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The Use of English as a Lingua Franca by University Students in Germany

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Abstract:

As the English language has increased its use in the last decades (Crystal, 1997), linguists have coined what is nowadays named English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). The present study intends to explore the perceptions that both local and international students have towards the use of a non-native language – English – in a country where English is not the official language – Germany. In order to do so, a questionnaire concerning attitude, (mis)understandings, lexicogrammar aspects, accent, and teaching and learning was released to both groups of students. Overall, results revealed that respondents, despite of the fact that their main aim was to be understood and thus achieve communication in international environments, were in general aware of English grammar rules. The study also suggests that many of the students do not try to follow a native accent but keep their own native one when talking in English.

Resumen:

Debido a que el uso del inglés ha aumentado en las últimas décadas, los lingüistas han acuñado lo que hoy en día se llama inglés como lengua franca (English as a Lingua Franca – ELF). El presente estudio tiene como propósito analizar las percepciones que los estudiantes locales e internacionales tienen hacia el uso de una lengua extranjera – inglés – en un país donde el inglés no es el idioma oficial – Alemania. Con este objetivo, se envió un cuestionario a ambos grupos de estudiantes sobre actitud, (mal)entendidos, aspectos del léxico y la gramática, acento y enseñanza y aprendizaje del idioma. Los resultados de este estudio demuestran que los encuestados, a pesar de que tenían como principal objetivo el ser entendidos y así lograr comunicarse en ambientes internacionales sin necesidad de imitar un acento nativo, eran conscientes de las normas de la gramática inglesa.

Keywords: ELF, perceptions, respondents, attitudes, non-native speakers, Germans, internationals, survey.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English has become an international language, as David Crystal explains, because of the power its speakers have. Some historical factors such as the huge influence of the Internet and American culture, as well as the prestige of the British Empire, have led to the internationalization of the English language (Crystal, 1997).

Jenkins (2007), considered to be one of the main important figures in the research of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), acknowledges ELF as “[...] an emerging language that exists in its own right and is being described in its own terms” (p. 2). Seidlhofer (2014) describes it as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (p. 7). The function of ELF is delimited by its non-native users, who use English in order to express identity, get a job, etc, by giving emphasis to communication and intelligibility rather than by focusing on idiomaticity and accuracy in English as a Native Language (ENL), and disregarding accent issues.

Mauranen (2010) points out that “the area where ELF is in sharpest contrast with Standard English is in lexis and grammar” (p. 18), including features such as the interchangeable use of *which* and *who* or the misuse of the 3rd person singular of present simple verbs. Besides, Seidlhofer (2014) argues that “learners of English as a foreign language assume the role of users of English as a lingua franca, and as they move into contexts of use outside the classroom, EFL learners become ELF users” (p. 187). Therefore, this change of perspective differentiates between ELF and EFL (English as a Foreign Language). The main objective of ELF speakers is to achieve communication rather than following a native model, and, thus, English users use the language “in their own right” (Seidlhofer, 2004: 214). Hence, she also defends that “[...] the focus should

not be on the *forms* of learner language and how far they deviate from NS norms, but on how effectively they *function* in making meaning” (Seidlhofer, 2014: 195).

In an ELF conversation, per definition, at least three different languages are involved: the first languages of the speakers plus English. Hence, ELF involves speakers with different mother tongues who set up a "shared set of norms and rules for the use of the language" (Romaine, 2000: 23). ELF is the vehicle which allows international communication among speakers whose L1s are not the same.

Taking this background into account, the aim of this Final Degree Dissertation is to explore the perceptions of international students towards the use of English – a language which is not the mother tongue for any of them – in a country where English is not the official language – Germany in this case.

2. METHOD

This work was carried out by means of a survey on the use of English as a Lingua Franca prepared for German and international students who are in Germany this year (2018) or were there last year (2017). In the last two weeks of February 2018, 44 people, 8 of whom were Germans and 36 from sixteen other countries, were requested to complete this survey. They all completed the task, so seventeen different nationalities were involved. Two different surveys were relayed: one for those who had German nationality (see Appendix 1), and another one for international students who are/ have been in Germany (see Appendix 2). The differences between the surveys laid only on the general questions, while the questions regarding attitude, misunderstandings, lexicogrammar aspects, accent and teaching and learning were exactly the same in both surveys.

The questions for the surveys were inspired by different articles and books on ELF, such as *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca* (Seidlhofer, 2014), *English as a Global Language* (Crystal, 1997), the article "Current Perspectives on Teaching World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca" (Jenkins, 2006), or the Final Degree Dissertation "A Small-scale Study of Students' Attitudes and Perceptions towards English as a Lingua Franca" (Torres Marco, 2016). The survey started with some general questions about the survey respondents, such as their age, nationality, or if they use/ used either German or English in order to communicate with internationals. They were followed by questions regarding the attitude the respondents had towards the use of English, then questions about misunderstandings produced when talking in this foreign tongue, queries of lexicogrammar aspects of the language, questions about accent, and, finally, questions regarding aspects of the teaching and learning of the English language.

With regard to the kind of questions of the survey, it included both open and closed-ended questions. The reason for choosing both is, as Nunan claimed, that "while responses to closed questions are easier to collocate and analyze, one often obtains more useful information from open questions" as "responses to open questions will more accurately reflect what the respondent wants to say" (Nunan, 1992: 143). Moreover, following the classification of closed questions carried out by Youngman (1986, in Nunan 1992: 143), the answers were of different types: category (e.g. 'For how long have you been studying English?' with the options 'Less than two years', 'Between 2-5 years', 'Between 5-10 years', and 'More than ten years'), ranking (e.g. 'enumerate from 1 (the easiest) to 4 (the most difficult) skill for you'), and quantity or frequency (e.g. 'Do you use the third person present tense -S? Example: He wearS jeans. Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)'). Then, once the students had completed the survey, I

displayed the information of each survey, and, in turn, of each question, in tables. Therefore, it was possible to clearly see and later compare the results of both groups for the subsequent analysis. Finally, when these tables were completed, it was possible to make comparisons between the two groups and see if they were in line with previous studies on ELF.

3. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

3.1. Background information of the respondents

The survey started with a series of more personal questions for the students such as what they were studying at university, for how long they had been studying English, or what language they use/ used in Germany when talking with international students.

As it has already been mentioned, 44 students completed the survey, 8 of which were Germans and the rest, that is, 36, international students from 16 different countries who were or had been studying in Germany as either Erasmus or full students of Bachelor, Master, or even PhD programs. Concerning their studies, they ranged from social studies (e.g. Intercultural Communication) or languages, through economy, to engineering.

Then, they were asked whether they had been in an English-speaking country in order to learn the language, as a contrast between both groups might be interesting. While only 2 out of 8 respondents of German nationality marked "yes", half of the international respondents, that is, 18 out of 36, indicated "yes" in this question. Additionally, the two Germans who marked the positive answer indicated that their stay had lasted less than one month, while, in the case of students from abroad, the answers

were more diverse: 9 of them had been less than one month, but there were some respondents that affirmed to have been in an English speaking country for more than one year. This difference can be a consequence of the similarity between the English and German languages and of the education in Germany in comparison to the countries from which the international respondents came from: it might be stated that in Germany the system followed in order to teach the English language is efficient enough to reach an appropriate level in all the skills. Nevertheless, in the countries of the international students, the teaching of English does not seem to be enough to improve skills such as speaking. Hence, this would be the reason why they travel to English-speaking countries, where they are forced to communicate in the foreign language.

Besides, the majority of the Germans and international students underlined the option of "English" when they had to choose the first second language that they had started to study: 5 Germans and 24 internationals. The time English had been studied was not lower than 5 years in both groups – except in the case of international students, where only four students selected the option "between 2-5 years". These responses are in line with the fact that English is par excellence the most important and widespread language nowadays, and this importance has been sprouted for several years, since people have been learning it for more than five, or even ten years.

