REFLECTING ON ENGLISH LINGUA FRANCA TODAY: EXPANDING SCENARIOS AND GROWING DILEMMAS
An overview with introductory notes

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This special issue, titled *English Lingua Franca: Expanding scenarios and growing dilemmas*, proposes and expands the papers presented at the homonymous ELF International Symposium, held at Sapienza University, Rome, on April 6-7, 2017. The international event aimed to provide the setting for an updated debate during which the most prominent figures in the field could exchange and discuss their ideas and findings. On that occasion, the new gains which emerged were so diversified and stimulating that the project of a volume completely devoted to those issues took shape. In accordance with the inspiring concept which animated the symposium, also in this present collection five main areas of interest can be identified: 1. the perspective arising from an investigation of theoretical questions underlying the ELF fast-pacing scenario, set against the main assumptions which characterize communication and mutual understanding via language more in general; 2. the intersection of an ELF-oriented pedagogical focalization in conjunction with the areas of EMI and ESP as experienced and developed in the academic world; 3. the cross-fertilization of ELF gains with corpus linguistics and corpora analyses, also set within the framework of specialized discourses; 4. the juxtaposition of the ELF resources and inter-communicative modalities with the dramatic circumstances realized in migratory contexts, especially experienced, mapped and studied in those areas in Italy where they represent an everyday pressing reality; 5. the encounter of ELF with pedagogical aims in the ever-growing educational scenarios of application at schools, teachers' development courses and assessment criteria in various communities of practice.

The two pivotal concepts around which the whole publication revolves are, in particular, the words "growth" and "dilemma", as they well represent the actual state of the art of ELF studies and research nowadays. Since its initial appearance in the world of sociolinguistics and applied linguistics, and markedly more over the last decade, the area of ELF has grown and expanded

enormously. This has attracted at an increasing pace researchers and practitioners who have found, in its main basic tenets and always renewing assets, a convincing representation of the intricate nexuses existing in the present linguistic dispensation in English on a global scale. The fact that the most eminent scholars in applied linguistics are devoting their attention and research energies to the ELF function as a contact language is proof enough of its relevant vitality and force of attraction. Countless are the publications in the field, and several the occasions for experts to meet from all over the world, so that different specificities are now being studied according to the peculiar conditions in which ELF procedures, repertoires and modalities are taken into account and observed in more localized contexts. The most specific event, the ELF conference, is now at its 11th edition – to take place in London in June 2018 – with its main focus being ELF and migration, an issue which was significantly represented – in particular by the Salento University group of researchers – at the aforementioned Sapienza ELF 2017 Symposium, from which this present collection originates.

As the introductory manifesto of Sapienza ELF Symposium recited,[1] the aim of the international gathering was to acknowledge, in updated and dilemma-oriented terms, the fact that "with the spread of English as a lingua franca (ELF), we are at present witnessing 'an unprecedented linguistic situation' in which 'a language has reached truly global dimensions, across continents, domains, and social strata […] accelerated by the dramatic expansion of electronic communication through the internet' (Seidlhofer 2011)". Therefore, the starting point was, and is, represented by the incontrovertible truth that "ELF as a contact language – with a sociolinguistic function, differentiated according to place, time, and context – is in constant growth and expansion". The special focus was inspired by the hypothesis that, if on the one hand ELF in/and its development/s "bring[s] obvious advantages to its users as enabling them to 'language' across linguacultural boundaries",[2] it also poses to its researchers, users and languagers the complex and articulate set of dilemmas which such accelerated growth and expansion imply. The problematic situations – created by the impact of the global reality of ELF on locally identifiable linguistic contexts – conjoined with the criticalities so dramatically arising as a consequence of the migratory flows characterizing the last decade or so, urgently "need to be addressed": "ELF, for example, is inevitably involved in the socio-political, religious and economic issues that come up in the critical situations generated by unprecedented displacement and migration, where it is the principal, and sometimes the only means of interaction and mediation".[3]

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[1] https://web.uniroma1.it/elf2017/sites/default/files/allegati/ELF%202017%20manifesto%20supersuperfinal.pdf
[2] Sapienza manifesto, quot.
[3] Ibidem.

