English as a lingua franca in the business domain: The case of university spin-off companies in Galicia

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Tese de doutoramento UDC / 2020

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Dona María Jesús Cabarcos Traseira, en calidade de directora da tese de doutoramento *English as a lingua franca in the business domain: The case of university spin-off companies in Galicia* escrita pola doutoranda Verónica Pérez Gómez

ACREDITO

Que a devandita tese de doutoramento reúne os requisitos formais e técnicos necesarios para a súa lectura e defensa pública, e que cumple tamén cos requisitos para optar á mención internacional.

Na Coruña, a 9 de xaneiro de 2020

Asdo: María Jesús Cabarcos Traseira.

my voice

is the offspring

of two countries colliding

what is there to be ashamed of

if english

and my mother tongue

made love

my voice

is her father’s words

and mother’s accent

what does it matter if

my mouth carries two worlds

Kaur, R. (2017). Accent. *The sun and her flowers* (p. 139). UK: Simon & Schuster.

Acknowledgments

The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the cooperation of many people that, one way or another, have played a part in it. First, I am very grateful for all the participants from the Galician companies who collaborated in this project. It was an extremely positive experience that allowed me to be in contact with people from a wide range of interesting areas.

My other most important debt is to my supervisor, Dr. María Jesús Cabarcos. I am truly thankful for her wise guidance, constant support, and immense patience through all these years. I feel that thanks to you I have grown not only academically speaking but also personally during this entire process.

I am also tremendously grateful to the Institute of Applied Linguistics of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, as they were always willing to help me to integrate in the academic environment. Moreover, I am particularly thankful that Dr. Anna Szczepaniak-Kozak was supervising me during my Erasmus doctoral stay in Poznań. Besides her academic guidance, she made me feel at home in this cold but beautiful city.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Professor Kathleen Wheatley and Professor Gabriel Rei Doval for their useful advice during my academic stay at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Since I have mentioned Milwaukee, I could not forget the beloved friends I made there: thank you Paula, Ruth, Carlos, and Iván for all your psychological support and for reminding me that humour puts everything into perspective.

Continuando no plano das amizades, non podo esquecerme dos meus dous amigos da infancia, Javi e Sylvie, por darme sempre ánimos e por terme aturado en toda esta “etapa tesiana”.

Grazas infinitas á miña familia, Mariluz, Manolo, Luis e Paula por todo o apoio que dunha forma ou doutra me levan dado, e especialmente a meus pais, Luz e Manuel, por inculcarme a importancia do esforzo desde pequena, ademais de educarme nos valores do afecto, a tolerancia e a responsabilidade. Grazas, en definitiva, por crer en min.

Por último, pero non menos importante, grazas Iván por acompañarme nesta longa viaxe e estar sempre aí para animarme nos momentos complicados, celebrar os de ledicia, impulsarme nos de procrastinación e axudarme a avanzar nos de bloqueo. Por máis que o ceo estea gris en Compostela, fas que cada día teña un brillo especial.

Resumen

El inglés como lengua franca en el ámbito empresarial: Estudio de las spin-off universitarias en Galicia.

Los estudios pertenecientes al campo del inglés como lengua franca y del inglés como lengua franca de los negocios (ELF/BELF) hacen hincapié en cómo el concepto de competencia en lengua inglesa basada en el hablante nativo inglés no se ha cuestionado hasta hace poco. Más concretamente, los investigadores de ELF/BELF han señalado cómo los estudios correspondientes al área de la comunicación internacional empresarial y de gestión han abordado el uso del inglés desde la perspectiva del inglés como lengua nativa, en lugar de considerar que la mayor parte de la comunicación internacional tiene lugar entre hablantes de inglés no nativos. Por consiguiente, los materiales pedagógicos que se elaboran para la enseñanza del inglés en el ámbito empresarial toman al hablante nativo de inglés como referencia. De este modo, los investigadores del campo de ELF/BELF han enfatizado la necesidad de llevar a cabo más estudios que analicen la forma en la que los individuos conceptualizan el uso del inglés. Considerando estas circunstancias, el objetivo de esta tesis doctoral es averiguar cómo y por qué se usa el inglés en las empresas spin-off relacionadas con las tres universidades gallegas: la Universidad de A Coruña, la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela y la Universidad de Vigo. Para dar respuesta a estas cuestiones, se ha llevado a cabo una exhaustiva revisión de los trabajos más significativos realizados en el área de ELF, junto con la recopilación y análisis de datos empíricos. Esta investigación empírica se basa en una serie de

entrevistas a trabajadores de 47 empresas diferentes. Los resultados indican que los participantes son usuarios de ELF, puesto que no se identifican con el modelo de inglés como lengua nativa (ENL), sino que conciben el inglés como otro medio a través del cual lograr sus metas profesionales. En lo que respecta al uso de otros idiomas, los participantes consideran que estos son secundarios. Asimismo, las conclusiones ponen de relieve la necesidad de centrar la atención de la enseñanza del inglés en el ámbito de los negocios en la adquisición de habilidades pragmáticas y culturales, con el objetivo de que los futuros trabajadores estén convenientemente preparados para la comunicación empresarial a nivel internacional.

Resumo

O inglés como lingua franca no ámbito empresarial: Estudo das empresas spin-off universitarias en Galicia

Os estudos pertencentes ao campo do inglés como lingua franca e do inglés como lingua franca dos negocios (ELF/BELF) fan especial fincapé na recente visión problemática da competencia en lingua inglesa baseada no falante nativo. Máis concretamente, os investigadores de ELF/BELF remarcan que os estudos correspondentes á área da comunicación internacional empresarial e de xestión teñen abordado o uso do inglés desde a perspectiva do inglés como lingua nativa, no canto de considerar que a maior parte da comunicación internacional ten lugar entre falantes de inglés non nativos. Polo tanto, os materiais pedagóxicos que se elaboran para a ensinanza do inglés no ámbito empresarial toman ao falante nativo de inglés como referencia. Deste modo, os investigadores do campo de ELF/BELF salientaron a necesidade de levar a cabo máis estudos que analicen a forma na que os individuos comprenden o uso do inglés. Considerando estas circunstancias, o obxectivo desta tese doutoral é investigar como e por que se usa o inglés nas empresas spin-off relacionadas coas tres universidades galegas: a Universidade da Coruña, a Universidade de Santiago de Compostela e a Universidade de Vigo. Para dar resposta a estas cuestións, realizouse unha revisión exhaustiva dos traballos máis significativos dentro da área de ELF, xunto coa recollida e análise de datos empíricos. Esta investigación empírica está baseada nunha serie de entrevistas a traballadores de 47 empresas diferentes. Os resultados indican que os participantes son usuarios

de ELF, posto que non se identifican co modelo de inglés como lingua nativa (ENL), senón que conciben o inglés como outro medio para acadar as súas metas profesionais. No que concirne ao uso doutros idiomas, os participantes consideran que estes son secundarios. As conclusións subliñan a necesidade de centrar a atención da ensinanza do inglés no ámbito dos negocios na adquisición de destrezas pragmáticas e culturais, co obxectivo de que os futuros traballadores estean convenientemente preparados para a comunicación empresarial a nivel internacional.

Abstract

A review of English as a Lingua Franca and Business English as a Lingua Franca (ELF/BELF) literature highlighted how the studies of the international business and management communication areas have dealt with the usage of English according to the English as a native language perspective (ENL), rather than considering that most of the international communication takes place between non-native English speakers. Consequently, the pedagogical materials designed for the teaching of English in business international communication have the native English speaker as the target model. ELF/BELF scholars have thus emphasised that more research on individuals' conceptualisation of English usage is needed in the ELF/BELF field. Taking these circumstances into account, the aim of this doctoral dissertation is to disclose how and the specific context in which English and other languages are used in Galician spin-off companies connected with the University of A Coruña (UDC), the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC), and the University of Vigo (UVIGO). To do so, a comprehensive review of relevant ELF literature was conducted and coupled with the collection and analysis of empirical data. This empirical research is based on interviews conducted among staff from 47 companies. The findings suggest that participants are ELF users who do not identify themselves with the ENL model, but they perceive English as another means to achieve their working goals. As regards the usage of other languages, they are viewed as secondary to English. Moreover, the conclusions point to the need to focus the teaching of English for business purposes

on pragmatic and cultural skills, so prospective workers can be better equipped for international business communication.

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List of abbreviations

ACE	Asian Corpus of English
BELF	Business English as a Lingua Franca
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EIL	English as an International Language
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
ELFA	English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings
ELT	English Language Teaching
ENL	English as a Native Language
LFC	Lingua Franca Core
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
NS	Native Speaker
NNS	Non-Native Speaker
NES	Native English Speaker
NNES	Non-Native English Speaker
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
VOICE	Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English
WE	World Englishes

Introduction

It has been frequently claimed that the studies of English related to the business environment have focused extensively on the native English speaker as the main frame of reference. The English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) research field has started to problematise this trend in order to disclose how different ways of using English beyond the standard norms are not a problem in English communication. ELF scholarship highlights how more attention should be given to ELF in linguistics, as well as to its consequences for the teaching field (Ehrenreich, 2010; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013; Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen, & Karhunen, 2015). Besides focusing on the usage of English, the ELF field has also started to emphasise the need to consider how other languages interface with English in international communication (Cogo, 2016a; Hynninen, 2016; Jenkins, 2015). The ELF field and, more specifically, BELF (Business English as a Lingua Franca) demand more studies that concentrate on how individuals conceptualise their usage of English, as well as other languages that may be present in international business communication (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Ehrenreich, 2010).

Bearing this in mind, the aim of this doctoral dissertation is to disclose how and the specific context in which English is used by a series of companies and their individuals in business ventures connected with the three public Galician universities. The usage of other languages and how they interface with English are also analysed in this study. Furthermore, it is expected that this research serves to unfold implications for the business and the teaching fields.

The aim of this dissertation is subdivided into four research questions that this study seeks to answer:

1. To what end do participants use English in their companies? More specifically, this question intends to identify the tasks and roles for which companies and their individuals may need English. It also aims to disclose how participants' usage of English is related to the field in which they work. Besides, the way in which their usage of English may have an influence on the hiring process and whether these companies hire professionals from the field of English studies are tackled through this research question.

2. How do companies and individuals identify themselves as users of English? Particularly, this question hopes to ascertain whether participants in this study are normative users or whether they are closer to the ELF/BELF paradigm.

3. How do companies and individuals view other languages in comparison with English? This enquiry attempts to find out whether any language-power ideologies exist among participants as regards their perception of English and of other languages. That is, this question aims to explore whether companies and individuals give more relevance to certain languages to the detriment of others and, if so, to disclose the underlying reasons for this situation.

4. How do participants perceive themselves in international communication? This last query intends to find if these participants think they have the necessary resources to communicate internationally with others and to what extent they are concerned with cultural awareness in their usage of English and of other languages in international communication. Furthermore, this question will examine how participants' personal experiences may have an influence in their encounters with others.

The companies selected for this study are connected with the three public Galician universities. These types of companies–mostly university spin-offs—were chosen due to their increasing presence within the Spanish business environment (Aceytuno Pérez & Cáceres Carrasco, 2009; Iglesias Sánchez, Jambrino Maldonado, & Peñafiel Velasco, 2012; Ortín, Salas, Trujillo, & Vendrell, 2008) and their relevance as the means of knowledge-transference between business and academic spheres (Clarisse & Moray, 2004; O'Gorman, Byrne, & Pandya, 2006). Empirical data was collected from these companies and their contributions are examined from a dual perspective: companies are analysed, first, as a global entity, as the means to obtain corporations' insights, and then, individually, to reveal the participants' personal perceptions on their usage of English and other languages.

In order to answer these questions and achieve a deep understanding of how and why English and other languages are used in Galician companies connected with universities, this study is organised into four chapters (1-4):

Chapter 1 is devoted to the theoretical framework with ELF studies as the main focus. It starts with a brief review of the expansion and role of the English language throughout history until nowadays. This is followed by a discussion of the research that has been conducted in the ELF area. Although ELF is a relatively recent research field starting in the 1980's, its conceptualisation and research focus have not stopped evolving. Therefore, chapter 1 presents first an overview of the origin and evolution of ELF through three stages, based on those proposed by Jenkins (2015), one of the main contributors to the field. The discussion of these three phases serves as an introduction to a more comprehensive review of the progress that has been done in ELF and which has been mainly focused in the linguistic areas of phonology, lexicogrammar, and pragmatics. Moreover, this chapter comprises the scholarly developments of research conducted on ELF specifically within the

academic and business domains—two areas of particular interest in order to contextualise the dissertation's empiric analysis of the presence of English in a corpus of companies and to discuss the possible implications this analysis might have for the teaching and learning of English.

After the review of the research context in the area of ELF, which dwells significantly on its scholars' scientific methodology and aims, chapter 2 describes and justifies the methodology that has been followed in this study. This part of the dissertation provides information on the research strategy that has been adopted for conducting this empirical research. Moreover, it details how data was collected among the companies involved in this study, as well as the process of data analysis. Since most of the companies included in this study are university spin-offs connected with the three public Galician universities, this chapter also offers background information on this type of business ventures.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the analysis and discussion of the findings obtained through the empirical research presented in chapter 2. The discussion is divided into three major sections: consideration of English and other languages, contexts of use, and personnel selection criteria. These three sections relate to the three main topics established in a questionnaire used to collect the data, and they intend to answer the research questions discussed above. Additionally, this chapter endeavours to contrast the results obtained in this study with similar works discussed in the theoretical framework.

Finally, chapter 4 summarises the findings and discusses the implications that these findings may have for the business and the teaching fields. Furthermore, limitations of this study are examined and suggestions that can open the path for further research are indicated.

Chapter 1

Theoretical framework

This chapter contextualises the role of the English language in history and in current society and, eventually, it discusses the research conducted in the field of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). More specifically, a brief historical overview of the role that English had as a lingua franca in the past and before being considered a lingua franca in its contemporary sense is presented in the first section (1.1). Some key aspects on the role of English at present and, particularly, on the influence that this language has in different areas are also reviewed in this same section of the chapter. This is followed by an overview of the evolution of ELF research from its origin until nowadays through three major periods of time. This overview allows for a better understanding of how ELF studies and the conceptualisation of ELF itself have transformed over a relatively short period of time (1.2.). After outlining the evolution that ELF has experienced to date, the discussion focuses on ELF studies conducted in the linguistic areas of phonology, lexicogrammar, and pragmatics (1.3.). In the final part of this chapter, ELF studies related to the academic and business domains are examined (1.4.).

1.1. The expansion of English from language to lingua franca

Similarly to other lingua francas from the past, such as Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Arabic, or Portuguese, among others (Ostler, 2005), English has served, for centuries, as a contact language among people with different mother tongues (Kachru, 1996). However, what is different about English is the way in which it has vastly spread outside its country of origin (Barber, Beal, & Shaw, 2009; Crystal, 2003; Ostler, 2005, 2010).

It was in the late 16th century that this language began its expansion through the first English settlements in North America, when an expedition of colonists arrived there and when, shortly after, they were followed by the religious groups that would be known as the Pilgrim Fathers (Crystal, 2003; McIntyre, 2009). Later on, at the beginning of the 17th century, the English language continued to spread towards the Caribbean, where a pidgin English resulted from the contact of African slaves with the European sailors of the ships in which they were brought and, also, with the landowners and with slaves from varying linguistic backgrounds. It was also in this same period that the English language would be introduced in South Asia through the foundation of the East India Company in 1600 (Algeo, 2010; Barber et al., 2009; Crystal, 2003; Ostler, 2005). Furthermore, the spread of English continued around the world via the Industrial Revolution, which started in Great Britain during the second half of the 18th century. More specifically, the English language, besides creating links between the colonies and the home country, was the means of becoming a part of the technological development that was emerging. Therefore, any country or region in the world that wished to participate in that development had to be familiar with the English language. Learning English was seen as the "development of an opportunity" (Ostler, 2005, p. 540) and, consequently, knowing

English became a symbol of prestige (Crystal, 2003; Ostler, 2005). In its penetration of South-East Asia, the English language spread rapidly by the turn of the 18th century, as it became the language of law and administration. In this same period, the language propagated in Australia and New Zealand through the settlement of a convict colony in the case of the former, and by regular immigrants in the latter (Crystal, 2003; McIntyre, 2009; Ostler, 2005). Moving on to the early 19th century, standard British English was acquiring more acceptability and prestige around the Caribbean as British colonisers gained control over several Caribbean islands that had been disputed by Spanish, Dutch, and French colonisers (Barber et al., 2009; Crystal, 2003).

Also at the beginning of the 19th century, English spread in some parts of the African continent[1], such as the West coast, where the British colonists had travelled attracted by the growth of commerce. Moreover, in 1822, English became the official language in South Africa (Crystal, 2003, pp. 43-46). Meanwhile, the technological progress that was taking place in Britain—the "workshop of the world" (p. 80)—had also a great influence on the English language diffusion. On the one hand, new scientific and technological terminology was necessary to label the vast amount of inventions that were being created. On the other hand, since these innovations were being made in Britain, other countries that were interested in these novelties would have to learn English.

At the end of the 19th century, the English language also spread in the South Pacific. However, due to the mixture of groups of South Sea Islanders working in plantations in Queensland, Fiji and Samoa, and Indians working in Fiji, the language spoken in this area developed into English-based creoles (Ostler, 2005). Moreover,

[1] There are references to an earlier presence of the English language in Africa that date back to the 1530s (Spencer, 1971, p. 8).

since the US acquired some territories after the war against the Spanish in 1898, another variety of English would add to the mosaic (Crystal, 2003; Ostler, 2005). It was also at the turn of the 19th century that the technological development that was taking place in Europe had to rival with its counterpart in the US. The innovations made in transportation and printing, and the new means of communication—such as the radio, the telegraph and the telephone—not only contributed to the spread of the language but also increased the production of material in English, as well as the access to it (Crystal, 2003).

From the 19th century onwards, the spread of the English language around the world has only increased. However, it was after World War II that the diffusion of English has been remarkably fast (Crystal, 2003; Kachru & Smith, 2008; Kaplan, 2001; Knapp & Meierkord, 2002). This speed in the expansion of English is closely connected with globalisation through the political relations, the development of international organisations and their members, the proliferation of trade operations between countries, and the advancements in the computer industry (Crystal, 2003; Hurn, 2009; Knapp & Meierkord, 2002; Ostler, 2005, 2010). Additionally, the diffusion of the U.S. culture through films, music, television, news, and social media was also crucial (Algeo, 2010; Crystal, 2003; Ostler, 2005).

From the middle of the 20th century until the present day, English has become a lingua franca indispensable for global communication. This worldwide presence of English was conceptualised by Kachru's (1985) idea of three concentric circles: the *inner circle* would be the places where English is used as the main language, such as the UK, US, Canada, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand. The *outer circle* would include the territories that were former British and U.S. colonies, where English has been adopted as an additional language by institutions, i.e. Philippines, Singapore, India, Malawi. And, finally, the *expanding circle* would refer to the areas where

English is mainly used by people with different mother tongues who do not have English as a native or official language; i.e. Japan, China, Korea, Europe. Despite being lately questioned on its accuracy for all countries and their speakers (Björkman, 2013; Crystal, 2003; Hülmbauer, Böhringer, & Seidlhofer, 2008), this three circles' approach has been and still is widely used as an illustrative model to understand the expansion of English around the world.

The wide range of cultures of English language users, and the many domains and motivations in which it operates make the use of English as a lingua franca, that is ELF, a phenomenon which has no precedent in history (Dewey, 2007a). Moreover, the development of new technologies in society nowadays has a crucial role in the spread and use of English among users from the expanding circle:

> The members of the expanding circle who do use English are an increasingly significant group who operate in an increasingly global economy which has an impact on the economy in all countries . . . [and] the Internet, mobile phones and other technology increasingly establish the potential for use of English which is quite independent of the controls offered by traditional educational systems, publishing outlets and radio/television. (Brumfit, 2002, p. 5)

This rapid spread of the English language has provoked that those who use it, or learn it, as an additional means to communicate outnumber by far those who have English as their first language or L1 (Alsagoff, 2012; Graddol, 2006). More specifically, there are nearly 1 billion English users from the outer and the expanding circle countries (Jenkins, 2009c) that resort to English to communicate with other bilingual or multilingual speakers of English (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006). Although other languages are widely spoken in the world, 80% of worldwide communication takes places in English (Sharifian & Jamarani, 2013, p. 4). English is

then established as the predominant language, and it looks like it will continue to be so in the future:

> In the course of the 20th century, English has become the hypercentral language of the world language system. Even if there are languages with more speakers, such as (probably) Mandarin and Hindi, English remains the most central one, on account of the many multilinguals who have it in their repertoire. This has nothing to do with the intrinsic characteristics of the English language; on the contrary, its orthography and pronunciation make it quite unsuitable as a world language. It is a consequence of the particular history of the English-speaking nations and of reciprocal expectations and predictions about the language choices that prospective learners across the world will make. Even if the hegemonic position of the US were to decline, English would continue to be the hub of the world language system for quite some time, if only because so many millions of people have invested so much effort in learning it and for that very reason expect so many millions of other speakers to continue to use it. (De Swaan, 2010, pp. 72-73)

The influence of the English language is well reflected in all the domains in which it has gained ground. For instance, it is the language used in areas such as transport, especially in international safety protocols in the airline and maritime fields (Algeo, 2010; Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 1997). English is also used in marketing and advertising (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999; Hyde, 2002) to catch the attention of the international sectors of population (De Mooij, 2004) and, hence, is considered to be one of the agents that promotes consumerist practices across the world (Cleveland, Laroche, & Papadopoulos, 2015).

As regards the technological field, English is the primary language adopted in applications and programmes that are developed in other non-English-speaking

countries. Additionally, being the language used in the majority of published works, bibliography and instructions related to the Information Technology (IT) makes English an indispensable means of communication in the computing world (De la Cruz Cabanillas, Tejedor Martínez, Díez Prados, & Cerdá Redondo, 2007; Krěpelka, 2014; Ostler, 2005). Even though various long-term studies carried between 1997 and 2009 have found that the use of English on the Internet has experienced a steady decline over the years and languages, such as Chinese, Russian, Spanish, and Portuguese, and lesser-used languages are becoming relatively more important than before (Graddol, 2006; Pimienta, Prado, & Blanco, 2009), English remains as the dominant language of communication on the Internet (Fantognon, Mikami, Paolillo, Pimienta, & Prado, 2005; Hurn, 2009; Pimienta et al., 2009).

English is also the preferred language of publication in general (Narvaez-Berthelemot & Russell, 2001) and is considered to be the language of the natural sciences and medicine[2] in particular (Brambrink, Ehrler, & Dick, 2000; Eggly, Musial, & Smulowitz, 1999; Glaze 2000). In line with this, Wulff (2004) affirmed that we are living in "the era of medical English" (p. 186), since it is used at the international medical conferences and in all the major medical journals and other scientific publications (Egger et al., 1997; Hamel, 2007; Maher, 1986; Rahimi & Bagheri, 2011).

To put it into numbers, the 2005 UNESCO report conducted by Fantognon et al. shows that, although French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Romanian and Catalan are spoken by nearly one billion speakers, they represent only one tenth of the scientific publications written in English. Furthermore, the same report disclosed that the English language was used in 80% to 90% of the publications in the natural

[2]Maher (1986) documented an increase from 53.3 percent in 1966 to 72.2 percent in 1980 in the proportion of English articles in the comprehensive *Index Medicus* database.

sciences, and in 74% to 82% in the social sciences and humanities. Hence, the expression "publish in English or perish" (Di Bitetti & Ferreras, 2016; Gnutzmann, 2010; Hutzinger, 1989) gives us a clear impression of the impact that English has nowadays in academic research publishing (Ammon, 2001; Ferguson, 2007; Giannoni, 2008; Swales, 2004). English is not only necessary to research and publish, but also an incentive for researchers to obtain funding, promotions, an increase in their salaries, and to gain international recognition (Curry & Lillis, 2004; Feng, Gulbahar, & Dawang, 2013; Lee & Lee, 2013; Moreno, 2010). According to Krěpelka (2014), "[p]ublications in domestic language or even in other major languages are perceived as popularization" (p. 139). Consequently, those scholars who decide not to publish their works in English would become invisible for most of the academic world.

As regards the business field, the globalised economy and the attempts to reduce costs have led many companies nowadays to outsource their work to other countries. More specifically, the main offshore contracts come from English-speaking corporations from the US (42%), UK (17%), Australia (4%), or Canada (2%) (Graddol, 2006, p. 34). It is not surprising, then, that English has become the language spoken by the global business sphere (Kassim & Ali, 2010; Neely, 2012). For instance, English remains to be perceived as the most useful language for career development in Europe (Eurobarometer, 2012; European Commission, 2010) and it has become one of the most demanded skills within companies all over the world (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; Farrell & Grant, 2005). Therefore, the lack of English skills in current international business settings will imply that candidates will not be hired (Ehrenreich, 2010; Graddol, 2006, 2010; Mohamed, Radzuan, Kassim, & Ali, 2014; Perez-Gore, 2014).

Demand for English skills in the business setting has a direct influence in the education field. It is the early learning of English at primary and secondary schools that would ideally allow future employees to be better qualified for the many positions that require English language proficiency (Clyne, 1994; Hewitt, 2007). For this reason, elementary education has become an area in which English is now an integral piece, rather than—as it happened in the past—a separated subject belonging to the foreign languages curriculum (Graddol, 2006, pp. 72-102). As for tertiary education, modern universities are under market pressure to adapt their students' needs to those of the workplace (Boden & Nedeva, 2010; Teichler, 2008; Wedlin, 2008). This has boosted student mobility in an attempt to fulfil the drive of universities to become internationalised. Consequently, all these factors have been decisive for English to become the language of higher education in non-English-speaking countries (Ammon & McConnell, 2002; Byun et al., 2011; Coleman, 2006; Costa & Coleman, 2013; Maiworm & Wächter, 2002; Wächter & Maiworm, 2008). This gradual implementation of English in campuses around the world is not only an endeavour to make universities' study programmes appealing to local and international students, but also a means to become international centres of excellence (Graddol, 2006).

The above-mentioned features of the spread of English around the world, and the many fields in which it is overwhelmingly present nowadays, recall McArthur's (1998) assertion about English as being "the most universal linguistic entity that humankind has ever known" (p. 57). Additionally, the aspects discussed on the main areas in which English is used pinpoint the need for taking into account the research that has been done on ELF and, eventually, in connection with the objectives of this dissertation, in order to disclose the implications in the domains of business and education. The review of ELF scholarship that follows has been accordingly divided

into three major sections: section 1.2, outlines the evolution of the ELF field through three significant periods that have meant a turning point within ELF research. Section 1.3 reviews the ELF studies conducted within the linguistic areas of phonology, lexis and lexicogrammar, and pragmatics, as they are considered the ones in which ELF research has been mostly done. The last major section in the chapter, section 1.4, focuses on academic and business settings as the two principal domains in which ELF studies have been carried out.

1.2. Evolution in ELF research: An outline

ELF has become a major area of interest since the 1980s. Especially from 2000 onwards, the research in the field has substantially increased, and its conceptualisation has been evolving ever since the beginning. Moreover, the vibrancy of ELF research has not escaped controversy and it has therefore also been a field of debate for the critical voices that have arisen. Defended by some and criticised by others, the ELF field has nevertheless been trying to answer the many questions on how English is used for international communication around the world. It is necessary, thus, to look into the ELF research that has been done to date to fully understand the underlying questions affecting ELF communication.