In the case of what skill they found the easiest, most of the Germans recognized that speaking is the most uncomplicated ability for them, whereas for internationals it is almost the most difficult one. The reason for this contrast may be the fact that for Germans, the English language is closer to their mother tongue – both are Germanic languages. Moreover, the level of English they considered they have, both Germans and internationals, went from B2 (Upper-Intermediate English) until C2 (Proficiency

English). In the two surveys, the most frequently marked option was C1, with 42.8% among Germans and 52.7% in the group of internationals.

After that, they were asked whether they were able to speak a third language, to which, in the case of all the German respondents, the answer was "yes", and with regard to the other group, 34 of them marked the affirmative option. Immediately after that, they had to indicate what language was that one, and it is interesting that half of the Germans said to have knowledge of Spanish. By contrast, it is not surprising that 24 out of those 34 answered "German", since, although they were or had been studying in English at university, they somehow were/ had been forced or motivated to study it in order to communicate in the streets or they simply took advantage of the free courses the universities tend to offer.

Afterward, respondents were requested to answer the question of whether they used German or English when communicating with international students. Not only internationals (except for two) but also Germans marked "English". In the case of the survey of internationals, they were asked to indicate the reason, and most of them answered: "because I knew only a bit of German and, therefore, I felt more comfortable communicating in English". The conclusion can be that English is the lingua franca, due to the fact that, even when a German speaks with an international student, he/ she talks in English. Consequently, international students did not have the necessity of learning German before going to the country, as they could be sure that they would be able to communicate in English – at least in groups of students.

Eventually, they were requested to say where they used English in their daily life, to which, on the one hand, half of the Germans responded "with friends". In this case, some of their friends must have been from another country different from

Germany. On the other hand, 27 out of 36 international respondents use it "at university/work", which may prove that many of them study in English rather than in German – an aspect that has been previously corroborated when some of respondents from these groups have recognized not to speak German.

3.2. Attitude aspects

The two questions in this section have to do with whether respondents felt comfortable when they talk in English either in class or in a group of people. It is thought-provoking that not only the Germans but also the rest of the international respondents said to feel more comfortable when they had to talk in English in a group of people rather than in class. The fact that they did not feel completely at ease in class might be due to the pressure of making mistakes in front of the teacher, as opposed to an environment with friends or family, where respondents felt more comfortable and did not care whether they used the grammar correctly or whether they used the appropriate words.

3.3. (Mis)understanding aspects

The main objective of the use of English as a Lingua Franca is to be able to successfully communicate with other non-native speakers of English – without taking too much into account the norms of the language – rather than focusing on following these norms very precisely. Kaur (2009, in Jenkins 2017: 226) points out the difference between 'misunderstanding' and 'non-understanding'. 'Misunderstanding', on the one hand, is the phenomenon in which the listener, although he/ she knows what has been said, he/ she is mistaken about it. By contrast, 'non-understanding' is produced when the receptor is not able to speculate what is told. Nevertheless, as it is difficult to distinguish both terms, it might be better to refer to misunderstandings in both cases.

Firth (1996) maintains that ELF speakers tend to make use of the so-called 'let-it-pass' strategy, which means that, in the case that some words are misunderstood, it does not matter. Deterding (2013: 113) claims that the percentage of examples of misunderstandings in the interactions of ELF in his data¹ rises only up to around 11.0%. In this case, interlocutors can solicit clarification, or either keep quiet or provide a different method of communication, that is, a back-channel.

When the participants in the survey were asked if they thought that they were understood when they spoke in English, not only Germans but also the respondents from the rest of the countries marked number 4 in their answers, which means that they thought they were not "completely understandable" (number 5) but almost: 50.0% in the case of Germans and 21.4% regarding the other group. In second place was the option of "completely understandable", marked by 37.5% of the Germans and 31.4% of the internationals. As Mauranen (2006) suggested, the members of an interaction in ELF tend to think they are skilled enough as to make themselves understood.

When non-indicated misunderstandings occur, the speaker depends on the feedback provided by the participants in the conversation. Therefore, it is the function of the speaker to make the message more accessible to the listener, and he/ she can choose different options, such as repetition or paraphrasing (Seidlhofer, 2014). Moreover, Cogo (2007, 2009) shows that code-switching is also a strategy in ELF communication, and Dewey remarks that the use of synonyms and paraphrasing is "important for effectiveness and reliability of communication" in a group of ELF speakers (2007: 342).

¹ Deterding (2013) collated a corpus of misunderstandings from conversations of ELF in Asia. This corpus was set up by nine recordings, eight of them comprising two speakers and one comprising four speakers. He simply analysed the recordings which involved two speakers. The conclusion was that, whereas initial clusters – such as /kl/ or /pr/ – should be kept in order to be intelligible, final clusters – final /t/ in *mashed potatoes* or final /d/ in *bend back* – may be avoided without affecting comprehension.

When survey respondents were asked to answer the question of how they made what they say more accessible – i.e., making the message understood by the listener – most of them (37.5% of the Germans and 17.1% of the internationals) answered in line with Seidlhofer (2014), saying they used either repetition or paraphrasing or even the combination of both. Moreover, it would be important to highlight the result that 40.0% of the international students said that they spoke in a clear and slow way to make their messages more accessible.

Moving on to the so-called code-switching, it can be defined as "the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation" (Oxford Online Dictionary). Consequently, due to the fact that ELF interactions involve more than two languages, code-switching comes to be possible. It comprises not only single words, but also phrases or even whole sentences. This phenomenon has undergone a conceptual transformation: it was considered a manifestation of deficiency, but it is currently perceived as a creative indication of bilingual speech, and, as stated by Klimpfinger (2009: 367, in Seidlhofer 2014: 105): "[...] code-switching constitutes an integral part of the discourse practices of ELF conversations".

Most of the respondents agreed with the present conception of the phenomenon, as 87.5% of the German respondents and 73.5% of the international students answered "yes" when they were asked if they considered the use of code-switching as appropriate. Nonetheless, 12.5% and 26.4% respectively marked "no", which means that they who somehow consider it as a sign of deficiency; however, most of the students would agree with Gumperz (1982) and Klimpfinger (2010), who claim that code-switching is used for different purposes (i.e., as a way to repeat something, allude to an addressee, or mark quotations, and in order to appeal for assistance, introduce another idea, indicate a culture, or specify an addressee).

Finally, several factors are important with regard to understanding conversations in English. In accordance with Jenkins (2000), in international environments where English is the language of communication, the major factor producing misunderstanding is pronunciation. Nonetheless, unknown lexis can also be a problem. Regarding grammar, Ishamina and Deterding (2015) and Deterding (2013) state that the percentage of misunderstanding because of grammar does not even amount to 20.0%.

When respondents were asked to choose what factor among lexis, grammar, pronunciation and code-switching they thought to be the most necessary so as to be understood, their answers coincided in part. For the German respondents, lexis occupied the first place with 62.5%, whereas pronunciation followed with 37.5%. On the other hand, considering the answers of the internationals, it can be said that they were in line with the results in Jenkins (2000) due to the fact that 48.5% of them marked "pronunciation" to be the most necessary factor in order to be understood. Lexis was placed secondly with 40.0%.

3.4. Lexicogrammar aspects

Seidlhofer (2004) focused on the importance of lexicogrammar aspects of ELF in language pedagogy. Her aim was to detect the aspects which are used among ELF users in a different way from those employed by native speakers. These differences, however, do not seem to cause communication problems:

In particular, typical "errors" that most English teachers would consider in urgent need of correction and remediation, and that consequently often get allotted a great deal of time and effort in English lessons, appear to be generally unproblematic and no obstacle to communicative success. (p. 220)

Likewise, Seidlhofer (2014: 197) suggests that the majority of non-native speakers of the English language employing it make an appropriate use of it, considering their aim. Most of them have the capacity to use the language, but are not considered fully competent regarding the norms established by native speakers.

The respondents were asked about some of the aspects of ELF lexicogrammar identified by Seidlhofer (2004: 220) in her study.

Firstly, it is claimed that an increase in redundancy is achieved by excessive explicitness, such as saying "How long time?" instead of simply "How long?" As regards the answers to the survey, only 10 out of the 35 international students and half of the Germans, i.e. 4 of them, replied "yes". These results somehow contradict Seidlhofer's views (2004: 220), as many respondents (50.0% in the case of Germans and 71.4% in the case of internationals) denied its use – at least in a conscious way. This could be attributed to the fact that, as previously mentioned, ELF speakers exploit other techniques such as speaking in a clear and slow way, or paraphrasing.

