# Introduction

## I.1 Why Have I Written This Book?

I have already written a book on *Intercultural Pragmatics* (Kecskes 2014). Did I not address issues on lingua franca there? Yes, I did. Then what on earth am I doing here? Well, I have been wanting to bring some pragmatic perspective into the heated debate on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF hereafter). It is not so much that there is no pragmatics in that discussion – there is! – but that it is not exactly what we, pragmaticians, call pragmatics (I shall return to this issue later). So what this book is about is most aptly characterized by the subtitle: "The Pragmatic Perspective" on English as a Lingua Franca. I do not write this book specifically for second language acquisition (SLA) scholars, applied linguists, ELF experts, or language teachers and not even only for pragmaticians. I have written it for all scholars who are interested in a very timely and intriguing question: Is lingua franca communication changing the way we think about language? Should we rethink, revisit, and/or revise what our standard knowledge and way of thinking is about language use in general? So please do not expect me to review the huge, rapidly burgeoning literature on ELF (although I do that where I find it necessary). My goal is not to give a synthesis of what we already have, rather to raise and discuss unanswered and partly answered questions, and approach existing knowledge from a new perspective. The focus is on issues concerning pragmatics, such as interactional competence, intention, the semantics–pragmatics interface, context, implicature, and modality. I intend to revisit these issues from an ELF perspective: what new knowledge (if any) can ELF add to the debate about the issues above, and what can ELF researchers learn from pragmaticians so as to better understand what goes on in ELF communication? So this is basically a two-way street in that I will regularly relate L1 pragmatics findings and thoughts to ELF and vice versa. I sincerely believe that the two fields can learn a lot from each other.

In my book on *Intercultural Pragmatics* (2014), I emphasized that I did not wish to ignore or replace the Gricean paradigm. On the contrary, my aim was to broaden the scope of Gricean pragmatics in order to explain not only what

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happens in L1 communication but also in interactions that include nonnative speakers. My problem with the current research on English as a Lingua Franca turns on the sentiment shared by many, namely what Jenkins calls "language with no native speakers." Well, if there are no native speakers there is no natural language.[1] What we have then is only a code-system without a heart and soul. Just think about computer programming "languages" such as Java, COBOL, Prolog, C++, Python, or others where there is a one-to-one relationship between code/sign and meaning. Take Esperanto, for instance, which failed to become a lingua franca because it lacks the real "human touch." It has no native speakers who could shape the language according to their needs, so that the language would reflect their ways of thinking. Esperanto lacks the unique relationship and interplay between the code system and users which should be a bidirectional dynamic process expected to result in the transformation of both sides as it occurs in natural languages. The question for us to answer is how English as a Lingua Franca differs from Esperanto and English as a Native Language (ENL) use. First of all, in ENL, the code system (English grammar) and its conventionalized use are the result of natural language development with its own sociocultural background, unlike in Esperanto where the code system has been artificially developed. The English language has native speakers whose language use and development of the code system are rooted in a dynamically changing sociocultural background. But in ELF those native speakers of English do not participate in the language game. This makes the whole thing tricky and unique. ELF interlocutors make use of a code system that has been developed according to the needs of a speech community other than theirs. So they just "borrow" that code system for their own communicative purposes, and use it and shape it according to their needs in temporary sociocultural situations where English is used as a medium of communication.

Therefore, I will consider ELF a language use mode in which all participants have an L1 other than English. My definition of ELF goes like this: *ELF is a way to put a variety, or several varieties of English to use in interactions between speakers whose L1 is other than English.* Here arises the basic problem for ELF research, namely the fact that what the "players" have in common is that they are native speakers of a language other than English.[2] The question remains: *how would these interlocutors use the English code system with a mind dominated by and wired to another code system with a different sociocultural background?* Let me explain this issue by means of an analogy with another medium, namely, painting: The way I think about language can be compared to the way in which Amedeo Modigliani understood the function of

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[1] I am fully aware of the debate about the term "native speaker." Later I will return to explain what is meant by this term in this book.