Firstly, following Jenkins' (2015) classification of the three phases of ELF, I use the terms *ELF1*, *ELF2* and *ELF3* to describe the three stages of development that, according to her, ELF has undergone and is currently undergoing. I outline the research that has been done during the first stage of ELF (ELF 1), from the 1980s until 2008, a period in which ELF became a research field under the influence of studies in World Englishes (1.2.1.). Moreover, it was at this stage that some ELF characteristics started to be identified and described. I move on to look at the research that has been done from 2008 until nowadays. The fact that this stage is

arguably still in progress and, therefore, we cannot benefit from the possibility of adopting a vantage point outside of the period under discussion, as well as because of the complexity of the issues analysed, the progress done in the last decade of ELF research is presented here in two different sections: 1.2.2. pays attention to how ELF researchers began to identify the reasons that caused the emergence of the ELF characteristics scholars in the previous phase identified. This section deals also with the criticisms and counterarguments that previous attempts at definition started to generate, as well as reviews the newest definitions of ELF. Finally, section 1.2.3. examines a simultaneous trend within ELF research. Thus, ELF 3 focuses mainly on how the scholarship has broadened its horizons from being mostly centered on English towards a more multilingual approach and the hypotheses on ELF reconceptualisation in the near future.

1.2.1. Early stage: *ELF 1*

During the 80s, research in the field of World Englishes (henceforth WE), founded by Smith, and to which Kachru (1982, 1985) contributed with the three circles' model, was starting to be animated. Kachru (1982) and Smith (1983) were claiming for the recognition of postcolonial varieties of English. The studies within WE had a powerful influence on the emergence of ELF empirical research since those studies gave legitimacy to the wide range of Englishes that were used in the global context without considering native speakers as a frame of reference. However, at this early point, the phrase *English as a Lingua Franca* was not yet common in the linguistics field (Jenkins, 2015, p. 52), and the expression *English as an International Language* was used in some works from the area of WE (Smith, 1983, 1987) and continued to be used in some subsequent works of ELF with some nuances in the meaning of the two expressions (see section 1.2.1.1. for further details).

At that time, and under the influence of WE, a critical perspective on the functionality of Standard English language norms arose (Jenkins, 1996b) and, consequently, a radically different view in the consideration of English for international communication opened the path for ELF investigation. Therefore, the interest in exploring the ways in which English was used for communicating in different contexts between non-native English speakers (NNESs) started to materialise in a few studies in the 1980s (Hollqvist, 1984; Hüllen, 1982; Knapp, 1985, 1987). During the 90s, research studies in ELF were gradually increasing, and tackled various aspects, such as solidarity, consensus and cooperativeness[3] (Firth, 1990, 1996; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Gramkow Andersen, 1993; House, 1999; Meeuwis, 1994; Meierkord, 1996, 1998); pronunciation[4] (Jenkins, 1998); or the definition of effective communication strategies[5] (Akar & Louhiala-Salminen, 1999).

Those early studies pointed out the need for considering ELF as a reference for English language teaching and emphasised the need for empirical research to obtain functional features that could be implemented in English language teaching material. It should be noted that those early works were "mainly conceptual in nature" (Knapp, 2002, p. 218), and not truly empirical as they are now conceived (Jenkins et al., 2011). By contrast, their focus was predominantly on the formal aspects displayed for effective communication between NNESs and, to some extent, they were compared to the norms of the native English speakers (Firth, 1996; House, 1999). It was not until subsequent empirical studies were done, that ELF was genuinely researched as a phenomenon in its own right.

[3] These studies focused on finding whether ELF users fostered solidarity in their interactions and, if they did, identifying the procedures that they used.
[4] The early research on pronunciation was mainly devoted to disclosing the ELF users' different forms of pronunciation from the native ones, and whether those forms could cause difficulties in comprehension.
[5] The research consisted predominantly on identifying strategies to which ELF users would resort to negotiate understanding when communicating with others.

Towards the end of the 90s, and the beginning of 2000s, the field of ELF was closely following the advancements in the description and recognition of some WE varieties (Bamgbose, 1998; Kachru, 1990, 1992). Consequently, the identification and description of certain ELF features were regarded as pertinent steps towards the legitimisation of ELF, and a hypothetical idea for codifying ELF varieties was taken into consideration (Seidlhofer, 2001). These ELF varieties consisted of a series of tokens: on the one hand, the ones most commonly used among speakers with different L1, and on the other, those from each particular L1.

At this point, ELF research studies were focusing on pronunciation and lexicogrammar. As regards pronunciation, Jenkins (1998, 2000, 2002, 2004), in an attempt to identify a series of characteristics that could define ELF and taking into account the speech samples accumulated from a vast amount of NNESs, created a *Lingua Franca Core*. This proposal included a series of native English speakers' (NESs) pronunciation features which, if absent in the intercultural communication contexts, could lead to intelligibility issues. These features were set in contraposition to the non-core ones. The latter, regardless of whether they were present in or absent from the interactions, did not have an influence on intelligibility. Jenkins' (2000, 2002) studies concluded that accommodation skills were regarded as essential for achieving mutual intelligibility.

As for the lexicogrammar area, shortly after the creation of Jenkins' Lingua Franca Core, two major ELF corpora based on naturally-occurring speech were established. The first one was the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE), which was started by Seidlhofer (2001) at the University of Vienna. Two years after the creation of VOICE, the Corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (ELFA) was launched by Mauranen (2003) in Finland to compile an academic ELF corpus. The vast amount of data collected in these two corpora

shifted the research focus from an interest in forms to an attention to the functions that were the basis of those forms (Jenkins, 2015).

Seidlhofer (2001) discussed some attempts that had been made in the past for advancing a simplified form of English in the context of its global use as a lingua franca, such as the Basic English by Odgen (1930) and the Nuclear English by Quirk (1982), and which were intended to be used for learning English—based on their easiness to understand and use—in international communication settings. It should also be noted that other international corpus projects of English, such as the ICE (International Corpus of English) and the ICLE (International Corpus of Learner English) had emerged before the VOICE and the ELFA (Seidlhofer, 2004). However, neither of those corpora projects mentioned—ICE and ICLE—nor the English proposals by Odgen (1930) and Quirk (1982) for learning English for international communication satisfied the ELF criteria discussed by Seidlhofer (2002, pp. 272-274). These criteria were mainly descriptive and pedagogical, and their intention was for ELF users to aim at intelligibility, while having high flexibility for communication through an endonormative use, or not "norm-dependent" (Kachru, 1985, p. 16).

The VOICE allowed Seidlhofer (2004) to establish some early lexicogrammar hypotheses which consisted of a list of items that were commonly used by English speakers from different L1 backgrounds, and which did not represent difficulties in their interactions among them (see Seidlhofer's list of characteristics in section 1.3.2.). Although the list of features was intended to be regarded as a hypothetical approach, it has revealed itself as consistent over the years, as well as useful for other studies in the field (Breiteneder, 2005, 2009; Cogo & Dewey, 2006). Moreover, Seidlhofer's (2004) work provided characteristics that were present in NNESs interactions as an illustration of language variation and change in their own right.

This implied, then, a break with the traditional linguistic perspectives that regarded ELF users as dependent on English as a Native Language (ENL) norms.

The advancements in ELF research in phonology and lexicogrammar would lead some scholars outside the field to assert, later on, that the aim of ELF researchers was to codify ELF, and thus believed that their goal was to propose it as an alternative monolithic model for the ENL paradigm. This idea spread also among some scholars from the area of WE (Kachru & Nelson, 2006; Kachru & Smith, 2008; Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006; Saraceni, 2008), who considered that ELF would impede English from evolving on its own outside the ENL countries, and from the ENL norms.

At the same time, scholars in favour of promoting the ENL norms expressed their concern about the possibility of ELF becoming a monolithic model (Elder & Davies, 2006; Prodromou, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008) that would implement a version of English in which "anything goes" (Jenkins, 2006b, p. 141). For instance, Prodromou (2006) referred to ELF speakers as those "who are stuttering onto the world stage of ELF" (p. 412), whereas Görlach (2002) asserted that "more and more people will acquire broken, deficient forms of English" (p. 12). Sobkowiak (2005) also postulated that the ELF perspective on pronunciation would "bring the ideal [Received Pronunciation] down into the gutter with no checkpoint along the way" (p. 141). Similarly, Davies (2003) argued that not having the native-speaker paradigm as a point of reference for learning English, would "take learners into a setting without maps" (p. 164). These critics were concerned that ELF users would be, in essence, promoting forms that the ENL perspective would consider to be errors.

The claim that ELF users—by employing non-standard forms—were making errors would eventually lead to the argument that those ELF users were still in the process of mastering the language (Davies, 1989; Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008) and,

hence, to the misconception of ELF as an interlanguage. According to Selinker (1969), an interlanguage is "the observable output resulting from a speaker's attempt to produce a foreign norm, i.e., both his errors and non-errors" (p. 5). Furthermore, the speaker's proficiency in a second language would be set on an *interlanguage continuum* (Selinker, 1972) between their native language and their second one. Following this line of reasoning, some scholars outside the ELF field defended the theory that ELF users would be English language learners trying to acquire a native speaker-like competence, in an interlanguage continuum (Davies, 2003; Mukherjee, 2005). And only when these so-called learners acquire a command of the L2—in this case, English—which makes their output distinguishable from that of NESs, would they stop being considered as learners. In other words, if these so-called learners never acquire a native-like competence in English, they would only have two options: they would either continue to be learners, or they would not be capable of learning any more, and their errors would become permanent, that is, *fossilised* (Gass & Selinker, 1994; Han & Selinker, 2005; Selinker, 1972, 1992; Zuengler, 1993). Consequently, for these scholars, ELF users can only be regarded as legitimate users of English if they are native-like users (Jenkins, 2006b, pp. 141-142).

In close relation with the understandingof ELF as an interlanguage, was the idea of ELF as being part of the English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) paradigm (Bruton, 2005). Under this view, more often than not, scholars from the second language acquisition (SLA) field considered that ELF users were learners of EFL attempting to communicate with native English speakers (Jenkins, 2006b). The consideration of ELF as belonging to the EFL model would imply that any deviations from the English as a Native Language norm would be considered to be errors. Therefore, the traditional SLA approach, taking into account the interlanguage theory explained above, sustained that non-native English speakers would be

measured against the natives' benchmark. As a result, ELF users were regarded, in some cases, as being in the process of learning the language or, in other cases, as "failed natives" (Cook, 1999, p. 196).

Since all these critical voices were questioning the legitimacy of ELF, scholars from the ELF field were compelled to clarify that it was a phenomenon in its own right. More specifically, these scholars stated that ELF did not have the ENL as the norm-providing reference, but their deviations from the standard norms were proper "variants" that were not a source of troubles for understanding in communication (Jenkins, 2006b, p. 141). In this line of thought, it would not be logical to judge ELF users against the NESs' norms, nor to consider them as learners within the EFL paradigm. But there would be different levels of competence among ELF users, ranging from those who are learners to those who are expert users (Jenkins, 2006b).

Firstly, researchers had seen a possibility to defend the legitimacy of ELF in its codification (Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Jenkins, Modiano, & Seidlhofer, 2001; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2001), a position which was also supported by some scholars from outside the ELF field (Coleman, 2006). This initial course of action was cautiously considered as ELF scholars were aware that more empirical investigation was necessary to regard codification as viable. Moreover, ELF scholars clarified that the codification of ELF was never intended to be regarded as an end in itself, but as a means to recognise the peculiarities that emerged through the different uses of English in lingua franca communication (Cogo, 2008; Jenkins, 2006a):

> [I]t is not the case that ELF research . . . is proposing the concept of a monolithic English for the entire world. Although ELF researchers seek to identify frequently and systematically used forms that differ from inner circle forms without causing communication problems and override first language

> groupings, their purpose is not to describe and codify a single ELF variety. (Jenkins, 2006a, p. 161)

More specifically, the ELF paradigm was understood by ELF scholars as a phenomenon in progress which “celebrates and supports diversity and appropriateness of English use in different contexts, therefore rejecting a monocentric model of lingua franca use” (Cogo, 2008, p. 59). Therefore, scholars highlighted that users of English from the expanding circle played an essential part in the ELF phenomenon:

> That language changes is self-evident and accepted by the vast majority of linguists. What is less universally recognised, even among linguists, is that Expanding Circle users of English too are contributing to that change by innovating in their own use of English, and that they are entitled to do so. Scholars of English are finding it difficult to recognise ELF alongside Inner and Outer Circle varieties of English, even when corpus descriptions and analysis are in place. (Cogo, 2008, p. 59)

These English users from the expanding circle and their different ways of employing English would be thus fully involved in the development of ELF.

As for the interlanguage theory, ELF researchers pointed out that it was “entirely irrelevant to ELF” (Jenkins, 2006b, p. 142), since the empirical research proved the presence of a series of features in ELF users, independently of their L1, that were different from the ENL norms (House, 2003). Besides, interlanguages are considered to be “individual phenomena . . . based on no communal norm” (Mufwene, 2001, p. 8).

Contrary to the monolingual and individual approach of SLA, ELF speakers are not part of a process consisting of unrelated groups of individuals who use English according to the ENL norm. To be more precise, ELF users are part of a

social process, "an international community made up predominantly of other NNSs" (Jenkins, 2006b, p. 147) in which they adapt, negotiate and use the language with each other (House, 2003; Lesznyák, 2002), while having different levels of proficiency (Jenkins, 2006b). Consequently, ELF can serve their own needs outside the ENL norm. Jenkins (2006b), for instance, claimed the need for taking into account those circumstances related to the variability and reinforce legitimateness of the ELF phenomenon and its users: "A reconceptualization of ELF that acknowledges what is happening in practice would emphasize the legitimacy of variation in expanding circle communities of use. It would thus enable members of these communities to cease viewing themselves as interlanguage speakers" (p. 143).

In addition, scholars from different areas of research related to second language learning (Bhatt, 2002; Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; Roberts, 2001) also pointed out the absence of a social approach on traditional SLA. Further, they reasoned out the need for a more equitable paradigm between the cognitive and social perspectives within SLA. Some of these scholars (Firth & Wagner, 1997) overtly asserted that research into quotidian use of a second language was not being done within the SLA field. As a result, supporters of the more traditional approach to SLA had been postulating that NNESs were learners in the process of acquiring a native-like competence, and hence maintaining that the acquisition of the L2 would mainly take place through interactions with NESs.

In line with the social approach to SLA, the ideas of some sociocultural theorists (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Donato, 2000) played an important role in the ELF field. Those theorists regarded second language learners as being agents in the spread of their L2 and capable of reshaping and adapting it to their circumstances, rather than being passive beneficiaries of the language.

In answer to the critics that equated ELF to EFL, Jenkins (2006a, 2006b) argued that the two paradigms were radically different, since the purpose of ELF users was to communicate mainly with other NNESs, rather than with NESs, whose L1 was usually not the same as their own. Moreover, where EFL judged everything that differed from the ENL norms as incorrectness, ELF regarded certain forms—those that were recurrent and did not cause problems in communication—as legitimate variations (Jenkins, 2006a, 2006b). Consequently, ELF researchers claimed for an alternative dimension to ENL and EFL, in which ELF could exist in its own right (House, 2003; Jenkins, 2006b; Meierkord, 2002; Pölzl, 2003). To put it differently, by placing ELF in a third dimension, scholars argued for the acceptance of those dissimilarities in the use of ELF as empirical evidence of variation, instead of regarding them, from the ENL viewpoint, as errors.

At this early stage in the development of ELF research, while defending their arguments from the critics, ELF scholars were also justifying the legitimisation of ELF as a field of study and pointing in the direction of research into variability. This variability and the defence of ELF legitimacy will be reflected in the early definitions of ELF.

1.2.1.1. Definitions of ELF

During the 90s and the early 2000s, the acronym EIL (English as an International Language) was mainly used within the ELF research field (Jenkins, 1996a, 1998, 2000; Knapp, 1987; McKay, 2003; Smith, 1983; Widdowson, 1994) as a synonym, although some researchers considered that EIL was for communication in which NESs were included, whereas ELF would allude to the communication among NNESs (Seidlhofer, 2005).

The definitions of ELF have been through different phases, accompanied by the research that has been done in each stage. In this first period, definitions of ELF

focused mainly on the formal aspects, such as variability that is, the constant evolution of ELF, and the varieties of ELF as a starting point that considered ELF as a hypothetical language variety. These aspects highlighted the nature of the interactions and the role of the NNESs and their legitimacy and stressed the connection of ELF with the WE. For instance, Gramkow Andersen (1993), defined the phenomenon as follows:

> There is no consistency in form that goes beyond the participant level, i.e., each combination of interactants seems to negotiate and govern their own variety of lingua franca use in terms of proficiency level, use of code-mixing, degree of pidginization, etc. (p. 108)

This definition included the basic features of ELF, such as variability depending on the users' proficiency and referred by the author as an inconsistency in form, negotiation of meaning, and the free choice of incorporating uses from other languages. Additionally, this definition incorporated the description of ELF as being a series of varieties created by each user.

Other scholars focused their definitions of ELF on the nature of the interactions and, since these took place mostly between NNESs, this led some authors to exclude the NESs from the ELF definition. Firth (1996), for instance, described ELF as "a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (p. 240). Since Firth's definition regarded ELF users as those who had English as a foreign language, NESs were implicitly excluded. Along the same lines, House (1999) did not include NESs in ELF communication, as she defined ELF interactions as those taking place "between members of two or more different linguacultures in English, for none of whom English is the mother tongue" (p. 74). However, later on, Seidlhofer (2005) argued that "[although most of the

interactions are between NNESs] this does not preclude the participation of English native speakers in ELF interaction" (p. 339). Likewise, Jenkins (2006a) pointed out to the inclusiveness of NESs, and justified the reason for restricting their participation in the ELF empirical research:

> The majority of ELF researchers nevertheless accept that speakers of English from both inner and outer circles also participate in intercultural communication (albeit as a small minority in the case of inner circle speakers), so do not define ELF communication this narrowly. In their search to discover the ways in which ELF interactions are sui generis . . . they [ELF researchers] nevertheless restrict data collection to interactions among non–mother tongue speakers. (p. 161)

In this first stage of ELF research, definitions also alluded to the diversity and functionality of ELF. House (2003) for instance, defined ELF as "a repertoire of different communicative instruments an individual has at his/her disposal, a useful and versatile tool" (p. 559). Moreover, ELF was conceived as a "mode of communication" (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2007, p. 369) in which its users were expected to have and use a series of strategies: "[ELF] is an umbrella term that encompasses all types of communication among bilingual users of English in the Expanding Circle, but allows for local realisations as well as extensive use of accommodation strategies and code switching" (Cogo, 2008, p. 58). These definitions were connected with Cook's (1993) idea of multicompetence—meaning linguistic, social and cultural knowledge—that multilingual users would need and, in this case, could be applied to ELF users, as they would need those skills to communicate among them.

Besides taking into account the interactions and highlighting the speakers' diversity of backgrounds and competences, other definitions referred to ELF as part

of the WE paradigm (Cogo, 2008; Jenkins, 2006b, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2005) as they considered that "the distinction between WE and ELF is not sustainable" (Cogo, 2008, p. 58). For instance, Jenkins (2006b) defined ELF as belonging to the WE, and in contraposition to EFL:

> Above all, [ELF] it is not a *foreign* language learnt for communication with its NSs. Rather, it is a *world* language whose speakers communicate mainly with other NNSs, often from different L1s than their own. It belongs, then, not to the category of Modern Foreign Languages, but to that of World Englishes. (140; emphasis in original)

This definition was just one of the many clarifications made by ELF scholars to defend the legitimacy of ELF and its users, so they were not measured against the NESs' yardstick. ELF was fundamentally conceived as "an emerging language that exists *in its own right* and is being described *in its own terms*" (Jenkins, 2007, p. 2; emphasis in original). ELF research was, then, in the direction of legitimising its usage and its users. Moreover, by defending ELF legitimacy, definitions of ELF also took into account the need of the NESs to be prepared to adjust to the lingua franca contexts of interaction. In this respect, NESs would also need the communication strategies and multicompetence skills previously mentioned: "as far as ELF interactions are concerned, any participating mother tongue speakers will have to follow the agenda set by ELF speakers, rather than vice versa" (Jenkins, 2006a, pp. 160-161).

All these definitions show how the conception about ELF was evolving and, in some cases, presented some slight differences. Nevertheless, what all these definitions have in common is that they are trying to capture the very essence of ELF as an emerging and lively phenomenon in constant evolution.

1.2.2. Second stage: *ELF 2*

Research on ELF has rapidly increased during this second stage which spans roughly from 2008 to nowadays. This is well illustrated by the creation of the *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* in 2011, edited by Barbara Seidlhofer, and by the foundation of the first book series on ELF, *Developments in English as a Lingua Franca* [*DELF*], edited by Jennifer Jenkins and Will Baker. Both works are published by De Gruyter Mouton and their endeavour is to investigate the ELF phenomenon and its implications from a variety of viewpoints, such as linguistic, social, political and psychological, within any domain in which English is the shared language. Besides these publications on ELF, the *Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English* (VOICE) was made available online in 2009. In addition to this, a relevant advancement was made with respect to written ELF through the *Corpus of Written English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings* (WrELFA). This corpus project, which was set up by Anna Mauranen in 2011, was completed in 2015 at the University of Helsinki and consists of 1.5 million words taken from academic papers that have not been edited (WrELFA, 2015). Moreover, a research network on ELF was founded under the auspices of AILA, which stands for the French denomination of Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée (International Association of Applied Linguistics). The ELF research network is currently coordinated by Alessia Cogo and Marie-Luise Pitzl, and there are 75 scholars from more than 20 countries and from various areas of ELF research who participate in it. In connection with this network, there are also a series of conferences that have been organised yearly since 2008, the last of them having been held in July 2019 at the University of Antioquia, in Colombia (ELF 12 Medellin, n.d.).

As for the geographical spreading of ELF research, while Europe was the main location in which ELF started to gain significance (Firth, 1996; House, 1999; Knapp, 2002; Seidlhofer, 2001) except for some East Asian locations (Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006), it has been during this second stage that ELF research has increased its relevance in Asia. For instance, Andy Kirkpatrick set up the Asian Corpus of English (ACE) in 2009. The ACE was completed in 2014 and consists of 1 million words from natural occurring ELF spoken interactions in Asia, such as conferences, interviews, meetings and seminars, among others (ACE, 2014). It should be noted that the specific places in which ELF research is developed do not necessarily restrict the geographical variety of English studied. The research done, for instance, in Austria is not limited to the English of Austria. By contrast, the objective of ELF is to have a multilingual approach and to include participants from any place. In the example of Austria, it would involve participants from any geographical point, not only participants from this country (Jenkins et al., 2011).

At the beginning of this second stage, there was a major shift in the focus of ELF research, from the formal aspects towards the variability and fluidity of ELF. More specifically, scholars disclosed through their empirical investigations that ELF users employed the language according to the objectives of the interactions and to the communicative circumstances connected with their interlocutors (Baker, 2009; Cogo, 2012; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Hülmbauer, 2009; Jenkins, 2007; Jenkins & Leung, 2014; Klimpfinger, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2007, 2009a, 2009b). Therefore, ELF scholars emphasised the idea that despite the common features that had been disclosed during the first stage of research into ELF, variability and fluidity were also common elements in ELF interactions:

> More recently, in line with the increasing availability of ELF data, there has been a growing realization that, despite the observed regularities in ELF

> forms, ELF communication is inherently more fluid, flexible, dynamic, and ad hoc than traditional language varieties used by traditional speech communities. As a result, the focus of research has shifted from features to the underlying processes that motivate their use and, in turn, to the need for new conceptualizations of language. (Jenkins & Leung, 2014, p. 5)

This focus on the variability and fluidity of ELF also implied that the concept of *community*—understood as being merely based on the spatial closeness of its interlocutors—did not make sense in today's intercommunicated world. Seidlhofer (2007, 2009b) pointed out the need for reconsidering the use of the phrase *speech community* and proposed the *communities of practice* as a more adequate alternative to describe the communication practices among ELF users:

> [A]t a time of pervasive and widespread global communication, the old notion of community based purely on frequent face-to-face contact among people living in close proximity to each other clearly does not hold any more. A much more appropriate concept is that of *communities of practice* characterized by 'mutual engagement' in shared practices, taking part in some jointly negotiated 'enterprise', and making use of members' 'shared repertoire'. (2009b, p. 238; emphasis in original)

Additionally, the communities of practice were also mentioned in connection with lingua franca communication purposes by Graddol (2006, p. 115), who referred to them as being mainly integrated by non-native English speakers. However, this notion had been anticipated by House (2003) as she had pointed out that focusing on the communities of practice would be a more appropriate perspective to refer to the ways in which ELF users communicated among them:

> Instead of basing ELF research on the notion of the speech community, we may therefore consider another sociolinguistic concept, the concept of

> 'community of practice'. Wenger's (1998: 76) three dimensions characterising a community of practice: mutual engagement, a joint negotiated enterprise, and a shared repertoire of negotiable resources, may indeed be applicable to ELF interactions. (p. 572)

The use of speech communities alluding ELF users was abandoned in favour of Wenger's (1998) communities of practice. By adopting this perspective, ELF scholars could explore in more depth the processes by which ELF users communicated and, hence, better understand how regularities and variability operated in the intercultural communication within ELF (Baker, 2011; Hülmbauer, 2009; Jenkins, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2009b).

Research on ELF interactions also revealed that the presence of ELF speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds implied that a great deal of negotiation of meaning and adjustment were involved in each of these communication processes. This diversity of ELF users, together with the variability that was present in each of the ELF communication contexts also meant that ELF was "beyond description" (Jenkins, 2015, p. 55), as it was not bounded by any linguistic variety nor by any geographical location. At this point, it became clear that the theory of varieties did not fit into the ELF paradigm (Jenkins, 2012).

This retheorisation of the ELF paradigm entailed a major shift with respect to WE, since the latter was and still is conceived of as "non-native models of English . . . linguistically identifiable, geographically definable" (Kachru, 1992, p. 66). By contrast, the intrinsic variability and fluidity of ELF and its detachment from any boundaries implied that ELF was not analogous to the WE paradigm (Jenkins, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2009b). According to Widdowson (2015):

> whereas WE [= the world Englishes paradigm] clearly follows the sociolinguistic tradition of variety description with a primary concern for the

> relationship between language and *community*, the study of ELF is essentially an enquiry into the relationship between language and *communication*, how linguistic resources are variably used to achieve meaning. (p. 363; emphasis in original)

From a more current point of view about WE, ELF scholars have pointed out their error in having regarded the theory of varieties of WE as being also valid for ELF. Accordingly, these researchers asserted that this mistake was justified due to the lack of other previous referents to which they could resort. In addition, ELF scholars pointed out that, at that time, WE was ideologically the closest paradigm to ELF (Jenkins, 2015; Morán Panero, 2015).

Even though WE and ELF are conceptually different, they continue to share the same essential ideology. Both paradigms maintain that the outer and expanding circle speakers do not use English as a foreign language to communicate mainly with native English speakers, but to communicate with non-native speakers. Furthermore, scholars from the WE and ELF fields claim that both paradigms are legitimate variations (Jenkins, 2015; Pakir, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2009b) and also agree that heterogeneity and variability in English, as well as departure from the ENL, are not signs of "linguistic decay" (Kachru, 1992, pp. 357-358) or of interlanguage. This concurs with Pakir's (2009) assertion that "WE and ELF are similar in that they have four common working axioms: emphasizing the pluricentricity of English, seeking variety recognition, accepting that language changes and adapts itself to new environments, and highlighting the discourse strategies of English-knowing bilinguals" (p. 228). As a result of the similarities that both paradigms share, ELF scholars claimed that WE and ELF should not be seen as rivals, but that they should collaborate with each other (Seidlhofer, 2009b) and be regarded as integral parts of the Global Englishes (Jenkins, 2015).