Secondly, according to Trudgill (2002, in Seidlhofer 2014: 105), the third person -s in Standard ENL has been recognized as a 'typological oddity', and, therefore, it is sometimes realized as a zero morpheme not only in ELF but also in native environments of English, an argument that Breiteneder emphasizes:

When speakers who belong to different linguacultures enter into these intercultural communication situations, it seems that their focus often shifts to communicative effectiveness and economy instead of markers of prestige and social status. (2009a: 263, in Seidlhofer 2014: 106)

Nonetheless, according to the survey, when both Germans and international students were asked about the use of this morpheme, most of them (5 in the case of

Germans and 19 regarding internationals) answered that they "always" used it. By contrast, almost none of them replied "never". This may be attributed to the fact that, as respondents had been studying English for more than 5 years, they had consolidated the language, and the zero morpheme -s was something that they automatically used.

Thirdly, as Seidlhofer (2014: 106) suggests, economy in the effort of communication would be also achieved by making an interchangeable use of the relative pronouns *which* and *who*. In this case, the norms of English as a Native Language (ENL) would be violated. When respondents were asked if they made an interchangeable use of both pronouns, their answers varied very little. Only four Germans (50.0%) answered 5, which means that they "never" made this interchangeable use of them, while the rest answered 4 (25.0%), 3 (12.5%), or even 1 (12.5%), this is, they recognized that they did not pay too much attention to this lexicogrammatical aspect of the English language. The results of international students were slightly similar: less than half (14, which corresponds to 38.8%) answered that they "never" changed their use. Nonetheless, the rest of the respondents (61.1%) admitted the fact that they did not care a lot about this feature. Taking into consideration these results, it is interesting to note that foreign speakers of English tend to use *who* and *which* instead of using the simplest option *that*, without taking into account if they are referring to a person (*who*) or a thing (*which*) (Seidlhofer, 2014: 107). Thus, Seidlhofer concludes:

This could be seen as speakers putting clarity and explicitness for their interlocutors over the option of minimizing effort by using the invariable relative pronoun *that*. (2014: 107)

Fourthly, Seidlhofer (2004: 220) has taken into account the considerable use of verbs which are too wide semantically speaking. In this list, verbs such as *make*, *put*, *do*, *take*, or *have* may be included. When respondents of both surveys answered this question, they recognized that they used them with high frequency. Hence, Germans

marked 2 (50.0%) and 3 (50.0%), which correspond to "often" and "sometimes" respectively. In the case of international respondents, 44.4% underlined 1 ("always"), and 33.3% number 2 ("often"). This widespread conscious use of these verbs can be linked to the fact that when students start to learn the language, these common verbs are the ones which appear in the lexis and materials of beginners, which facilitates its solidification and constant employment.

Furthermore, Seidlhofer (2004: 220) takes into consideration the correct use of the plural forms of the nouns. She asserts that ELF speakers create plural forms for those nouns which are considered uncountable in the English of native speakers. When students were asked whether they used plurals in a proper way, such as *women*, *wives*, or *information* (and not **informations*), the majority of both internationals and Germans answered "often" (33.3%) or even "always" (41.6%), and "sometimes" (37.5%) and "always" (50.0%), respectively. Considering these results, this correct use of plurals could be assigned to the high emphasis teachers give to such forms. The students have to study by heart not only the irregular forms but also the exceptions. In consequence, they acquire these right forms and put them into practice when speaking the language.

Besides, the use of idiomatic expressions (i.e. idioms, phrasal verbs or metaphors) in a context of ELF is not very widespread, and the reason may be attributed to the fact that speakers of English should know the appropriate context in which these idioms are used (Seidlhofer, 2014: 132). Moreover, this is supported by Kecskes, who claims that:

[speakers] try to come as close to the compositional meaning as possible because they think that if there is no figurative/ or metaphorical meaning involved their interlocutors will process the English words and expressions the way they meant them. Since lingua franca speakers come from different sociocultural backgrounds and represent different cultures the mutual knowledge

they may share is the knowledge of the linguistic code. Consequently, semantic analyzability plays a device role in ELF speech production. (2007: 10, in Seidlhofer 2014: 138)

Similarly, Seidlhofer (2004: 220) has coined the term *unilateral idiomaticity*, which means that the communication in an ELF environment breaks down when one of the speakers involved in the conversation makes use of these idiomatic expressions, because of the lack of awareness of them the other interlocutor has.

As a result, respondents of both German and the rest of nationalities mostly responded from 3 ("sometimes") to 5 ("never"). Most of them claimed to be neutral, that is, they neither always nor never used idiomatic expressions, but they were in between. Thus, despite the fact that the majority of them declared to have a B2 or C1 level of English and they might be assumed to be familiar with some idiomatic expressions, they did not make use of them as a result of a lack of idiomatic competence, which is gained by experience and exposure in a community. Consequently, this could be connected also to the previous data that not all the people who are able to speak English have been in an English speaking country in order to study the language, and thus, they have never been involved in an English community for the necessary time to use idiomatic expressions in a natural way.

Finally, it might be important to refer to the appropriate word ordering within questions. It is true that, as Willemyns (2001) maintains, in ELF oral communication, the key is intelligibility. In addition, the quality of the language is not as important as the message itself (Breiteneder, 2009). In spite of these assertions, when respondents were asked if they tried to use the correct word order in their questions (i.e. in "Do you want something to eat?" putting the auxiliary before the subject), the majority of the Germans – 62.5% – and half of the international students answered "always". In the case of students from abroad, some of them also marked the "often-option" (22.2%).

The reason why they do not make in general a wrong use in question order might be a consequence of the emphasis teachers give to these constructions, providing plenty of examples and different materials which allow their students to practice them, as well as to integrate them.

All in all, it might be said that the speakers of ELF either do not necessarily have to conform to the norms of English as a Native Language (ENL) or can deviate from the use of native-speaker idiomatic expressions (Seidlhofer, 2014: 148). ELF speakers can perfectly be communicatively competent in the language, as intelligibility is the most important aspect in ELF communication, and, in turn, this leads to a regularization and simplification of English (Breiteneder, 2009). Hence, the deviation from these aspects could be seen as a result of the use of English with a communicative purpose – that which characterizes English as a *Lingua Franca*.

Görlach (2002), a German professor specialized in the field of English linguistics, has summarized this perception of the English language:

The demand for English will continue and possibly increase, which means that more and more people will acquire broken, deficient forms of English, which are adequate to the extent that they permit the communication functions they were learnt for. (in Seidlhofer 2014: 12)

3.5. Accent questions

It might be said that, although speakers of ELF do not have the necessity of following a native accent when they speak the language but can keep the accents of their own mother tongues, these people have been always taught by following the native models of English. Hence, the consequence is that the more widespread native accents of English, that is, General American (GA) and Received Pronunciation (RP), are the accents which dominate over the rest and are the model for many learners. This

dominance can be recognized in the answers of both international and German students. In both cases (63.8% in the international group and 50.0% with respect to Germans) a native accent, either American or British accent, are held forth. These results coincide with the statement of Dziubalska-Kolaczyk (2005: 4), who defends the teaching of the "native accent" of English, i.e., following either the broadcast speech – such as that of the BBC – English or that of the professionals. Additionally, it might be interesting to mention that, within the above percentages showed, only 16.6% of the internationals and 12.5% of the German respondents recognized following the British accent. This last percentage would contradict De Meerleer (2011-2012: 18), who states that it is not as clear-cut whether RP is preferred over GA and the other way around. Cargile & Giles (1998: 342, in De Meerleer 2011-2012: 18), claim that British RP accent can be associated with "conservative", "high class", or "traditional loving". By contrast, General American English is considered "dim and uneducated" or "cool" (Sjöstedt & Vranic 2007, in De Meerleer 2011-2012: 18). The reason why that pronunciation is not the preferred one for non-native learners of English is stated by Macaulay:

Since RP is not necessarily the easiest or most appropriate accent of British English for foreigners to learn, the choice of RP as a model is difficult to justify. It would be better for everyone if linguistics, phonetics and teachers overcome their fascination with the accent of an élite minority and concerned themselves more with the speech of the majority of the population. (1988: 115, in Mauranen & Ranta 2009: 11)

On the other hand, Dauer (2005: 548) suggests that "[...] certain students may not want to sound American, Australian or English", and thus would be "less frustrated" if non-native accents of English were accepted in the methodology of teachers. This would allow the speech of learners to be more comprehensible without forcing them to follow a variety of a native speaker. This viewpoint is shared by 36.1% of the

international respondents and half of the Germans. In addition, Barbara Seidlhofer endorses ELF:

A very clear tendency emerging from empirical ELF work is that successful ELF communication avoids, consciously or unconsciously, precisely those native-speaker 'shibboleths' that indicate membership of a very specific, confined native-speaker community, and of which some accomplished ELF learners exhibit impressive mastery. (2005: 71)

It might be considered that when participants of an English conversation adopt their own accent, it is a sign that they want to assert their own culture identity through ELF. Hence, they are aware that they are not following a NS culture, but rather they are convinced that they are NS who should take into consideration their identities as NNSs and adapt their language correspondingly (Seidlhofer, 2005).

Then, respondents were asked about foreign accents when people talk in English. Firstly, with reference to what non-native accent they consider the closest to that of a native speaker, half of the Germans and 48.5% of internationals marked the option of "Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)". By contrast, the non-native accent considered to be the least close to that of a native speaker was agreed to be "Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)" by both groups of respondents. It might be important to mention the fact that some respondents also claimed that the closest accents are those of the northern-European countries and German. This is not surprising, since their languages (Danish, Swedish, etc.) are Germanic languages, just like English.

Immediately after that, they were requested to mark the non-native accent that they understood the easiest. In this case, the most selected option was "Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)": 58.3% in the group of internationals and 62.5% regarding Germans. On the other hand, as the non-native accent of English they found more

difficult to understand stands out "Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)" – 75.0% according to the Germans and 63.8% to international students.

Comparing these results with the research carried out by Calvo-Benzies² (2017), in both studies German speakers were considered not only to speak and pronounce well in the foreign language, but also with fluency. They were said not to sound too foreign-accented. In the case of both French and Spanish speakers, the results differed. According to Calvo-Benzies (2017), French speakers (Romance accent) were claimed to be fluent and to pronounce well, but with foreign accent; and as concerns Spanish speakers, they were clearly declared not to hold an accent similar to that of a native speaker, but rather a powerful foreign accent when communicating in English. These last two groups, were, nonetheless, classified as intelligible and easy to understand. Hence, these results would partially disregard the answers of my survey, as both German and international students considered Romance accent to be the closest non-native accent to that of a native speaker. Likewise, whereas in Calvo-Benzies (2017) Chinese speakers were considered to have an accent similar to a native English speaker and easy to understand, in my survey they were marked as having the least close foreign accent to L1 English and the most difficult non-native accent to understand.

3.6. Learning/ teaching questions

It is normally thought that the use of a language and its learning are two dissimilar processes, depending the learning on the use, i.e., the language is first learnt in order to be able to use it. Unless you learn the language in a proper way, you are not able to effectively make use of it. Seidlhofer (2014: 189), by contrast, considers that the

² Calvo-Benzies (2017) looked at both non-native and native speakers of English accents by means of six ESP books. Additionally, undergraduate ESP students from European countries in the fields of Law and Tourism were asked to evaluate the non-native accent of English that French, German, Polish, Chinese and Spanish speakers had. In general, while the results were positive for German and Polish speakers, they were negative for French and Spanish ones.

processes of learning and using are simultaneous rather than consecutive processes, as learners, by employing the language, magnify their abilities on it.

With regard to the surveys, not only Germans but also international students would agree with Seidlhofer's viewpoint: 72.2% of the respondents coming from another country than Germany and 87.5% of the local students of Germany considered that the learning and the practice come together.

Furthermore, regarding the accent that teachers of English have, they can either follow the accent of their mother tongue (a foreign accent) or a native accent. A question of the survey was about the accent that the teachers of the respondents at both school and high-school had. In both groups, teachers were said to have the accent of their mother tongues rather than a native accent: 57.1% among the international students and 62.5% in the group of Germans.

Additionally, the teaching and learning of a language can have been influenced by ELF (or not). In accordance with Grant (2014, in Calvo-Benzies 2017), the language can be taught by two approaches. On the one hand, the termed *Traditional Approaches* are characterized by following a native pronunciation – as they only accept native speakers of English –, as well as using materials coming from natives. On the other hand, the *Current Approaches* accept as teachers not only natives but also non-native speakers – on condition that they have a proficiency level of the foreign language. There is a huge controversy on who is better at teaching English: a native speaker, a non-native one, or any of them, and this is reflected in the answers of the survey: concerning German students, half of them answered "a native speaker" and the other half "a non-native speaker"; meanwhile, with regard to international respondents, 57.1%

preferred a native speaker, 22.8% of them did not care, and 20.0% opted for non-native speakers.

Finally, they were requested to give a reason why they preferred one or another. This last question was not answered by all of the respondents, but the ones who responded gave many varied opinions. Those who claimed that they would prefer a non-native teacher rather than a native one argued that non-natives are aware of the difficulties of the language and have sympathy with them, have knowledge about the better ways of learning it, and they speak slower and in a clearer way, as they had to study it beforehand – in contrast with native speakers, who grow up with the language, and speak too fast and have experience in learning other languages but not English. In fact, Chun (2014, in Calvo-Benzies 2017) states that non-native teachers are "more effective in helping students with psychological aspects of language learning", and for Seidlhofer (2001: 134-135, in Seidlhofer 2005): non-native teachers "know the target language as a foreign language, share with their students the experience of what it is like to try and make in their own, often through the same first language/ culture 'filter', and can represent relevant role models for learners". By contrast, those who said to prefer a native-speaker teacher, defended their answers by declaring that they have a model pronunciation, that they *idem* teach the language used in real life (informal speaking) and not as it stands in the books, that they use idiomatic expressions which are fundamental to handle proficiently the English language, or that native teachers are never mistaken. Lastly, concerning the view that neither native teachers nor non-native teachers are worse or better at teaching English, but any of them are equally skilled for it, the respondents commented, for instance, that, although a non-native speaker is easier to understand, a native teacher speaks correctly and with original pronunciation. Furthermore, they affirmed that the country does not matter, but the quality of the

teacher, that is, both types of teachers must be able to excel in communication and empathy, have a great vocabulary range, control the grammar and deliver the class entirely in the foreign language, and using the correct teaching methods – and none of these aspects are fixed to a particular group. This fact that both models of teachers have positive aspects has been defended by many linguists. In Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002, in Calvo-Benzies 2017), students consider native speakers to be the best guides for culture, pronunciation and speaking skills; by contrast, non-native teachers are more skilled in teaching grammar, and are considered to be more sympathetic with the students – since the misunderstandings or the problems can be solved by talking in the native language of the learner. Additionally, in consonance with Madrid and Pérez-Cañado (2004, in Calvo-Benzies 2017), who claimed that as the level of proficiency of the learner increases, his/ her preference for a native-speaker teacher increases as well, some of the respondents said that, in spite of the fact that at the beginning of the learning of the foreign language a non-native speaker is better – since starting with native teachers can be really confusing – , by the time someone reaches a higher level, it can be an advantage to talk a lot with native speakers and see how they use and pronounce words.

4. CONCLUSION

This work has sought to explore and compare the answers given by both German and international students to a questionnaire concerning "attitude", "(mis)understandings", "lexicogrammar aspects", "accent", and "teaching and learning" towards the use of English. I have also tried to assess to what extent such perceptions are in line with the results of previous studies on ELF.