Migratory flows are not the only critical and controversial scenarios in which ELF assumes a preeminent role, even though one of the main goals of the symposium was to share, with updated studies, the state of the art of ELF research in migratory contexts in Italy. In this volume ELF is observed from diversified perspectives and cuts across various domains. The order of presentation of the articles reproduces the sequence of talks delivered at the aforementioned symposium, but all the contributions have been expanded and enriched in the written version. The rationale behind the choice of the sequence is provided by the intention of approaching ELF issues starting from concepts of broader and more theoretical amplitude (Seidlhofer, Widdowson, and Pitzl this volume), then gradually zooming into more specialistic discourses (Gotti, and Tatsuki this volume), dealing in depth with the dramatic encounter of ELF and migration (Guido *et al.*, Provenzano, Centonze, and Sperti this volume) and finally approaching more localized contexts of pedagogical application (Bowles, Grazzi, Lopriore, and Vettorel this volume).

The volume opens with the contribution of Barbara Seidlhofer and Henry Widdowson, titled *Competence, capability and virtual language.* In their provocative article, Seidlhofer and Widdowson raise crucial questions regarding the general concepts of "competence", "lingual capability" and "virtual language". As it has been diffusely shown by the ELF literature, they start from the assumption that "users of English as a lingua franca are capable of using language to communicate in contextually appropriate ways even though in so doing they may not conform to the norms of Standard English or the usage of native speakers"; given that "such model is generally considered to provide the benchmarks of competence in the language", they wonder what happens when " 'incompetent' users manage to be capable communicators": in such case, "what is the nature of this capability?", what kind of "construct" must competence be considered to be? These are some of the dilemmas that Seidlhofer and Widdowson confront us with, arguing that such "capability" "refers to some kind of knowledge other than competence" (or what is usually labelled under this term). Therefore, they suggest that its nature and substance, its implications, need to be investigated at the level of "actual pragmatic process of communication". According to the two authors, "the recognition that communication in general is achieved by the exercise of a general lingual capability that, unlike the concept of competence, is not a matter of conformity to the actual encodings of any particular language but the exploitation of the coding potential of virtual language" opens up the way to future research pointing out towards, so to say, a 'liberatory view' of "lingual capability", ultimately leading to the notion of "virtual language". Drawing on previous authoritative descriptions of "communicative competence", what Seidlhofer and Widdowson advocate for is a vision of language in which the linguistic means is not seen as "something we do *in opposition* to something we know",

but rather as an entity in which what counts is "enquiring into the *relationship* between knowing and doing", with the resulting dilemma of "how far this knowing can be equated with competence as this has been conventionally conceived". Seidlhofer and Widdowson suggest a 'deconstruction' of the traditional notion of linguistic and communicative competence as conventionally described in conformity with the norms of a particular speech community. Now that the configuration of "community" is inexorably mutated and subverted, a renewed stance in relation to the dramatically changed human condition – in sociolinguistic, communicative and even existential terms – needs to be adopted. Indubitably, this mutated condition gives rise to great dilemmas. Linguistic competence can't be conceived of as "a normative entity" any more, as it was in the past: "in a world of shifting populations and digitalized networks of communicative interaction" the conceptualization of linguistic competence needs to be readdressed because "the traditional notion of speech community and the concept of competence that depends upon it clearly cannot account for the kind of translingual/transglossic/translanguaging practices that are enacted in global communication, and which are so clearly exemplified in ELF". According to the two authors, the core dilemma that ELF poses is that "[u]nderstanding ELF […] crucially depends on an understanding of the nature of communication in general".

With a parallel focus on communication, the contribution by Marie-Luise Pitzl, titled *Communicative 'success', creativity and the need for de-mystifying L1 use: Some thoughts on ELF and ELT*, addresses the question of how a "de-mystifying" notion of communication – and its consequent success in L1 and ELF – can be juxtaposed to the more general concept of creativity and its implications in ELT. The author starts from a subtle analysis of the concept of "communicative success", differentiating it from the notion of "absence of miscommunication": "communication is not necessarily 'successful'", Pitzl claims, when it is simply "miscommunication-free", there can't be the "simple formula in which the absence of miscommunication equals successful communication"; therefore Pitzl focuses on what is, according to her, the real problem: "if a link between 'communicative success' and miscommunication is to be established at all, then the key issue would need to be how miscommunication is 'dealt with' by interactants". Even when sharing the same language, in L1 interactions, and even when knowing the interlocutors quite well, Pitzl argues, we may "miscommunicate on occasion". If, on the one hand, previous ELF literature provides extensive evidence that the view of communication is of particular relevance for the ELF research, the possibility of discarding the traditional assumption of what successful communication is, needs to be addressed with more decisive steps, not only in ELF research, Pitzl suggests, but also in ELT more broadly. According to the author, "the myths that idealize (L1) communication have been present in ELF/FLT for decades", and of course they also have