1.2.2.1. Current definitions of ELF

During this second stage, most scholars from the ELF field have preferred to use the acronym ELF, rather than EIL to avoid any possible confusions (Ishikawa 2016; Jenkins, 2012, 2015). For instance, English as an International Language, that is, EIL could be mistaken for *international English*, which in some cases is regarded as being equivalent to the English from North America (Jenkins, 2009b). Additionally, and according to some ELF scholars, the use of EIL could lead to the mistaken belief that there is a neutral variety of English (Ishikawa, 2016). However, EIL and ELF are considered to be the same phenomenon among ELF scholars, with the only distinction that EIL was the term more frequently used at the beginning of the research in the field (Jenkins, 2017). It must also be recalled that during the first stage of research into ELF, some scholars—inside and outside the ELF field—referred to EIL when native speakers of English were included in the interactions, whereas they used ELF when they included only non-native speakers (Jenkins, 2009b). However, except for a few cases (McKay, 2009; Prodromou, 2008; Marlina, 2014), this distinction has not been made since the first stage of ELF research.

As regards the definitions of ELF in this stage, they evince the transformations that the research has experienced during this period, as well as reveal the current trends in the ELF field. For instance, Pitzl's (2011) definition of ELF reflects its inherent variability and fluidity: "ELF is a different kind of beast, namely 'a hybrid' that exhibits characteristics in which it is at the same time very much like as well as unlike other languages" (p. 281). Besides highlighting the relevance of variability in ELF, other definitions clarify the ELF endeavour by stating that it "is not a matter of spotting and counting discrete features but of looking for insights into variability and potential change" (Seidlhofer, 2009a, p.55). The shifts on ELF research are also expressed through the role of the communities of practice in ELF and the absence of

geographical boundaries: "ELF, then, is spoken as a contact language by speakers from varying linguacultural backgrounds, where both the community of speakers and the location can be changing and are often not associated with a specific nation" (Cogo, 2012, p. 98). This lack of space constrictions also coincides with the definitions that situate ELF in contraposition to WE, as they assert that "ELF . . . could not be considered as consisting of bounded varieties, but as English that transcends boundaries, and that is therefore beyond description" (Jenkins, 2015, p. 55).

Besides referring to the reconceptualisation of ELF as not being related to any geographical location, other definitions of ELF allude to the influence of the current intercommunicated reality in which ELF communication takes place:

> ELF cannot be primarily identified with any of the Kachruvian Circles [*sic*] but is a function of the transcultural exploitation of the communicative resources of all three. ELF thus needs to be added as an option to be made use of when appropriate, and as a conceptual innovation reflecting the realities of globalized communication in the 21st century. (Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 81)

The idea that ELF is a matter of negotiation and accommodation is developed in Jenkins's (2009b) definition: "ELF is thus a question, not of orientation to the norms of a particular group of English speakers, but of mutual negotiation involving efforts and adjustments from all parties" (p. 201). This negotiation of meaning in ELF interactions is also expressed in the definition given by House (2013b), as she asserts that "ELF is negotiated *ad hoc*, varying according to context, speaker constellation and communicative purpose. It is thus individually shaped by its users" (p. 281; emphasis in original). Likewise, Seidlhofer's (2009b) interpretation points out that ELF communication "is how people engage with each other and do on-line interactional work" (p. 242).

As regards the correlation between form and function, Cogo (2008) describes ELF as being dependent on both of them: "ELF is both form *and* function; besides, by performing certain functions it is appropriated by its speakers and changed in form. In other words, form seems to follow function and start a circular phenomenon of variation and change" (p. 60; emphasis in original). This definition is closely connected with Seidlhofer's (2011, back cover) assertion that ELF is "an adaptable and creative use of language in its own right." Both definitions consider ELF as a creative process that implies the users' appropriation and modification of the English language in order to generate new concepts and meanings. Moreover, these descriptions of ELF are also related to the definitions that question the claim that ELF is a simplified form of English: "ELF is not about simplification, as speakers do not avoid idiomatic language, instead they use expressions they are more familiar with or create idiomatic expressions that are more appropriate and understandable in their contexts" (Cogo, 2012, p. 103).

The dichotomy between ELF and ENL, as well as the presence of native speakers and their need to accommodate to the ELF communication context, are also included in the definition proposed by Jenkins (2012):

> ELF (unlike EFL) is not the same phenomenon as English as a Native Language (ENL), and therefore needs to be acquired by L1 English speakers too, albeit that their starting point, native English—rather than some other language—makes the process less arduous . . . NES ELF users need to be able to adjust (or accommodate) their habitual modes of reception and production in order to be more effective in ELF interactions. (p. 487)

Native English speakers and their role in lingua franca interactions are also mentioned in Jenkins's (2009a) definition: "NSs can indeed participate in ELF, but

. . . no longer set the linguistic agenda and should not expect the non-native participants in the interaction to defer to NS norms" (p. 41). In other descriptions, Jenkins (2009b) referred to the diversity of ELF speakers and the particular circumstances surrounding them as decisive points for sharing the English language: "in using this term [ELF] I am referring to a specific communication context: English being used as a lingua franca, the common language of choice, among speakers who come from different linguacultural backgrounds" (p. 200). Similarly, Mauranen (2015) defined ELF "as the default global contact language", while she also stressed that this resulted from the fact that ELF speakers "come from immensely varied language backgrounds" (p. 34).

The definitions discussed in this section point thus to variability, negotiation and creativity as crucial elements within ELF communication. Moreover, they highlight the role of all ELF users within the communication processes with independence of their linguacultural backgrounds. Apart from making progress in ELF evolution, ELF scholarship continued to confront the critical voices during this second stage.

1.2.2.2. Criticisms and counterarguments

During this second phase of ELF research, some of the criticisms that had been pinpointed during the first stage have persisted among some authors. For instance, the assertion that ELF researchers intend to define and establish a new monolithic variety of English has been pointed out by some scholars (Anderson & Corbett, 2010; Canagarajah, 2014; Marlina, 2014; Matsuda & Friedrich, 2012; O'Regan, 2014; Park & Wee, 2011, 2014; Sowden, 2012). Marlina (2014), for example, claimed that "[ELF] still promotes a particular variety of English or a predetermined set of several varieties (ASEAN English or Euro-English) as 'the core' and gives other varieties less equal recognition" (p. 6).

Moreover, some of these authors are concerned that ELF scholars intend to propose the Lingua Franca Core as a variety to be taught to those who want to use English in multilingual settings (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2012). Considering that these critics see ELF as a simplified form of English, some of them specifically defend other options, such as Nerrière's (2004) *Globish*[6] as being a more appropriate alternative to ELF to be learned and used in international communication contexts:

> While ELF does not seem to offer a plausible future for English language development and teaching, other possible scenarios may do so. One such is the notion of 'Globish' (Shimop.cit.), which draws on the standard usages of English in different parts of the world in order to create a World English owned by and accessible to all; although heavily dependent on the Anglo-Saxon native-speaker model, this agglomeration would in theory make space for and actually give way to other norms as respective peoples (for example speakers of Indian and Nigerian English) exert increasing influence on the world stage. (Sowden, 2012, p. 94)

In line with the assertion that ELF is a simplified form of English, another of the criticisms that some scholars have made is that the ELF field focuses exclusively in the formal aspects of communication without paying attention to the social, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds of its users, as some have asserted that "it privileges clarity and the efficient transfer of information at the expense of the interactional function of language, that is the use of language to establish personal relationships" (Anderson & Corbett, 2010, p. 416). At the same time, these scholars have also maintained that the social and cultural elements have not been examined

[6] Globish is a simplified form of English, which consists of 1,500 words, uses basic grammatical constructions and gets rid of idioms. In the Globish website, Nerrière defines Globish as being "correct English without the English culture . . . just a tool and not a whole way of life" ("Globish, The World Over", n.d.).

by ELF researchers (Anderson & Corbett, 2010; O'Regan, 2014; Park & Wee, 2014; Sowden, 2012). As a result, ELF has been described by some of these authors as an "attempt to neutralize English, to sheer it of its cultural baggage" (Sowden, 2012, p. 90).

Some of the criticisms also point to how ELF scholars oversimplify the notion of ENL. According to these critics, the fact that ELF scholars define ELF in contraposition to ENL implies that ELF researchers regard ENL as a homogeneous entity and, for this reason, they ignore the heterogeneity of the varieties employed by native English speakers (Anderson & Corbett, 2010; Park & Wee, 2011; Prodromou, 2008; Sewell, 2013). This statement is also connected with the recurrent claim that the ELF field is only interested in the communication among non-native English speakers. These scholars assert that ELF researchers do not take into account speakers who are native users of English, nor those who are monolingual natives of English (Canagarajah, 2014; Marlina, 2014). Marlina (2014), for instance, declared that EIL, in contraposition to ELF "does not claim that communication in English or varieties of English encountered in international contexts excludes 'native-speakers'" (p. 6). Hence, he assumes that ELF researchers do not take native English speakers into account in defining lingua franca communication contexts.

These criticisms about the scope, definition, and boundaries of ELF have been addressed also in various ways. Firstly, in response to the claim that the main purpose of ELF is to promote a new monolithic or fixed variety of English, ELF scholars have continued to clarify that the aim of ELF research is not to establish a new model of language, nor to impose on speakers the recurrent characteristics found in ELF communication as if they were rules (Baker & Jenkins, 2015; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Dewey, 2013). Instead, according to the scholars from the ELF field, their endeavour is to explain in detail how the ELF communication takes place

(Cogo, 2012) and have elucidated that the LFC was meant to be used only within the area of phonology in connection with the users' accommodation abilities (Jenkins, 2000, 2002). In short, the LFC has never been conceived by them as an alternative code of fixed characteristics (Cogo, 2012; Jenkins et al., 2011). It should also be noted that, although codification is not declared to be their main objective at the moment, these scholars do not deny the possibility that ELF might be codified in some way in the future. Nevertheless, this option would have to be carefully studied, as they have pointed out that the inherent variability of ELF could not be ignored in any case (Jenkins et al., 2011; Seidlhofer, 2009b).

With respect to the authors that argue that ELF researchers give more relevance to certain characteristics in detriment of others, ELF scholars have clarified that they are not in charge of determining the way in which communication processes develop in ELF, since the elements that are present or absent from ELF communication come from their empirical investigations (Cogo, 2012; Jenkins, 2009a, 2009b). As far as teaching is concerned, ELF scholars have also declared that "ELF is about awareness and choice—making students aware of different ways of speaking English, of language variability and change—and about offering choice to them" (Cogo, 2012, p. 104). Incidentally, certain possibilities of implementing some general concepts of ELF into the teaching field were explored (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011), but the implications that this implementation could have for teachers would need more research. For instance, Dewey (2012) suggested that collaboration between these teachers and ELF researchers would be beneficial for both fields. According to this, ELF scholars have also stressed that practitioners from the English language teaching field are the ones who, eventually, must consider the appropriateness of ELF for their students in connection with their situation. Borrowing Jenkins' (2012) words, what ELF scholars actually demand "is that

learners are presented with the sociolinguistic facts of the spread of English around the world before they make their choice" (p. 492). Considering the statements made by these scholars, ELF endeavours are not to impose language or any specific features belonging to it. On the contrary, ELF intends to promote critical knowledge that allows language users to make choices that are adequate to their particular circumstances.

The claim about ELF researchers paying more attention to certain common features is also connected to the view of the ELF field as focusing exclusively on forms. In this respect, some authors assert that ELF researchers do not consider the social and cultural aspects of language as being part of the communication processes. However, ELF scholars have clarified that ELF research does not focus on formal aspects in isolation, since they defend that form must be analysed in connection to function in order to understand how the communication develops in ELF (Baker & Hüttner, 2011; Cogo, 2008; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Mauranen, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2009a). More specifically, ELF researchers have asserted that they explore the ways in which ELF users create cultural meaning and identities every time they communicate, while they adjust to others and collaborate with them. That is, ELF scholars intend to disclose how the ad hoc negotiations and creations of meaning, together with the linguacultural backgrounds of the interlocutors are involved in the communication among ELF users (Baker, 2009, 2011; Cogo, 2009, 2010). By analysing these aspects of ELF interactions, scholars are stressing the complexity of the ELF paradigm. This also contrasts with the criticism about ELF as being a simplified form of English and indifferent to the cultural background of its users: "ELF research is explicitly concerned with how cooperation and accommodation are achieved in communication, as well as with issues in the representation and construction of identities and cultures . . . . This would certainly seem to suggest an

amplified rather than *simplified* English" (Baker & Hüttner, 2011, p. 183-184; emphasis in original).

In connection with the authors who defend Globish as a so-called alternative to ELF for learning English, scholars from the ELF field have been categorical about the inappropriateness of comparing Globish to ELF (Gajšt, 2014; Jenkins et al., 2011; Seidlhofer, 2011). From the ELF scholars' point of view, Globish lacks empirical research since it is a source of arbitrary decisions. Contrary to this, any conclusions made within the ELF field come from the vast amount of empirical research that has been done to date (Archibald, Cogo, & Jenkins, 2011; Jenkins, 2015; Jenkins et al., 2011).

As regards the criticism that researchers regard ENL as a homogeneous variety, ELF scholars have actually asserted that all languages are inherently heterogeneous, variable and dynamic (Baker, 2011; Dewey, 2013; Seidlhofer, 2011). For instance, Jenkins (2009b) declared that "ELF, like ENL, involves a good deal of local variation" (p. 201). Moreover, according to ELF scholars, referring to notions such as native and non-native speakers of English, as well as to ENL and ELF would be an abstraction to analyse the way in which these speakers use English in ELF communication. However, this does not imply that ELF researchers are in favour of compartmentalising the English language or their speakers, since scholars from the ELF field, in fact, defend the opposite idea (Baker, 2009; Baker & Hüttner, 2011). For instance, Dewey (2013) elucidates how using the terms ENL and ELF make theorising about ELF possible:

> [I]t is essential that these categories are not overstated, that they are not presented as static or mutually exclusive, especially when attempting to take account of what an academic discipline means for professional practice. It is, of course, still useful to make general points of contrast between the formal

> and functional tendencies of ENL varieties and the properties of ELF. Making generalizations does not preclude seeing English as dynamic and heterogeneous, and certainly does not mean essentializing ENL or ELF as bounded categories. (p. 349)

As previously mentioned, some authors also claim that ELF scholars disregard native English speakers in ELF research. However, ELF scholars have pointed out that all English users, independently of being native or non-native English speakers, are important for ELF research. But what they consider crucial in ELF communication is finding how these ELF users adapt the language to their own needs rather than adhering to the language norms of others, i.e. native English speakers (Jenkins, 2009a, 2009b, 2012; Mauranen, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011). This concurs with Seidlhofer's (2011) claim that "English could not actually function as an international language at all if it were simply adopted rather than adapted" (p. 66). ELF scholars are recalling here the relevance of negotiation among ELF users as part of the communicative processes, which does not signify that native English speakers cannot be included in ELF interactions. This means that native English speakers, as well as other ELF users, will have to accommodate to their interlocutors. NESs—whether monolingual or not—are thereby taken into account whenever they are present in ELF communication: "Whatever the role of NSs in lingua franca scenarios, the processes of communication of which they are a part need to be described and analysed because they are a part of the complex linguistic landscape that ELF encompasses" (Baird, Baker, & Kitazawa, 2014, p. 187). Additionally, ELF researchers have emphasised that any speaker that uses English to communicate with others who have different first languages will always be included under the definition of ELF (Jenkins, 2009a, 2009b, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2011).

The research that has been and is being done on ELF during this second period shows evidence of the interest that the diversity of linguacultural backgrounds of ELF users has for ELF communication. It seems that this attention to language and cultural heterogeneity would lead towards a new reconceptualisation of ELF that goes beyond the interest in English. That is, an approach that widens the scope to focus on multilingualism.

1.2.3. Third stage: *ELF 3*

As it was discussed in the previous section, the diversity of cultures and languages in ELF communication means that English is not the only language that deserves attention in ELF research. In line with this, ELF scholars have claimed the need for a reconceptualisation, that is an 'ELF 3' approach that clearly takes into account the multilingual character of ELF communication (Cogo, 2016a; Hynninen, 2016; Jenkins, 2015). Hence, to grasp the influence of multilingualism for ELF, it would be necessary to understand how the scholarship on multilingualism itself has evolved. The section below (1.2.3.1.) explores the research done on multilingualism and its connection with the ELF field. Eventually, the proposals for ELF reconceptualisation are examined (1.2.3.2.).

1.2.3.1. Multilingualism and ELF

Until recently, multilingualism has been regarded in the field of applied linguistics from a monolingual perspective that conceived languages as independent and fixed entities (Cenoz, 2013; Cogo, 2016a). And these separated entities were supposed to follow determined rules that should remain intact. According to this monolingual approach, the languages in the repertoire of their users would not be influenced by other languages or varieties (Cummins, 2005; Heller, 1999). This monolingual bias (Ortega, 2010) or ideology (Auer & Li, 2007) had a substantial

influence in the SLA and pedagogical fields, most clearly manifested on the studies of bilingual instruction from this period (Cogo, 2016a) and in the conceptualisation at the foundation of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages). More specifically, these fields regarded bi- or multilingual speakers in terms of proficiency or deficiency in languages that were analysed as separate. In other words, these speakers were seen as being or not competent in each of the different languages that they had in their linguistic repertoire. Therefore, bi- and multilingual command of these differentiated language entities was always measured against the native speaker yardstick—that is, from a monolingual point of view. And similarly, the users' exploitation of linguistic strategies that allowed them to alternate and/or mix these languages, such as code-switching or code-mixing among others, were viewed as problems in communication since these speakers were regarded as not being linguistically competent (Cenoz, 2013; Cogo, 2016a; Rampton & Charalambous, 2012).

However, the emergence of critical voices against the monolingual perception of multilingualism has been continual since the end of the 80s (i.e. Grosjean, 1985; Cook, 1992), and a *multilingual turn* has taken place recently, which has meant a shift in the field towards a more holistic approach (Cenoz, 2013; Dewaele, 2007; Larsen-Freeman, 2012). This holistic approach sees languages not as independent units, but as linguistic resources (Cenoz, 2013; Cogo, 2016a) that are not fixed but combine dynamically (Djite, 2009). Thus, multilingual users manage their linguistic resources to create new meanings and make sense in their interactions with other speakers. This multilingual turn meant that bi- or multilingual speakers could not be measured against the native speakers' proficiency in each of the languages that they use. But the languages that they use or have in their language background would have an impact on their multilingual process of communication as a whole (Jessner,

2008). Moreover, as Larsen-Freeman (2012) asserted, "no longer can we assume language learners to be native speakers of a single national language, interacting with native speakers of another national language, and moving inexorably in a line from L1 to L2. Multilingualism is the norm" (p. 134). Scholars have emphasised the fact that multilingual speakers use languages, and hence linguistic resources, differently from monolinguals. The wider language choice of the former allows them to be multicompetent users who select and implement elements from the languages that they know and that help them to communicate with others (Block, 2007; Byrnes, 2012; Cenoz, 2013; Cook, 2008; Ortega, 2010). Furthermore, multilinguals' contact with languages and their experience of them varies (Cenoz, 2013; Jessner, 2008), and that is why their command of various languages could not be regarded as stable. Considering these characteristics, multilingualism is seen by scholars that support the holistic perspective as a field that "brings new opportunities for individuals and societies" (Auer & Li, 2007), and one that rejects the traditional idea of multilingualism being the perfect command of two or more languages (Cenoz, 2009, 2013; Cook, 2008; Nguyen, 2012; Ortega, 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty, 2008).

The criticism against the monolingual bias continues nowadays and intends to theorise on the concept of multilingualism itself by pointing to alternative terms, such as *metrolingualism* (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2009), *multilanguaging* (Nguyen, 2012), *heteroglossia* (Bailey, 2012), *polylingualism* (Jørgensen, 2008), or *translanguaging* (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009; García & Li Wei, 2014; Li, 2010). More specifically, the term translanguaging (translated from the original Welsh term *trawsieithu*) was proposed by Cen Williams (2002) to refer to how students used English and Welsh and practised their skills by using these languages interchangeably to do their class work. However, the use of this concept transcended

the classroom boundaries and it became associated with multilingual communities that communicate effectively in any situation (García, 2009). Some scholars consider that translanguaging is more integrable on the multilingualism retheorisation than the other terms (Cenoz, 2013) as it implies a transformative dimension that allows linguistic resources to interrelate among them and create meaning (Cogo, 2016a).

As for the ELF field, it has been criticised for being influenced by the monolingual tendency to see languages in isolation. According to some scholars, ELF has been conceived as a separate research field from that of multilingualism. More precisely, it has been claimed that, to a certain extent, ELF research paid too much attention to English and ignored multilingualism (Canagarajah, 2007; Cook, 2013). From this separatist perspective, English would be the only focus of ELF, whereas multilingualism would account for other languages as well as English (i.e. Cogo, 2009, 2010; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Hülmbauer, 2009, 2011; Klimpfinger, 2009; Pölzl & Seidlhofer, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2011).

ELF scholars have more recently agreed with this idea to a certain extent, in the sense that they consider that ELF focus should go beyond the use of English and pay more attention to how other languages relate to the use of English (Cogo, 2016a; Jenkins, 2015). In fact, ELF scholars have pointed out how the nature of ELF communication includes the interrelation among languages, which means that the separation between multilingualism and ELF would not be real: "[T]his separation is paradoxical, to say the least: when English is used as a lingua franca it becomes less foreign, but also "less English" and closer to other languages because of the crosslinguistic, or trans-linguistic, influences of the resources in the users' repertoire or their sociolinguistic contexts" (Cogo, 2016a, p. 61).

Moreover, ELF scholars have noted that although in previous stages of ELF research, the ELF field ignored multilingualism to a certain degree, the research field

of multilingualism has also dismissed English as being another relevant element within multilingualism. More specifically, according to ELF scholars, researchers from the multilingualism field either tended to disregard ELF or referred to it in the same ways as the critics of ELF have been usually doing it, and alluded to ELF as being a "variety" or as a field that excluded native English speakers (Jenkins, 2015, pp. 72-73).

Nevertheless, the ELF field has aligned with the new multilingual approach which considers languages as resources that mix and depend on each other (Cogo, 2016a). In like manner, taking into account that most speakers of English are non-native speakers –and hence have diverse linguacultural backgrounds—ELF scholars have highlighted the relevance of multilingualism as a main characteristic in ELF communication. As a consequence, ELF researchers have claimed that a reconceptualisation of ELF would be necessary to pay more attention to the multilingual nature of ELF users, rather than focus specifically on their use of the English language (Cogo, 2016a; Hynninen, 2016; Jenkins, 2015, 2017).

In this ELF reconceptualisation, and in light of the assertion that multilinguals have more resources than monolinguals, Jenkins (2015) has argued that ELF multilingual speakers would have a certain advantage and would be better prepared for these kinds of interactions, whereas ELF monolinguals should learn other languages to be at the same level of communication competence. According to Jenkins (2015), ELF communication could be regarded as the mediation of intercultural communication skills to interact not between NESs and NNESs but between multilingual and monolingual ELF users. Such a shift implies that ELF scholars focus on the speakers' linguacultural background rather than on their use of the English language.

1.2.3.2. ELF reconceptualisation

According to ELF scholars, certain issues must be addressed in order to reconceptualise ELF once the multilingual turn has been taken into account:

Firstly, ELF has focused mainly on English and not enough on the other languages spoken by ELF users. According to Jenkins (2015), “ELF is a multilingual practice, and research should start from this premise and explore how ELF’s multilingualism is enacted in different kinds of interactions” (p. 63). Cogo (2016a) has also urged to explore how the linguistic resources would relate to the types of groupings of language users and to their linguistic skills. She has further asserted that this could help to disclose the influence that social and cultural circumstances have in ELF multilingual communication (Cogo, 2016a, 2016b).

Similarly, the way in which interlocutors negotiate and cooperate to construct meaning in ELF communication would need deeper exploration in relation to the concept of the communities of practice. For instance, some ELF scholars have argued that the notion of communities of practice should be redefined since groups of ELF users would not necessarily be communities and would not always engage in *shared practices* (Ehrenreich, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2011). This would imply that ELF researchers focus their attention beyond the stable groups of ELF users and consider other heterogeneous groups of people that might not have anything in common from the start (Ehrenreich, 2009; Jenkins, 2015). ELF scholars asserted, therefore, the need to study in more depth concepts such as *multilingual repertoires* and *shared resources* (Seidlhofer, 2011). Jenkins (2015), for instance, proposed *English as a Multilingua Franca*, in which she reconsiders the concepts of multilingual repertoires, *shared repertoires*, and *multilingual resources* and advances the notion of *repertoires in flux* (p. 76) as a way that would better represent, particularly, the emergent and online nature of ELF. According to Jenkins (2015), the repertoires in

flux would consider whether certain elements are or not shared a priori and/or ad hoc. Moreover, these repertoires in flux would include the repertoires of the monolingual native English speakers since they would be influenced by their interlocutors' multilingual backgrounds.

In line with being more aware of the multilingual nature of ELF and integrating it within a framework of multilingualism, scholars suggest that the reconceptualisation of ELF would need to take into account a combination of complexity, emergentist, and usage-based theories (Baird et al., 2014; Baker, 2015; Jenkins, 2015). According to complexity theory, languages are complex adaptive systems in which distinctiveness and unpredictability are obtained in interactions. Hence, language innovation would emerge in every interaction and would not depend on the interlocutors' ways of implementing grammar norms (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008; Miller & Page, 2007). Likewise, emergentist positions see grammar as derived from recurring social interactions and the use of certain expressions (Hopper, 1998). Accordingly, more general perspectives of usage-based theories underline the social character of language and define it as "a form of social action constituted by social conventions for achieving social ends, premised on at least some shared understandings and shared purposes among users" (Tomasello, 2008, p. 343). Moreover, bearing in mind the multilingual turn, these theories regard language from a holistic perspective, rather than deconstructing it into individual parts. Considering these theories in connection with ELF, Baird et al. (2014) have stated that "what is shared in ELF interactions that enable the participants to refer to the language as English is related to social experience rather than abstract rules" (p. 182). This would imply that variations in ELF do not relate to any set of abstract norms (Larsen-Freeman, 2017). However, Seidlhofer (2011) has been reticent to see the emergentist conception of language as appropriate for ELF,

as well as for the study of English language alone, and she referred to Widdowson's (1997) concept of *virtual language*: "[T]hat resource for making meaning immanent in the language which simply has not hitherto been encoded and so is not, so to speak, given official recognition . . . gets variously actualized over a period by communities adapting it to their changing needs" (pp. 138-142).

Seidlhofer (2011) considered that ELF does have identifiable traces of English, which would be productions of virtual language and that, although ELF has not been codified, it also has English at its core with "some underlying abstract set of rules" (p. 112) that would make possible to call it English. According to this, ELF would be more focused on the usage of English as a fixed entity. Nevertheless, as Hülmbauer (2013) asserted in connection with ELF communication, "virtuality within the English language is in constant interaction with the multilingual environment in which it takes place and exponentially extended through the resources available from its speakers' plurilingual repertoires" (p. 53). ELF scholarship has, therefore, two confronted views regarding this point: on the one hand, some scholars consider that English and its rules are realities that make it possible to regard English as consistent: since ELF has identifiable traces of English, it would hence need a sort of encoded system to ensure its consistency. On the other, there are those scholars who highlight that ELF is a mixture of plurinlingual resources and consider that English is in constant contact with other resources from the speakers' linguacultural backgrounds. To put it another way, the latter perspective defends that it is through ELF that all the speakers' plurilingual resources become highly dynamic and do not need to follow a set of rules to have consistency. In the same vein, some ELF scholars embrace the complex theory in connection with ELF reconceptualisation as it considers that the equilibrium of ELF comes from its changing character, which at the same time, is a property of all complex structures (Jenkins, 2015; Larsen-

Freeman, 2017). In view of these considerations, ELF scholars propose a combination of the emergentist and complex theories as appropriate to make ELF communication workable within a multilingualism framework, as well as for the retheorisation of the communities of practice (Baird et al., 2014; Baker, 2015; Jenkins, 2015).