The results can be summarized as follows. Students claimed to be not fully comfortable in class when talking in English but, by contrast, they feel at ease in a group of people. Besides, as regards to the perception both German and non-German respondents have of being understood, it is highly positive; also they tend to use some techniques such as repetition or paraphrasing. Furthermore, although ELF does not focus on grammar correctness but on successfully communicating with other people whose L1 is not English, due to the fact that most of the respondents had been studying English for more than 5 or even 10 years, they claimed to accomplish the grammar of the standard English. Additionally, respondents in both groups affirmed that they either did not follow a native accent of English or tried to imitate the American one. Asian accent was agreed to be not only the non-native accent less close to English but also the most difficult to understand by both groups of respondents. Eventually, regarding the preference towards a native teacher or a non-native one, there is some controversy: whereas German respondents were more divided – 50.0% preferred a native speaker and the other 50.0% a non-native one – international students preferred a native speaker, and argued that they are the ones who enrich students' vocabulary. Those who defended a non-native teacher said that they are the ones who perfectly know the difficulties of the foreign language.

Finally, although the sample of German respondents was reduced to 8 students in comparison to the 36 international ones, interesting results and contrasts have come to the fore. It is interesting to highlight that international students, but not Germans, claimed to have been in an English-speaking country in order to practice the language, or the fact that speaking is the skill which was claimed by Germans to be the easiest, and one of the most difficult for non-German students. These differences can arise from the fact that both English and German are Germanic languages, while the languages of

international students were mostly Romance languages. This difference can be appreciated also in the way German was said to be the non-native accent of English which is the closest and the easiest to be understood by a large amount of respondents.

From my experience as a non-native speaker of English who has been living in Germany for a year in an international environment and thus, speaking English, I would agree that the accent of a German speaker is one of the closest to L1 English and the easiest to be intelligible, as Calvo-Benzies claimed in her work. Having a native teacher of English has its positive and negative sides: on the one hand, native speakers can enrich your vocabulary and make you acquire a native accent – very useful and important when someone has already reached a considerable level of the foreign language – but, on the other hand, they are more difficult to be understood by beginners, and they are not aware of the difficulties their language can cause to non-native speakers.

In any case, this study can be said to be a snapshot of how English is nowadays the lingua franca in a university context: students simply want to be understood and thus, achieve communication. Grammar mistakes and vocabulary inaccuracies are therefore a secondary concern.

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Appendices

Appendix 1



The Use of English as a Lingua Franca (Germans)

Part 1: General questions

1. Age:
2. Gender:
 - a) Male
 - b) female
3. What degree do you study? :
4. Have you ever been abroad (in an English-speaking country) in order to study English?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
5. In case the answer is "Yes", how long?
 - a) Less than one month
 - b) Between one and six months
 - c) Between six months and one year
 - d) More than one year
6. What second language did you start to study at school?
 - a) English
 - b) Spanish
 - c) French
 - d) Other (specify)

7. For how long have you been studying English?

- a) Less than two years
- b) Between 2-5 years
- c) Between 5-10 years
- d) More than ten years

8. Enumerate from 1 (the easiest) to 5 (the most difficult) skills for you.

Listening- writing- reading- speaking

9. What level of English do you consider you have?

- a) B1 (Intermediate English)
- b) B2 (Upper-Intermediate English)
- c) C1 (Advanced English)
- d) C2 (Proficiency English)

10. Are you able to speak some other language apart from English?

- a) Yes
- b) No

11. In case your answer is "yes", which one? (You can select more than one)

- a) Spanish
- b) French
- c) Italian
- d) Other (specify)

12. In Germany, what language do/ did you use in order to communicate with international students?

- a) English
- b) German

13. As non-native speaker of English, where do/ did you use the language in your daily life?

- a) At university/ work
- b) With my friends
- c) In the streets
- d) Other (specify)
- e) I never use English

Part 2: Attitude

14. Do you feel at ease when talking in English in class? Select a number in the scale from 1 to 5 (1= not at ease // 5= completely at ease)

1 2 3 4 5

15. Do you feel at ease when talking in English in a group of people? Select a number in the scale from 1 to 5 (1= not at ease // 5= completely at ease)

1 2 3 4 5

Part 3: (Mis)understanding

16. Do you think you are understood when speaking English? Select a number from 1 to 5 (1= not understandable // 5= completely understandable)

1 2 3 4 5

17. How do you make what you say more accessible (i.e. make it understood by the listener)? (More than one option can be selected)

- a) Repetition
- b) Paraphrasing
- c) Combination of the two previous ones
- d) Synonymy
- e) Paraphrasing
- f) Speaking clearly, slowly

18. When a speaker make use of the so-called code-switching (alternation between two or more languages in the context of a single conversation), do you think that it is appropriate?

- a) Yes
- b) No

19. What factor do you consider the most important/necessary in order to understand a conversation in English?

- a) Lexis (vocabulary)
- b) Grammar
- c) Pronunciation
- d) Code-switching

20. Do you use explicitness in order to be understood? Example: "black colour" instead of saying "black", or "how long time?" instead of "how long?"

- a) Yes
- b) No

Part 4: Lexicogrammar aspects

When you **speak** English...

21. Do you use the third person present tense -S? Example: He wearS jeans. Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

1 2 3 4 5

22. Do you make an interchangeable use of the relative pronouns "who" and "which"? Example: "a chair WHO" and "a teacher WHICH". Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

1 2 3 4 5

23. Do you make use of verbs that are too wide semantically speaking (e.g. make, put, do, take)? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

1 2 3 4 5

24. Do you use plurals properly (e.g. women, wives, "information" and not "*informations", or "staff" and not "*staffs")? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

1 2 3 4 5

25. Do you consider that you use idiomatic expressions (idioms, phrasal verbs or metaphors) when talking in English? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

1 2 3 4 5

26. Do you try to use the word order in your questions (e.g. in "Are you hungry?" or "Do you want something to eat?" putting the auxiliary before the subject)? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

1 2 3 4 5

Part 5: Accent

27. Do you try to follow an accent when speaking English?

- a) Yes, America accent
- b) Yes, British accent
- c) No, I don't

28. What non-native accent of English do you consider that is the closest to that of a native speaker?

- a) Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)
- b) Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)
- c) Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)
- d) Other (specify)

29. What non-native accent of English do you consider that is the least close to that of a native speaker?

- a) Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)
- b) Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)
- c) Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)
- d) Other (specify)

30. What non-native accent of English do you understand the easiest?

- a) Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)
- b) Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)
- c) Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)
- d) Other (specify)

31. What non-native accent of English is the most difficult to understand for you?

- a) Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)
- b) Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)
- c) Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)
- d) Other (specify)

Part 6: Teaching/ Learning

32. I think that the learning and the use of a language are...

- a) Consecutive processes (first learning, and then use)
- b) Simultaneous processes

33. When you were taught English at both school and high-school, what accent did your teacher have?

- a) The accent of his/ her mother tongue (foreign accent)
- b) Native accent

34. Who do you think is better at teaching English?

- a) A native speaker
- b) A non-native speaker
- c) Any of them

→ Why?

Appendix 2

The Use of English as a Lingua Franca (international students)

Part 1: General questions

1. Age:
2. Gender:
 - a) male
 - b) female
3. What degree do you study? :
4. Nationality
 - a) Spanish
 - b) Italian
 - c) French
 - d) Other (specify)
5. Have you ever been abroad (in an English-speaking country) in order to study English?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
6. In case the answer is "Yes", how long?
 - a) Less than one month
 - b) Between one and six months
 - c) Between six months and one year
 - d) More than one year
7. What second language did you start to study at school?
 - a) English
 - b) Spanish
 - c) French
 - d) Other (specify)

8. For how long have you been studying English?

- a) Less than two years
- b) Between 2-5 years
- c) Between 5-10 years
- d) More than ten years

9. Enumerate from 1 (the easiest) to 5 (the most difficult) skills for you.

Listening- writing- reading- speaking

10. What level of English do you consider you have?

- a) B1 (Intermediate English)
- b) B2 (Upper-Intermediate English)
- c) C1 (Advanced English)
- d) C2 (Proficiency English)

11. Are you able to speak some other language apart from English?

- a) Yes
- b) No

12. In case your answer is "yes", which one? (You can select more than one)

- a) Spanish
- b) German
- c) French
- d) Other (specify)