implications in ELF. "De-mystifying L1 communication" "in the context of researching ELF" can help realizing that "miscommunication is part of any communication and does not evaporate with increased language 'proficiency'". With such assumption in mind, we can also deconstruct the typical myths about creativity and the creative use of language. In her article Pitzl lists a series of words, created by ELF speakers, which can be seen as norm-transcending, as well as norm-following, and in some cases even norm-reinforcing. Should these words be considered "creative"? Should simply be "tolerated" by teachers, or encouraged, even praised? Should such non-conformity instances be considered as "intentional" or "accidental" occurrences of creativity? Pitzl concludes arguing that miscommunication and creativity, though defining such different realms, are to be conjoined in our analysis of applied linguists. She also argues that instances of creativity should not be "evaluated differently depending on who they have been produced by". "Despite the past two decades of descriptive ELF studies, there is still a lot of work – and a lot of 'convincing' – to be done", Pitzl concludes, opening up to ample space for future debate on this issue.

With Maurizio Gotti's contribution, titled *English as a Lingua Franca in the academic world: Trends and dilemmas*, the second section of the volume, dedicated to special discourse/s, opens with a particular focus on the significant impact of ELF in academic contexts where "the need for a common language is particularly felt especially for the development of specialized communication at a global level". English as a Lingua Franca is observed from the vantage point of its intersection with the specialized scientific discourse/s of the ESP and EMI areas. According to Gotti, the present globalizing trends strongly influence the development of both language research and higher education policies. Academic discourse is particularly perceived as being under the influence of opposite forces, homogenizing and localizing at the same time, with the consequence that it results "not at all uniform but [varying] according to a host of factors, such as language competence, disciplinary field, community membership, professional expertise and generic conventions". On the one hand, the massive use of English in academic research and instruction in many non-English speaking countries opens up to "new opportunities for learning the English discourses relating to the specialized disciplines taught". However, on the other hand, it also raises new questions, challenges and dilemmas to the experts. Gotti argues that the spread of English – while indubitably being "a great advantage […] in terms of better global communication" – "has also aroused criticism" from various parts, as it has often been seen as "a factor of marginalization or even obliteration of important existing differences among non-English speaking communities […] preventing the attainment of authentic intercultural discourse", due to the fact that "globalizing trends commonly rely on covert strategies meant to reduce participants's

specificities". If ELF, with its massive contribution in the process of globalization of academic practices, has provided solutions of "great practical value", this process "has also aroused fears and complaints in many non-English-speaking academics". The EMI policies adopted for academic publications, for instance, "have heightened non-English-speakers' awareness that the increasing use of this language in publishing and higher education might greatly reduce the role of national languages for academic purposes". English, as the dominant language in ESP and EMI, may clearly have a "backwash effect" on "smaller languages", "subject to standardizing pressures in their semantic, textual, sociopragmatic and even lexicogrammatical construction". In his contribution Gotti reports data about his university research projects that "have investigated identity-forming features linked to 'local' or disciplinary cultures, as communicated through English in various academic domains by native and non-native speakers". Among the numerous examples provided, taken from his research corpora, particularly significant is the excerpt that he reports in which the idiomatic form "feel at home" was used by the lecturer with native-like competence while dialoguing with a non-native student: the insertion of this formulaic metaphorical expression created a critical situation of misunderstanding and unbalance between the two, and there was an evident communication breakdown. "Our data", Gotti concludes, "show how the students' awareness of not being native speakers seems to create a higher motivation in their adoption of supportive moves than is commonly noticed in settings only involving native speakers". This takes us to the problem that native-like users might not be the best communicators, as argued in the following article.

Another area of specialized discourse is highlighted in Tatsuki's contribution proposing the lens of observation of ELF in MUN simulations. In her article, titled *ELF in Model United Nations Simulations: When East meets West,* Tatsuki reports on a section of her ongoing research where the two "communities of practice" (according to Wenger's criteria), that is, the MUN delegates and ELF speakers, come into mutual interaction. Tatsuki starts describing the peculiarity of MUN simulations as discursive constructs and interactional processes, pointing out the relevance of ELF research in such domain. In all the different stages of the MUN simulation Tatsuki identifies linguistic and interactional traits that not necessarily are best possessed by native speakers. MUN delegates must work in team and "spend time trying to express all the ideas in their position papers verbally and spontaneously in order to increase their abilities to speak about the issues". At the actual MUN event there are different interactional genres that the participants need to master: from formal to informal debate, from caucusing to face-to-face negotiation. According to Tatsuki, face-to-face negotiation, particularly, is of great potential interest to researchers in the ELF world because ELF users, meeting at MUN simulations, all come from different