Besides the theorisations that come from the ELF scholarhip, other proposals—from outside the ELF field—contemplate a multilingual perspective for language in general, and lingua franca in particular, that could be useful for ELF reconceptualisation (Jenkins, 2015). They all have in common the notion of language and multilingualism as a social practice in which the main focus is the speakers' use of multilingual resources and the way this reflects their own experiences. One of these possibilities for ELF retheorisation would be Makoni and Pennycook's (2012) conception of *lingua franca multilingualism* or *multilingual franca*: "in lingua franca multilingualism languages are so deeply intertwined and fused into each other that the level of fluidity renders it difficult to determine any boundaries that may indicate that there are different languages involved" (p. 447). In their theorisation, these scholars maintain that speakers' realities are filtered through their peculiar way of using and mixing languages and linguistic resources. Therefore, this concept could add relevant insights on the versatility and mixability of linguistic resources to the discussion about multilingualism in ELF, and the idea of ELF users of having a wide linguistic repertoire besides English, to which they can resort in lingua franca communication (Cogo, 2016a, 2016b; Hülmbauer & Seidlhofer, 2013; Jenkins, 2015).

The availability and mixing of languages could also be connected with Canagarajah's (2013) conception of *codemeshing*. Although this term alludes to written English, "it offers a possibility of bringing the different codes within the same text rather than keeping them apart" (p. 112), and it could also be valuable for ELF

retheorisation since the mixing of languages would concur with a multilingual view of ELF. Additionally, Canagarajah's (2011) concepts of *integrated competence* as the form in which various languages represent the speakers' linguistic repertoire, and *language competence* "as a form of social practice" (p. 6) would be useful for ELF retheorisation. More specifically, these two concepts would be related to the hybridity, fluidity, and mixability that ELF regards as essential properties, not only for English but for any other languages in the linguistic repertoire of ELF users (Jenkins, 2015; Cogo, 2016a, 2016b).

In the same way, Pennycook's (2008) description of *translingual franca English* would be convenient for ELF reconceptualisation:

> [I]s a term to acknowledge the interconnectedness of all English use . . . as a local practice. Language speakers come with language histories, and means of interpretation – the ideolinguistic dimension where English is one of many languages, a code useful for certain activities, a language connected to certain desires and ideologies. (p. 30.7)

This approach conceives English as one language choice among others and intertwined with the speakers' realities, and shaped by the speakers' ideologies and circumstances around them. This conceptualisation would be, then, connected with a multilingual perspective for ELF (Cogo, 2016a; Jenkins, 2015).

Taking all these possibilities into account, ELF scholars have regarded the notion of translanguaging, which had been also considered in multiligualism retheorisation, as being a viable alternative for ELF reconceptualisation (Cogo 2016a; Jenkins, 2015, 2017; Jenkins & Leung, 2016; Leung, Lewkowicz, & Jenkins, 2016). According to García (2009), "translanguagings are *multiple discursive practices* in which bilinguals engage in order *to make sense of their bilingual worlds*" (p. 45; emphasis in original). The concept of translanguaging might thus recall similitudes

with code-switching and, in some cases, both terms have been used as if they were synonyms (Cogo, 2016a; Kalocsai, 2014). However, it must be noted that translanguaging transcends the concept of code-switching, since the latter would imply viewing languages as separate. As García and Li Wei (2014) have pointed out,

> Translanguaging differs from the notion of code-switching in that it refers not simply to a shift or a shuttle between two languages, but to the speakers' construction and use of original and complex interrelated discursive practices that cannot be easily assigned to one or another traditional definition of a language, but that make up the speakers' complete language repertoire. (p.22)

As a consequence of García and Li Wei's claims, Cogo (2016a) has affirmed that reconceptualising ELF within the notion of translanguaging would place a greater emphasis on the interrelation among the resources that are available to ELF users—and that are part of their linguistic repertoire—rather than referring to them as being separate.

Besides focusing on the linguistic repertoire of the speakers as a whole and as being interdependent, ELF scholarship highlights the transformative character of translanguaging. More specifically, translanguaging would mean the transformation of languages into new experiences for their users through a "trans-semiotic" (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 42) process. In this trans-semiotic process, the users' L1 would have an influence on their management of other languages and the other way around, in a reciprocal way. In other words, ELF researchers stressed the need to consider the reciprocity that the trans-semiotic process represents in translanguaging to integrate the translanguaging framework into ELF reconceptualisation successfully (Cogo, 2016a; Jenkins, 2015).

Taking into account the literature discussed in this section, it seems that what ELF scholarship intends is not a full retheorisation of ELF on multilingualism since

ELF is already seen as a “multilingual activity” (Jenkins, 2015, p. 61). Instead, what ELF researchers emphasise is the need to regard English as another available language for participants in their language repertoire so ELF can work within a multilingual framework. To summarise, ELF is a work in progress in which the attention now centres on the interrelation among the ELF users’ linguistic repertoire(s) and their abilities to manage diversity in multilingual communication settings.

Bearing in mind this constant progress within ELF scholarship, the next section reviews the advancements that have been made to date in specific linguistic areas and their influence for the teaching field.

1.3. ELF studies in the main linguistic areas

Despite a recent interest in written ELF, most of the ELF research that has been done on linguistic areas focuses on speech. This research is mainly empirical and based on naturally occurring data from conversations, rather than on tasks elaborated for that purpose or on induced conversations (Jenkins et al., 2011). The phonological and lexicogrammatical data obtained from non-native speakers has been traditionally held up against a native speaker model. However, since most of the communication in English takes place between NNESs, ELF scholarship has usually challenged the native speaker ideal. Consequently, the ELF research that has been conducted to date shows how the “ownership of English” (Widdowson, 1994) has become a somewhat dated concept, as nowadays English is spoken, thereby adjusted, modified and creatively used not only by native speakers but primarily–given their increasing number–by non-native speakers (Björkman, 2013; Hynninen, 2010; Jenkins, 2015; Jenkins et al., 2011; Pitzl, 2015).

This section explores the ELF research that has been done on phonology, lexis/lexicogrammar, and pragmatics, as these are the linguistic areas in which ELF research has been extensively conducted (Jenkins et al., 2011). More precisely, the first subsection (1.3.1.) is devoted to phonology and focuses on Jenkins' (2000) main contribution to ELF scholarship through the development of Lingua Franca Core (LFC): a set of characteristics that no longer took the native English speaker model as the benchmark for pronunciation in ELF interactions. The next subsection (1.3.2.) reviews ELF studies on lexis/lexicogrammar that revealed major findings on lexical innovations. The final subsection (1.3.3.), examines ELF research carried out on pragmatics, where studies have been concerned on finding how and why communication strategies are managed among ELF interactants.

1.3.1. Phonology

Towards the end of the 1990's, some linguistic researchers realised that it was necessary to analyse the role of English phonology in communication among non-native English speakers, that is, in lingua franca communication, as they started to question the functionality of the ENL (English as a Native Language) norms (Jenkins, 2015). Therefore, research on ELF phonology started with Jenkins' (1996a, 1998, 2000, 2002) first studies on pronunciation and intelligibility among NNESs. Moreover, Jenkins' (2000, 2002) early works served to claim an equal relevance for intelligibility not based on the NES listener perspective. In other words, the author claimed the need to challenge the assumption that NES intelligibility must be understood as being appropriate for all listeners, NESs and NNESs indistinctly. The purpose of Jenkins' (2000, 2002) study was to disclose whether intelligibility difficulties in ELF communication were predominantly connected to pronunciation,

or if they were caused by issues related to other areas. Furthermore, the aim of this study was to disclose how participants coped with those difficulties.

Jenkins' findings revealed that participants with the same L1 were more likely to resort to L1 transfer, that is, these speakers transferred sounds from their L1 to the L2, in this case, English. By doing so, these participants were able to understand certain sounds in English better, since they were similar to the ones in their L1. However, in communication among students with different L1s, L1 transfer of sounds was the main cause of breakdowns in communication. In these cases, participants solved the intelligibility issues by replacing problematic sounds with others that were closer to the ENL norms as they were considered to be easier to understand for their interlocutors. In this way, the study demonstrated that NNES students were able to identify which sounds were likely to be a cause of unintelligibility and tended to replace them so they could achieve mutual intelligibility. Consequently, students resorted to phonological accommodation with the purpose of being understood by their interlocutors (Beebe & Giles, 1984). In line with these findings, Jenkins (2000, 2002) highlighted the challenge for students to learn accommodation skills since English teaching courses were usually conducted in groups of speakers with the same L1 and in their own country.

As regards the specific issues that were susceptible of causing problems of intelligibility in ELF communication, the author found that were consonant sounds, tonic or nuclear stress, vowel length, and reduction of consonant clusters that is not allowed, according to English rules for syllable structure (Jenkins, 2002, p. 88). Therefore, Jenkins (2000) created a list of these items which she called the Lingua Franca Core (LFC).

1.3.1.1. The *Lingua Franca Core* (*LFC*)

Jenkins' (2000) LFC consisted in a series of items that proved to be problematic for effective communication between the NNESs of her study. Below is the list of features identified by Jenkins (2000):

1 The consonantal inventory with the following provisos:

- rhotic [ɹ] rather than other varieties of /r/

- intervocalic /t/ rather than [ɾ]

- most substitutions of /θ/ and /d/, and [ɫ] permissible

- close approximations to core consonant sounds generally permissible

- certain approximations not permissible (i.e. where there is a risk that they will be heard as a different consonant sound from that intended)

2 Phonetic requirements:

- aspiration following the fortis plosives /p/, /t/, and /k/

- fortis/lenis differential effect on preceding vowel length

3 Consonant clusters:

- initial clusters not simplified

- medial and final clusters simplified only according to L1 rules of elision

4 Vowel sounds:

- maintenance of vowel length contrasts

- L2 regional qualities permissible if consistent, but /ɜː/ to be preserved

5 Nuclear stress production and placement and division of speech stream into word groups (p. 159)

The author emphasised the usefulness of the LFC for ELF communication since it would allow speakers to achieve intelligibility. Furthermore, the LFC would help them to develop their accommodation skills.

As for the items that, according to Jenkins' (2000) data, did not jeopardise mutual intelligibility in ELF communication, these were referred to as *non-core*. These non-core features were viewed as indicators of ELF users' origins. For instance, they would signal the speakers' regional accents. Contrary to the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) perspective, the author claimed that these features should not be regarded as errors. These non-core features consisted of the following items (Jenkins, 2000, 2002):

- The consonant sounds /θ/, / ð /, and the dark allophone [ɫ]
- Vowel quality, as long as it is used consistently
- Weak forms: substitution of full vowel sound in some cases with schwa
- Some features of connected speech, such as assimilation (in two successive words the assimilation of the final sound of a word to the sound of the initial of the next one)
- The direction of pitch movements or tone independently of its use for indicating attitudes or grammatical meaning
- Word stress positioning in general
- Stress-timed rhythm

Jenkins' (2000, 2002) studies claimed legitimacy for ELF users. More specifically, the author argued the need for ELF users to be recognised as international speakers in their own right instead of being regarded as learners of English. According to her, the way of approaching ELF users should be different from those who were learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Following the ELF approach, its users would resort to English to communicate mostly in environments in which NNESs are predominant. By contrast, EFL would be

employed mainly for communication with NESs. Taking these considerations into account, Jenkins (2000, 2002) claimed that there should be a shift in English pronunciation teaching. In fact, she declared that an approach more focused on the NNESs' pronunciation would be more realistic for ELF communication than the ones based on the Received Pronunciation or the General American models.

Despite the reasons stated by Jenkins for considering the LFC as a beneficial reference for ELF phonology, this received several criticisms. For instance, some authors claimed that Jenkins' (2000) LFC did not offer clear instructions to deal with certain aspects, such as which criteria to follow for the substitution of /f/ and /s/ for dental fricatives (Szpyra-Kozlowska, 2003, 2005), or the difficulty of teaching English without having the ENL as a model of reference, or the negative impression that strong accents might have (Scheuer, 2005). Some scholars highlighted the possibility that LFC promoted mediocrity among its potential users (Sobkowiak, 2005), and others expressed their concerns that LFC would prescribe certain forms in detriment of others (Marlina, 2014; Sowden, 2012). However, these criticisms were made from an NES perspective, and were not based on empirical research. Moreover, they failed to notice that the main objective of the LFC was not to be prescriptive, but its aim was to be descriptive (Jenkins, 2000, 2002, 2006b). Jenkins (2000, 2006b, 2015) has repeatedly clarified that the LFC was not intended to be a model for ELF users to reproduce irrespective of the communication requirements of ELF interactions. Instead, "the accommodation element of the ELF proposals means that a speaker . . . is entirely free to adjust the core features if this suits local communication needs" (Jenkins, 2007, pp. 25-26). Additionally, Jenkins (2000) has pointed out from the start the need for conducting more empirical research on the area of ELF phonology that could support her findings.

Keeping in mind Jenkins' requests for more empirical studies, numerous works built on her research and confirmed that the LFC and phonological accommodation enhanced intelligibility among its users (Matsumoto, 2011; Osimk, 2009; Pickering, 2006; Rajadurai, 2007). One of these works was Da Silva's (1999), who confirmed Jenkins' core features in the study that he conducted in Brazil among students from different countries. The main objective was to test how a Brazilian accent could affect students' intelligibility. The author found that the reduction of vowels in a final syllable, which was not included in Jenkins' LFC, should be taken into account by teachers in Brazil, as it was the main cause of unintelligibility in his study.

Another study that expanded on Jenkins' research was Deterding and Kirkpatrick's (2006), conducted among 20 English teachers who held semi-informal conversations with speakers from different countries. The results disclosed that the use of non-standard features (i.e. avoiding reduced vowels in unstressed syllables and pronunciation of triphthongs as bisyllabic) reinforced intelligibility. Similarly, Osimk (2009) confirmed Jenkins' (2000) findings on two features of the overall three that she tested—aspiration and different realisations of interdental fricative [θ], [ð]. The author also found that these features did not impede mutual intelligibility in ELF interactions. Pickering's (2006) findings revealed a clear relation between intelligibility of certain forms and familiarity with them.

Deterding's (2013) study exposed that, in 86% of the instances that he analysed in the Asian Corpus of English (ACE), the problems in intelligibility were related to pronunciation. Furthermore, he supported Jenkins' theory that characteristics regarded as non-standard enhanced intelligibility in ELF. The research scope of this study was widened in Deterding and Nur Raihan (2016). In this study, the authors analysed 98 instances that included vowel quality. The

findings revealed that there was only one case in which this feature was the main cause of unintelligibility. Given that it did not have an impact on intelligibility in ELF communication, they confirmed Jenkins' argument that it was a non-core feature.

In general, the studies discussed above corroborated Jenkins' results on the LFC. However, there were some questions that researchers indicated to improve the original LFC, besides the example previously mentioned on the accents in the Brazilian context (Da Silva, 1999). For instance, pitch cues were found relevant for ELF communication as a way of signalling problems and repairs (Pickering, 2009). Other studies proved how the pronunciation of some sounds instead of others—some realisations of voiceless [t] instead of [θ]—would be better understood by certain listeners (Osimk, 2011), whereas the pronunciation of /t/ in final consonant cluster, which Jenkins (2000) considered being non-core, was found to be relevant for intelligibility (Matsumoto, 2011). Likewise, word stress, aspiration and nuclear stress were pointed out to affect the length of the vowel, but they were not included in the LFC (Dauer, 2005). In contrast, other researchers observed that distinguishing vowel length was not always necessary, since this would not represent a problem in intelligibility in most of NS varieties (Wells, 2005).

Besides improving certain aspects in the LFC, scholars have drawn attention to the need for developing more teaching material that involves the LFC. However, Walker's (2010) textbook is the only reference material that has been designed to date for teaching ELF pronunciation. This textbook is mainly intended for NNES teachers with students that have the same L1. Nonetheless, it offers useful resources on how learners can take advantage of their L1 knowledge, with an especial emphasis on local accents, to learn the L2. Moreover, the author argued how Jenkins' (2000) self-designed five-stage programme could be helpful for speakers who wanted to acquire an NS accent, even though it does not address their needs specifically:

> 1. Addition of core items to the learner's productive and receptive repertoire
> 2. Addition of a range of L2 English accents to the learner's receptive repertoire
> 3. Addition of accommodation skills
> 4. Addition of non-core items to the learner's receptive repertoire
> 5. Addition of a range of L1 English accents to the learner's receptive repertoire. (Jenkins, 2000, p. 219)

Those learners who wish to acquire a native-like accent should focus on points 4 and 5 to adjust to the NS target (Walker, 2010, p. 45).

In his study, Walker (2010) additionally paid attention to the relevance of developing accommodation skills and how challenging teaching them is in groups of learners that share an L1. To solve this, Walker (2010) attached a CD with recordings of speakers with different L1s, so that learners could familiarise themselves with a wide range of English accents. Moreover, he proposed certain activities to help learners with the same L1 to develop accommodation skills, such as dictation in pairs and transcription practice. Walker (2010) agreed as well with the studies discussed above that pointed to the need of making some adjustments in the LFC. However, he concluded that “the LFC is an excellent foundation for learners wherever they are, and whatever their long-term pronunciation goals” (p. 46). This handbook could be, in essence, an effective resource to raise teachers’ awareness of the different accents in ELF communication, and to help them to transfer this awareness to their students.

Researchers have also recalled that very few pedagogical materials have approached the pronunciation instruction based on the actual implementation of the LFC in real classrooms. For instance, Da Silva (1999), Walker (2001), and Zoghbor (2009) designed their pronunciation classes based on the LFC, in which they took into account the difficulties of their learners with the same L1—Portuguese, Spanish,

and Arabic, respectively. The findings in the three studies confirmed the usefulness of implementing the LFC in classrooms to enhance intelligibility. Furthermore, Walker (2001) and Zoghbor (2009) emphasised the implementation of the LFC as a resource to legitimate the NNESs' accents when speaking English.

Patsko (2013) also explored the implementation of LFC in the classroom but, in contrast with the three studies mentioned above, the classrooms addressed were multilingual. More specifically, Patsko provided teachers with material for implementing the LFC in L1-mixed classrooms in an international school in London. The author found that this material was positively welcomed by teachers.

1.3.1.2. Attitudes and identity towards accents

Besides the LFC and intelligibility, the area of ELF phonology has also explored how accents are perceived in ELF interactions. Numerous studies have focused on perceptions of accents, especially within academic settings, and disclosed how a wide range of contradictory attitudes emerged among teachers and students towards the diversity of accents.

As regards the research on teachers' perspectives, on the one hand, some studies point out how teachers prefer a native English accent for themselves and for their students. On the other hand, other works disclose how teachers seem to defend NNES or ELF pronunciation as a means to preserve the speakers' identity, while they promote a native English speaker model among their students. For instance, in his study among English teachers in Spain, Walker (1999) found that most of the NNES teachers leaned towards a native English speaker accent. A similar conclusion was found in Hüttner and Kidd's (2000) reply to Spichtinger's (2000) article, in which the author criticised the teaching of English based on the NS approach for pronunciation at the University of Vienna. In their response, Hüttner and Kidd argued that having learners of English with an Austrian accent would mean a global

failure in the foreign language teaching system. Moreover, the authors claimed that ELF could not be regarded as a positive model of reference to teach pronunciation.

A preference for an English native-like accent was also found in Jenkins' (2007) study. The findings disclosed that NNES and NES teachers preferred the NS-like pronunciation—especially the British and American ones—as a model for teaching English pronunciation and did not consider other models, such as ELF, to be appropriate since the teachers thought using other models different to the NES would imply a deterioration of the standards. According to them, this would represent a danger for mutual intelligibility among NNESs. However, the findings also revealed contradictions in the participants' perceptions, since they declared that they did not believe in the existence of a perfect English and they seemed to be aware that the correct use of English would not be intrinsically connected to an NS-like accent. In addition to this, the teachers who participated in this study expressed their awareness that NNES accents played a crucial role in reflecting and maintaining their own identity. Ur (1996), Jenkins (2005), and Walker (2010) reached similar conclusions about the speakers' legitimacy of preserving their L1 accents when using English and argued that this would be a means to assert their identities. Likewise, participants in the study conducted by Young and Walsh (2010) considered the NNES' accents as an integral part of their identities and defended ELF as a means of preserving it, even though the NNES teachers of English interviewed were more keen on NES pronunciation. Similarly, in his study among teachers and learners of English from different countries, Timmis (2002) disclosed that both preferred the NES accents not only to communicate with NESs but also with NNESs. More specifically, the findings revealed that most of the NNES teachers seemed to agree that an NS model for teaching was necessary: "While it is clearly inappropriate to foist native-speaker norms on students who neither want nor need them, it is

scarcely more appropriate to offer students a target which manifestly does not meet their aspirations" (p. 249). By contrast, the NES teachers' opinion seemed to not coincide with NNESs' teachers and learners at this point. Rather than focusing on their students' accents, NES teachers seemed to be more interested in the fact that their students acquired intelligibility for international communication.

According to Walker (2010), the contradictory attitudes between teachers' ideology and practice towards NES and NNES or ELF accents would be related to two major causes. The first one would be the prestige that an NES accent implies since it would reflect the teacher's ability to master this aspect of English that goes beyond grammatical and lexical competence. The second reason that Walker adduced was that NNES teachers would try to maximise the time and effort that they invested in learning by attempting to sound closer to NESs. Consequently, students' choice of being closer to NES accents could be the result of the influence transmitted by their English language teachers. This idea is expounded in Scales, Wennerstrom, Richard, and Wu (2006) in their study conducted among NNES students in the US. The participants had to choose whether they preferred to be understood or to have an English native-like accent. Eventually, the results indicated that most of the English learners wished to acquire a native-like accent. However, most of those students who chose to have an NES accent were unable to give a reason for their choice. According to the authors, the participants who were inclined towards the NES accent seemed to assume that it was the most appropriate choice for them.

A proclivity for English NS-like accent was also disclosed in the studies that Sung (2014) and Ren, Chen, and Lin (2016) conducted among Chinese students. However, these participants' motivations were related to their own linguacultural backgrounds rather than their teachers' choices of accents. The findings revealed that these speakers wanted their L1 culture to be perceived in a positive light. By being

closer to the NES ideal, they wished to be regarded as good learners of English. More specifically, Sung (2014) found that half of the participants preferred to have an English NS-like accent since, according to them, having a local accent in English in Hong Kong was interpreted as insincere. In this case, it was by not showing their local NNES accents that these participants were keeping their identity as Hong Kong citizens. The other fifty percent of participants preferred to maintain their NNES accents to demonstrate their Chinese linguacultural background. Moreover, this group adduced pragmatic reasons for keeping their local accents, as they pointed out the difficulty of imitating an NES accent. Along the same lines, the findings in Ren et al. (2016) evinced that participants wished to acquire an NES accent to be viewed as good learners of English but were aware of the difficulties and showed concern about not being successful.

Bearing in mind the studies discussed, it can be concluded that the speakers' concern of sounding closer or not to NESs is inevitably influenced by their self-perceptions as users of English. For instance, Jenkins (2000) pointed out to the L2 speakers' "inferiority complex" (p. 221) about their accents, as they would be logically influenced by their L1. That is, when they speak English, they would always feel themselves as compared with the ideal native English speaker. In line with this, Jenkins (2000) as well as other researchers in subsequent studies (Deterding, 2011; Kivistö, 2005; Thir, 2016), suggested that ELT (English Language Teaching) programmes should be more realistic since most communication nowadays takes place between non-native English speakers. These scholars defended the need to create ELT programmes that encourage L2 speakers to value their own accents in order to see them as part of their identity, rather than regard them as wrong or inferior in comparison to the native English speakers'. Kivistö (2005), for instance, claimed that teaching materials should reflect the NNESs' accents as a more realistic

reference for speakers in ELF contexts. Deterding's (2011) study pointed to the same direction as he alluded to the ELF approach as being a more inclusive teaching method. The author argued that ELF regards the NESs and their accents in a positive light and attempts to help them to acquire accommodation strategies. By using ELF, NESs would thus become efficient communicators when interacting with other speakers in lingua franca situations. Moreover, according to the author, turning into ELF users would allow them to be seen by NNESs as equals, rather than competitors for being closer to an NS-like accent.

Overall, the research examined in this section proved that the area of ELF phonology is a prolific one. However, according to ELF scholars, more research must be done on the implementation of the LFC in real classroom scenarios to obtain more data on how it is perceived by both teachers and students. Moreover, the studies discussed focused mainly on academic settings, which suggests a need to conduct more research in other contexts to gain deeper insights on the attitudes of other individuals in various circumstances outside the academic environment.

1.3.2. Lexis/Lexicogrammar

The works discussed in this section are also along the same lines of those dealing with phonology, as they demonstrate how a shift was progressively taking place from the focus on features to the processes underlying ELF communication. Moreover, the ELF studies on lexis reviewed here pinpoint how innovation in the usage of language was taking place, which makes them indispensable to undersand this evolution in ELF from the attention to forms to the interest in processes. Thus, the research on the discovery of ELF features and their functionalities are discussed first (1.3.2.1.) and next, the studies on lexical creativity are examined (1.3.2.2).

Research in lexis and lexicogrammar was slower than in other ELF areas since at the beginning there were no large size corpora to which the ELF studies could relate (Jenkins et al., 2011). However, this situation changed with the data collected from the VOICE and ELFA projects, and later the ACE, which allowed scholars to compare the use of ELF between Europe and Asia. After these corpus projects were set up, many works have researched the way in which ELF speakers used the language strategically to communicate with others.

The VOICE project was started by Seidlhofer in 2001. The author's aim was to identify some commonalities among speakers, regardless of their L1, or their level of proficiency in English. Besides, the author wanted to disclose which expressions, grammatical constructions, and lexical characteristics were most successfully used among these speakers, as well as the factors that favoured a straightforward communication, and those that caused problems. The author also hoped to find whether the closeness to an ENL variety was related to a more successful communication, or whether there were constructions that were frequently used and effective for ELF communication among their users, despite being considered as "incorrect" in ENL. Moreover, through the VOICE corpus, Seidlhofer (2000) aimed to establish hypotheses that reflected the systematic use of a set of patterns as simplified forms of L1 English.