13. In Germany, what language do/ did you use in order to communicate with other?

- a) English
- b) German

14. In case your previous answer is “English”, why?

- a) Because I knew nothing of German
- b) Because I knew only a bit of German and, therefore, I felt more comfortable communicating in English.
- c) Because, although I could speak German, the other person couldn't
- d) Because neither I or the other person were able to speak German

15. As non-native speaker of English, where do/ did you use the language in your daily life?

- a) At university/ work
- b) With my friends
- c) In the streets
- d) Other (specify)
- e) I never use English

Part 2: Attitude

16. Do you feel at ease when talking in English in class? Select a number in the scale from 1 to 5 (1= not at ease // 5= completely at ease)

1 2 3 4 5

17. Do you feel at ease when talking in English in a group of people? Select a number in the scale from 1 to 5 (1= not at ease // 5= completely at ease)

1 2 3 4 5

Part 3: (Mis)understanding

18. Do you think you are understood when speaking English? Select a number from 1 to 5 (1= not understandable // 5= completely understandable)

1 2 3 4 5

19. How do you make what you say more accessible (i.e. make it understood by the listener)? (More than one option can be selected)

- d) Repetition
- e) Paraphrasing
- f) Combination of the two previous ones
- g) Synonymy
- h) Gestures
- i) Speaking clearly, slowly

20. When a speaker make use of the so-called code-switching (alternation between two or more languages in the context of a single conversation), do you think that it is appropriate?

- c) Yes
- d) No

21. What factor do you consider the most important/necessary in order to understand a conversation in English?

- e) Lexis (vocabulary)
- f) Grammar
- g) Pronunciation
- h) Code-switching

22. Do you use explicitness in order to be understood? Example: "black colour" instead of saying "black", or "how long time?" instead of "how long?"

- c) Yes
- d) No

Part 4: Lexicogrammar aspects

When you **speak** English...

23. Do you use the third person present tense -S? Example: He wearS jeans. Enumerate

from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

1 2 3 4 5

24. Do you make an interchangeable use of the relative pronouns "who" and "which"?

Example: "a chair WHO" and "a teacher WHICH". Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

1 2 3 4 5

25. Do you make use of verbs that are too wide semantically speaking (e.g. make, put, do, take)? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

1 2 3 4 5

26. Do you use plurals properly (e.g. women, wives, "information" and not "*informations", or "staff" and not "*staffs")? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

1 2 3 4 5

27. Do you consider that you use idiomatic expressions (idioms, phrasal verbs or metaphors) when talking in English? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

1 2 3 4 5

28. Do you try to use the word order in your questions (e.g. in "Are you hungry?" or "Do you want something to eat?" putting the auxiliary before the subject)? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

1 2 3 4 5

Part 5: Accent

29. Do you try to follow an accent when speaking English?

- d) Yes, America accent
- e) Yes, British accent
- f) No, I don't

30. What non-native accent of English do you consider that is the closest to that of a native speaker?

- e) Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)
- f) Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)
- g) Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)
- h) Other (specify)

31. What non-native accent of English do you consider that is the least close to that of a native speaker?

- e) Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)
- f) Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)
- g) Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)
- h) Other (specify)

32. What non-native accent of English do you understand the easiest?

- e) Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)
- f) Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)
- g) Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)
- h) Other (specify)

33. What non-native accent of English is the most difficult to understand for you?

- e) Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)
- f) Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)
- g) Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)
- h) Other (specify)

Part 6: Teaching/ Learning

34. I think that the learning and the use of a language are...

- c) Consecutive processes (first learning, and then use)
- d) Simultaneous processes

35. When you were taught English at both school and high-school, what accent did your teacher have?

- c) The accent of his/ her mother tongue (foreign accent)
- d) Native accent

36. Who do you think is better at teaching English?

- d) A native speaker
- e) A non-native speaker
- f) Any of them

→ Why?

Appendix 3

Results of the survey “The Use of English as a Lingua Franca (Germans)”

Part 1: General questions

1) Age

Respondents	Answers
Respondent 1	24
Respondent 2	22
Respondent 3	29
Respondent 4	27
Respondent 5	22
Respondent 6	23
Respondent 7	21
Respondent 8	26
TOTAL	8

2) Gender

Options	Answers
Male	4
Female	4
TOTAL	8

3) What degree/ master do you study?

Respondents	Answers
Respondent 1	Intercultural Communication
Respondent 2	Intercultural Communication
Respondent 3	Web Engineering
Respondent 4	Masters
Respondent 5	Bachelor Sports Engineering
Respondent 6	Master
Respondent 7	Elementary school/ English Studies
Respondent 8	I'm not studying
TOTAL	8

4) Have you ever been abroad (in an English-speaking country) in order to study English?

Options	Answers
Yes	2
No	6
TOTAL	8

5) In case the answer in the previous question is "Yes", how long?

Options	Answers
Less than one month	4
Between one and six months	0
Between six months and one year	0
More than one year	0
TOTAL	4

6) What second language did you start to study at school?

Options	Answers
English	5
Spanish	1
French	1
Other (specify)	1
I didn't study at school, but private Portuguese	
TOTAL	8

7) For how long have you been studying English?

Options	Answers
Less than two years	0
Between 2-5 years	0
Between 5-10 years	3
More than ten years	5
TOTAL	8

8) Enumerate from 1 (the easiest) to 4 (the most difficult) skills for you

Options	Speaking	Reading	Listening	Writing	TOTAL
1 (the easiest)	3	3	2	0	8
2	2	2	1	5	8
3	2	3	1	3	8
4 (the most difficult)	2	1	4	1	7

9) What level of English do you consider you have?

Options	Answers
B1 (Intermediate English)	0
B2 (Upper-Intermediate English)	3
C1 (Advanced English)	3
C2 (Proficiency English)	1
TOTAL	7

10) Are you able to speak some other language apart from English?

Options	Answers
Yes	8
No	0
TOTAL	8

11) In case the previous answer is "Yes", which one? (You can select more than one)

Options	Answers
Spanish	4
French	2
Italian	0
Other (Specify)	3
- German	1
- Parts of Russian and Italian	1
- Portuguese	1
TOTAL	8

12) In Germany, what language do/ did you use in order to communicate with international students?

Options	Answers
German	0
English	8
TOTAL	8

13) As non-native speaker of English, where do/ did you use the language in your daily life?

Options	Answers
At university/ work	2
With my friends	4
In the streets	0
I never use English	0
Other (specify)	2
- At uni and privately	1
- Freetime, using the internet	1
TOTAL	8

Part 2: Attitude

14) Do you feel at ease when talking in English in class? Select a number in the scale from 1 to 5 (1= not at ease // 5= completely at ease)

Options	Answers
1	0
2	1
3	3
4	1
5	3
TOTAL	8

15) Do you feel at ease when talking in English in a group of people? Select a number in the scale from 1 to 5 (1= not at ease // 5= completely at ease)

Options	Answers
1	0
2	1
3	1
4	2
5	4
TOTAL	8

Part 3: (Mis)understanding

16) Do you think you are understood when speaking English? Select a number from 1 to 5 (1= not understandable // 5= completely understandable)

Options	Answers
1	0
2	0
3	1
4	4
5	3
TOTAL	8

17) How do you make what you say more accessible (i.e. make it understood by the listener)? (More than one option can be selected)

Options	Answers
Repetition	1
Paraphrasing	2
Combination of the previous ones	3
Synonymy	0
Gestures	1
Speaking clearly, slowly	1
TOTAL	8

18) When a speaker use the so-called code-switching (alternation between two or more languages in the context of a single conversation), do you think that it is appropriate?

Options	Answers
Yes	7
No	1
TOTAL	8

19) What factor do you consider the most important/ necessary in order to understand a conversation in English?

Options	Answers
Lexis (vocabulary)	5
Grammar	0
Pronunciation	3
Code-switching	0
TOTAL	8

20) Do you use explicitness in order to be understood? Example: "black colour" instead of saying "black" or "how long time?" instead of "how long?"

