

Introduction

Dynamics of Change from Different Perspectives and on Different Scales

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Languages undergo continual change, but not at constant speed. External and internal dynamics affect the speed as well as the different scales at which change occurs. Among important external factors, societal change, mobility and the ensuing language contact create conditions of stability or instability and upheaval. Language-internal changes may be triggered off by external changes, for instance when these lead to lively contact between languages or varieties, but internal changes may also begin seemingly autonomously, and may affect different subsystems, or one or more subsystems at different stages. In this volume both internal and external processes of language change are addressed, with a focus on contemporary processes and on English, although not exclusively, so that historical lines of development are included, as are other languages. Throughout the volume, the contributions highlight social contexts of various sizes and kinds, and social processes interacting with linguistic ones. A few chapters also delve into cognitive processes and individual users, thus ensuring that a range of scales is covered in addressing the issues of change and the specific phenomenon of English as a global lingua franca.

English is a particularly interesting kind of language use in the contemporary world, because it has ushered in a qualitatively new linguistic development, one that not only commands a wider reach than any other language before, but at the same time is spoken far more by its second-language (L2) users than its first-language (L1) users. Its most common use today is as a lingua franca, which means it is spreading in a qualitatively new fashion, as a global, transregional lingua franca, or, as Croft puts it (this volume, Chapter 2), ‘the primary exoteric lingua franca’ in many domains of the globalized world. In this role, as a means of communication between people who do not share a mother tongue, it is now used across spaces and domains, transcending traditional community divisions by nationality, culture or geographic location. Such a change in uses and practices calls for rethinking traditional principles of

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analysis and categorization, along with sources and directions of influence. It also throws the dynamicity and complexity of language in sharp relief: a global-scale lingua franca may be exceptionally sensitive to change and complex influences, but in which ways, if any, does it differ from the ways in which any language use is complex and dynamic?

What we want to achieve in this volume is to bring different research traditions to bear on the issue of how the emergence of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) as a relatively recent research field touches upon other, more established fields of study that relate to English, and to the study of language more generally. By bringing together very different perspectives, we also want to contribute to a more ambitious goal: new conceptualizations of the dynamics of language change in the context of relationships within language, between languages, and between languages and their environments.

Contact, Change and Mobility

It is relatively well established that language contact is one of the major drivers of language change, and even though change takes place via many different routes and for a plethora of reasons, contact is a fundamental characteristic of ELF, and a common thread in this book. Contact is approached from a variety of perspectives leading to different kinds and levels of contact, each author specifying their own particular take on the concept and its relation to the data with which they are engaging. Several chapters are concerned with multilingual speakers engaging in direct face-to-face contact or digital interaction, translating texts and sometimes falling back on their different languages in otherwise English-based interactions. Speakers of different linguistic backgrounds have presumably always, since prehistoric days, met and communicated over trade, war, hunting or exchanging spouses, and we know hunter-gatherers to have already been mobile. Today mobility takes place on an unprecedented scale, and has gained entirely novel forms in digital discourses which may or may not accompany physical mobility. All these kinds of social and communicative contact involve contact between speakers of different languages and different varieties – ‘polylectal’ speakers (cf. Ross 2003), in short.

Breadth and Heterogeneity of Social Contacts

The kinds of social contacts that specifically characterize ELF have turned out to be elusive for attempts at defining them. Many scholars have noted the unsuitability of traditional notions of speech community for capturing the nature of the social formations where ELF is used – many contacts are transient encounters, as Jenkins (2015) points out, and along similar lines, Mortensen

(2017 and this volume, Chapter 6) talks about transient communities. On the other hand, many ELF communities can be seen to resemble Wenger's (1998) communities of practice (Seidlhofer 2011). Mauranen (2018) in turn suggests that they are diffuse, network-based multilingual communities where English is a dominant lingua franca.

Early modern London, a city with a fluid social structure, gave rise to verbal *-s* as a result of 'the heterogeneity of contacts between speakers of different regional and social backgrounds' (Nevalainen this volume, Chapter 5). Today's social contacts can be considered even more heterogeneous as individuals engaging in ELF communication are not only of different social backgrounds, but also come from different social structures: for example, the social position of a student can be very different around the world. In this volume we observe the communication of university students in a student dormitory in Vienna (Bosso, Chapter 11) and in Japan (Siegel, Chapter 12), as well as advice sessions for refugees and asylum seekers at a UK charity centre (Cogo, Chapter 13) – the social contexts of which are as far from each other as possible, representing both privileged and necessity-driven mobility.