[2] Based on Wittgenstein's "language game" metaphor, I will often refer to interlocutors as "players" or "gamers."

human eyes. Eyes are the mirror of the soul just as language is the mirror of human mind. The eyes in Modigliani's portraits are different from any others.[3] Sometimes the eyes look like almonds, sometimes they seem to be empty holes. Very rarely do they resemble real human eyes. At first glance, they do not express anything, but when you look into them you see – or feel – the model's soul. It would be hard to find another artist able to express so much with such unrealistic, single-colored eyes that occasionally even appear to be blind. Some of Modigliani's portraits, however, have fully painted eyes, like the later portraits of his wife, Jeanne Hebuterne. In the earlier years of their relationship, Modigliani once said to her, "When I know your soul, I will paint your eyes." Sometimes it happens that Modigliani paints two different eyes, like those in the portrait of Max Jacob, which is considered one of Modigliani's master-pieces. What he wanted to show with those eyes is that with one eye Max is looking at the outside world, while with the other he is looking within himself. On another occasion, when Leopold Survage saw his portrait painted by Modigliani, he asked his friend, "Why have you only given me one eye?" Modigliani's answer: "Because you only view the world with one eye, with the other you look within yourself."

How does this all relate to language and ELF? Soul operates mind and mind operates language. To quote Tertullian (A treatise on the soul): "We, however, affirm that the mind coalesces with the soul – not indeed as being distinct from it in substance, but as being its natural function and agent."[4] So the mind is a natural agent of the soul, and as such operates language. Through language the mind facilitates the inner reflection of the outside world. In the case of ELF the "eye" is unique because it mirrors the complexity of a mind that has to work with the blend of two (or more) reflections of the outside world: one that is attached to L1 and the other being developed through L2 or Lx. The two are intertwined. Both of them require the maintenance of some kind of a norm system. So the question is: whose norms do/should the ELF speakers follow? Since they communicate in L2, the answer should be that ELF speakers are expected to follow both the grammatical and communicative norms of L2 (English). The issue, however, is not that simple: If their mind works with the blend of two reflections of the world, then they appear to need to make special efforts to follow the norms of L2 and overcome the dominant effect of L1. And here arises yet another problem. ELF occurs in temporary speech dyads or communities. There is evidence (e.g., House 2003; Kecskes 2007, 2013, 2015; Canagarajah 2014) that when people spend even a short time together they inherently, instinctively attempt to create their own norms

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[3] Information in this part of the text was collected on the Internet.
[4] *Sacred Writings of Tertullian*, vol. 1. p. 224. Jazzybee Verlag: Altenmuster: Germany. 1922.

no matter how temporary the time together will be.[5] In order for the norms to be organized into a relatively definable system, they need to be developing for a significant amount of time. This is not the case in lingua franca where the dyads and speech communities are usually temporary. It is difficult or even impossible for ELF speakers to create long-lasting norms of their own although they attempt to do so no matter how temporary the dyads or speech communities are. That is why it is a mistake to compare lingua franca to "interlanguage" (Selinker 1972) as some scholar do. ELF is not a "developing system" of a nonnative speaker. As I have said, it is a language use mode, a "variable way" of using English (Seidlhofer 2011: 77) and not a variety of English. Consequently it is not right to try to squeeze ELF into the Kachruian three categories: "inner, outer and expending circle." Also, I do not agree with Mauranen (2003) that Kachru's model is outdated. I think ELF simply does not fit into that model because it is neither norm-providing as American English or British English is, nor norm-developing in a way as Nigerian English, Iranian English, Chinese English, etc. are. ELF is a language use mode, and as such it is more fluid and flexible with its temporarily developed and temporarily existing "intercultures" and norms than any variety of English. So, it does not make much sense to compare it to the Kachruian varieties that usually have a describable structure with their norms and rules.

## I.2    Why Is This Book Needed?

ELF as an independent research field has been growing very quickly. There is an increasing amount of empirical work focusing on ELF interactions: see, for instance, Jenkins, Cogo, and Dewey (2011), for an overview, and the latest books by Archibald, Cogo, and Jenkins, (2011), Bowles and Cogo, (2015), and Vettorel (2015); and databases such as the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE), the Asian Corpus of English (ACE), and the Helsinki ELFA Corpus, which all focus on aspects of language in lingua franca interactions. Furthermore, there was a special issue in the journal *Intercultural Pragmatics* (2009), edited by House, with the title of "The pragmatics of English a Lingua Franca." *Journal of Pragmatics* (2011, 43/4) also published a special issue dedicated to the pragmatics of English as a lingua franca edited by Björkman. Several excellent books have been published on English as a Lingua Franca (such as Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2011; Mauranen 2012; Björkman 2013; Deterding 2013; MacKenzie 2013; Baker 2017) just to mention a few. Björkman's (2013), Holmes and Dervin's (2016), Deterding's (2013), and

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[5]  Of course, the more time they spend together the stronger those norms are going to be.