Options	Answers
Yes	4
No	4
TOTAL	8

Part 4: Lexicogrammar aspects

21) Do you use the third person present tense -S? Example: He wears jeans. Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

Options	Answers
1	5
2	2
3	1
4	0
5	0
TOTAL	8

22) Do you make an interchangeable use of the relative pronouns "who" and "which"?
 Example: "a chair WHO" and "a teacher WHICH". Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

Options	Answers
1	1
2	0
3	1
4	2
5	4
TOTAL	8

23) Do you make use of verbs that are too wide semantically speaking (e.g. make, put, do, take)? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

Options	Answers
1	0
2	4
3	4
4	0
5	0
TOTAL	8

24) Do you use plurals properly (e.g. women, wives, or "information" and not "*informations")? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

Options	Answers
1	4
2	1
3	3
4	0
5	0
TOTAL	8

25) Do you consider that you use idiomatic expressions (idioms, phrasal verbs or metaphors) when talking in English? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

Options	Answers
1	1
2	0
3	3
4	3
5	1
TOTAL	8

26) Do you try to use the word order in your questions (e.g. in "Are you hungry?" or "Do you want something to eat?" putting the auxiliary before the subject)? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

Options	Answers
1	5
2	1
3	1
4	1
5	0
TOTAL	8

Part 5: Accent

27) Do you try to follow an accent when speaking English?

Options	Answers
Yes, American accent	3
Yes, British accent	1
No, I don't	4
TOTAL	8

28) What non-native accent of English do you consider that is the closest to that of a native speaker?

Options	Answers
Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)	1
Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)	0
Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)	4
Other (specify)	3
- German	1
- Accent from northern countries	1
- Non	1
TOTAL	8

29) What non-native accent of English do you consider that is the least close to that of a native speaker?

Options	Answers
Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)	4
Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)	0
Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)	3
Other (specify)	1
- Indian	1
TOTAL	8

30) What non-native accent of English do you understand the easiest?

Options	Answers
Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)	1
Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)	1
Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)	5
Other (specify)	1
- German	1
TOTAL	8

31) What non-native accent of English is the most difficult to understand for you?

Options	Answers
Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)	6
Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)	1
Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)	0
Other (specify)	1
- Indian	1
TOTAL	8

Part 6: Teaching/ Learning

32) I think that the learning and the use of a language are...

Options	Answers
Consecutive processes (first learning, and then use)	1
Simultaneous processes	7
TOTAL	8

33) When you were taught English at both school and high-school, what accent did your teacher have?

Options	Answers
The accent of his/ her mother tongue (foreign accent)	5
Native accent	3
TOTAL	8

34) Who do you think is better at teaching English?

Options	Answers
A native speaker	4
A non-native speaker	4
Any of them	0
TOTAL	8

→ Why?

Respondents	Answers
Respondent 1 (a non-native speaker)	I think native speakers are too fast, they don't know how it is to learn that language. They have probably the experience in other languages but not with for example English. On the other side, if you are in a higher level it can be an advantage to talk a lot with native speakers. You can see how they use words different, or pronounce words different. But in the beginning is very confusing!
Respondent 2 (a native speaker)	Cause in case of pronunciation a native speaker is the best model.
Respondent 3	Omitted this question.
Respondent 4 (a non-native speaker)	Because he had to understand the reasons for the usage of the words/ language before too. Native speakers are growing up with the language, so they speak like automatically.
Respondent 5 (a native speaker)	You learn the language as it is used in real live not as it stands in books.
Respondent 6 (a non-native speaker)	1. Cause the teacher knows what you don't know of a language and speak about it (if the teacher has the same mother tongue as you). 2. He speaks slower and better to understand.
Respondent 7 (a native speaker)	To adopt its pronunciation.
Respondent 8 (a non-native speaker)	Because they know how it feels to learn the language.
TOTAL	7

Appendix 4

Results of the survey “The Use of English as a Lingua Franca (international students)”

Part 1: General questions

1) Age

Respondents	Answers
Respondent 1	22
Respondent 2	23
Respondent 3	24
Respondent 4	23
Respondent 5	25
Respondent 6	27
Respondent 7	25
Respondent 8	28
Respondent 9	22
Respondent 10	28
Respondent 11	24
Respondent 12	23
Respondent 13	26
Respondent 14	24
Respondent 15	24
Respondent 16	24
Respondent 17	25
Respondent 18	23

Respondent 19	21
Respondent 20	27
Respondent 21	19
Respondent 22	23
Respondent 23	23
Respondent 24	22
Respondent 25	31
Respondent 26	26
Respondent 27	24
Respondent 28	21
Respondent 29	27
Respondent 30	23
Respondent 31	28
Respondent 32	21
Respondent 33	23
Respondent 34	23
Respondent 35	25
Respondent 36	22
TOTAL	36

2) Gender

Options	Answers
Male	24
Female	12
TOTAL	36

3) What degree/ master do you study?

Respondents	Answers
Respondent 1	Bachelor
Respondent 2	European languages and cultures
Respondent 3	Mathematical engineering
Respondent 4	Spanish Philology
Respondent 5	Computer Science
Respondent 6	Bachelor
Respondent 7	Master Information and Communication System
Respondent 8	Information and Communication Systems
Respondent 9	Marketing and Market Research
Respondent 10	Automotive Software Engineering
Respondent 11	Mechanical Engineering Design and Production
Respondent 12	Engineering
Respondent 13	Master in Economic Engineering
Respondent 14	Linguistic and Cultural Mediation
Respondent 15	Mechanical Engineering
Respondent 16	Industrial Engineer
Respondent 17	Master Automotive Software Engineering
Respondent 18	Engineer Master
Respondent 19	Bachelor
Respondent 20	Bachelor
Respondent 21	Bachelor
Respondent 22	Control Engineering
Respondent 23	Mechanical Engineering
Respondent 24	Psychology
Respondent 25	Master of Information and Communication Systems
Respondent 26	Master's in English American Studies
Respondent 27	Engineering
Respondent 28	Labor Relations and Human Resources
Respondent 29	Value Chain Management
Respondent 30	English- Spanish Bilingual Translator

Respondent 31	BA English Teaching
Respondent 32	Mechanical Engineering
Respondent 33	Production System
Respondent 34	International Business and Economics
Respondent 35	PhD
Respondent 36	Labour Relations and Human Resources
TOTAL	36

4) Nationality

Options	Answers
Spanish	4
Italian	8
French	1
Other (specify)	23
- Macedonian	1
- Belgian	2
- South Korea	3
- Syrian	2
- Moroccan	2
- Argentinean	4
- Turkish	2
- Venezuela	1
- Brazilian	1
- Czech	2
- Bulgarian	1
- Slovak Republic	1
- Polish	1
TOTAL	36

5) Have you ever been abroad (in an English-speaking country) in order to study English?

Options	Answers
Yes	18
No	18
TOTAL	36

6) In case the answer in the previous question is "Yes", how long?

Options	Answers
Less than one month	9
Between one and six months	8
Between six months and one year	4
More than one year	2
TOTAL	23

7) What second language did you start to study at school?

Options	Answers
English	24
Spanish	2
French	6
Other (specify)	4
- German	3
- Russian	1
TOTAL	36

8) For how long have you been studying English?

Options	Answers
Less than two years	0
Between 2-5 years	4
Between 5-10 years	12
More than ten years	20
TOTAL	36

9) Enumerate from 1 (the easiest) to 4 (the most difficult) skills for you.

Options	Speaking	Reading	Listening	Writing	TOTAL
1 (the easiest)	11	23	7	3	35
2	10	9	13	7	35
3	10	2	9	8	29
4 (the most difficult)	7	2	5	17	29

10) What level of English do you consider you have?

Options	Answers
B1 (Intermediate English)	0
B2 (Upper-Intermediate English)	11
C1 (Advanced English)	19
C2 (Proficiency English)	6
TOTAL	36

11) Are you able to speak some other language apart from English?

Options	Answers
Yes	34
No	2
TOTAL	36

12) In case your previous answer is "Yes", which one? (You can select more than one)

Options	Answers
Spanish	6
German	25
French	4
Other (specify)	1
- French, German, Dutch	1
TOTAL	36

13) In Germany, what language do/ did you use in order to communicate with international students?

Options	Answers
German	2
English	34
TOTAL	36

14) In case your previous answer is "English", why?

