *errors* on the basis of the interlanguage paradigm.
- The **performative use of ELF** should be taken as an acceptable alternative option whenever students are engaged in authentic intercultural communication in a multilingual and multicultural environment (e.g. on the Internet), provided their discourse is intelligible and appropriate to the achievement of their pragmatic goals (Widdowson, 2003).
- The students' success should be assessed in terms of their ***lingual capability*** (Widdowson 2015).

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Thank you!

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