Baker's (2017) works are parts of the series in the Developments in English as a Lingua Franca (DELF). There have been some significant developments of ELF in specific settings such as business English as a lingua franca, academic English as a lingua franca, or ELF for Asian or European people (e.g., Du-Babcock 2009; Kankaanranta & Planken 2010; Mauranen 2012; Ehrenreich 2016; Liu & Liu 2017). Books like Björkman's *English as an Academic Lingua Franca* (2013), and Kirkpatrick's *English as a Lingua Franca in ASEAN* (2011), highlight these developments. The field also has a (relatively) new journal (*Journal of English Lingua Franca*). As mentioned, these developments demonstrate a rapidly increasing interest in the field.

One of the reasons why I think this book still can add something to the existing and ever-burgeoning scholarship is its unique perspective that is based on the Gricean paradigm. ELF research has been carried out mainly from the perspective of applied linguistics and second language acquisition even when the focus has been on ELF pragmatics with an interest in strategies interlocutors use in communicative processes (e.g., House 2009a: Seidlhofer 2009a; Bjorkman 2010, 2013; Mauranen 2012; Murray 2012). Less attention has been paid to the theoretical issues of pragmatics underlying ELF language use including utterance formation (not speech acts), intention, explicature, implicature, semantics–pragmatics interface, role of context, salience, relevance, and linguistic behavior in general. No current pragmatic theories have been applied to explain lingua franca use (at least to my knowledge). Consequently, there seems to be a need for a book that discusses the language use and behavior of lingua franca speakers from the perspective of current pragmatic theories with an attempt to answer the following questions: Can current pragmatic theories explain lingua franca communication in which basic concepts such as common ground, cooperation, intention, implicature, presupposition, salience, relevance, and politeness. gain a new meaning? Do we need a new pragmatics theory for lingua franca interaction, or what we have to do is just adjust and/or modify the existing approaches according to the requirements of this type of communication? And, of course, the main question: With no native speakers participating in the language game how much will players stick to the original rules of the game?

That said, I think this book can be useful for both theoretical pragmatics on the one hand, and applied linguistics and SLA on the other. It would help both sides understand that neither the monolithic (rigid, formal, structure-based) nor the heterolytic (fluid, hybrid, intersubjective, community practices-based) approach is good enough to reveal the real nature of language, especially language use. Both sides should loosen up and let some fresh air into their disciplines acknowledging the equal importance of form, structure, cognition, and the individual factors on the one hand and the hybrid, fluid, socially

determined factors on the other. In other words, the former cannot exist without the latter. They form a symbiosis that requires scholars on both sides to analyze language use as a reflection of the dual nature of human beings: we are both individuals and social beings at the same time. This fact is reflected in our communicative behavior. Recent neurological experiments on mirror neurons can be interpreted as confirming human beings' dual nature, as well as the interaction of their abilities (Rizzolatti & Craighero 2004; Arbib et al. 2005).

## I.3        How Can the Book Be Useful for Theoretical Pragmatics?

### I.3.1        *Monolingual Bias in Current Pragmatic Theories*

According to UNESCO data, the number of multilinguals exceeds the number of monolinguals in the world. But if multilingualism is considered 'normal,' shouldn't this affect the ways linguists build their models of language and pragmaticians develop their models of meaning and language behavior? I argue that given the rapid growth in the world of the number of people who speak more than one language and the increasing importance of intercultural interactions in communicative encounters, the main linguistic and pragmatic models must also be evaluated on their capacity to explain multilingual competence, multilingual language use and its traces appropriately. However, this is not exactly what is happening. As I discussed elsewhere (Kecskes 2014), in the dominant monolingual approaches that govern mainstream pragmatics today anything that is "societal" (Mey 2001) and/or whatever pragmatic phenomenon has not reached "grammaticalized" status (as Levinson calls it; 1983: 9) on principle is excluded from consideration in many versions of pragmatics. This is how Jacob Mey (2013: 488) described the current situation:

It has been the custom for partisans of linguistics to fire away from their hideouts and shoot down pragmatics (of the 'wrong' kind) as being 'continental' (Levinson 1983:2), as "not stringent enough" (as one colleague of mine once told her students), or simply as being outside the realm of scientific description (as many linguists and semanticists seem to believe, witness the fact that they, intentionally or unconsciously, omit any mention of the 'other' kind of pragmatics in their writings.