backgrounds and need to deal with such diversity in their interactions. In fact, they are seen to employ a "range of accommodation strategies to ensure cooperatively negotiated understandings". If, on the one hand, it is true that bilinguals' experience can reduce the "emotional resonance of language", there is also evidence that pragmatic accommodation strategies spontaneously adopted by ELF speakers are instances of effective negotiation practices and successful interactions. East Asian ELF speakers, for example, usually "adopt convergent pragmatic solidarity-building strategies", mirroring "their cultural values of positive politeness, consensus building and rapport strengthening. Thus it is safe to assume that ELF speakers bring their own cultural communication habits to each interaction". At this point, Tatsuki inserts the perspective of the "native speaker problem", since from her MUN simulations experience, she noticed that the linguistic competence possessed by the native speaker was "no guarantee of an ability to interact successfully with a wide variety of interlocutors". She could realize how English native speakers were in "especially acute need of training" in order to adjust to the ELF world of communication, ultimately displaying a lack of communicative competence. The MUN delegates coming from Japan, Tatsuki specifies, are usually at the C2 level, but "despite their strong capabilities, over the years […] have struggled to make their voices heard and ensure that their policies and ideas become included into the working papers that form the basis of the important draft resolutions": this points out an evident unbalance in the negotiation between ELF and non-ELF speakers. Tatsuki suggests that perhaps it is "time to problematize the language behaviors of the native speaker/non-ELF speakers". In this direction her research goes, investigating on the ELF speakers communication/comprehension difficulties when interacting with non-ELF (English native) speakers, trying to identify what specific items cause these difficulties. Her preliminary pilot study based on MUN delegates observation proved that the "most frequently cited problem areas related to manner of delivery and lexical knowledge". "These problem areas point specifically at poor skills of accommodation" (according to Cogo's definition), therefore Tatsuki concludes that specific training in accommodation should be directed to native speakers of English. Her findings invite us to focus on raising awareness, developing accommodation strategies, and improving NSs' communicative skills using a more globalized version of English.

The following contribution, opening the section of this volume dedicated to ELF and migration, presents the most updated gains and findings of the group of researchers from Salento University in this specific interface. The first contribution, signed by Maria Grazia Guido, Lucia Errico, Pietro Luigi Iaia and Cesare Amatulli, articulates developing on a four-fold perspective. Their paper, titled *Modern and ancient migrants' narratives through ELF. An Experiential-Linguistic project in Responsible Tourism,*

reports about an on-going project in responsible tourism in the region of Apulia, and provides an interdisciplinary contribution to the study of the relationship between ELF as a contact language and migratory phenomena taking place in the south-eastern part of Italy. "In the context of this project, migrants, together with international tourists, who happen to be in the same holiday locations, are directly engaged in intercultural activities aimed at the exploration of their emotional experience of such seaside resorts whose geographical position on the Southern Mediterranean coasts of Italy has always made them earn the reputation of hospitable places welcoming voyagers and characterized by a hybridization of languages and cultures". The topic of responsible tourism is approached through the migrants' narratives in ELF, framed in an experiential linguistic-place marketing project and filtered through a cognitive-pragmatic model; more precisely, the article juxtaposes an "appraisal of the contemporary non-Western migrants' dramatic sea-voyage narratives reported in their ELF variations" with "the epic narratives of Mediterranean 'odysseys' towards 'utopian places' belonging to the Western cultural heritage, translated from Ancient Greek and Latin into ELF". In this study, tourists are made "participants" playing the role of 'intercultural mediators' in their encounter with migrants, and the narratives of the past and present dramatic experiences are observed with an "ethnopoetic" approach; the texts under analysis are drawn from two corpora, constructed for the purpose: the 'modern' one containing texts collected during ethnographic fieldworks in reception centres for refugees, and the 'ancient' one "including extracts from Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*." What is striking are the similarities in the "verse structures" in the two kinds of narratives, responding, with their rhythms and sequences, to the traumatic events experienced. As a last step, the narratives are "translated" into the multimodal rendering of 'premotional videos' with ELF subtitles. "The ELF variations used in such contexts of intercultural communication between groups of non-native speakers of English are assumed to foster in both tourists and migrants in contact an awareness of shared linguacultural and experiential narrative features". On the other hand, the data collected in these Apulian touristic resorts showed that "misunderstandings" between tourists and migrants are caused not only by the "syntactic, semantic and pragmatic structures of their respective native languages transferred into their ELF variations in contact, but also by the two groups' dissimilar experiential 'schemata'". The archetype of the Utopia vs Dystopia is introduced, ultimately suggesting the category of "shared Utopia", in order to define and actualize the convergence of these experiences. An ample repertoire of recorded cases is provided in support of such articulated view in which "a hybrid use of ELF – indeed, a collective ELF translanguaging practice" enhances mutual accessibility to shared experiential schemata and narratives. The role played by ELF is analysed in depth and powerfully enhanced in its

multifaceted spectrum, confirming how the critical contexts in which is used also shows its crucial significance.