The heterogeneity of today's social contacts can also be seen in an impressive variety of L1 backgrounds which are attested in different communicative settings and thus are potentially in direct contact. Siemund and Mueller (Chapter 9) count ninety-three different L1 backgrounds in their study of multilingualism among university students and instructors. Cogo lists a dozen languages the staff of the charity speaks and a dozen which refugees/asylum seekers speak, with the overlap between them of about five languages. Mauranen (Chapter 4), drawing on the ELFA corpus, deals with speakers of more than fifty different L1s. In fact, a high degree of complex multilingualism in terms of the number of languages in speakers' backgrounds and those available in the situational contexts is an aspect of most chapters in Part II of this volume.

To further complicate matters, the fluency of speakers engaging in ELF interaction varies just as widely. For example, some of Cogo's informants in Part II are clearly the least fluent, whereas students in Bosso's study seem to be more fluent than students in Siegel's study. Thir (Chapter 10), in her study of the ability of ELF users to benefit from co-textual and contextual cues to aid phonological intelligibility in comprehension, estimates the participants to be at an upper-intermediate or low-advanced level in English. While fluency is rarely taken up by ELF scholars, it clearly has an influence on the strategies different speakers use to manage interaction and negotiate meaning. Importantly, this affects not only those who are less fluent, but also those who perceive their interlocutors to be less fluent. The strategies and communicative practices adopted range from gesturing, mimicking and use of co-textual and contextual clues to code-switching, translanguaging and using digital tools and

multimodal resources, and involve both common as well as unconventional means (see Cogo, Bosso, Siegel and Thir this volume). Thus, ELF interaction seems to provide ground not only for the diffusion of innovative forms, but also for novel communicative means and practices, such as glossing standard but low-frequency lexical items with pictures, or searching for a picture of an L1 word instead of an English translation (see Bosso this volume).

The relationship between the breadth of social contacts and ELF is vividly demonstrated in Laitinen and Lundberg's study (Chapter 7), who show that those who tweet in ELF have larger social networks, weaker ties and therefore, as is reasonable to hypothesize, enjoy social conditions favourable for diffusing innovations and acting as agents of change. The reverse relationship is probably also true: in order to reach out to a wider social circle, one needs to adopt ELF as the language of communication. In this sense, the prophecy of the second president of the United States, quoted in Nevalainen, that English will be 'the general medium of Correspondence and Conversation among the Learned of all Nations, and among all Travellers and Strangers' due to the increasing number of speakers of English and their wide contacts with speakers of other languages, is largely fulfilled, as, for example, Franzman et al. (2015) also suggest.

Multilingualism

Breadth and heterogeneity in social contacts make multilingualism a ubiquitous feature of ELF communication, and one of the most prominent themes in this volume; we see a complex interplay between multilingualism in the mind, multilingual features in interaction and a potential impact of both on language change.

Multilingualism impacts individuals cognitively beyond the social level. Mauranen investigates language contact at three levels: cognition, interaction and language as a collective entity. For cognition she argues that, while languages in a multilingual's mind exert an unavoidable influence on each other, as demonstrated in previous research (e.g. Pavlenko 2014), it is nevertheless important to approach the issues from fresh angles, since the mechanisms and the manifestations of such influences have turned out to be hard to pin down. Considering together relatively neglected domains of multilingual activity – either investigated in relative isolation or simply under-researched, like translation and ELF – and bringing them to bear on the study of multilingual cognition shows intriguing commonalities and differences which help track down tricky questions of priming effects, for example. Siemund and Mueller hypothesize that it is cognitively advantageous for subsequent language acquisition to have more than one home language, and thus those who are multilingually raised reach higher proficiency in ELF. At the same

time, a social impact is also observable. As already mentioned, Laitinen and Lundberg show that it is individuals who use more than one language in their tweets who have larger social networks, counted in the number of friends and followers, especially if one of these languages is ELF. Thus, from the perspective of social network theory and taking into account Laitinen and Lundberg's findings, it would seem to be above all networked multilingual individuals who have the potential for acting as innovators and agents of change.