Seidlhofer (2004) identified a series of lexical and lexicogrammatical ELF features that were regarded as hypotheses since no empirical work had yet been done. The list included the following characteristics:

- 'Dropping' the third person present tense *–s*
- 'Confusing' the relative pronouns *who* and *which*

- 'Omitting' definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in ENL, and inserting them where they do not occur in ENL
- 'Failing' to use correct forms in tag questions (e.g., *isn't it?* or *no*? instead of *shouldn't they?*)
- Inserting 'redundant' prepositions, as in *We have to study about*…)
- 'Overusing' certain verbs of high semantic generality, such as *do, have, make, put, take*
- 'Replacing' infinitive-constructions with *that*-clauses, as in *I want that*
- 'Overdoing' explicitness (e.g. *black color* rather than just *black*). (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 220; emphasis in original. Scare commas were restored according to the original paper[7])

1.3.2.1. The features and their functionalities

The first empirical works on ELF lexis and lexicogrammar aimed to further the study of the features that Seidlhofer's (2004) groundbreaking work had listed. One of the features that has been most commonly explored was the use of the third person -s in the present simple. Breiteneder (2005), for instance, conducted a study on a small-scale corpus of 50,000 words in which the language of native speakers of 21 European countries was included. The author found that the third person -s of present simple was used in conformity with the norms of Standard English in 80% of the cases. However, there were 29 instances in which the -s was dropped. This variation seemed to be due to linguistic and extra-linguistic reasons. The instances in which the *zero form* was used were namely three: collective noun heads, i.e. "ministry decide" (p. 18); coordinated subjects, i.e. "the institutions and the network

[7] According to Jenkins et al. (2011), the scare commas had been deleted by the publisher from the original paper of 2004. Therefore, this could give the false impression that Seidlhofer regarded those features that she herself had identified as negative ones, instead of being considered as legitimate ELF variants.

thinks" (p. 19), and indefinite expressions, i.e. "everybody initially talk about it" (p. 20). The author attributed the omission of the third person singular -s to regularisation by analogy, that is, the speakers omitted the third person singular by analogy with the regular pattern of other verbs in the present tense. As for the extra-linguistic nature of this variation in the third person, it seemed to be a result of maximisation of the economy due to communicative redundancy. As one of the ELF speakers asserted in the recordings for the corpus: "what really matters is that we are sort of basically understood" (p. 34). The findings suggested that priority was given by the speakers to the content of the message rather than the form of the language.

Later on, Breiteneder (2009) explored again the usage of the third person singular -s by analysing the data of a pre-released version of the VOICE. The main objective was to disclose the underlying reasons for ELF speakers to use the zero marking for third person singular instead of the third person -s in some cases, and why they did not use it in others. The study concluded that the main factor that influenced the presence or absence of the zero marking was communicative effectiveness, as the author declared that "ELF speakers focus on their joint communicative enterprises and use ELF as a successful means for the exchange of information" (p. 63). Moreover, the author pointed out that these speakers did not need to use the third person -s as a marker of prestige and social status since their social and educational conditions were already stated as being working in European affairs and capable of communicating successfully in a different language than their L1.

Another study that dealt with the third person singular -s was Cogo and Dewey's (2006). These authors analysed some lexicogrammar characteristics and the pragmatic circumstances behind them, while exploring the interrelationship between the two areas. For the lexicogrammar area, the authors analysed data from naturally-

occurring conversations ranging from informal to more formal ones, such as presentations and seminars. There were 55 participants with 17 different L1 languages, who were not learners of English but competent L2 users "in their own right" (p. 63). Moreover, the authors pointed to a four key criteria that ELF works should accomplish in order to be considered as accurate ELF lexicogrammar descriptions, which would allow them to be identified as legitimate ELF variants, and not errors: (1) These features must be systematic and occur frequently; (2) they must be statistically analysed and corroborated by means of concordance software that can help to establish patterns of language and corroborate their systematicity; (3) those features must be produced by different speakers from different L1 backgrounds, and finally; (4) they must lead to effectiveness in communication (p. 64).

The study not only confirmed the features highlighted by Seidlhofer (2004) but also found other innovations. For instance, a tendency to use bare and/or full infinitive instead of gerunds, i.e. "interested to do" (p. 75), or the use of the infinitive as the subject of the clause, i.e. "to study is . . . " (p. 75), and frequent use of redundancy through the ellipsis of objects/complements of transitive verbs, i.e. "I wanted to go with", "You can borrow" (p. 76). However, the study focused particularly on the use of the third person singular zero. The findings disclosed that there was a fair distribution between the occurrences of third person singular -s (48%), and third person singular zero (52%). Furthermore, the authors found that the difference in the distribution was determined by the presence or absence of native English speakers in ELF interactions: when NESs were excluded, the use of the third person zero increased. The authors' conclusions pointed to the speakers' effective use of communicative strategies in ELF contexts. More specifically, in connection with the results on the presence or absence of the third person singular

-s, the authors highlighted the awareness of the speakers in using or omitting this feature, depending on who their interlocutor was.

Another feature that was included in Seidlhofer's (2004) list was the use of question tags. Hülmbauer (2007) for instance, found that there was a wide preference for the use of "or?" and "no?" (p. 21) with a confirmatory function in her study of naturally occurring conversations among Erasmus students. The author suggested that the use of this feature was based on communicative effectiveness, and argued how intonational components contributed to making the message intelligible. Moreover, the author highlighted the fact that the variable use in the question tags was not only related to ELF but was also present in ENL varieties and in New Englishes. According to Hülmbauer (2007), this could be a sign of "language change in progress" (p. 22). At the same time, these findings would support the claim that these ELF features should be viewed as legitimate variations rather than errors.

Metsä-Ketelä's (2006) study on lexical vagueness also contributed to the lexis and lexicogrammar area. The author analysed the use of *more or less* in the ELFA corpus and compared it with the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) data, which is mostly based on written and spoken English produced by NESs in academic contexts (Mauranen, 2006a). The findings revealed a higher frequency of the use of the expression by NNESs, which indicated a higher occurrence within the ELFA corpus than in the MICASE. Moreover, the use was found mainly in monologic speech. Metsä-Ketelä concluded that the use of the expression appeared to have three main functions: "minimizing, comparing similarities and approximating quantities" (p. 141).

Another study based on the ELFA corpus was Ranta's (2006), although in this case, the analysis focused on tense usage. The author observed that the speakers made an extensive use of the progressive aspect, i.e. "air that we *are breathing*" (p.

108; emphasis in original). The findings disclosed that this use of the progressive aspect promoted comprehensibility in communication and, more interestingly, these speakers perceived that the use of -ing captured the attention of their interlocutor.

The use of the progressive was also found to be prominent in Björkman's (2008) study. In this case, speakers from different L1 backgrounds tended to use the progressive instead of the present simple when they were discussing scientific and engineering facts, although these facts were always true and would, therefore, require the present simple, i.e. "A power system is called a power system, because *it is using* different generator systems" (p. 39; emphasis in original). Moreover, the results confirmed the findings of previous studies that the progressive tense was more frequently used by speakers in ELF interaction contexts than in NES communication.

Non-standard usage of the verb tense was also found to be a common feature among Erling's (2002) students at the Freie Universität in Berlin. In her study, the author demonstrated how the non-adherence to standard norms, such as in the case of the non-standard use of the verb tense, i.e. "I *learn* English since ten years" (p. 8; emphasis added), did not imply that these speakers were deficient users of the language. By contrast, the author claimed that by making use of non-standard features, such as the variations in the use of the tense and aspect, these speakers were efficient. To summarise, these speakers used the features they regarded as being highly functional and eliminated those that were inefficient from their perspective, regardless of their presence or absence in their L1.

Functionality was also highlighted by Björkman (2013) as the underlying reason for the choice of certain features in ELF. In her study conducted at a Swedish university, the author disclosed that most of the features pointed out in the literature were found, except for the use of redundant prepositions. Moreover, other features that had not been previously reported by other ELF scholars, such as non-standard

question formulation and unraised negation, were found in her study. The author categorised the features that were present in her study according to their communicative effectiveness, namely, the use of non-standard features that caused overt disturbance in communication, such as non-standard question formulation; effective simplifications of redundancy, i.e. not using the plural marking for nouns; elements that favoured comprehensibility and increased explicitness, i.e. unraised negative, pre- and post-dislocation; and other non-standard characteristics that did not cause communication problems (p. 143). The findings suggested that these features were chosen according to their functionality in ELF communication, and they were used as long as they proved to be effective. Furthermore, the features that were considered to be not useful were eliminated from her study. The author found that non-standard question formulation was the only peculiarity that caused an overt disturbance in communication, although she also pointed to a combination of other elements that could affect communication negatively, such as question intonation and the presence or absence of the interrogative adverb or pronoun as well as syntax. Besides exploring the usage of non-standard forms, the author also investigated the perceptions that the participants had of these forms in her study. In this respect, the results revealed that subject-verb agreement issues, article usage, and word order were rated by the participants as being the most frequently involved in incomprehensibility. Moreover, issues related to word order, passive voice, and question formulation were perceived as the most irritating ones. Keeping in mind the previous findings of ELF research, Björkman concluded that despite a vast amount of usage of ELF features, communication was mostly effective.

Likewise, in a recent study discussed in the previous section on phonology by Ren et al. (2016), the perception of ELF lexicogrammar was also analysed. This research was conducted among two groups of students, one from mainland China

and the other from Taiwan. The researchers created a series of sentences, some of them containing typical variations of Chinese English, whereas others included ELF lexicogrammar features. The findings revealed that the students from China regarded ELF features as less correct and acceptable than those from Taiwan. This pointed out towards a tendency for following Standard English norms more closely in mainland China than in Taiwan. In light of the previous literature, the authors concluded that the use of ELF features did not cause problems in intelligibility.

1.3.2.2. Lexical creativity

The creative use of the language in ELF was also observed in the lexical innovations that have been explored in numerous works. Hülmbauer (2007), for instance, identified a series of innovative uses of the language in ELF interactions. More specifically, the author found some coinages made by the speakers in her study, such as “dictature” (p. 25), instead of *dictatorship*, as a term which resembled the form *Diktatur* German L1 of the speaker. In her later work, Hülmbauer (2009, 2013) continued to delve into the influence of the speakers’ multilingual backgrounds in ELF communication. She found how the cross-linguistic influence, not only of their L1 but of other languages that they mastered, led these speakers to use words in English that resembled the term they meant in their L1 or in other languages from their repertoire. Consequently, the resulting word in English would be a false friend. She mentions, for instance, the use of *card* to refer to a map since in Greek, the speaker’s L1, it would be *chartis*, whereas, in the other language of her repertoire, German, it would be *Karte*. The author concluded that these innovative words and false friends would eventually become “true friends” (Hülmbauer, 2009, p. 341) since they would contribute to effectiveness in ELF communication.

Pitzl, Breiteneder, and Klimpfinger (2008) based their work on lexical innovations in ELF on a subcorpus of VOICE, consisting of 250,042 transcribed

words collected from speech events from education, leisure, and professional areas. The authors explored a series of words that had not been found in any of the reference dictionaries used for the compilation of VOICE and had been categorised under the tag *pvc* (pronunciation variations and coinages). Some of them seemed to be new lexicon, i.e. "misstand", "pronunciate" (p. 29), "forbiddenness", "increasement" (p. 31), whereas others belonged to specialised terminology, i.e. "commodification", "annihilator" (p. 29). Before analysing their significance for ELF, the authors clarified their reasons to include technical terms within the pvc category, despite their not being apparently real lexical innovations:

> Firstly, it needs to be borne in mind that any distinction between general and special (ESP) vocabulary is always to some degree arbitrary and depends on the context in which a word is used. What is 'normal' in one context and for one person may be 'new' in another context and for another person. Secondly, items of special terminology, which have often only been coined recently and are, diachronically speaking, young, go back to the same word-formation processes which are also observable in words which are coined ad hoc and are not part of any discipline. (Pitzl, Breiteneder, & Klimpfinger, pp. 29-30)

The authors observed that these pvc examples were not arbitrarily coined since their aim was to find which were the main characteristics of these items and which circumstances made them effective for communication. The findings suggested that the usage of these words increased clarity, a characteristic that Dewey (2007b) regarded as the main underlying process that triggered innovation in ELF. Economy of expression, regularisation, and filling lexical gaps were also found as the main reasons for such innovations. As a result, a clear relation between these forms and their pragmatic functionality was observed.

The use of idiomatic expressions has been another flourishing area of research in ELF lexis and lexicogrammar. In some early scholarship, the use of idioms was pointed out as not being very frequent. Meierkord (2005), for instance, conducted a study among 74 speakers from different L1 backgrounds, with different levels of proficiency in English, and who were recorded while having informal conversations. The author found that these speakers used very few idioms and the lexicon seemed to be unstable and heterogeneous. Moreover, the lexicon was more or less culturally oriented, depending on the speakers that participated in these conversations. However, the author concluded with the caveat that these speakers would have to interact regularly with a stable group of participants so that the lexicon could show stability.

In line with the presence or absence of idioms in ELF interactions, the need for NESs to adjust their use of idiomatic expressions to be understood by NNESs was also discussed by Prodromou (2003, 2007a, 2007b). In Prodromou (2007a) idiomaticity was found to be problematic when it followed the fixed L1 usage, whereas in other cases it was pointed out that NNESs tended to avoid their use when the interactants perceived that this could cause problems in communication (Prodromou, 2007b). These cases referred to what Seidlhofer (2001, 2002, 2004, 2009) named as *unilateral idiomaticity*, and described those instances in which the use of a native idiomatic expression (i.e. idioms, metaphors, phrasal verbs) can lead to a breakdown in communication as they would not be known by the interlocutor. However, it must be noted that in these three studies by Prodromou, idiomaticity was researched from an NES perspective as the ideal to which ELF users should conform. Consequently, bearing in mind that most ELF users communicate with speakers from different L1s—mainly NNESs—and that they would need to be

understood by them, it is necessary to address this issue within the context of ELF specifically (Björkman, 2013).

Contrary to the perspectives expressed by Prodromou (2007b), ELF research has proved that ENL idioms are not avoided by ELF speakers, but rather NNESs have been revealed to use idioms differently from the ENL and to adapt them in a creative way. For instance, Pitzl (2009) compared the use of idiomatic expressions in ELF contexts with their use in ENL situations. The studies disclosed that ELF speakers used idioms creatively and not as fixed structures, in comparison to the native English speakers' usage, i.e. *We should not wake up any dogs*, instead of the original expression *Let sleeping dogs lie*. This would concur with Seidlhofer and Widdowson (2007) as they argued how ELF users adjust idioms to their communicative situation by negotiating and creating new ones on-line. Moreover, Pitzl's results (2009) proved that the ELF speakers' creative usage of these idioms did not affect their original meaning or functionality. The author concluded that ELF would allow their users to be more creative as they would resort to metaphors in idiomatic language. By contrast, in ENL idiomatic expressions would be regarded to a certain extent as fixed and, therefore, creativity would not be so plausible.

While claiming that little attention has been paid to the multilingual aspect of idioms and metaphors in ELF, Pitzl (2016) explored how these would be influenced by language contact. The author's aim was to demonstrate "how non-English idioms have a role to play in ELF interactions as emblems of multilingual creativity" (p. 299). She analysed a series of examples of non-English idioms in ELF interactions from the VOICE and argued how the multicompetent multilingual ELF user–by being cognisant of various languages and cultures—would demonstrate linguacultural expertise. Consequently, rather than the monolingual native English speaker, it would be the ELF user that plays the role of the linguistic ideal in ELF

interactions. The findings also suggested that non-English idioms were adapted to English. Moreover, the idioms used in their original versions would be elements that help to construct inter- and transcultural dimensions since they are usually representative of specific cultural idiosyncrasies. Pitzl pointed to an example of a conversation with two Maltese individuals; in this conversation, a Serbian speaker identified herself with Italians as she highlighted that they had a similar proverb in both cultures, i.e. "fuma come un turco –smoke like a turk" (p. 305). In this instance, this speaker showed explicitly to the others her own individual multilingual repertoire (i.e. Serbian, Italian, and English). And at the same time, she pointed to her own multilingual awareness on the association that she made of the idiom in different languages—her L1 Serbian as well as her L2 and L3, Italian and English, respectively. However, as the author observed, non-English idioms may also be integrated within ELF speech without speakers being conscious of this. Therefore, the use of non-English idioms proved that individual and collective factors would have an impact on the linguistic consequences of language contact in ELF interactions. As Pitzl asserted, "[t]he analysis of the linguistic consequences of ELF as a site of transient language contact offers a window on the multilingual creativity of individual ELF speakers and ELF groups" (p. 306). Thus, the author's conclusions emphasised how language contact and the multilingual repertoire of speakers would be essential in the innovation of idioms in ELF communication.

1.3.3. Pragmatics

Similar to what happened in the phonology and the lexis and lexicogrammar areas, the need to unfold the pragmatic reasons that triggered the ELF features emerged, as well as how ELF speakers were able to communicate successfully. This section explores the evolution on ELF pragmatics from the first studies with a

primary focus on speakers' strategies to achieve mutual understanding despite using forms that differed from the ENL ones. Subsequent studies pointed out how problems in communication were not as common as expected and they were solved through the speakers' ability to use different pragmatic strategies (Jenkins et al., 2011). More specifically, the first part of this section discusses the research that centered on the ways in which communication was promoted in ELF (1.3.3.1.). This is followed by the advancement of other strategies beyond the *let it pass* for achieving mutual understanding (1.3.3.2.). While analysing the strategies that promoted mutual intelligibility in ELF, the discussion moves on to the research that considers how certain strategies would signal the cultural identity of its users (1.3.3.3.). Next, studies on discourse markers and *chunking* are reviewed since they have recently captured more attention in the ELF pragmatic area (1.3.3.4.). More specifically, chunking refers to the phenomenon by which phraseological sequences are created to manage interaction in ELF communication (Mauranen, 2005, 2009a). Finally, the last section within pragmatics focuses on some studies that have disclosed how consensus and cooperation—despite being common—are not always present in ELF communication (1.3.3.5.).

1.3.3.1. Promoting communication

The first studies into ELF pragmatics focused on the communication among non-native English speakers. Given that cooperation was found to be the main feature of ELF communication, researchers attempted to disclose how mutual intelligibility was achieved despite the use of non-standard forms according to the ENL (Firth, 1990, 1996; Gramkow Andersen, 1993). In one of the first studies in this area, Firth (1996) analysed a series of telephone conversations of Danish export managers with their clients, who were NNESs. The nature of these conversations was business related and the aim of the speakers was to sell and buy goods. Participants

intended to carry out these conversations as normally as possible despite the usage of certain syntactic, morphological, and phonological features that did not correspond to standard English, and that the native speakers would categorise as "infelicities" (p. 239). Firth highlighted the use of certain strategies that these participants used and that allowed them to communicate with their interlocutors and achieve mutual understanding.

One of the strategies identified by the author was the *let it pass*, which the speakers used when they avoided a difficult communicative situation. In these circumstances, participants gave priority to achieving mutual agreement rather than asking their interlocutor for clarification. In other words, by using this strategy, participants chose to let a comment that was not clearly understood go as unnoticed, continue the interaction and focus on the rest of the conversation. The author pointed out the difficulties that researchers would have to know if the participants did let something pass consciously, or if they did it unconsciously for any given reason, for instance, as a result of not hearing their interlocutor (p. 243). The other strategy found to be commonly used was the *make it normal*. This strategy referred to the situations in which the hearer identified the interlocutor's usage of non-standard forms—considered as errors in ENL—but acted normally. The hearer would focus on the content of the message, rather than on making any suggestions about the correctness of the form. This latter action, which concentrates on correcting the form, is a different strategy, known as *other repair*, which was found on very few occasions, and so was *other completions*–completing the information of the interlocutor. Firth (1996) revealed how these conversations were mainly content-oriented: "Some resources - such as 'other-repair' and 'other completions'- appear to be less prevalent in the data examined here, and it was suggested that a reason for this was that such devices have the potential for focusing attention on the form of the

other's talk - a practice these interactants appear averse to engage in" (p. 256). The author concluded that communication was "robust" (p. 248), i.e. no significant problems were observed, which enabled speakers to hold relatively fluid conversations. In other words, Firth found that speakers in ELF communication continued conversations without asking for further clarification on the basis that they were willing to accept that unsolved circumstances and communication strategies were given. Subsequent studies confirmed Firth's (1996) findings that ELF users attempted to achieve mutual consensus in ELF communication. However, these subsequent studies revealed how participants attempted to resolve difficulties and achieved mutual intelligibility in ELF communication by other different means than the let it pass strategy. Moreover, it must be noted that, unlike today's research into ELF, the approach to ELF in Firth's (1996) study was done from a perspective of deficiency in the participants' usage of English. That is, despite considering that participants in his study could communicate efficiently by using ELF, they were regarded against the NESs' yardstick (Jenkins, 2011; Jenkins et al., 2011).

A more sceptical perspective on mutual understanding in ELF was taken by House (1999) in "Misunderstanding in Intercultural Communication: Interactions in English as a Lingua Franca and the *Myth* of Mutual Intelligibility" (emphasis added). In this study, and in line with the early ones within ELF, House analysed the communication among NNESs. However, these conversations were not naturally-occurring since they were prepared in advanced and simulated in a classroom. Unsurprisingly, the findings manifested that speakers were not willing to use the communication strategies that had been found as commonly used in ELF interactions in other studies. They did not feel that their interactions were at a stake since it was not communication in a real scenario of negotiation of meaning (i.e. Firth, 1996; Gramkow Andersen, 1993). House also referred to the notion of

"pragmatic fluency" (p. 81) as the way in which ELF speakers would be able to communicate fluently and in a way that applied to their legitimacy as ELF users, that is, without having to conform to the NESs' norms. The author established five performance criteria for achieving this pragmatic fluency:

> 1. Appropriate use of routine pragmatic phenomena
> 2. Ability to initiate topics and topic change, making use of appropriate routines
> 3. Ability to "carry weight" in a conversation
> 4. Ability to show turn-taking, replying/responding
> 5. Appropriate rate of speech, types of filled and unfilled pauses, frequency and function of repairs. (p. 81)

The creation of this list contributed to identify the pragmatic skills that would promote collaboration and smoothness in communication among interactants from different linguacultural backgrounds, namely in ELF communication scenarios. House's criteria on pragmatic fluency played therefore a part in reconceptualising the notion of *fluency* within an ELF framework (Cogo, 2010).

Focusing on communication among NNESs as well, Meierkord's (2000) analysed a series of small talk conversations among participants with 17 different L1 backgrounds in a student hall of residence in the UK. The findings suggested differences in the level of pragmatic competence of NESs and NNESs. More specifically, ELF speakers showed a tendency for making pauses before the end of conversations as a way of marking a change in the topic. Other findings were the choice of safe topics for conversation as, for instance, those related to life in the halls of residence, or their lectures at the university, or the use of *backchannelling* in a similar way than NESs. The backchannelling strategy is used to show listenership, agreement, and involvement in the interaction and to produce more speech (Cogo &

Dewey, 2012). Backchannelling was used verbally (i.e. *mhm*, *right*, *I see*) and non-verbally (head nods) with supportive laughter, and immoderate use of cajolers (i.e. *you know*). In light of previous studies (i.e. Gramkow Andersen, 1993; Firth, 1999), Meierkord concluded that communication among those ELF speakers was mainly characterised by an atmosphere of cooperativeness and consensus.

Likewise, Lesznyák's (2002) study disclosed how participants—after completing a series of phases from the opening to the close of a discussion—achieved common ground. The corpus analysed was obtained from a series of simulated meeting discussions among students from different European countries at a European students' conference, thus in a real ELF setting. The author examined topic introductions and closings, interruptions, topic shifts and discourse topics. Moreover, complex formulations were substituted by simple ones to achieve successful communication. Again, the findings revealed that participants were willing to advance towards mutual consensus. Furthermore, they prioritised communication effectiveness in a way that concurred with Firth's (1996) assertion that communication in ELF was robust.

1.3.3.2. Achieving mutual understanding beyond the *let it pass* strategy

Different means of achieving mutual understanding in ELF communication were researched in subsequent works. For instance, Mauranen's (2006b) study disclosed how speakers from different L1 backgrounds from the ELFA corpus used a series of strategies to accomplish mutual intelligibility. For instance, these speakers aimed to *self-repair* by rephrasing the content of their messages. *Repair* would be the attempt to solve or prevent problems in communication with the aim of achieving intelligibility (Kurhila, 2003, 2006; Wagner & Gardner, 2004). It must be noted that repair is different from correction since the use of the former is not necessarily

triggered by an error (Gramkow, 2001; Kaur, 2009, 2011; Smit, 2010). In fact, Mauranen (2006b) found that self-repairs were mostly proactive, as they tended to occur after the identification of a trouble in communication. In this respect, self-repair was found to be a means of preventing problems of intelligibility and clarifying the message, that is, before problems in communication occur. Moreover, in the cases in which misunderstandings occurred, they were signalled by questions and repetition. In addition to this, the results disclosed no instances of grammatical correction, although self-repair included grammatical reformulation. This grammatical self-repair was defined as the "speakers' initiations of grammatical reformulations in their own speech before closing their turns" (p. 146). Grammatical reformulation was found to be the main difference with respect to speakers from the MICASE data. More specifically, Mauranen compared the occurrences of self-repairs in the ELFA corpus with those in the MICASE. The findings indicated that speakers in MICASE did not use syntactic reformulations and seemed more inclined to paraphrase long sentences. Additionally, the results suggested that the practices of self-repair were not frequently made explicit by the interactants, as they tended to be more focused on comprehension. Nevertheless, the author realised that by repeating statements, speakers contributed to the achievement of understanding as they expected clarification from their interlocutors. Consequently, by rephrasing their propositions, the interactants were also conscious of their own mission in making their statements clearer to their interlocutors. This coincides with Mauranen's assertion that "[l]ingua franca speakers thus appear to work hard to achieve mutual understanding, quite possibly on the basis of the natural common sense assumption that it is not easy to achieve without special effort" (p. 147). Therefore, she concluded that a joint effort among ELF interactants seemed to be made to achieve mutual intelligibility. Later work by Björkman (2008), Kaur (2009, 2011), Matsumoto (2011)

was able to corroborate the joint effort that ELF users made to minimise vagueness and ambiguity.

Repetition was also observed as a common means to contribute to mutual understanding in ELF interactions. House (2003), for instance, alluded to the term "represent" (p. 568) and did not use the exact word *repetition*. However, according to Lichtkoppler (2007), House's description of the term represent could be understood as the function that repetition actually had:

> It is used, as its name suggests, to 're-present' the previous speaker's move in order to aid the present speaker's working memory in both his/her comprehension and production processes, to provide textual coherence, to signal uptake, to request confirmation, or to indicate to the previous speaker that there is no intention to 'steal' his/her turn. (House, 2003, p. 568)

Besides contributing to ELF communication with the functions expressed by House (2003), Cogo and Dewey's (2006) study demonstrated that repetition reflected the speakers' ability to accommodate to their interlocutors and, consequently, this favoured mutual cooperation. More specifically, the authors pointed to repetition as a sign of agreement and listenership, and of the interactants' engagement in the conversation. The findings also disclosed that repeating the interlocutors' information enabled speakers to align among them and show mutual support and acceptance as well as joint effort to achieve mutual understanding, which supports Mauranen's (2006b) findings discussed above.

Repetition was the focus of Lichtkoppler's (2007) study as well. She analysed a series of conversations at an Austrian student exchange organisation and categorised the repetitions that she observed according to their functions as follows: to gain time and develop utterance; to give prominence; to ensure accuracy and to signal listenership and establish cohesion. Moreover, Lichtkoppler pointed out that these

repetitions would have three main purposes: (1) facilitating the speakers' language production, (2) favouring mutual understanding, and this would allow interactants to (3) show their attitude and opinions (p. 59). She concluded that repetition was crucial to deal with linguacultural divergences and achieve successful communication in these ELF interactions. Lichtkoppler's (2007) findings were substantiated by subsequent studies (Björkman, 2014; Cogo, 2009; Kaur, 2009, 2010; Mauranen, 2012). Kaur (2009), for instance, found that repetition was commonly used among university students in Malaysia from her corpus. In both Kaur's (2009, 2010) studies the findings disclosed that communication was effective, since the participants' competent usage of repetition accompanied by paraphrasing allowed them to achieve common ground. These conclusions are consistent with Björkman's (2011) study among engineering students from different L1 backgrounds at a Swedish university. In this study, participants' usage of repetition allowed them to carry out successful conversations. Similarly, in another study by Björkman (2014), the findings proved that repetition was a useful strategy to remove uncertainty from instances of potential ambiguity that could result in a lack of intelligibility among interactants.