On another note, the article by Mariarosaria Provenzano, titled *ELF and linguistic accessibility in EU migration laws. A Critical Discourse Analysis on text reformulations,* focuses on ELF and its impact in legal discourse, presenting the study of a corpus of texts drawn from the EU Immigration and Political Asylum laws. In such collection, the texts referring to administrative practices and procedures for claiming asylum in European Member States are investigated through the filter of a pragmatic analysis, with the underlying hypothesis that "these specialized text-types are mainly built on pragmatic strategies which mainly reflect Western routines". This implies the obvious consequence that they are based on a "power asymmetry" relationship reflected in the EU language practices. The objective of the study moves from the awareness that, in specific European contexts, "claims of normative, socio-cultural and juridical character may create conflict at the interpretative level" and therefore the need emerges for a reformulation of such texts in order to facilitate their usability from the side of the assumed interlocutors. These texts, Provenzano argues, "may be actualized only by experts in the field, at the detriment of non-experts, who would be the potential receivers of the laws"; if this holds true, professionals – when writing these norms and laws – should focus their attention on "the specialized interactions that govern, also from a sociological viewpoint, the contact between the participants in the interactions" and "on the pragmatic modalities of the interaction, which are here only limited to the written mode". According to Provenzano, it is fundamental to verify the accessibility of these texts to communities of migrants speaking different variations of ELF. In the process of analysis, suggesting amendments in these legal texts, Provenzano adopts a Critical Discourse Analysis approach "in order to point out the possible incongruities of the original statements", and thus proposing new reformulations, in a frame of simplification strategy, inspired by an ELF aware perspective. A series of interviews conducted with a group of migrants from the Lecce area shows how the ELF contact function can be usefully adopted to rebalance power-asymmetry relations in problematic contexts. Therefore a reconsideration – under an ELF strategic approach – of the cognitive permeability of legal concepts in a special discourse setting appears fundamental for the success of the interaction and mutual understanding. According to Provenzano, the "model of cognitive-functional analysis should be further implemented to provide adequate solutions and be more in line with the 'schemata' of potential recipients in terms of expectations and other cultural ideas".

The area of interest of ELF in conjunction with migratory criticalities is further developed by Laura Centonze's article, titled *Towards a corpus pragmatics of ELF through semi-automated annotation systems,* in which the

problematics of ELF use/s in migration settings are observed from the vantage point of corpus linguistics and corpus pragmatics combined with the most recent techniques of quantitative/qualitative analysis and corpus annotation by means of semi-automated software tools. More precisely, Centonze illustrates her undergoing research aimed at describing spoken discourse in ELF in migratory contexts where the pragmatic annotation of speech acts, from an ELF perspective, is performed through the DART (Dialogue Annotation Research Tool) tool, a software resource which also includes POS functions and pragmatic annotation of spoken discourse. The resulting corpus – called *ELF MiDo Corpus* (English as a Lingua Franca in MIgration DOmains corpus) – "consists of over 50,000 words of conversation between asylum seekers and intercultural mediators in symmetrical contexts of interaction". The objective of the study is to verify if, adopting a corpus-pragmatic approach and providing an integrated model for the analysis of such interactions in their pragmalinguistic features, it is possible to identify pragmatic patterns in ELF conversations taking place in migratory contexts, and eventually train future cultural mediators on the basis of those specific traits. Starting from the theoretical background of the speech act theory, Centonze identifies in the corpus pragmatics approach the possibility of conjoining the "horizontal-reading methodology" of small texts with the "vertical reading" of a huge set of texts provided by the KWIC analysis. The corpus taken into consideration is described in all its features and two distinct case studies are reported in detail, as they are filtered through the DART tool and its main functionalities. Centonze illustrates the procedure in all its operational steps and gives evidence of how, through a corpus linguistics and corpus pragmatics approach, we can provide some additional "insights into the dynamics of ELF in multicultural contexts".