We can then take a different perspective and look at how multilingualism manifests itself in interaction. It seems that the extent to which multilingual practices are adopted depends on a variety of social factors. In Bosso's study we can only see a very covert type of multilingualism: international students living in a student dorm in Vienna seem to recognize the potential lack of intelligibility of English low-frequency vocabulary, and therefore the nature of English they are using as a lingua franca, through their reliance on multimodal practices such as using pictures in their messages. However, they do not resort to any explicitly multilingual practices such as code-switching. In contrast, in the seemingly similar context of a student dorm in Japan, Siegel observes not only explicit code-switching between a Japanese and Thai speaker, but also a change over time in their recognition of shared multilingual resources: such resources gradually become part of their communication. Finally, the amount of code-switching in Cogo's study is such that she argues for a need of a theoretical shift and conceptualization in terms of translanguaging which emphasises the 'permeability of languages and linguistic repertoires' (Cogo this volume, Chapter 13). Still, she points out that there would be even more space for translanguaging practices if not for the ideological pressures which limit them to specific contexts and points in interaction.

With respect to the plethora of multilingual practices ELF speakers engage in in different social contexts, it is instructive to go back to Croft's chapter on sociolinguistic typology of contact languages. He argues that it is social factors or traits, namely community size and degree of stratification, which determine the way languages will be used in a situation of contact. He draws our attention to a surprising fact: the absence of lingua francas and pidgins – languages which arise specifically for the exoteric function or communication between members of different speech communities – in areas of high linguistic diversity, such as Papua New Guinea. The explanation he offers is that an exoteric language emerges only in contact with a large-scale stratified society. Thus, long-distance trade with such a society gives rise to a lingua franca, while in contrast, communication between neighbouring small-scale egalitarian societies can be managed by local (receptive) bi-/multilingualism.

Synchronic Variation and Standardness

ELF is typically regarded as non-standard English, as we see discussed in many of the chapters in this volume, especially in Part II. Nevalainen shows in her chapter how, in the historical perspective, English has had a long history of pre-standard stages, changing standards and more or less pervasive or widely adopted standards. The last is what one might call a ‘weak’ standard, one that is there but is not too overpowering, so that local and regional usages develop and live on despite the existence of a standard. With ELF we see a pervasive language use that is not regional, not local and not standard – but not always very far from Standard English either, like in the case of written academic texts. What makes global ELF a particularly interesting research domain is that it coexists with a few national standards (UK, US, Australian, Canadian, South African, etc.) based on native-speaker use, while actual ELF develops in interaction, giving rise to spontaneous norms without external norms. Thus, among these islands of somewhat different standards, bottom-up self-regulation emerges without top-down regulation. Tensions between communicative effectiveness or expedience, favouring spontaneous self-regulation, and social prestige, favouring standards, add to the dynamics of variation, regulation and change.

Standardness has a strong ideological underpinning: it is advocated as language at its ‘best’: the richest in vocabulary, the most sophisticated – and ‘correct’ – in grammatical structure, the most appropriate in register, the most idiomatic in phraseological expression, the most fluent in speech and elegant in accent. Since English as an L2 is most commonly associated with learning English as a foreign or second language through classroom instruction and often relatively early stages of learning, native speakers not only constitute the target set up for learners, but are always at an advantage in comparison, and ascribed the possession of the ‘best’ version of the language. However, in her chapter, Dąbrowska (Chapter 3) clearly shows that such key aspects of individual language ability as phonological representation, vocabulary size and grammatical complexity are all determined to a large extent by the amount of print exposure. The amount of print exposure does not equal the categories of native and non-native speakers. Quite the contrary, many speakers of ELF, professionals in academia, diplomacy and international relations, are likely to have experienced vast amounts of print exposure. Thus, the ‘best’ versions of the language might not necessarily belong to native speakers.

The issue of individual speakers versus language in the community is raised in several chapters. Dąbrowska describes how writing changes language in the individual mind and how cumulatively such changes lead to changes at the level of the community. Mauranen likewise explores language contact at the individual and the communal levels, but also posits a third level of social

interaction as the mediating force between the two. She argues that the effects of language contact percolate upwards from the individual to collective usage through social interaction. Conversely, individuals are primed by the usage in interaction but also beyond it, to adopt features from ‘above’, absorbing them in their personal repertoires. Croft, adopting an evolutionary perspective, defines language as a population of actual utterances produced in a speech community, in turn defined as a population of persons interacting with each other. Schneider (Chapter 1) assumes a complex dynamic systems perspective and points out that constructions diffuse by replication both individually and communally. Vetchinnikova and Hiltunen (Chapter 8) conceptualize language as a complex system of idiolects and examine micro-processes of language change, such as priming and chunking, at both the individual and the communal level of language representation, comparing them to each other. Recognizing individuals under the guise of the communal has implications for understanding synchronic variation, especially in the current situation of increased mobility and migration.