All the studies discussed in this subsection seemed to reinforce Pitzl's (2005) assertion that understanding is "not a passive ability, but an interactive and jointly constructed process which is dynamic and cooperative and which all participants of a conversation continuously engage in" (p. 52). They have emphasised, then, the relevance of the joint effort that participants must do to achieve mutual understanding.

1.3.3.3. Signalling cultural identity

Besides researching strategies that proved essential for achieving mutual intelligibility, research on ELF pragmatics has explored how cultural identities are signalled, especially through code-switching.

Code-switching has been considered an essential pragmatic strategy in ELF communication (Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Jenkins et al., 2011) and is the means by which speakers strategically resort to another language that they have in their repertoire. Some of the reasons for code-switching would be that speakers consider that a different language would express a certain idea more adequately (Cogo, 2009; Firth & Wagner 1997; House, 2013a Klimpfinger, 2007; Pölzl, 2003). By doing so, these bi- or multilingual speakers would assume that their interlocutors would be able to understand the concept since they all would make adjustments in their language(s) to adapt to the linguacultural heterogeneity of the ELF communication context (Cogo, 2009).

Code-switching was frequently detected among ELF speakers in the work carried out by Pölzl and Seidlhofer (2006). More specifically, the participants in this study were Arabic speakers at the Department of Modern Languages in Jordan. Interestingly, the authors found that, although these speakers switched to English—a different language from their L1—they felt comfortable. Pölzl and Seidlhofer referred to the concept of the *habitat* (Bourdieu, 1991) factor, which they defined as "the setting which interlocutors recognize as their own" (p. 155). The authors suggested that these speakers' feelings of being at ease when using a different language from their L1 were due to the fact that all of them shared the same culture. Thus, having the same culture allowed these participants the opportunity to rely on it while they switched to English. However, this is not the usual case, since heterogeneity in ELF scenarios is rather the norm than the exception. Consequently, ELF speakers cannot usually resort to their L1 culture, nor to the ENL, as Pölzl and Seidlhofer (2006) pointed out: "It has long been recognized–in principle if not in practice–that when learning and speaking English as a lingua franca, its users are not required to adopt the culture(s) associated with English as a native language. They have to know the

code sufficiently . . . to manage successful and effective communication across cultures” (p. 153). The ELF speakers of this study did not feel the need to adhere to the ENL culture, but rather they tended to rely on their own culture since they perceived that this was a feasible option for them.

Code-switching was similarly found to be a strategy for signalling cultural identity in Klimpfinger’s (2007). The author analysed the role of code-switching in group discussions among academics from different L1 backgrounds. The findings revealed that these ELF speakers signalled culture, as well as in-group belonging, through frequently switching to other languages, including their L1s. In her study, Klimpfinger distinguished between two types of switches—those used explicitly by speakers to allude to ideas or concepts associated with a specific culture (i.e. homelands, backgrounds, or particular expressions)—and those referred to as *emblematic switches*. The latter were used by means of tags, exclamations, pause fillers, or function words from one language to another since, according to the author, they would be normally easy to integrate within utterances. These emblematic switches were used by speakers “to implicitly give a linguistic emblem of this culture” (p. 40). One of the cases in which these emblematic switches were used for signalling cultural identity was the instance in which a French participant, despite being the only French speaker in the conversation, resorted to her L1 by using “oui” (p. 54). The word seemed to be “easily fitted in” (p. 55) as nobody asked for translation or clarification, and its purpose was to express the speakers’ multilingual identity. At the same time, the meaning of the French utterance was assumed by all the participants in this conversation as the speaker’s purpose was to indicate group membership. As for the other type of switch, another participant, while discussing universities’ different profiles in education, switched to her Italian L1 as she used the word “[R]oma” (p. 55) instead of the English form *Rome*. By doing so, this

participant signalled her Italian background and her hometown. Furthermore, she highlighted "her unique status in the ELF group" (p. 56). Apart from signalling cultural identity, Klimpfinger (2007, 2009) found that ELF speakers used code-switching for different purposes, such as directing their speech towards one or more addressees, asking for assistance, introducing a new topic, or because they believed that another language would be more appropriate to express a specific idea.

Code-switching was also found relevant in Cogo's (2010) study for signalling cultural identity but also for showing cooperativeness and promoting understanding in ELF communication. An example of the cooperativeness that resulted from code-switching was demonstrated by the prevention of a potential instance of unilateral idiomaticity (Seidlhofer, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2009). More specifically, one of the participants in Cogo (2010) tried to clarify the meaning of the French expression "fleur bleu" (p. 301) in English. Other speakers engaged in this exploration of an equivalent meaning by resorting to their respective L1s and tried to convey the meaning in English. In these circumstances, the signalling of identity was made explicit by another participant's reference to their "foreignness" (p. 304). In this case, the speaker's assertion that "we are all foreigners" (p. 303) showed the participant's sense of belonging to the group. Therefore, this speaker was pointing out that all the participants in the conversation shared the characteristic of being foreigners. The findings revealed that participants code-switched as they resorted to their shared multilingual repertoires to negotiate meaning and achieve mutual understanding and cooperation. Moreover, by means of code-switching, these speakers signalled their identities with respect to their L1s and the other languages in their repertoires. Similarly, House (2013a) disclosed how code-switching was used by academics at a German university during consultation office hours. More specifically, while using ELF, the German interactants switched to their German L1 by saying *ja* instead of

yes as a backchannel to express solidarity towards their interlocutors with a different L1 but also to signal their identity. In this way, these German participants expressed that they understood what their interlocutors were telling them, but also filtered their German nativeness by—consciously or unconsciously—switching to their L1 in an ELF interaction.

Multilingual identities were reflected in Vettorel's (2014) analysis of Italian students using ELF in blogs as well. The author found that by employing a series of elements and concepts from their L1 and from other languages from their repertoire, these Italian bloggers were demonstrating their diverse cultural identities. Moreover, the participants in this study frequently commented on other participants' perceptions of their own lack of proficiency in the language. This was used to express their group membership, as they were sharing their status of not being native speakers of those languages with which they were dealing in their comments.

A similar study was conducted by Luzón (2016), although in this case the participants were from different L1 backgrounds and the blogs in which they interacted were restricted to travel blogs. The study focused on four strategies: the make it normal (focusing on the content of the message rather than the form therefore ignoring grammatical inconsistencies of other participants), backchannelling (signalling attentiveness to interlocutor, expressing agreement and eliciting more speech), code-switching, and *meta-comments* (commenting on the participants' own use of the language, or about the interactants' ways of communicating). The aim of the study was to ascertain whether the comments written in the blog signalled the participants' identity and were a means to create a sense of community among them. The findings revealed that these bloggers manifested several attitudes through different strategies. Participants indicated attentiveness and interest towards their interlocutors by resorting to the

backchannel. They also signalled their membership to the group of travel bloggers by using the make it normal strategy, whereas they code-switched to create solidarity and show a multicultural identity. Moreover, the author noticed that cultural concepts that were not known by other interactants were not usually translated to make them clearer for the others. According to Luzón, this behaviour could be due to the asynchronous nature of blog interactions, since these types of interactions would allow participants to look up for the information on the internet. However, it could be another means of creating solidarity while encouraging interactants to learn about the languages and cultures of other participants: "the commenter invites the reader to accept them as part of the inter-culture that is being co-created in this particular ELF situation and thus the switch serves to construct group-solidarity" (p. 140). She also found that participants in her study, in contraposition to bloggers in Vettorel's (2014) study, did not make comments on their language proficiency, nor on their condition of being non-natives. In this case, participants used meta-comments to signal "a loyalty to their culture" (p. 145). With these meta-comments, these bloggers encouraged other participants to share with them their idiosyncrasies from their own cultural background. The author concluded that the four strategies analysed were a means to express rapport, attentiveness, and solidarity towards their interlocutors. As for code-switching, it contributed to express the participants' multilingual identity and, at the same time, reflected their belonging to the international community of travel bloggers.

Code-switching has been a vastly researched strategy during the last decade, as we have just seen. The next section explores how discourse markers and chunking have started to be researched more recently in ELF, as innovative functions were unearthed within ELF communication.

1.3.3.4. Discourse markers and *chunking*

The use of discourse markers have recently begun to be explored in ELF pragmatics (Jenkins et al., 2011). For instance, House (2009) analysed the use of *you know* among ELF speakers during university consultation hours in Germany. The study revealed that ELF speakers used this expression differently from English L1 speakers. More specifically, the native speakers' use tended to be hearer-oriented, that is, they used the expression to relate to other interactants. However, ELF speakers reinterpreted the expression as they implemented it in their discourse as an organising device; i.e. to direct the attention towards a specific topic, to introduce a new one, or to indicate transition among different topics. When *you know* appeared accompanied by the conjunctions *but*, *and*, *because*, the expression acquired the function of focusing the attention of the interlocutors. The findings also suggested that, in ELF interactions, *you know* served as a coherence marker in a different way than in ENL. ELF speakers tended to use *you know* when they could not find the appropriate words as they tried to formulate their statement. In such situations, participants in this study used *you know* as a way of revealing their attempts to deal with upcoming difficulties.

A similar lack of orientation towards other speakers was found in the use of the discourse markers *I think* and *I don't know*, analysed by Baumgarten and House (2010). The corpus of this study consisted of elicited conversations at German university scenarios. These conversations were recorded from three different groups, one with English L1 speakers and the other two with L2 English speakers. Although both discourse markers *I think* and *I don't know* seemed to be used similarly among the English L1 and the ELF speakers, there were some dissimilarities. These were mainly related to the frequency of use as well as to the speakers' choices of concrete forms and contexts of use. More specifically, in comparison with L1 speakers, ELF

speakers tended to use *I think* as a single clause construction more frequently, and less as a pragmaticalised verbal routine. As for the difference in the contextual use of *I think*, ELF speakers used this expression as an additional collocation of their subjective point of view since their stance was already implicated in their speech utterances. The findings, therefore, suggested that ELF interactional discourses were more "fragile" (p. 1197) in comparison with those from the ENL speakers. By using *I think*, ELF speakers were consciously expressing subjective meanings and making their point clear. At the same time, this manifestation of subjectivity was regarded by ELF speakers as a potential problematic perspective.

As for the phrase *I don't know*, L1 speakers used it to express vagueness, avoidance, neutrality and lack of commitment. Therefore, these speakers preferred the more grammaticalised and pragmaticalised form of the verb. By contrast, ELF speakers preferred the less grammaticalised and pragmaticalised forms. That is, ELF speakers used *I don't know* to express their lack of knowledge as well as their attempt to solve the ongoing difficulties derived from their perceived insufficient information on a specific topic. Moreover, L1 speakers used the discourse marker to focus the attention of the hearer and to invite other participants to join the conversation. However, the ELF speakers' usage of *I don't know* did not involve the participation of others.

Baumgarten and House (2010) found two plausible explanations for the reinterpretation of the discourse markers by ELF speakers. One was that their predilection for the less grammaticalised forms in *I think* and *I don't know* could be an indicator of a different perception of immediacy in the function and frequency of these expressions, in comparison with the native speakers. The other reason applied to their awareness of the ELF setting in which they were interacting. In this case, ELF speakers would tend to use the more prototypical functions of the expressions since

they would realise that their expectations on communicative behaviour and linguistic expertise might not be the same as the ones of their interlocutors.

Likewise, a reinterpretation of discourse markers was found in the analysis of *yes/yeah*, *so* and *okay* conducted by House (2013a). The findings revealed that these markers were frequently used by the participants for various purposes, such as signalling the uptake of the turn in the interaction, organising their discourse, backchannelling, or indicating agreement and consensus. Additionally, the author found that these discourse markers allowed the participants to express inter-subjectivity. That is, participants engaged in supportive interactional practices in which they showed interest for their interlocutors, which favoured the communication among them. House (1999) concluded that these speakers were pragmatically competent and had pragmatic fluency as they were skilful in maintaining conversations without breakdowns.

A similar conclusion about pragmatic competency in using discourse markers was reached in Centonze's (2015) analysis of two different corpora: the VOICE and the ELF WebIn. In her examination of data from the VOICE, the author found that the use of hesitation markers, i.e. *er* and *mhm*, in Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) was not a sign of low fluency. By contrast, the findings pointed out that, by using these markers in turn-taking, these ELF speakers were able to negotiate meaning and integrate others in the interaction during business meetings. As regards the frequency and contexts of usage, the results were rather different in her analysis of the ELF WebIn Corpus. This was a small, under-construction corpus collected from Facebook interactions for VISA consultation services offered by worldwide agencies. In this corpus, the use of hesitation markers was very low and the circumstances in which they were used were also different from that of the VOICE. In this latter corpus, hesitation markers were used to express sorrow and

embarrassment when the respondents had to apologise for not fulfilling the other party's expectations in their answers. The findings suggested that the dissimilar nature of the speech would be the reason for the difference in the usage of the hesitation markers. In the WebIn Corpus, the pieces of discourse were shorter, and the messages were expected to be unambiguous. Immediacy in the answer was not required as the discourse was displayed in written form and to a certain extent, this allowed more planning before its realisation than the spoken form. However, in the meetings from the VOICE, speakers were required an immediate response and, in contrast with the WebIn speech events, they allowed their interactants to express more subjective views.

Another discourse marker that has been analysed in various works is *I mean* (Fernández-Polo, 2014; House, 2013a; Kaur, 2011; Wu & Lei, 2016). These studies focused on ELF academic settings and revealed similar findings. They showed that the expression *I mean* was used as a monologic particle to enhance clarity and explicitness but also to rearrange previous statements and dysfluencies and correcting them. It was also disclosed that the expression *I mean* was used by speakers to organise their discourse in conference presentations (Fernández-Polo, 2014), as well as in seminar discussions (Wu & Lei, 2016), to signal the speakers' identity and their active involvement in the topic and their personal evaluation of it. Additionally, the findings in Wu and Lei's (2016) established that *I mean* was used in seminar discussions by interactants to take their turn in the debate and respond to other participants' doubts.

Besides the use of discourse markers, various studies have indicated how ELF speakers use chunking in creative ways to communicate with others. Mauranen (2005, 2009a), for instance, found in her analysis of the data from the ELFA corpus that ELF speakers preferred to use long phraseological sequences as an

approximation to the standard expressions, without using the exact standard forms. More specifically, Mauranen (2009a) observed that the expression *in my point of view* was mostly used rather than the standard forms *in my view* or *in my opinion*. In fact, *in my point of view* resulted from a sort of combination that the speakers made between the phrases *from my point of view* and *in my view*. The results suggested that the longer expressions would be regarded by these ELF speakers as a way of giving more weight to their discourse while expressing a different opinion with respect to their interlocutor. Eventually, the author corroborated that, despite the fact that ELF speakers used these expressions in a different way from that of the standard usage, these variations were not as prominent as to cause problems in comprehension.

1.3.3.5. Instances of non-consensus and non-cooperation

All the studies discussed above highlighted the consensus and the effort that interactants made to reach common grounds in ELF communication. However, other scholars have also disclosed some occasions in which this consensus and cooperation among interactants did not take place.

Planken (2005), for instance, conducted a comparative analysis of intercultural sales negotiations in two different groups. One of these clusters consisted of students of international business communication, or more precisely, aspiring business professionals, whereas the other group was made up of professional business negotiators. The findings suggested that professionals tended to engage more in safe talk in their negotiations than the aspiring participants. The author described the notion of safe talk as the practice in which the interaction is "not directly related to or relevant for the primary transactional goal being negotiated" (p. 385). Professional negotiators proved more successful in sharing their commonalities with the other party of the negotiation. More specifically, these

participants were more proactive in attempting to achieve mutual consensus as they showed inclusiveness by frequently using the pronoun *we*. Furthermore, they showed solidarity as they regularly referred to their own cultures by using humour. By doing so, these professionals took distance from their L1 cultures and showed a sense of solidarity and, consequently, they were successful in building rapport with their counterparts. In contrast, the aspiring group of negotiators seemed to have fewer pragmatic skills. These participants used the first personal pronoun *I* more often, instead of the institutional *we*. They were, therefore, unable to construct a professional identity in the negotiation context. Moreover, they demonstrated lack of skills in establishing a professional distance as well as a sense of inclusiveness towards the other participants. The author concluded affirming the relevance of teaching pragmatic skills in business international communication courses in English.

House (2008) similarly failed to detect cooperation among ELF participants. She used the data from her 1999 study to argue again that consensus and solidarity were not present in many of the examples that she presented as the simulated business debates among students. More specifically, House discussed the *self-centred hypothesis* as the idea that suggests that ELF users would be focused on getting their message across. According to this notion, ELF participants would concentrate their interactions on improving their own performance, rather than searching for mutual consensus and cooperation towards solidarity. Moreover, they would position themselves in a safe stance as they would frequently avoid open conflict. The author maintained therefore that the participants' avoidance of open conflict would indicate their attempt at hiding their lack of pragmatic fluency. Although these findings are still relevant for ELF pragmatics, the scenario in which these ELF interactions took place was simulated within a classroom and, hence,

these results would be more closely related to the context in which they were obtained and should not be extrapolated to other natural-occurring contexts (Kappa, 2016).

A similar conclusion regarding lack of pragmatic competence in certain ELF interactions was made by Knapp (2011). However, unlike the previous study reviewed, in Knapp's work, the data came from naturally occurring interactions among students from different L1 backgrounds in a course in engineering at a German university. The findings showed that communication among participants seemed to be effective. Nevertheless, there were complications at a pragmatic level, since there was a clear lack of consensus in the negotiations in which the participants were involved. The results indicated that failure to find common ground was due to the different perceptions of what was "appropriate" communicative practices in the specific context of a university by the participants. This was exacerbated by the fact that participants came from different linguacultural backgrounds. Eventually, negotiation of meaning was unfruitful, since these participants were not able to reach consensus.

Likewise, Kirkpatrick, Subhan, and Walkinshaw (2016) illustrated how ELF communication is not always characterised by cooperativeness among participants. In line with House (2008) and Knapp (2011), their findings unsurprisingly confirmed that context has a major influence in the way in which ELF speakers use the language. The authors analysed a series of interactions from the ACE corpus. A sample of these interactions was conducted among diplomatic staff from different embassies in Asia in a collegiate atmosphere. According to the authors, these interactions did not represent a high-stakes environment and participants were discussing different topics that were of mutual interest. The results proved that cooperation and consensus were frequent. However, the other set of interactions

focused on a courtroom exchange, and the results demonstrated that direct questions and disagreement were common. The authors concluded that, although ELF interactions would be normally consensus and cooperation oriented, in a courtroom, confrontation was expected by the interactants. Consequently, the disagreement was made explicit, with little attention to the interlocutors' risk of being exposed to open conflict and without aiming to build rapport among interactants.

Another study that questioned consensus as an omnipresent characteristic in ELF communication was Kappa (2016). The study examined the informal interactions among twelve multilingual participants from different linguacultural backgrounds at a dinner party in Denmark. These participants had different levels of proficiency in English and belonged to different academic and professional backgrounds. The consensus among participants was not clear, as there seemed to be some disagreement about the social norms. More specifically, the use of jokes by some of the participants was a source of disagreement, which some of them showed by not responding to the jocular situation. Thus, the use of jokes, that would be intended to create rapport and solidarity, had the opposite effect and created distance.

The studies discussed in this subsection highlighted how discussing a topic in a simulated scenario is not comparable to conducting a business transaction in which the stakes are high, or when the disagreement must be verbalised as in a courtroom, or in informal conversations out of an institutionalised context. In sum, what the review of the literature suggests is that the context in which ELF interactions take place is essential.

Moreover, the review of ELF literature in the linguistic areas has pointed out how research into phonology, lexis/lexicogrammar, and pragmatics has evolved from the early studies that paid attention to the innovations made by ELF users, to

progressively focusing on the reasons that trigger the usage of those innovations. ELF research into these three linguistic areas has become interested not only in what but also in why: the ways in which speakers use and/or create new forms in ELF and why they do so, i.e. to achieve intelligibility, to promote mutual understanding, to indicate their cultural identity. These findings have also implications for the teaching of English—and of other languages—as they suggest the need to make students more aware of the heterogenous linguacultural context that surrounds them, so they are better equipped to communicate with others in different ELF scenarios. Likewise, this study on Galician companies intends to examine how and why a series of individuals use English and other languages in international communication, that is, the reasons for and context of use of English as a lingua franca within the business environment. Finding the answers to these how and why questions will have implications for the business setting and for teaching.

The following major part of this chapter reviews thus ELF studies conducted within the academic and business domains and examines their relevance for the teaching field.

1.4. Domains

Although ELF research in linguistic areas has also been conducted on both the academic and business domains, scholars have observed a shift in ELF connected with sociolinguistics. More specifically, in its consideration of language contact, this field has experienced a change of focus from geographical contexts to domains as the settings where language contact takes place. Along the same lines, ELF scholars have considered necessary to investigate in more depth the academic and business fields, since they have led to particularly productive research on different aspects—such as the perception of the English language usage and in connection with the usage of

other languages within higher education institutions and corporations—that were not examined with such attention within the studies concerned with the linguistic areas (Jenkins et al., 2011). The sections below examine, then, various studies related to the academic (1.4.1.) and business (1.4.2.) settings. The studies carried out in both areas continue to be concerned with the legitimacy of ELF and with questioning whether English as a Native Language is the ideal frame of reference for NNESs. These debates are therefore contextualised within the academic and the business domains and they both explore the impact that their findings may have for the teaching and learning of English.

1.4.1. Academic setting

Since the legitimacy of ELF and its implications for the didactics of teaching English have been at the centre of the debate from the very beginning of research into ELF, it is necessary to review the ELF studies conducted in the academic setting. More specifically, this section delves into how English is perceived within the academic environment, namely the usage of English for publishing in academia, as well as the area dedicated to the practical didactics of English and as the setting where the perception of English occurs, by teachers and students. This section explores, then, the research done on how ELF has had an impact in the process of publishing (1.4.1.1.). The influence of ELF will be also discussed through the research that has questionned the use of English as a Native Language as the benchmark for the assessment of proficiency in the teaching of English (1.4.1.2.). This leads us to examine the studies that focus on the development of teaching curricula based on ELF (1.4.1.3.), and eventually, to the research on how ELF is perceived by students and teachers (1.4.1.4.).

1.4.1.1. Publishing in English

The internationalisation of universities has caused English to be introduced as a medium of instruction in higher education institutions in countries where English is not the official language (Söderlundh, 2013; Wächter & Maiworm, 2008, 2014). As a result, English is being implemented at all education levels at universities as they aspire to go to the top positions of worldwide rankings of higher learning institutions (Flowerdew, 2012; Jambor, 2011; Kaša & Mhamed, 2013). Moreover, this urge to be well positioned and acquire more prestige has turned publishing in English into a priority for researchers: "[u]niversities in many countries now require their staff to present at international conferences and, more crucially, publish in major, high-impact, peer-reviewed Anglophone journals as a pre-requisite for tenure, promotion, and career advancement" (Hyland, 2012, p. 37). In other words, scholars must use English if they wish their research to be published in the most important journals around the world (Ammon, 2006, 2007; Bocanegra-Valle, 2013; Mur-Dueñas, 2013; Pérez-Llantada, Plo, & Ferguson, 2011). The situation for academics who must publish in a language that is not their L1 could be described in Van Dijk' s (1994) words as "the triple disadvantage of having to read, do research and write in another language" (p. 276). Scholars have pointed out how the label *international* that many scientific and academic journals use to describe themselves implies that most contributors are using English as a lingua franca. However, they have also indicated that these publications ask contributors to have their articles checked by NESs, so that their writing conforms to the ENL norms (Ammon, 2000; Flowerdew, 2008; Hu, 2004; Jenkins, 2011; Li & Flowerdew, 2007; Lillis & Curry, 2006; Mur-Dueñas, 2013; Pitkänen, Lehtonen, Siddall, & Vikkunen-Fullenwider, 2011). Consequently, various scholars have argued that this preference for the ENL norms in the academic

journals could translate into a disadvantage for NNESs and that discriminatory judgements may be made against NNESs scholars' papers, based on their divergent use of the language with respect to the English native standard norms (Curry & Lillis, 2004; Li & Flowerdew, 2007; Flowerdew, 2008; Seidlhofer, 2004).

To defend the legitimacy of NNES academics, scholars have claimed that English nowadays would not belong solely to NESs (Jenkins, 2011; Kachru, 1985; Mckay, 2003; Widdowson, 1994). As Haberland (2011) has stated,

> [N]on-native, frequent users of English should be 'empowered' – they should have the feeling that the language they use is also 'theirs', not just one they have borrowed from its proper owners. That also means that they should not feel completely dependent on the judgments (of grammaticality or otherwise) of native speakers that are only experts because they are native speakers. (p. 947)

Scholars from different areas, and especially from the ELF field, have gone one step further as they declared themselves in favour of having NNES contributors not checked by NESs. These scholars have encouraged editors and publishing companies to consider non-native forms, such as ELF, as valid writing means for academic publishing (Mauranen & Metsä-Ketelä, 2006; Mauranen, 2009b). For instance, Mauranen and Metsä-Ketelä (2006) declared their intentions of not imposing any specific variety of English for the contributors to their publication volume in the *Nordic Journal of English Studies*:

> This special issue is written in ELF. Although native speakers have not been excluded from the volume, they have not acted as the ultimate authorities of linguistic correctness or comprehensibility. Thus, the papers have not been 'checked by a native speaker', as the saying goes. As ELF-speaking editors, we have not imposed our idiolects on the papers with a heavy hand either. The

> writers are all expert users of English despite their varying status of nativeness. We hope that the readership finds the texts as clear and comprehensible as we do, and that the issues raised and the findings presented give food for thought for English scholars in the Nordic countries and beyond. (p. 6)

Similarly, Ammon (2007) claimed that ELF research should be considered "for encouraging the acceptance of non-native forms to a much greater extent than today, and to motivate editors and publishers to consider them accordingly" (p. 131). In other words, these ELF scholars have argued for a wider perspective that goes beyond the ENL norms as the sole reference for academics.

Besides requiring publishing in English for their international venture, universities are prompted to attract international students (Coleman 2006; Jenkins, 2011) and both universities and students are expected to be competent in English (Komori-Glatz, 2015; Ljosland, 2011). However, higher education institutions continue to rely on ENL standard tests to assess the proficiency level of their potential students in their university level entry tests (Andrade, 2009, Jenkins & Leung, 2014; Ljosland, 2011). In these circumstances, different scholars have highlighted the need to discuss how the notion of competence in English was conceptualised in higher education institutions through their means of assessment (Björkman, 2011; Haberland, 2011; Jenkins, 2011; Jenkins & Leung, 2014; Knapp, 2011; Shohamy, 2011) and they have concluded that in order to be considered as truly international institutions, a shift in the assessment of English, as well as in the English teaching curriculum, must be accomplished.

1.4.1.2. Questioning the assessment of English

Early questioning of assessment for English learners came from the field of World Englishes (WE) and was made by Lowenberg (2000). This author contested

that ENL was the yardstick to measure English language proficiency for all learners of English. Although he defended the use of local norms for the English of the speakers from Kachru's (1992) outer circle, he initially contended that ENL norms should be maintained for the varieties of English from the expanding circle. However, in a subsequent work, Lowenberg (2002) retracted himself and declared that the Englishes from the expanding circle would also have the legitimacy to apply to their local norms as their reference. Furthermore, he questioned the logic of the testing system based on ENL as he advocated the need to consider the deviations from the standard norms that could be found in the speech of non-native English speakers. Thus, Lowenberg finally concluded that international tests should take into account these characteristics, instead of regarding them as errors.