Another contribution, concluding the section devoted to ELF and its impact on migratory settings, is the one by Silvia Sperti who, in her article, titled *A phonopragmatic analysis of ELF spoken interactions. Linguistic and paralinguistic features in specialized migration contexts*, carries on an investigation of ELF spoken interactions from a phonopragmatic perspective. Through this approach, the dialogues collected are researched in order to realize "how ELF speakers, engaged in intercultural encounters differently appropriate the English language, not only according to their own native linguacultural and paralinguistic 'schemata', but also to specific pragmalinguistic purposes and processes". The phonopragmatic analysis regards a number of cases collected during a 14-month period of fieldwork, and Sperti reports about three examples more in detail, observing them from the three different levels of "acoustic", "conversational" and "register analysis". The first case regards "asylum-seeking representations and unequal socio-cultural 'schemata'"; the second one, focuses on "'schema'-biased attitudes in integration processes and practices"; the third one, points out

"intercultural divergences in the perception and interpretation of legal-bureaucratic procedures", reconnecting, in this respect, to ESP. Sperti devotes particular attention to the suprasegmental, rhythmic and prosodic features, as well as paralinguistic and extralinguistic elements, as "speakers tend to modulate more or less their prosodic patterns and intensity level", with variations in pauses, pitch and speech prominence, especially when difficulties are perceived – if not misunderstandings – in intercultural conversations. The asylum seeker, legal advisor and intercultural mediator – who are the three participants in the conversations analysed – have different levels of linguistic competence and show unequal forms of familiarity with the language/s (ELF and ILF) spoken, they have completely different lingua-cultural backgrounds and very often opposite needs, therefore their emotional and attitudinal features are respectively mirrored and detected in the phonopragmatic description. The results of her study, Sperti concludes, "have confirmed that prosody is one of the most relevant communicative means speakers and listeners use both in the production and in the interpretation of speech acts". From this perspective, the phonopragmatic approach could also represent a strategic pedagogical tool in the training of intercultural mediators, especially in an ELF-oriented scenario of mutual contact.

The following contribution, titled *Immunologically speaking: Oral examinations, ELF and EMI*, by Hugo Bowles, opens the section which focuses on the impact of ELF in the world of education, bringing into it its pedagogical implications and dilemmas. Bowles, in his article, proposes a perspective where ELF and EMI interface in examinations at HE level. A form of continuum is identified in the EAP/ESP-CLIL-EMI line progression, where the didactic attention has gradually shifted from language to content and then from content to content learning. If it is true that several academic subjects at universities are taught in English as a medium of instruction, Bowles argues, what is usually neglected is that such use of English goes under the ELF umbrella function. "The relationship of EMI with English as a lingua franca and its implications for teaching are relatively unexplored", Bowles claims. He specifically addresses "the challenges facing lecturers and examiners working on English-taught programmes (ETPs) in ELF and the role of language experts in supporting them". In his article, qualitatively analysed data – taken from a set of immunology oral examinations at an undergraduate degree programme in medicine taught in EMI – are reported as indicative of the co-construction of chronological narratives of immunological sequences between students and examiners during the oral test, the oral examination being "a particularly important EMI speech event because it is an area of EMI in which student's language difficulties often come to the fore". Despite its pedagogical relevance as an assessment event, very little research on oral examination interaction in EMI contexts has been done so far. Bowles argues that "far from being an exclusively linguistic

matter" such process of co-construction implies specific discursive preparation for the students, and, for the instructors, a specific pedagogical goal in raising the students' awareness of the complexity and necessity of the dialogical co-construction process. On the basis of the local data collected, Bowles presents a series of extracts from oral examinations which are analysed in detail with a discursive distinctiveness procedure, that is, dividing the macro-structure of the whole oral examination in three phases: "an opening sequence, the main body of conversation and a closing sequence". In his observation of the oral assessment event, Bowles also applies criteria of "local and cultural distinctiveness" and tries to identify what is distinctively disciplinary, "in the way that the examiners themselves talk about their discipline", pointing out the "importance of understanding disciplinary variation". Then Bowles asks how far these features can be generalized and applied to other EMI contexts, and whether there are in them "recommendations for language experts and policymakers in understanding and improving the quality of EMI lecturing and assessment". Finally, the question regarding how far "an ELF orientation to pedagogy can assist EMI lecturers, examiners and students in their decision-making regarding materials, methods and their own English usage" is raised, framed in the growing scenario of an increasing pedagogical focus of ELF.