The assumption then of standard pragmatics about the nature of communication is that it depends on there being commonalities and conventions between speakers and hearers. These commonalities, conventions, common beliefs, shared knowledge, and the like all create a core common ground, a kind of collective salience on which intention and cooperation-based pragmatics is built (see Kecskes 2014). However, when this core common ground appears to be missing or limited – as is the case in lingua franca communication –

interlocutors cannot take them for granted, rather they need to negotiate and co-construct them, at least temporarily. So there seems to be a shift in emphasis from the communal to the individual. It is not that the individual becomes more important than the societal. Rather, since common ground is limited, it should be created in the interactional context in which interlocutors function as core common ground creators rather than just common ground seekers and activators as is mostly the case in L1 communication. The nature of intersubjectivity therefore seems to be being changed. That is to say, *there is more reliance on language created ad hoc by individuals in the course of interaction than on prefabricated language and preexisting frames.* So the role of individual with his/her individual background, prior experience, language use habits, and creativity in general increases. Deliberate creativity (see Kecskes 2017) rules instead of exiting norms and formulaic, prefabricated language. In the case of interlocutors who use a common language and whose L1s differ, the lack of full control over language skills (L2) and lack of full knowledge of conventions, beliefs, and norms of the target language (L2) used as the medium of communication may lead *to a more conscious approach to what is said, and how it is said.* This is where mainstream pragmatics and lingua franca pragmatics significantly differ. The more conscious approach in ELF shifts the emphasis from societal to individual, results in co-construction of common ground (rather than relying on exiting core common ground of the target language speakers), and brings closer "what is said" to "what is communicated" than in L1. To a large extent, interlocutors have to rely on semantic analyzability rather than on figurative and prefabricated, formulaic language. So the semantics–pragmatics interface issue has to be revisited. All of this should certainly affect the way we evaluate speaker intention and production, hearer comprehension and implicatures in lingua franca interactions. There is more conscious and careful recipient design involved in these interactions than in L1 communication in which interlocutors do not have to deal with language skill issues and may rely on more spontaneous speech and less monitoring. This kind of recipient design may change the way we think about what is said, and what is beyond what is literally said.

Theoretical pragmaticians worry if they let some "fresh air" in, that will surely ruin the logical structure of language, jeopardize truth conditions, and break how presuppositions work: in one word, that change will put everything into the air and ruin systematicity, which is so important for each human language system. Not a bit of it. This book tries to demonstrate that ELF, although it is just a language use mode, does not mean anarchy in language use, and it does not entirely lack systematicity. If, however, we want to describe ELF, we need to make some changes to our way of thinking about how language works.

### I.3.2 The Pragmatic Analysis of English Lingua Franca Gives a New Twist to the Main Tenet of Current Pragmatic Theories: The Semantics–Pragmatics Interface

According to the traditional view, it is up to semantics to tell us what somebody literally says when s/he uses an utterance of a given type, and it is up to pragmatics to explain the information one conveys, and the actions one performs, in or by saying something. King and Stanley (2005: 117) formulated the basis for the semantics–pragmatics divide as follows: "pragmatic content is what the speaker communicates over and above the semantic content of the sentence."

However, the issue is not that simple and the border-line debate (see for summary, Korta and Perry 2015) is a never-ending one.

Analysis of lingua franca utterances and discourse can give a new twist to the debate. The process of inferencing for lingua franca hearers in intercultural interaction usually differs from that of L1 hearers. Native speakers do inferencing usually top-down, while lingua franca speakers mostly rely on bottom-up processing. For lingua franca speakers the semantic content is very often the conveyed content (cf. House 2002, Kecskes 2007). There is evidence that semantic analyzability has some kind of priority in lingua franca interactions. Some studies concluded that interlocutors were reluctant to use language that they know, or perceive to be figurative or semantically less transparent (e.g. Philip 2005; Cieślicka 2006; Kecskes 2015). So for nonnative speakers (especially those with lower language proficiency) participating in lingua franca interactions, pragmatics gets very close to semantics, particularly if we look at this issue from the traditional mainstream pragmatics view, where there is little pragmatic enrichment and/or saturation.[6] In L1 communication, however, "what is said" rarely coincides with "what is communicated." This is why Gricean pragmatics gives such importance to implicatures: "Speakers implicate, hearers infer" as Horn (2004: 6) said. However, in lingua franca interaction what the speaker says frequently coincides with what s/he actually means. The meaning, that is to say, of the utterance is usually limited to its literal sense. In L1 communication, on which current pragmatic theories are built, there may be much more of a gap between what is said and what is meant than in lingua franca communication. In the case of the latter, it is of utmost importance that the speaker should mean close to what s/he says, otherwise the hearer may have difficulty figuring out the speaker's intention because of limited core common ground, nonexisting frames, restricted familiarity with shared knowledge and few mutual norms. Figurative and formulaic language use does not help the communication process as much as it does in L1, for the latter requires

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[6] I will return to explain "saturation" and "pragmatics enrichment" (Recanati 2004, 2012) in the next chapter.

background knowledge rooted in the culture the target language represents. This is precisely why we need to address the following crucial questions: Whose common ground do the interlocutors rely on in lingua franca interaction? Does speaker implicature always go beyond semantics, or sometimes speaker implicates what is literally said?