Along the same lines, Mckay (2003) expostulated against the assumption that learners of English wanted to acquire a native-like level of proficiency; instead, she suggested, these learners' purposes could be different from those of English monolingual speakers. The author pointed to the global nature of the English language, which was used, mostly, by non-native speakers in cross-cultural scenarios. Keeping this in mind, Mckay held that teachers should not require native-like proficiency for English learners since they would not need that competence to communicate internationally. For this reason, the author asserted, first, that the domain in which these speakers communicate would be more specific. Secondly, she affirmed, acquiring a native-like pronunciation may be not useful for them since it could actually make being understood by others more difficult. And thirdly, the author claimed that ELF users would be the ones that make the language their own to comply with their own purposes in lingua franca communication. Therefore, Mckay considered that the native speaker should not be the one that sets the norms in ELF: "English as an international language belongs to its users, there is no reason

why some speakers of English should be more privileged and thus provide standards for other users of English" (p. 18).

Besides not having the NES as a reference model for lingua franca communication, Mckay alluded to the cultural diversity of ELF communication. She declared that having an English L1 culture as the target in ELF communication would not be appropriate either. Instead, she suggested that the local culture should be emphasised as a means of enhancing the communication in English. This would also allow teachers to have a better control of the information they teach, and it could be riveting for learners, rather than focusing on an ENL culture. Moreover, the local cultural context should be taken into account, since the particularities given in a certain local context (social, political, etc.) would have an influence on the developments of the classroom communication. The author concluded that the teaching field should be aware that every classroom is different, and so are the students' ways of learning, as well as students and teachers' ways of interacting.

Moving on, more recent works have explored the conceptualisation of proficiency in the assessment of English. And in line with the works discussed above, they have also problematised the notion of being proficient in English as being closer to the ENL norms (Jenkins & Leung, 2014; Leung, Lewkowicz, & Jenkins, 2016; McNamara, 2012; Newbold, 2015). Leung et al. (2016), for instance, discussed the characteristics of large-scale tests, such as the IELTS (International English Language Testing System), or the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) for university incoming students and argued their lack of adequacy as a "fit for all" (p. 69) to assess students' proficiency. Moreover, the authors argued that focusing on the vast amount of language varieties would not be enough for assessing proficiency in English in academic contexts. In contrast, focusing on the specific academic areas in which students are integrated and the institution practices would be more helpful

for these students. Thus, the authors pointed out that the use of English in the specific academic setting should be informed by the research conducted in ELF, as well as in multilingualism and translanguaging communication areas. In this way, the authors stated that the main focus of research should be the transcultural communication among NESs and NNESs, as well as the local uses of language. And the local uses of language should be researched by considering the specific contexts and domains towards which students would direct their academic endeavours (i.e. business, law, medicine, etc.). The authors came to the conclusion that research based on ELF, multilingualism, and translanguaging in academic contexts would be key to creating an authentic assessment of proficiency in English for incoming students at universities.

To disclose how proficiency in English was conceptualised, other studies have examined the assessment methods based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) under the ELF framework (Hynninen, 2014; McNamara, 2011, 2012; Pitzl, 2015). The assessment methods based on the CEFR would have the native speaker as the target of communication. Scholars have therefore argued for the need to go beyond the constraints of the assessment methods based on the CEFR. Pitzl (2015), for instance, compared ELF and BELF concepts on *understanding* and *miscommunication* and related them to the CEFR. The author claimed that understanding was simplified in the CEFR construct. More specifically, the notion of understanding was regarded as a receptive skill within foreign language interactions and in spite of the fact that miscommunication examples were found among CEFR descriptors as *misunderstanding(s)*. However, these descriptors would fail in their conceptualisation of the term misunderstanding since it was described as being caused primarily by limited language competence, and due to the cultural differences among speakers. Furthermore, these descriptions would not concur with the ELF

empirical findings that proved that miscommunication should be managed by all the participants involved in the communication process. In fact, the author pointed out how ELF interactants would negotiate meaning and attempt to resolve communication difficulties to achieve a common understanding. And this communication process would not be the responsibility of only one of the interactants, nor would its occurrence be inherent to intercultural communication. The author highlighted then the need to accept the fact that miscommunication could occur in any type of communication, not only in lingua franca.

Pitzl discussed the high impact that the CEFR assessment had on the teaching field and on the development of curriculum for English language courses at all levels, including university courses. She concluded that placing all the pressure on the learners as solely responsible for their learning would not be appropriate. By contrast, the author claimed that each of the agents implied in the language learning process—learners and teachers, as well as native speakers—should all be made accountable in the learning process.

In line with the problematisation on the notion of English proficiency based on the ENL norms, some alternative methods of assessment have been proposed. Chopin (2015), for instance, discussed the need for designing an assessment method that focused on how people communicate, rather than on grammatical accuracy according to the ENL norms, that is, an assessment of ELF. This would imply that the targets of this test would not be solely NNESs. But NESs would also have to be tested on their abilities to negotiate meaning and accommodate to their interlocutors in ELF communication: “The native speaker would no longer be given a free pass, with the assumption that being a native speaker by definition gives an ability to communicate effectively in ELF settings” (p. 201). Moreover, the author pointed out that current English language teaching is directed towards the testing and

certification system, and she emphasised the need to develop small-scale tests as an opportunity for students and teachers to find out more about ELF and its implications for international communication. The author suggested that an assessment of ELF could make teachers more aware of its relevance and, consequently, they could transfer this awareness to their students.

Likewise, Newbold (2015) discussed the existing tests for English language, based on NS norms. The author pointed out the need to conduct more research to develop other assessment methods of English according to the learners' real communication needs. A needs analysis was conducted among students from two Italian universities to disclose the purposes for which they needed to use English. The results of the needs analysis revealed that receptive skills, such as reading and Internet searching, were highly used. In the meanwhile, productive and interactive skills, such as writing emails or speaking with incoming international students from mobility programmes, were less frequently used, according to the students surveyed. Taking into account these results, a project was developed in which a test prototype was set out—the *Test of English for European University Students* (TEEUS). This test was intended to be used as an evaluation method for incoming students in mobility programmes at European universities. The test included an ELF component in which test takers would be exposed to spoken and written samples produced by non-native speakers in academic contexts in Europe. After trying out the test among students, they were asked for feedback on the test. The results disclosed that the level was perceived as "more or less right" by 83% of the respondents, whereas the content was regarded as "fairly (47%) or very (53%) realistic", and the variety of NNES accents was judged by most of the respondents (64%) to be neither more difficult nor easier than the NES accents (pp. 218-219). Although this test was a prototype at the time in which the article was written, the author concluded that it would be a useful

method for the assessment of ELF and could be therefore implemented at universities in the near future.

1.4.1.3. Developing an ELF-based teaching curriculum

As was seen earlier in the review of ELF research in the linguistic areas (section 1.3.), many scholars have argued the inadequacy of looking towards the native English speakers as the benchmark for teaching English. Consequently, scholars have also argued for the need for a more ELF-oriented methodology in English teaching (Dewey, 2007a; Kohn, 2015; Leung & Lewkowicz, 2013; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008; Widdowson, 2004). Moreover, these ELF approach methodologies would prepare students for communicating in heterogeneous linguistic and cultural settings. As a result, both parties, teachers and students would be predisposed to adopt an intercultural perspective, rather than adhering to the conventions of a specific community (Galloway, 2013; Lopriore & Vettorel, 2016).

Seidlhofer (2004, 2005) pointed out the need for more descriptive research that could make it possible to develop ELF curricula for the teaching field and to have another viable option beyond the ENL. Seidlhofer (2004) highlighted how the research that was at that time being done on specific areas of ELF, such as the phonology, lexicogrammar and pragmatics, would help to have a clearer perspective on the teaching field and in the design of English teaching policies that could take the findings from those studies into account:

> Acting on these insights can free up valuable teaching time for more general language awareness and communication strategies; these may have more 'mileage' for learners than striving for mastery of fine nuances of native speaker language use that are communicatively redundant or even counter-productive in lingua franca settings, and which may anyway not be teachable

> in advance, but only learnable by subsequent experience of the language. (p. 340)

The author emphasised the relevance of communication strategies for ELF interactions and the need to implement them into the teaching field, rather than pursuing the native speaker-like competence as the ideal model for lingua franca communication.

In line with Seidlhofer's (2004, 2005) claims, Snow, Kamhi-Stein, and Brinton (2006) analysed teacher training for prospective teachers who were non-native English speakers through a series of review surveys in two different locations—Egypt and Uzbekistan. Both were characterised by the scarcity of resources for teaching, and their needs to improve English teaching programmes were highlighted. In the Egyptian case, the English language programmes designed to train in-service teachers were focused on a series of standards that English teachers were required to meet. These standards were expected to improve the in-service teachers' language skills as well as to provide adequate language education and assessment to their students. As for the Uzbek case, the programmes for English language teachers paid attention to the needs of both parties, the professionals in charge of the teachers' preparation and the local teachers. By taking into account these training programmes, the authors intended to make the participants aware of their intercultural identities and the lingua franca situations. It was expected that they could implement methodologies that could be appropriate for the local context in which they taught. In this respect, it was suggested that non-native speaker varieties should be a part of the curriculum, and more specifically, that both teachers and learners were exposed to these varieties. By doing so, it was intended that these in-service teachers and their students could regard themselves as valuable intercultural speakers, rather than taking the native-speaker as the ideal model. The

authors concluded that assessment of teachers' methodologies and needs analysis should be a priority to achieve teaching quality and assess language policy for these English language programmes. Hence, these programmes would be successfully adjusted to the learners' specific needs and to their local contexts.

The native speaker model was also questioned in Kirkpatrick (2007) in the specific context of Chinese speakers in Hong Kong. The author proposed the concept "local institutional bilingual targets" (p. 379) to refer to speakers who learned English at school and were taught by local teachers. According to the author, it would be necessary to describe the particular features of the local language and how they would influence the speakers' use of English. This would be "a vital first step in helping legitimize it as a variety of English" (p. 388). Since their L1 would have a major influence on these speakers' use of English, it would make more sense to set the learners' goals in consonance with the particular characteristics of their L1 rather than having the ENL norms as their learning yardstick.

An alternative to ENL in the curriculum for teaching English was suggested by Sifakis (2007; 2009b) as well. More specifically, the author proposed to use a transformative approach for the implementation of ELF in the teaching curriculum. To do so, teachers would need to change their perspectives about traditional English pedagogy—that is, taking the NES as a model of reference—and start to consider the role of NNESs in cross-cultural interactions. Moreover, this would allow them to have a critical approach towards the imposed standard English courses. The author concluded that teachers should explore the possibilities that ELF could offer, and this would allow them to acquire a more reflective view towards ELF and their own roles as ELF teachers. Similarly, in a later work, Sifakis (2009a) discussed the possibility of implementing an ELF curriculum in Greek state schools. In this particular context, teachers would have to face the perceived low status of state school EFL (English as a

Foreign Language) teachers, since they were regarded as being less prestigious than teachers from other fields, university EFL teachers, and ELF teachers from the private sector. State school EFL teachers would also have to face issues such as the general orientation towards the ENL norms to evaluate the learners' proficiency, as well as the reality about the use of English in the country, which would be generally limited to the EFL classroom. According to the author, to take an NNES communication approach such as ELF would be an attainable methodology for teaching English in this context. What is more, adopting an ELF perspective would allow students to be aware of the linguacultural diversity of their own country, it would have an influence in the way policy makers perceive the teaching of English, and it would have an impact on the curriculum development process. Those in charge of this process could also help learners express their own identities and be interested in others' cultures and identities. The author concluded that EFL teachers should be given support by educational institutions to help them to successfully implement ELF in the English language classrooms.

In a more recent study, Pullin (2011) discussed the changes that were taking place in curriculum development at two higher education institutions in Zurich. These changes were aimed at adapting to the evolving needs of students in the current lingua franca communication scenarios, so ELF was being integrated as part of the curriculum. In line with other studies discussed above, the author claimed the need to make students aware of the intercultural environment in which they interacted. She argued how these students should be able to accommodate to the communicative context, negotiate meaning, develop a sense of tolerance towards other varieties of English than the ENL, and hence embrace other different forms of communicating in English, such as ELF: "It is important for teachers, users and learners of English not only to accept the wide range of "Englishes" that exist

globally, but also be aware of the fact that that [sic.] unlike Australian or Indian English, ELF displays considerable variation in the way it is used both by individual speakers and within groups of users" (p. 2). According to Pullin, teachers must prepare students to be effective users of English in different lingua franca communication contexts and assist other English users—not necessary learners—to communicate in a variety of academic daily-life situations.

In the same way, Jenkins (2011, 2012) argued for the need to take ELF research findings into account, so that the term *international* could make real sense when it was applied to the university context. More specifically, Jenkins (2011) explored the implications of universities being considered as international scenarios, and how ELF research could have an impact on native-English-speaker academics. The author urged universities to review their English language policies and make students aware of how ELF could help them to communicate in this so-called international context, rather than require them to conform to the ENL norms in academic spoken and written modes. At the same time, the author suggested that new policies for teaching English should consider the native speakers' needs, as they would have to adjust to the ELF communication settings so that they could acquire the necessary communication strategies to interact with non-native speakers.

To successfully integrate an ELF approach into teaching practice, closer collaboration between ELF researchers and teachers would be necessary, as indicated by Dewey (2012, 2014). More specifically, Dewey (2012) analysed the way in which pedagogical materials were designed for programmes of teacher education and certification of English and argued how they were oriented towards the NES norms. Moreover, the author pointed out that the references to ELF in these materials were presented as problematic as they were considered to be a lack of proficiency in the learners' side. He also denounced the lack of attention to the pedagogical

applications of ELF for teaching English and asserted that teachers should receive more preparation on the social and contextual factors that modify the way in which language is used. Finally, he recommended ELF as an adequate paradigm to achieve teachers and learners' awareness on these topics.

In line with these discussions on the implementation of ELF in the teaching curriculum, an ELF-based curriculum for teachers was proposed by Sifakis and Bayyurt (2015). The authors created the ELF-aware Teacher Education project (ELF-TEd), for in-service English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers in Turkey and Greece, in public and state education. Participants in this project were expected to acquire substantial knowledge and understanding of ELF and WE paradigms so that they would know how to apply them to their teaching contexts. The ELF-aware Teacher Education project was started in 2012 and was completed in 2013. The authors set out three phases for ELF-aware teacher pedagogy through which these in-service teachers would consider the diversity of the teaching context and relate it to their own, previous experiences as language learners. The first phase of the project was theoretical and consisted of giving the in-service teachers information about ELF and WE. The second phase was related to applicability, and these participants were asked to relate the information they received in the first phase to their own teaching context. And in the third phase, they were required to evaluate the application of the theory to their teaching context and discuss any concerns related to it. The findings pointed out that these in-service teachers gained a broader perspective on their assumed knowledge of English language teaching methods. Moreover, through the review of ELF and WE literature, they acknowledged the differences between EFL and ELF. At the same time, these participants became more aware of the ways in which they perceived themselves as non-native English speakers. Consequently, they modified their preconceived views

of deviation from the standard norms. Interestingly, the results also revealed that by the end of the project these participants gained more confidence in themselves as non-native speakers and as teachers.

In line with the claim for implementing pedagogical methods for English based on ELF, different scholars have asserted that focusing on intercultural awareness would be essential, that learners would be better equipped for intercultural communication without being expected to conform to the norms of a particular community. Baker (2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2015), for instance, emphasised the need for the teaching field to approach the relationship among language, culture, and communication and consider their connection with the specific contexts in which communication takes place. More specifically, Baker (2011) explored the integration of intercultural awareness (ICA) as a theoretical framework for ELF communication. The author discussed in this study how intercultural competence could be integrated to better reflect the reality of ELF communication. He argued that this would allow examining the skills, attitudes, and knowledge that intervene in successful intercultural interactions. Baker (2011, 2012a) also analysed the meaning of intercultural awareness, and defined it as “a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices, and frames of reference can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context-specific manner in real time communication” (2011, p. 202). The author maintained that, given the global nature of the English language and more specifically of ELF communication, the intercultural awareness approach would relate to ELF since English would not be necessarily linked to any specific community. To clarify the knowledge and skills necessary to reach intercultural awareness, Baker (2011) proposed three levels of cultural awareness: from basic to advanced level, until reaching the intercultural awareness, which would be the

highest level. Moreover, within the intercultural awareness level, he distinguished between theoretical and practical uses. The former would be related to the user's understanding and attitudes towards cultures, as well as the capabilities to manage interaction in intercultural communication. As for the practical use of intercultural awareness, this would focus on how the theoretical abilities would be applied in real situations of intercultural communication.

The applicability of intercultural and cultural awareness to teach global Englishes courses were explored at a university in Thailand (Baker, 2012b), and in Japan (Galloway, 2013). In both cases, these courses approached the global uses of English in conjunction with their heterogeneous socio-cultural contexts. These two courses offered diverse perspectives on the uses of English including ELF, to be implemented in intercultural communication, and to raise the students' critical awareness for pursuing a native-like competence. Moreover, Galloway (2013) suggested that to eliminate stereotypical perceptions of NESs as being the ideal model for English learners, and to increase their awareness on the diversity of English speakers, it would be beneficial to recruit teachers from all over the world.

The possibilities of incorporating intercultural competence in higher education courses were further examined by Pullin (2015). In this case, the implementation was intended for the curriculum of courses in Business Administration and Economics at a university in Switzerland. The author developed a series of tasks for two groups of business students, one with work and research experience and the other with no working experience. Both groups were language learners at an advanced level and the tasks were designed according to these types of students so they could be better prepared to enter the globalised job market. One of these assignments was regarded as a possibility to be integrated within a course for business administrators. In this task, participants had to carry out meetings in which

they simulated negotiations about saving money in different companies. Before conducting these meetings, participants had to interview their colleagues back at their jobs or laboratories to come with authentic proposals for saving money. The other task was designed for business students with no working experience. In this case, participants had to carry out a series of interviews outside the classroom, among professionals from a wide range of fields. By conducting negotiations and approaching real professionals from different areas, participants were thus expected to know how to integrate pragmatic skills, as well as gain intercultural communicative competence. In this study, Pullin suggested that English language teachers in business courses should resort to ELF findings from the business field (BELF) so that they could implement more authentic materials to teach English to their business students. By doing so, the author concluded, students could develop their intercultural awareness and strategies to successfully communicate with others.

1.4.1.4. Students and teachers' attitudes towards ELF

Besides exploring proposals for implementing ELF in the classroom, ELF research has also examined students and teachers' attitudes towards ELF, and they have disclosed ambivalent views towards ELF. On the one hand, ELF seems to be generally viewed as a useful approach and one that can be adjusted depending on the situations. However, at the same time, a certain preference towards the ENL approach seems to be still popular among students (Csizér & Kontra, 2012; Ehrenreich, 2010; Hynninen, 2010; Smit, 2010; Wang, 2015).

Cogo (2010), for instance, conducted a series of interviews with teenagers at secondary schools and also among Erasmus students from the UK, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. These interviews revealed positive attitudes towards ELF users, who were perceived as fluent and confident. The responses also showed a tendency towards aiming at having effective communication skills rather than

pursuing native-speaker correctness. Moreover, NNESs' accents were positively regarded. Nevertheless, the results disclosed ambiguity in the interviewees' responses since they considered that NES fluency was "good English" (p. 306) and, therefore, a desirable goal for them. Cogo concluded that although young multilingual participants still had some inclinations towards the NES ideal, they were generally open-minded about ELF.

Similar open-mindedness towards ELF was found in Ranta's (2010) study, which was conducted among students and teachers in Finland. Ranta showed that it was the local and institutional authorities that were more inclined to preserve the use of Standard varieties of English through the assessment methods carried out in this academic scenario, rather than the students and teachers surveyed. Both students and teachers were wide aware of the reality of ELF in global communication outside the classroom. Moreover, the author suggested that the daily exposition of Finnish citizens to a wide range of non-native Englishes through the Finnish media could explain these participants' open-mindedness towards ELF and other uses and varieties of English, despite the schools' prevalence for ENL varieties.

Kalocsai (2011) similarly showed how the NES ideal was not predominant among students in a study conducted among Erasmus students at a university in Hungary. In this case, ELF was the means to communicate when no other languages were shared by interlocutors. The use of ELF was regarded as highly positive by these participants, and ENL norms were not seen as important since participants produced their own norms through negotiation. Besides ELF, a wide repertoire of languages was used for different purposes in a variety of situations and their choice was also negotiated among participants. These students not only used ELF to communicate but also to share sameness, since ELF allowed them to identify themselves as belonging to the group of non-native speakers.

Galloway (2013) observed more ambivalent views towards ELF among students in a questionnaire administered at a Japanese university, before and after a course in Global Englishes was implemented. The aim was to explore how this course could influence the students' perceptions towards English and whether these perceptions would change after the course. Galloway found that in the pre-course questionnaire there was a tendency towards choosing the NES as the ideal model. More specifically, respondents identified native English with correctness and "standard", whereas non-native English was described as "imperfect", "wrong", and "untrustful" (p. 794). These participants were not able to offer specific reasons for their tendency towards the NES as a model. The explanation most frequently provided by participants was that they wanted to learn English to communicate mainly with native speakers (78.8%). Moreover, a high percentage of participants (76.9%) declared that they wanted to sound like NESs and that they preferred being taught by a native-English-speaker teacher rather than by a Japanese one, despite admitting that the latter were properly qualified and acknowledging that it was a stereotype-based ideology. Participants also expressed a high positive attitude towards ELF encounters, since they perceived that communication with other NNESs felt easier and created a more relaxed atmosphere than when the interlocutors were solely NESs.

At the end of the course in Global Englishes, the students were surveyed on the same questions to see if their perceptions towards English had changed. The findings revealed little variation in their attitudes towards ELF, as closeness to ENL was still preferred. However, students were now more aware of Global Englishes and perceived the English spoken in Japan as more attractive than in the pre-course questionnaire. Interestingly, in the post-course questionnaire, there were no respondents that regarded the Englishes of NNSs as incorrect. The overall findings

revealed that despite the fact that “the NES is still placed firmly on a pedestal” (p. 801), the course in Global Englishes helped students to raise their awareness towards ELF and other uses and varieties of English. In view of these results, Galloway claimed for more research to be carried out in this area in order to develop appropriate English language curriculum that could help English learners become aware of the English language diversity.

These findings are in line with Wang and Jenkins’s (2016) research among university students and workers in China. The authors found that the participants who had experience in ELF communication were more confident in the communicative effectiveness of other Englishes than the native varieties. By contrast, those with less experience in ELF declared relying on native English as the only means to achieve intelligibility and considered any deviations from native English as errors. Nevertheless, participants in this study also expressed some ambiguity about their acceptance of ELF use: “Sometimes I think, for example during the days of the Olympic Games, or of World Expo, many people, their grammar might be erroneous, but they could roughly express their ideas, they DID communicate . . . . To be honest, I don’t accept their English within my heart. But their English really worked. Why?” (p. 47). The findings pointed out that sometimes ELF was positively evaluated by participants as the means to achieve successful communication, whereas at the same time it was not accepted as correct English in comparison with the Standard native English.

Borghetti and Beaven (2015) also describe this view that the NS is the ideal language model while accepting the benefits of interacting with NNSs. This study focused on the use and learning of lingua francas in a context of international mobility. ELF was taken into account among other languages that were used as lingua francas in the European countries in which the students were staying, namely,

Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, and Sweden. Their study revealed that participants perceived NSs of the country in which they were staying as norm providers and as reference models. More specifically, participants considered that NSs could correct their linguistic issues related to grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and idioms more accurately than NNSs. As regards the interactions with NNSs, these were considered as a useful training means to help them to improve their accommodation and negotiation skills. Concerning the use and perception of ELF specifically, there was a question on the survey which asked participants which language they used the most during their mobility: the language of the destination country or ELF. The results disclosed that 41.1% of students used the language of the destination country, whereas ELF was mainly used by 58.9%. ELF users were found to be more familiarised with the use of English for international communication. And, interestingly, these participants were more aware of ELF conceptualisation as they declared that NNSs represented also good target language models. By contrast, the participants that had used mainly the language of the destination country were more inclined to take the NS as the ideal language model.

Despite the many ambivalent attitudes revealed in the studies discussed above, students' awareness of ELF is increasing. Moreover, the introduction of courses on Global Englishes, as well as the international mobility programmes—where heterogeneity in languages and cultures is the norm—seem to be contributing to the students' understanding of ELF.

Research on attitudes towards ELF (other than those conducted on accents, discussed in 1.3.1.2.) has mainly focused on students (Jenkins & Wingate, 2015). However, the interest in the teachers' stances on ELF is also starting to grow. Although teachers in Sifakis and Sougari (2005) were found to lack any real

awareness of ELF, the findings in more recent studies such as Dewey (2012), Illés and Csizér (2015), López-Jaramillo (2014), Ranta (2010), Young and Walsh (2010) proved that besides being generally well informed about ELF, teachers accepted it. In some cases, they even exihibited sophisticated command of ELF (Dewey, 2012; Ranta, 2010). At the same time, instructors also manifested a strong preference for teaching the Standard English native varieties (Illés & Csizér 2015; Jenkins, 2014; Ranta, 2010; Young & Walsh, 2010).

Teachers of English from different backgrounds and with varied levels of experience at higher education institutions in the UK were surveyed by Dewey (2012), and they demonstrated an understanding of the concepts of WE, English as a Global Language, and ELF. As for ELF specifically, most of the participants grasped its main characteristics: they described ELF as being a shared means to communicate transculturally across borders and asserted that NNESs, as well as NESs, were involved in ELF communication. Moreover, some of the participants showed deeper knowledge about ELF by describing the term as being "non-codified" (p. 151), which is the essential nature of ELF. However, in line with the ambivalent responses of students disclosed in ELF research, teachers in this study also showed contradictory views. Despite generally showing high awareness of ELF, when they were asked about the implementation of ELF in the classroom, the respondents expressed concern about its heterogeneity. Most of these participants felt that the diversity inherent to ELF could threaten their role as teachers since they were expected to teach their students the "accepted" and "recognized" version of English (p. 161). Dewey concluded that the ambivalent views in the responses given by these participants could be related to their sense of responsibility as teachers: they felt they had a duty towards their students and their immediate learning needs. This also

concurred with their commitment to the educational institutions, in which language teaching and assessment are usually based on normative agendas.

Likewise, López-Jaramillo (2014) disclosed that teachers of English were well informed about different varieties and uses of English, including ELF. These teachers gave more priority to intelligibility than to grammatical accuracy; however, they showed a tendency towards English native standard varieties, as they considered native speakers more intelligible. A great number of these participants (85%) felt admiration towards the non-native speakers that were able to achieve native-like competence in English and preferred their students to have a native-like pronunciation. Consequently, they helped students to acquire native speaker knowledge and skills related to pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and idiomatic expressions.

These studies among teachers' attitudes and perceptions seem to be in line with those related to the students' views of ELF, since both showed ambiguous perspectives about ELF. At least part of this inclination towards ENL would be related to the way in which pedagogical materials are designed since, based on the literature discussed, they are NS-oriented: on the one hand, English learners are tested according to ENL norms, which implies that they will have to develop ENL skills to pass these tests. On the other hand, teachers are expected to comply with their institutional roles and follow the standard norms so that their students can achieve their academic goals. Therefore, as the literature seen in this section suggests, the introduction of ELF in the assessment methods for learners as well as in the teaching materials could make not only students and teachers but also educational authorities and institutions aware of the usefulness of developing communication skills rather than focusing on being closer to a native-like competence.