With a similar research direction and educational involvement in the growth of the ELF-informed pedagogy in ELT, Enrico Grazzi's article, titled *ELF in the English classroom. Great ideas and burning open questions*, addresses the question of the urgent need to reconceptualize and reshape the traditional approach to ELT at school, incorporating ELF findings into the English syllabus through innovative teaching and learning practices. Grazzi amply grounds his argument on previous literature in the specific interface and raises questions with particular regard to the opportunity of providing or not native-speakers' language models in language education, especially when dealing with ELF creative forms as opposed to "errors", devising modalities of language assessment with ELF criteria. Starting from the assumption that English, as compulsory subject of most curricula around the world, "is taught as a foreign language (EFL), i.e. as the language that is spoken by and 'belongs' to its native speakers […] the varieties that are usually chosen as exonormative reference models in school education […] are standard English (SE)". Since the majority of language teachers are NNSEs, it is very likely that a "hybrid variant" form of English will emerge especially in pedagogic environments. According to Grazzi, we should consider that "this English, or better the *similect* that is developed in the English classroom" is the language that students are going to use not just at school, but particularly "outside school as an international lingua franca, whenever they communicate in authentic multilingual and multicultural settings". Therefore, it is evident how EFL and ELF tend "to converge by means of the learner/L2-user's

performance". Grazzi underlines the difference between interlanguage, transitional dialect and ELF appropriation, particularly for the social dimension that ELF may assume, intertwining the dynamic intra-personal and inter-personal strata at the same time. The new challenges which are presently facing language teachers, methodologists and language practitioners are well represented by Grazzi's contribution in which the theoretical stances of sociocultural theory and ecological approach are combined within an ELF conceptual frame, to the advantage of an updated pedagogic view with newly informed trajectories. In fact, even though "the variability of English in the age of globalization and of the digital revolution is plain to see" and communities of NNESs outnumber those of NESs, "the dominant pedagogical model in ELT is still firmly rooted in native speakerism". After twenty years of academic research on the phenomenon of ELF, "it seems that mainstream ELT has hardly been affected by the great sociolinguistic changes". The aim of Grazzi's article is "to enhance critical thinking as regard the implications of ELF in ELT and teacher education". A series of theoretical and practical indications to teachers is then added, in order to provide tentative answers to the "open burning" questions raised.

Sharing the same perspective of pedagogical research, with the objective of reconsidering the English curriculum from the vantage point of teachers' education and classroom practice, Lucilla Lopriore's contribution – titled *Voicing beliefs and dilemmas from WE- and ELF-aware reflective teacher education contexts. Teachers' personal responses to rapidly changing multilingual contexts* – sheds light on beliefs and dilemmas arising from the conjunction of WE and ELF contexts, as realized through teachers' personal experiences in response to the radical changes in multilingual scenarios and present linguistic dispensation. Lopriore provides an articulated description of the intricate net of innovations which define unprecedented linguistic landscapes in the educational field. Globalisation processes call into question the role played by English on a worldwide scale; the porosity of borders, the hybridization created by migration flows, the new language policies endorsed by decision makers, all these sociolinguistic phenomena address urgent dilemmas to language educators. "The current development of English and of its instantiations, from World English to English as a Lingua Franca, in plurilingual contexts, has elicited studies on […] the contents and type of approach to be used in language teacher education courses for future teachers of English", Lopriore claims. English has so dramatically changed in the last three decades that it is advisable to look to forms of reflective approach in order to reconsider beliefs, understandings and methodologies, as well as materials and practices in ELT. ELF research poses crucial challenges to the current pedagogic practice and the need for a shift in language teachers' education is clearly emerging. Research studies on ELF have highlighted, for instance, the relevance of pragmatic strategies in the process

of communicative interactions among speakers, so that negotiation, repetition, rephrasing, paraphrasing procedures and the like reveal the participants' willingness to create an environment of mutual understanding and successful communication. As teachers take into account the variability and diversity of English, the stereotyped opposition of native vs non-native, just to quote one example, loses ground leaving space to more relevant traits in ELT. Lopriore describes three case studies drawn from a pre- and in-service teacher education experience, run within a WE and ELF-informed perspective. The courses were inspired by the principles of engaging the group in a reflective practice experience, challenging previous beliefs and views about language, and developing the participants' professional identity as non-native teachers of English. A detailed illustration of the areas which were covered and the activities proposed is provided, and from these it is evident how the newly informed pedagogic and didactic approach, from theoretical, becomes operational. The teachers were exposed to multiple video stimuli, involved in group discussion about their practicum experiences with a particular attention devoted to noticing the language used in course-books, and engaged in producing their end-of-course projects, shared on a Moodle platform. The tasks proposed were all informed on the group's exploration of the WE and ELF features in the various aspects of the language used. Sharing the data and gains of the experience, Lopriore makes the teachers' voices resound as they express their doubts and beliefs, enthusiasm and perplexity, indubitably all dilemmas to be addressed in future teachers' education initiatives.