Options	Answers
Because I knew nothing of German	2
Because I knew only a bit of German, and, therefore, I felt more comfortable communicating in English	25
Because, although I could speak German, the other person couldn't	8
Because neither I or the other person were able to speak German	1
TOTAL	36

15) As non-native speaker of English, where do/ did you use the language in your daily life?

Options	Answers
At university/ work	27
With my friends	7
In the streets	0
I never use English	2
Other (specify)	0
TOTAL	36

Part 2: Attitude

16) Do you feel at ease when talking in English in class? Select a number in the scale from 1 to 5 (1= not at ease // 5= completely at ease)

Options	Answers
1	1
2	1
3	6
4	15
5	13
TOTAL	36

17) Do you feel at ease when talking in English in a group of people? Select a number in the scale from 1 to 5 (1= not at ease // 5= completely at ease)

Options	Answers
1	1
2	2
3	6
4	11
5	16
TOTAL	36

Part 3: (Mis)understanding

18) Do you think you are understood when speaking English? Select a number from 1 to 5 (1= not understandable // 5= completely understandable)

Options	Answers
1	0
2	1
3	5
4	19
5	11
TOTAL	36

19) How do you make what you say more accessible (i.e. make it understood by the listener)? (More than one option can be selected)

Options	Answers
Repetition	2
Paraphrasing	8
Combination of the previous ones	6
Synonymy	2
Gestures	4
Speaking clearly, slowly	14
TOTAL	36

20) When a speaker use the so-called code-switching (alternation between two or more languages in the context of a single conversation), do you think that it is appropriate?

Options	Answers
Yes	26
No	10
TOTAL	36

21) What factor do you consider the most important/ necessary in order to understand a conversation in English?

Options	Answers
Lexis (vocabulary)	14
Grammar	2
Pronunciation	18
Code-switching	2
TOTAL	36

22) Do you use explicitness in order to be understood? Example: "black colour" instead of saying "black" or "how long time?" instead of "how long?"

Options	Answers
Yes	10
No	26
TOTAL	36

Part 4: Lexicogrammar aspects

23) Do you use the third person present tense -S? Example: He wears jeans. Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

Options	Answers
1	19
2	6
3	4
4	4
5	3
TOTAL	36

24) Do you make an interchangeable use of the relative pronouns "who" and "which"?
 Example: "a chair WHO" and "a teacher WHICH". Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

Options	Answers
1	3
2	6
3	8
4	5
5	14
TOTAL	36

25) Do you make use of verbs that are too wide semantically speaking (e.g. make, put, do, take)? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

Options	Answers
1	16
2	12
3	4
4	4
5	0
TOTAL	36

26) Do you use plurals properly (e.g. women, wives, or "information" and not "*informations")? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

Options	Answers
1	15
2	12
3	4
4	3
5	2
TOTAL	36

27) Do you consider that you use idiomatic expressions (idioms, phrasal verbs or metaphors) when talking in English? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

Options	Answers
1	1
2	9
3	14
4	11
5	1
TOTAL	36

28) Do you try to use the word order in your questions (e.g. in "Are you hungry?" or "Do you want something to eat?" putting the auxiliary before the subject)? Enumerate from 1 to 5 (1= always // 5= never)

Options	Answers
1	18
2	8
3	5
4	3
5	2
TOTAL	36

Part 5: Accent

29) Do you try to follow an accent when speaking English?

Options	Answers
Yes, American accent	17
Yes, British accent	6
No, I don't	13
TOTAL	36

30) What non-native accent of English do you consider that is the closest to that of a native speaker?

Options	Answers
Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)	1
Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)	4
Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)	18
Other (specify)	13
- I do not know	1
- German	8
- Romance accent and Arabic accent	1
- None	1
- Northern European countries	2
TOTAL	36

31) What non-native accent of English do you consider that is the least close to that of a native speaker?

Options	Answers
Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)	21
Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)	5
Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)	8
Other (specify)	2
- I do not know	1
- Indian	1
TOTAL	36

32) What non-native accent of English do you understand the easiest?

Options	Answers
Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)	2
Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)	8
Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)	21
Other (specify)	5
- Flemish	1
- I usually can understand any accent	2
- Russian	1
- German accent	1
TOTAL	36

33) What non-native accent of English is the most difficult to understand for you?

Options	Answers
Asian accent (Japanese, Korean, Chinese...)	23
Arabic accent (Turkish, Iranian...)	5
Romance accent (Spanish, French, Italian...)	5
Other (specify)	3
- I do not know	1
- Indian accent	2
TOTAL	36

Part 6: Teaching/ Learning

34) I think that the learning and the use of a language are...

Options	Answers
Consecutive processes (first learning, and then use)	10
Simultaneous processes	26
TOTAL	36

35) When you were taught English at both school and high-school, what accent did your teacher have?

Options	Answers
The accent of his/ her mother tongue (foreign accent)	21
Native accent	15
TOTAL	36

36) Who do you think is better at teaching English?

Options	Answers
A native speaker	21
A non-native speaker	7
Any of them	8
TOTAL	36

→ Why?

Respondents	Answers
Respondent 1 (a native speaker)	Because he or she will know at perfection phrases and particularities that can be easy to learn, and it can be an easy way of informal speaking.
Respondent 2 (any of them)	Both have advantages and disadvantages in learning language. You can understand your non-native speaker better, but native speaker speaks correctly and with original pronunciation.
Respondent 3	Omitted this question
Respondent 4 (any of them)	Country doesn't matter. It depends on teacher qualities.
Respondent 5	Omitted this question
Respondent 6 (a non-native speaker)	For beginning levels I think that the non-native teacher could be better because he passed through all the processes of learning a second language and because of that he is more emphatic.
Respondent 7	Omitted this question
Respondent 8	Omitted this question

Respondent 9	Omitted this question
Respondent 10 (a native speaker)	Because he or she has the native accent
Respondent 11	Omitted this question
Respondent 12	Omitted this question
Respondent 13	Omitted this question
Respondent 14 (a native speaker)	I believe that the pronunciation and the use of idiomatic expressions is fundamental to handle proficiently the English language.
Respondent 15 (any of them)	The important things about a foreign language teacher are independent from the fact of being or not a native speaker. The teacher must: 1. Excel on communication and empathy, 2. Perfect the accent and grammar, 3. Have a great vocabulary, and 4. Give the class entirely in the foreign language. None of these things are fixed for a particular group, but it really help to be a native speaker.
Respondent 16 (a native speaker)	Less mistakes, better pronunciation
Respondent 17 (a native speaker)	Native teacher can offer a real English lesson to students. For example, students may learn about English or American cultures that are closely related to the language and learn better.
Respondent 18	Omitted this question
Respondent 19	Omitted this question
Respondent 20 (any of them)	Because the only thing that matters at the end is practice
Respondent 21	Omitted this question
Respondent 22	Omitted this question
Respondent 23 (a non-native speaker)	The teacher can explain first the basic rules in mother tongue)
Respondent 24 (a non-native speaker)	He/ She can understand the difficulties for a foreign student better

Respondent 25 (a native speaker)	He will always use the right words, he won't make any mistakes.
Respondent 26	Omitted this question
Respondent 27 (a native speaker)	A native speaking teacher would usually give more insights and explanations about some wordings' and colloquial expressions' meanings, than a non-native speaking one.
Respondent 28 (a non-native speaker)	A non-native speaker can understand better the way to learn English because he or she had to do it before.
Respondent 29	Omitted this question
Respondent 30 (a non-native speaker)	Because he/ she knows how to grow up and improve the skills.
Respondent 31 (a native speaker)	Because people can learn the original English. And good pronounce.
Respondent 32	Omitted this question
Respondent 33 (any of them)	It is all about the correct use of teaching methods and the teacher's attitude.
Respondent 34 (any of them)	Non-native speakers had to learn the language as well, making it easier for them to know the difficulties. However, native speakers might be good teachers and could have a deeper understanding of the language.
Respondent 35 (a non-native speaker)	Because he can understand students' difficulties better than a native speaker.
Respondent 36 (any of them)	Some teachers do have a very good accent, although they are not native speakers.
TOTAL	21