Vetchinnikova and Hiltunen’s study shows that when a communal corpus displays an alternation between, for example, two variant forms, it does not necessarily mean that each individual alternates between these two forms in the same proportion. What this can suggest instead is the split between those individuals who prefer one form and those who prefer the other, both being remarkably consistent in their choices. Thus, variation can be tied to the actual people rather than to nationality, culture, geographic location or any other criterion by which a language community is commonly defined. In diffusion, then, the forms are ‘reshuffling’, to use Schneider’s expression, because people are reshuffling by migrating from one place to another. That is, forms can travel together with the idiolects which bear them.

The process itself is not new, as we see from Nevalainen’s close focus on the individual within the wider social environment. In Early Modern English, migrants from the North brought the third-person singular *-s* variant to London, replacing the southern *-(e)th* variant: early modern London was a city of immigrants, as Nevalainen writes. She gives examples of two individual speakers, Thomas Cromwell, who was born south-west of London and was a consistent *-(e)th* user, and Henry Machyn, who apparently arrived in London from the North and continued to use the *-s* variant. The difference of today’s Global English from Early Modern English is in the scale of migration and the heterogeneity of social contacts.

Internal Dynamics

Several chapters in this volume directly address the question of internal processes of language variation and change, such as regularization, simplification, generalization and lexical conditioning.

Nevalainen points out that the replacement of the third-person singular *-(e)th* by the northern *-(e)s* variant is a case of simplification, since the original northern English system of present-tense verbal inflections was more complex. She also predicts that the current system is at an intermediate stage in the regularization process and may continue to regularize. Verbal *-s*, for example, may at some point in the future be replaced by the suffixless or zero variant which can at present be observed in some pidgin and creole varieties, as well as in ELF interaction.

Contact-induced processes in translations and ELF, as discussed by Mauranen, reveal some shared contact-induced developments, which indicate simplification in certain respects, but also complexification, and above all new preferences among existing grammatical patterns. Simplification would seem to be at its clearest in lexis, where the most common words tend to become proportionally even more common. This effect is nevertheless found only among the very highest-frequency lexis, and an overarching simplification is not supported. In syntax, calquing is common in both translation and ELF, resulting in new lexicogrammatical patterns in the affected language, while altered syntactic preferences are also in evidence. At the same time, both show a measure of loosening up of conventional patterns, which would appear to originate in a reinterpretation of patterns as productive instead of conventionalized and lead to increased variability.

Schneider takes up the phenomenon of the spread of *as* in constructions such as *call as/term as* in Asia (cf. *consider as/regard as*). He notes that the process follows the common route observed in the diffusion of innovations, as it is lexically conditioned to be adopted with different verbs to various extents, but the ‘lexical anchor’ drives the innovation to new contexts. The process is similar to lexicosyntactic calquing (Silva-Corvalan 1998) and appears in translations and cross-linguistic influences discussed in Mauranen’s chapter. In this respect it is interesting to recall that the diffusion of verbal *-s* also showed signs of lexical conditioning: high-frequency verbs *have* and *do* resisted the change.

Vetchinnikova and Hiltunen looked at the variation between the contracted and the full form *it’s* versus *it is* and show that at the individual level there is an effect of priming and chunking on the tendency to contract. That is, if an individual produced a contracted form, s/he is more likely to contract it again in immediate proximity. Likewise, if *it’s/it is* is part of a chunk in one’s individual chunk repertoire, it is more likely to occur in a contracted form. Since both factors, cognitive in nature, work at the individual level, this may lead to more divergence in individual preferences and individual language use.

The chapters in this volume have adopted various units of analysis – from individual speakers to social formations such as societies, countries, tribes and groups, and a number of linguistic categories, including grammatical or lexical

forms, pragmatic items or ‘linguemes’. Besides these, units of analysis involving multimodal elements such as gestures and images are taken up, and newer, typically digital elements also make an appearance: emoji and tweets shape our notions of what counts as a unit of communication. Many of these may very well be closely intertwined with ELF as the language of the globalized world, with the growing needs to communicate across boundaries and borders, even when conventional notions of proficiency, fluency or standardness fail to be relevant. These may indicate the shape of things to come.

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