With Paola Vettorel's contribution, titled *The plurality of English and ELF in teacher education. Raising awareness of the 'feasibility' of a WE- and ELF-aware approach in classroom practices*, the special focus on pedagogic instances in connection with the present ELF research is further investigated. Vettorel starts from the shared assumption that the plurality into which English has developed in the last two decades, extending its role of lingua franca, has considerable consequences in ELT environments. English is taught at school, but "increasingly constitutes a consistent presence in the 'outside-school' world", therefore, "encounters with (linguistic) otherness can be experienced daily, from the multicultural and multilingual school environments to mobility and digital communication". According to Vettorel, raising awareness on the state of the art of English/es nowadays, updating and involving teachers in the complex process of transformation of the language, can help create that necessary link between theoretical research and applied practice, through which a real advancement in pedagogical strategies can take place, for a "realistic" and "inclusive" approach in ELT. "If language educators are familiarised with the complex reality of English, and critical reflection […] is actively promoted in teacher education, teachers can not only realize the 'feasibility' of a WE- and ELF-aware approach in classroom

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practices, but also its 'suitability' to prepare learners to communicate through English in its current plural and lingua franca dimensions", Vettorel argues. In support of her stance, she refers to two different experiences of pre- and in-service teachers' development courses (TFA and PAS) which took place at her university. What Vettorel could verify is that, even though most of the teachers had been linguistically and professionally shaped as SE followers, many of them proved to also be enthusiastic supporters of the new variations and variability models, particularly for the sense of openness to the real world that language conceived in its contact function could provide. The flexibility in the applied models and didactic practices of the WE- and ELF-informed pedagogical approach can beneficially contribute to the creation of a curriculum more attuned to our contemporary needs. As a first step, Vettorel envisages the necessity to raise the teachers' awareness about the fast-mutated linguistic scenario and the plurality of models available at present; a reflective approach, being paramount to any possible ameliorating change, can be carried out as a "shared scaffolded and collaborative moment". Awareness can be implemented with exposure to the complexity of English usage, with critical appreciation of previous beliefs and action plans for classroom, involving processes of "languaging" as well as "translanguaging". Enforcing a "post-normative framework", Vettorel encourages the integration of "deep sociolinguistic modifications" into the school curriculum, particularly inspired by "the fluidity and hybridity of ELF communication": "Unless the plurality into which English has developed (WE), and its use as a lingua franca functional variety become part of teachers' knowledge and (professional) awareness, a move towards a plurilithic and ELF-aware approach in ELT would be difficult to envisage". Moving away from a "deficiency" paradigm, WE- and ELF-aware practices can take into account current phenomena such as the language spread, globalization, multilingualism, and superdiversity. Therefore priorities in teaching must be revised, focusing more on the elements that favor effective communication ("despite" their non-conformity to SE norms, as Seidlhofer suggested). However, teachers usually prefer moving on safe ground, and the new space prospected by WE- and ELF-didactic models is still to be delineated with clear traits, or rather, is escaping stable definitions. What is certain – Vettorel underlines – is that there is a markedly significant difference between teaching with an ELF-inspired awareness and teaching ELF as opposed to EFL. Even though ELF-awareness does not provide a set of prescriptive "rules" or a "new method", it helps teachers to co-construct "appropriate ELF-related methodologies for their learners" in their local contexts, within an "ecological approach". The teachers' proposals and ELF-aware lesson plans and diverse activities, collected during the TFA and PAS courses referred to above, emphasize the great degree of creativity they all contained. This has allowed for more freedom in self-expression and inter-peer

communication, as well as favoring the contact with other linguacultures, to the enrichment of both collective and individual linguistic repertoire and patrimony. In the end, the ultimate goal an effective pedagogical orientation aims at is the passage from "capacity" to "capability", as defined by Widdowson, "a knowledge of how meaning potential encoded in English can be realised as a communicative resource".

From our ELF point of view, it is particularly significant that this introductory survey ends just with a pronouncement which takes us back to the beginning of our collection. This, by no means accidental, (virtuous) circularity shows how the theoretical foundations, from which the whole event "English Lingua Franca: Expanding scenarios and growing dilemmas" and relative publication originate, are propelling. Both actual outcomes – the symposium and the special issue – also acknowledge the inspiring power of the groundbreaking and seminal masters. The eminent scholars, together with the consolidated experts and promising younger researchers here gathered, are proof of the thriving force of the field of English Lingua Franca. It is indeed an expanding scenario and a series of growing dilemmas that we are becoming more and more aware about, as researchers and practitioners. This awareness generates responsibility, but also the thrill of exploring and discovering new horizons. Therefore we would like to thank all the contributors for their participation and trust in the initiative. What we can only add, at this point, is an "*ad maiora* wish" to the whole ELF community, both local and international, for a more and more prosperous future of prolific exchanges.