Does ELF use mean that there is less pragmatics and more semantics for lingua franca speakers? No, not quite so. (As we will see later, the issue is more complicated than that.) Lingua franca interaction may disabuse us of the prevalent current view in some pragmatic theories that posit a divide between pragmatics and semantics. Analysis of ELF use demonstrates the validity in theoretical pragmatics of those propositions that emphasize the function of pragmatics in ways beyond the mere filling of the gap between semantics and conveyed content. Bach (2007: 5) argued that it is misleading to speak of the border, or the "interface" between semantics and pragmatics. This mistakenly suggests that pragmatics somehow takes over where semantics leaves off. It's one thing for a sentence to have the content that it has and another thing for a speech act of uttering the sentence to have the content it has. Even when the content of the speech act coincides with that of the sentence, that is still to be understood as a pragmatic act, something for the speaker to intend and the hearer to figure out. So Humpty Dumpty's maxim (Lewis Carol 1871, *Through the Looking-Glass*) is truer than ever before: "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less." When a lingua franca speaker produces an utterance, it usually signifies more or less what its compositional meaning is. I will return to this issue in some of the upcoming chapters.

## I.4    How Can the Book Be Useful for Applied Linguistics and SLA?

### I.4.1    *Calling Attention to the Fact That Dismantling the Concept of "Language" Will Not Help*

Since Firth and Wagner (1997) questioned some key dichotomies dominating second language acquisition research in their article, there has been quite a strong tendency in SLA and applied linguistics research to dismantle the concept of language (as it is traditionally understood) based on the Haugenian approach, according to which "the concept of language as a rigid, monolithic structure is false, even if it has proved to be a useful fiction in the development of linguistics. It is the kind of simplification that is necessary at a certain stage of a science, but which can now be replaced by more sophisticated models" (Haugen, 1972: 325). We can respond to this Haugenian approach with a quote from Leibniz (1976 [1679]): "*si nihil per se concipitur, nihil omnino concipietur*," meaning if "nothing is understood by itself, nothing at all will ever be

understood." Why is this important? It is true that what we call "language" is a scientific abstraction, and what we actually have is the instantiation of this abstraction in different dialects and varieties. This does not mean, however, that we do not have to have a "core," a basic abstraction to which we relate the "concrete" occurrences/substantiations of language. English as a Lingua Franca is not a language, it is not a normative phenomenon, it is a temporary "community of practice" – a "language use mode" (Kecskes 2007) – that may develop into a variety if, and only if, it is used for a longer period of time in a relatively definable speech community. There is hope for that in the European Union. This basically explains why ELF research appears to be most intensive and extensive in Europe.

### I.4.2     Grammar versus Pragmatics

It seems to me that one of the main dangers in ELF research is the emphasis of pragmatics over grammar: "Is one more primary in communication than the other," House (2003: 46) asks, "and are they in fact separable? Would pragmatic strategies enable one to communicate successfully irrespective of the level of grammatical proficiency?" One can argue that the general view is that ELF facilitates harmonious communication mainly through pragmatics rather than grammar. Canagarajah (2007) claimed that ELF speakers cannot depend on "preconstituted forms of meaning." What happens is that they activate complex pragmatic strategies that help them negotiate their variable form. However, we have to be careful with this statement because everything depends on what we understand by "preconstituted forms." If what Canagarajah means by "preconstituted forms" is formulaic, prefabricated language then he is right. But grammar is also preconstituted. And so is semantics. If we think otherwise, that will dismantle language. Grammar and semantics represent preconstituted knowledge which serves as a basis for semantic analyzability and general language use. ELF speakers seem to prefer semantically transparent language. This was claimed in Section I.3.1, and will be shown later in this book.

   As I have said, analysis of ELF use demonstrates that pragmatics doesn't just fill in the gap between semantics and conveyed content, and that it operates even when there is no gap. Pragmatics is there when the utterance is formulated and/or interpreted, just like grammar. Pragmatics and grammar work together (see Ariel 2008), they are inseparable, they support one another. Higher grammatical skills help learners to overcome some pragmatic problems in language production (classroom learners); likewise, higher pragmatic skills help to get meaning through even if grammar is poor. This is especially true for ELF.