1.4.2. Business setting

Besides being a lingua franca in the academic setting, English has become the lingua franca to communicate in the business environment. Consequently, research in the use of English for communication in international business settings has been increasing for the last two decades. Moreover, studies about international management and corporate communication added a relevant contribution to the study of the business domain in general (Blazejewski, 2006; Feely & Harzing, 2003; Fredriksson, Barner-Rasmussen, & Piekkari, 2006; Harzing, Köster, & Magner, 2011; Steyaert, Ostendorp, & Gaibrois, 2011). However, it has been applied linguistics, particularly the ELF research field, that has made the most significant contribution to the issue of how the English language is used in the business arena (Ehrenreich, 2010; Gerritsen & Nickerson, 2009; Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, & Kankaanranta, 2005). This area of ELF is known as Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) and has been defined as being "characterised by its goal oriented (inter)action, drive for efficient use of such resources as time and money, and an overall aspiration for win–win scenarios among business partners" (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010, p. 381). BELF's most distinguishing feature vis-à-vis ELF is its domain and role. BELF has been developing an interest in the way in which English is perceived by business workers as well as their attitudes in BELF communication, and in close connection with the studies from the international business and management area. In this respect, BELF scholars have claimed that those studies from the international business and management field do not usually problematise the question of what English language competence is (Ehrenreich, 2010; Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen, & Karhunen, 2015). Nevertheless, although BELF and the international management and business communication fields are different in their way of

approaching the use of English, the research findings of the latter are also valuable for the business domain at large. Thus, this section reviews research dealing not only with BELF specifically but also with international management and business communication in particular.

The first section (1.4.2.1.) discusses the research done in the use of English for communication in international business contexts and how its focus and research methodologies have changed from being centered on speaking and writing to paying attention to the discourse and the methods used in order to tackle communicative competence. Then, challenges involved in international business communication related to the interactants' linguacultural backgrounds, as well as the consequences of ignoring them are reviewed (1.4.2.2.). After considering these issues that emerge in international business communication, the research on how English interfaces with other languages in business settings is examined (1.4.2.3.). In light of the wide presence of English in the business domain, it is necessary to consider also how this has an impact when it comes to selecting potential candidates for the workplace. Therefore, a discussion on the research that focuses on the English language needs within the corporations' recruitment process is conducted (1.4.2.4.). Finally, after reviewing the relevance of English for hiring candidates by taking into account their proficiency, it is essential to contextualise the concept of proficiency itself. Specifically, the last section addresses the research that interrogates the notion of English proficiency within international business communication (1.4.2.5.).

1.4.2.1. Implementing new genres and methods for addressing communicative competence

The pioneer studies in communication for international business started in the early 90s before BELF studies were consolidated as a legitimate area of research. At this early stage, research in business communication tended to isolate language

into written texts or spoken production (Louhiala-Salminen, 1996). However, the research trend experienced a shift and discourse became more integrated and contextualised as well as more focused on the elements that could have an influence on the communicative production. Besides paying more attention to the discourse, the high mobility and the development of new technologies has provoked that the genre under study in international communication has evolved since the beginning of these studies, which analysed business phone conversations (Firth, 1996; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Gramkow Andersen, 1993; Haegeman, 2002; Wagner, 1995). For instance, through the introduction of the Internet, other genres such as email communication became vastly analysed (Gimenez, 2002; Kankaanranta, 2006; Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, & Kankaanranta, 2005; Nickerson, 2000). Besides the increase in the genres for research, there was more variety of research methods implemented such as surveys and interviews (Charles & Marschan-Piekkari, 2002; Jämtelid, 2002; Taillefer, 2007; Vandermeeren, 1999). And lately, the focus groups (Lønsmann, 2011; Zander, Mockaitis, & Harzing, 2011) have been suggested as a helpful method to analyse the conclusions after an analysis is discussed by participants (Gerritsen & Nickerson, 2009). However, a combination of genres, as well as of research methods, has become more common in recent studies (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Charles, 2007; Ehrenreich, 2010; Machili, 2015).

Louhiala-Salminen (1996), one of the early works in business communication in English, analysed written business communication in order to ascertain whether the introduction of fax and email had changed the way of communicating. The results revealed the emergence of *Euro-English*, which aimed to label the use of different Englishes to communicate in business lingua franca situations in Europe. The author found a shift in the use of language, since email language was more informal and direct, and similar to speech production. Moreover, efficiency in terms of content

accuracy was seen as more important than form or grammatical correctness. The findings also disclosed that written skills were as needed as spoken skills and confirmed that the absence of intermediaries was the norm in business written communication.

At that moment, the discourse of English within the business environment redirected progressively towards a focus on the language strategies that could be necessary to communicate effectively within the business domain, rather than focusing on language skills in isolation (Bilbow, 2002; Charles, 1996; Gimenez, 2002; Nickerson, 2000; Poncini, 2002). Charles (1996), for instance, analysed the strategies engaged in communication. This study showed how the participants' language decision in business negotiation contexts revealed the types of relations involved in these communication events, and whether these relations existed before or were created among interactants at the moment of interaction. Bilbow (2002) expounded how Western and Chinese speakers' strategic choices in corporate meetings seemed to be determined by their L1 culture and by the specific corporate practices within an airline company. Poncini (2002, 2003, 2004) likewise analysed how the participants' strategic use of different languages influenced the way in which they constructed solidarity and common ground to meet their goals.

Other studies that focused on the contextual use of discourse examined the use of English in written email communication within multinational corporations. Gimenez (2002) compared the communication in English and in Spanish through email and fax and explored how employees dealt with problems in understanding between the headquarters in Europe and the subsidiary in Argentina, as well as the preferences for using email or fax. Nickerson (1999, 2000) analysed the use of English and Dutch in email communication between NSs of these two languages, and how the language choices were influenced by the presence or absence of the

interaction with NSs. Nickerson (1999), for instance, revealed that two main factors were involved in the choice of using Dutch or English: Dutch was commonly used among Dutch speakers in the Dutch branch; English was preferred when non-Dutch speaker employees needed access to information, as well as in emails sent outside the Dutch branch.

Similarly, Planken (2005) investigated the types of communication strategies used by experienced business employees in comparison to business students with little working experience. Even though both groups revealed similar language proficiency, the strategies used by either were different: experienced participants were more effective in using communication resources and, consequently, they were more successful in business operations than the inexperienced students.

More recently, Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2011, 2013) discussed the communicative competencies that were necessary for BELF communication through the *global communicative competence* model. The concept was connected with Hymes' (1972) notion of *communicative competence*, which focused on the social dimension and the complex character of interactions and to *international communicative competence*, which had been researched by Charles (2008). According to Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2011, 2013), global communicative competence consists of three layers or competencies. Multicultural competence refers to the skills needed to deal with communication contexts in which professionals interact with speakers from a variety of cultural backgrounds (different from theirs) within an organisation, a professional field or a nation. Accommodation skills and tolerance towards others are, in this case, indispensable. The second layer would entail competence in BELF, that is, being able to carry out the daily work while creating rapport with others. This requires a combination of knowledge in business specific genres, as well as communication strategies that focus on being accurate,

direct, brief, and polite. The third layer of competence, business know-how, has a major influence on the other two layers and is linked to business-specific knowledge. Business know-how is two-fold: on the one hand, it refers to the business specific context of use, which acts at the micro-level; on the other, it includes all the business-related objectives, strategies, and norms that are common to the whole business community, and acts at the macro-level. Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen concluded that the field of international business communication should focus on interactional skills and on building rapport, since they would be key elements to improve business workers' communication competence. Consequently, they argued that the business teaching field should implement these areas in order to train future business workers to be successful communicators at the workplace.

1.4.2.2. International business communication: The influence of the cultural background

Besides analysing the strategies involved to acquire communicative competence, many works have explored the influence of the cultural background when using English as a corporate language and the challenges derived from it. For instance, some scholars from the linguistics field denounced the lack of a critical approach that considers how English used as a lingua franca was a means to reflect the cultural background of its users—contradicting what other scholars had stated (Crystal, 1997; House, 1999, 2001). In line with this, Rogers (1998) used the notion of *English divide* to discuss the separation provoked by the ways in which English used in business communication was perceived by its users. English as a lingua franca was regarded by some as a cultureless language for business communication, whereas others expressed their resentment as they were required to learn it to be considered successful business people. The study also discussed the perception of native speakers and their view that they did not need to learn other languages since

they considered that English would be the key language for the international business field. Moreover, Rogers argued how this English divide had an influence in the way in which English was investigated in connection with the business environment, since research in countries where English was not the L1 focused on multilingualism, while in those countries where English was their L1, research tended to give more prominence to the use of English.

The influence of the cultural background in business communication was also emphasised by Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005). These authors described BELF as "'neutral' and shared communication code" (p. 404), which they explained in the following way: "BELF is neutral in the sense that none of the speakers can claim it as her/his mother tongue; it is shared in the sense that it is used for conducting business within the global business discourse community, whose members are BELF users and communicators in their own right – not 'non-native speakers' or 'learners'" (pp. 403-404). Their description of BELF as neutral, however, cannot be taken to mean that BELF is not related to any culture. What they meant to emphasise was that despite BELF not being the L1 of any of its users, it reflects the cultural background(s) of their speakers, in line with Meierkord's (2002) claim on lingua francas. More specifically, Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005) analysed the use of BELF in a corporate merger between a Swedish and a Finnish company and explored the linguacultural similarities and differences between Swedish and Finnish in BELF communication, as well as the difficulties that participants had to face in their interactions. The authors used a multimethod approach composed of interviews, questionnaires, and a corpus of written and spoken interactions consisting of emails and recorded meetings, respectively. In the interviews, Swedish and Finnish participants reported each other's language and cultural differences in discourse. Finns saw themselves and were seen by Swedish as more direct, in contraposition to

the Swedish, who viewed themselves and were viewed by the Finns as talkative. The findings revealed how the participants' cultural background was reflected in their BELF written and oral discourse. The study proved then that the L1 cultural background of BELF users had a strong influence in the way in which they used other languages to communicate.

Dealing also with L1 cultural background in BELF communication, Bjørge (2007) analysed the degree of formality in emails that international students sent to their professors. Although the study was conducted among business students, not yet business professionals, it shed light on the way in which the L1 culture had an influence in how ELF and BELF users communicated with their interlocutors. Bjørge used Hofstede's (2001) concept of *cultural dimension* on high and low power distance cultures, and it concentrated mainly on the initial and closing parts of emails in order to disclose how the students' relationship with their professors was influenced by their national cultures (i.e., how they demonstrated a higher or lower power distance relationship). The participants were business students at a Norwegian university and were from different countries. The findings showed a wide variety of greetings and complimentary closes in the participants' emails. Interestingly, although the professors had encouraged a relationship based on informality and equality with their students, more than two-fifths of the students addressed their professors formally in initial and close formulations (i.e. *Dear* + Title/Honorific + Surname; *Yours*/*Sincerely*). To explain these results, Bjørge pointed out to two levels on which participants would be affected by certain factors: at the individual level, the students' personal experiences and their language proficiency were the main reasons for choosing a formal or an informal style to address their professors; at the cultural level, the students' cultural background determined the way they established a higher or lower distance between them and

their professors. Students who were used to having a higher power distance from their teachers resorted to formulations that they perceived as being "safe" (p. 77) to communicate with their teachers. Conversely, students who were used to a lower distance power relationship between them and their professors felt more comfortable using an informal style in their emails (i.e. *Hi*/*Hello* + First Name; *Cheers*).

Carrió-Pastor and Muñiz Calderón (2012) analysed emails written in English among NNESs from China and Pakistan within a Spanish exporting company and their study also revealed how both groups transferred their L1 style into their writing: the Chinese emails were direct and used the imperative, as an influence from their L1 Chinese, while the Pakistani were more neutral and their style conformed to ENL norms more closely. The reason for this, the authors suggested, could be that English was learned as a second language by Pakistani participants, not as a foreign language as the Chinese did. Additionally, the authors noticed that communication was effective despite the differences in the interactants' cultural background.

In line with this communication success in multicultural settings, Zander et al. (2011) found that, as long as the context in which English communication took place was clear, ambiguity was minimised and communication difficulties were perceived as minimal among participants. To reach this conclusion, these authors analysed how English used as a corporate language and as opposed to different L1s could have an impact on the managers' decisions and behaviour in leadership contexts in 17 countries. The findings showed that these decisions depended more on the context in which they took place than on the language used. However, the results disclosed that the culture related to the first language was more evident when analysing the participants' reactions in leadership situations across countries. In these cases, a strong relationship was found between the participants' nationalities and their leadership functions, since their choices, views, and beliefs were closely connected

with their native cultures. The roles and attitudes of managers were different across countries, as they were influenced by the cultural contexts, rather than by the language used. Thus, Zander, Mockaitis, and Harzing's conclusions concur with Poppi's (2012) view about BELF communication, as she asserted that "interactions are inherently intercultural, and are inevitably influenced by the perception people have of themselves, the perception that one has of the interlocutors and the tendency to emphasize differences, often dictated by stereotypes" (p. 179).

As these studies reveal, L1 can significantly influence the way in which messages are interpreted when transferred to lingua franca communication. For this reason, when interactants try to adjust their own views to others', they may be at risk of being too superficial and ignoring the deep complexities involved in cross-cultural interactions. This was well illustrated by Campbell's (1998) analysis of business letters and the reactions that they caused in readers from different liguacultural backgrounds. This author related the responses generated by a letter that was originally written in English by a Chinese scientist addressing to a Japanese organisation. Since the Chinese writer was not very confident in his English writing skills, he asked an English intern for help. Campbell explained that when he asked a group of Asian editors with good English skills to read the letter, they found that it reflected the Chinese writing conventions and sounded very foreign in English. A similar view was expressed by a group of Northern European communicators since, to them, this letter seemed excessively polite for the business context. Campbell concluded that, since the language of reference used in this case was English, the letter should be written according to the cultural etiquette of English letters and not to the writing style of the original author—the Chinese scientist.

Another example of the consequences of not being aware of the impact of L1 cultural background in lingua franca communication was reported in Incelli (2013),

which deals with how lack of cultural awareness put a business transaction at risk. The study focused on email communication between a medium-sized British company, acting as a seller, and a small sized Italian company, as the buyer. One of the British participants in the study declared that, when emails sent by NNESs were difficult to understand, they were intentionally given less priority which, in turn, made the Italian company have the impression of being ignored. Lack of awareness was twofold: the British employees failed to adjust their language to the Italian businessman; the Italian employee did not have sufficient communication skills to express his message accurately. As a result, a lingua-cultural barrier emerged and their objectives as buyers-sellers were jeopardised. The Italian company was not able to communicate and understand the UK staff properly and decided to cut their trade with the UK company for a period of time. As a solution, Incelli suggested having a range of NSs who would be able to communicate in the language of the other. Adopting this measure, the British company could have avoided the risk of losing their customers due to lack of linguacultural skills. However, according to Incelli, British companies, in general, do not regard this measure as an advantage, while British businesspeople see themselves as sufficiently prepared to communicate with others since their L1 is English. In this study, the findings proved how this perception provoked a situation of unequal power between the two companies.

Besides failure in business transactions, lack of awareness of the influence of L1 background on lingua franca communication may be catastrophic in other ways, as studied by Tajima (2004). In this case, the problems in BELF communication between a Dutch captain and a Spanish controller provoked a fatal crash between two planes, when Spanish controller understood the phrase “We are now at takeoff” (p. 460), uttered by the Dutch captain, to mean being at the takeoff position rather than executing the actual taking off maneuvre, which resulted in the worst accident

in aviation history. As Rogerson-Revell's (2007) stated, "[w]hile people may well need to 'speak the same language' in such multilingual contexts, they may not necessarily 'speak the same way'" (p. 118). The controller's misinterpretation was caused by the captain's use of an expression that was influenced by his L1 Dutch and uncommon in aviation.

The works discussed above seem to support Forey and Lockwood's (2007) conclusion to their study on English communication in Business Processing Outsourcing companies: "It appears that communication failure has less to do with the traditional notions of poor language skills, i.e. poor grammatical knowledge and poor pronunciation, and more to do with poor interactional discourse skills and cultural appreciation" (p. 323). Moreover, these works suggest the need to adapt to the social and cultural context in which communication takes place, as highlighted by Kuiper (2007). This author described her experience as a teacher in a course in business communication at a Malaysian university that was expected to concentrate on developing skills for international business communication. Although students took for granted that it would deal with communicating in English exclusively, the author was aware that this was not the main language of commerce in that setting, and that the local language was more frequently used instead. Therefore, Kuiper decided to teach developing skills for business in the local language as well as in English. In this way, she gave students the opportunity to learn to use their local language effectively for business communication and to understand how their L1 interfaced with English in the context of business communication. In this case, the adjustment of the language to the business context seemed easier, as students did not use solely English but they also used their native language. However, when the situation requires the accommodation of interactants with different L1s and hence different cultures, it may present difficulties, as reflected by Angouri and Harwood

(2008). Their study analysed English written communication in meeting minutes and internal reports in three multinational corporations in Greece, Denmark, and Japan. The findings revealed how employees had to confront the challenges derived from adjusting all the format, content, and formulas of documents to different audiences, locations, and objectives. Therefore, this study also emphasises how the process of adapting interactants' cultural perspectives and uses of the language to a different L1 is a complex one, and it requires users' awareness of the particular context in which they are working and with whom they are interacting.

Difficulties in using English as the corporate language were also disclosed in Charles and Marschan-Piekkari (2002), which analysed the use of English and its implications in a multinational corporation based in Finland. English had been chosen as a corporate language in the 70s due to the expansion of the company abroad. As a consequence, English was used extensively in oral communication within international contexts and in written documents. Having the possibility of using English when no other language was shared among employees in certain situations, as for instance in the numerous subsidiaries that the company had outside Finland, was seen as an advantage. However, communication in English was not regarded as unproblematic, as even though the English language had been present in the company for more than thirty years, employees felt that they were not proficient users. For instance, resorting to English in written documentation represented a problem when this was done exclusively by employees with the same L1. Employees reported trouble understanding information and they declared that it would be easier for them if those documents were translated into their L1. Moreover, NNES, as well as NES participants, declared having difficulties in understanding different Englishes. These issues were usually related to grasping various types of accents and, as some NESs declared, comprehending translated documents from other languages

into English was also challenging. Moreover, NNESs asserted that communication with other NNESs was easier than with NESs, which suggested that the latter did not usually accommodate their communication style to NNESs. Charles and Marschan-Piekkari further revealed that the corporation they studied provided in-company English training courses. However, not all the staff could have access to these training programmes since these courses were only for middle and top management level employees and these employees were required to have a certain level before starting the course. The authors concluded that training in the corporate language, that is, English should be encouraged for all staff at the corporate level and that employees' previous skills in the language should not preclude them from having access to the language courses. Moreover, they also suggested that multinational corporations train NESs to accommodate to NNESs.

Along the same lines, Maclean (2006) pointed out that NESs were less prepared than NNESs for international business communication since their use of the language would be rather influenced by their L1 English cultural perspectives and would fail to adjust to the heterogeneous context of business lingua franca interactions. Similarly, in Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2010) interviewees expressed their feeling that in communication with NESs, they were not at the same level, since—being more proficient in the language—NESs usually gained control of the situation. By contrast, when the communication was among NNESs, participants felt that they were all "on the same footing" (p. 207) and perceived a sense of mutual empathy when sharing the difficulties of using a language that was not their L1. Moreover, in Charles (2007) NNES asserted that the main trouble in the interaction with NESs was the latter's sophisticated use of the language. Both cases would suggest, then, a lack of accommodation skills on the NESs' side.

This lack of accommodation skills by NESs was also found in Rogerson-Revell's (2007) study about the difficulties of BELF communication in a European business organisation that had English as the corporate language. In this case, NESs declared that they accommodated when they interacted with NNESs (they tried to speak slowly and avoided idioms, metaphors, and jargon) and appreciated the effort of NNESs to communicate in English. However, when NNESs were asked about their interactions with NESs, they criticised their coworkers' lack of accommodation in BELF communication. Franklin (2007) recorded a similar remark by a German manager: "[t]he English aren't always sympathetic to Germans when they speak English. To begin with, the English speak slowly, but then fall back into speaking the same speed and slang as if the listener is a native" (p. 273).

Although the lack of accommodation of NESs would seem an inconvenience for NNESs in their interactions, as reported in the studies discussed above, the findings in Rogerson-Revell (2007) about this issue were inconclusive. In this study, 43% of NNESs stated that communication with NESs and NNESs was equally easy. Moreover, NNESs found no difficulty understanding accents such as the UK and US English, as well as Dutch, German, Scandinavian, and French accents. However, accents such as London English, Australian, African, Scottish, Irish, Tennessee and New Orleans American, Catalan, French, Japanese, German, Southern European, Far Eastern were challenging for them. Other difficulties for these NNESs were lack of vocabulary, especially among those with lower proficiency in English. As for participants with higher proficiency, their difficulties were related to aspects of interactions such as interrupting or expressing certain ideas during a high-speed discussion. Additionally, both groups with high and low proficiency struggled with the pace and volume of speech (i.e. fast and/or quiet). NESs, in turn, alluded to the intricacies of understanding the different accents and pronunciation of NNESs when

communicating in international business meetings, but they also asserted that these difficulties decreased over time.

Another case in which participants highlighted the little effort NESs made to accommodate in lingua franca communication was Ehrenreich (2010), who analysed the roles of the English and German languages, and their perception by managers, in a German multinational corporation. According to the respondents, NESs' lack of accommodation provoked tensions, since it was essential for all participants to understand what was going on during business operations. Moreover, respondents agreed that communicating in English was usually more tiring and time-consuming than in German, their L1. As for the specific challenges related to communication in English, participants reported having more troubles in small talk, whereas they declared being well versed in technical aspects. To overcome their difficulties in English communication, employees were offered in-company courses, which were in turn found disappointingly traditional, while employees would have preferred a "learning by doing" (p. 419) methodology.

Apart from the communication hindrances discussed, different studies have disclosed how a lack of competence in English has led to employees feeling disempowerment, as they feel their status quo jeopardised in these companies. For instance, Marschan et al. (1997) and Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999) illustrated a case of exclusion due to lack of competence. More specifically, they described how employees who were not able to communicate in English were excluded from relevant venues for the company, such as training programmes in the subsidiaries in different countries. These training programmes were a strategic way of building informal social networks among employees, as was reflected in one of the employees' remarks: "By sending people for training, we are not [only] learning [about] the products but . . . also get[ting] contacts . . . [After the training course] we just contact

them" (Marschan et al., 1997, p. 594). Employees who were regarded as not having sufficient skills in English could not benefit from these venues. By contrast, employees who demonstrated fluency in English could use these networks strategically to accelerate the decision-making process in negotiations. Furthermore, having access to these training programmes would offer workers valuable information and advice to make advancements in their professional careers. Blazejewski's (2006) study illustrated cases in which junior managers who were proficient in English gained power in the decision-making process of the company with respect to less proficient senior managers. Likewise, Virkkula-Raeisaenen (2010) recorded how a manager in a Finnish company, by being proficient in English, became fundamental in international business meetings: he chaired the meetings, filtered all the information, and became the company's "star" (p. 526). Identical situations occur, of course, when English is not the corporate language, as Charles (2007), and Vaara, Tienari, Piekkari, and Säntti (2005) have demonstrated how employees with insufficient skills in the corporate language—Swedish in this case—felt disempowered.

Taking into account the overall findings discussed in this section, English can be seen as a means that facilitates communication within companies. However, the choice of using English is not a straightforward one since there is a series of elements that needs to be considered beforehand, such as the influence of the L1 culture, the interactants' ability to accommodate to others, as well as the different degrees of proficiency among employees. All these factors greatly impact how communication takes place within companies and how employees manage these communicative situations. Furthermore, the studies reviewed pointed out how companies nowadays are characterised by a high diversity of languages and cultures. Hence, it is necessary to examine how English interfaces with other languages.

1.4.2.3. The interface of English with other languages

Given the heterogeneity of current business environments, this section analyses how companies deal with the use of multiple languages. More specifically, it discusses how other languages are perceived by employees in relation to English. Moreover, the way in which companies decide which language to use and for which reasons, the difficulties that their choice may suppose, as well as the solutions that are proposed within companies are also examined. Eventually, other effects such as financial benefits and attitudes derived from using multiple languages within corporations are also explored.

Many works have focused on the employees' perceptions of English in comparison with other languages. For instance, Angouri and Miglbauer (2014) analysed how employees perceived the role of different languages for their daily work. The authors interviewed 40 senior and junior managers from 12 European companies located in different European countries that had English as a corporate language, which meant that this language was given priority for international communication. English was used internally in most of the written documentation, such as technical documents, programmes and applications, and reports. Externally, English was present in texts to promote these companies among customers. It was commonly used in meetings and to communicate with other subsidiaries by phone and email. English was therefore perceived by participants as the means to reach the global market. However, the native speaker ideology in English was found to be dominant among participants and was connected with the professional image of employees. That is, having an NS-like proficiency in English was perceived as being more educated at the workplace. At the same time, this NS ideology on proficiency coexisted with a more instrumental perception in the use of English and of other languages, as one of the interviewees asserted: "My English is very good for what I've

signed up for" (p. 164). Thus, the NS-like competence perspective did not preclude these employees from seeing their use of English as adjusted to their needs in the working context. This showed contradictory views, since using English according to their working needs and hence getting the job done suggested that having NS like proficiency in English was not actually necessary. Additionally, local and other foreign languages were also important among employees to carry out daily tasks at the workplace. Interviewees expressed their preference for avoiding the use of English in those cases in which they shared the same L1 as their counterparts, and provided this did not preclude other interactants from participating in the communicative process.

This study revealed how participants connected this language diversity with their own experiences of living in different places and being able to adapt to different contexts. In other words, the use of English allowed these employees to be identified as being part of a "global mindset" (p. 158) whereas, at the same time, a sense of integration within the local setting was promoted by using the local languages.

Similarly, in Machili (2015) the global and the local intertwined. In this case, English was used along with the local language, Greek. The study proved how the use of both languages was related to the hierarchy level of workers. English was used to communicate with employees in higher positions since these were the ones who established connections with workers from other countries. In the meanwhile, employees in lower levels of the company were not involved in international relations, and they communicated more often in Greek among themselves. Employees expressed their awareness of how being able to communicate in the L1 of the companies with which they conducted business operations was crucial for advancing in their professional careers, i.e. getting promotions, and more generally for not losing their jobs.

Lønsmann (2015) also analysed the perception on the use of English and of other languages in a multinational corporation in Denmark. Danish was perceived by participants as the natural language, it was used among Danish speakers in the company and it was also seen as a relevant language that allowed international workers to have social mobility in Denmark. Consequently, being proficient in Danish would presumably offer them more professional opportunities, as well as a higher social integration in the country. However, when Danish was compared with English, the former was regarded as local and unimportant, based on the international repercussion that English had as a global means to communicate. Furthermore, although English was highly considered by participants, and a symbol of power, it was not always a necessary language for communication at top management level. Other languages such as Spanish, Arabic, and French were frequently used in international communication. Interestingly, these languages were categorised by participants as not being work-related or they were not even mentioned as part of the international communication. To analyse this data, Lønsmann referred to Gal and Irvine's (1995) notion of *erasure*: "the process in which ideology, in simplifying the field of linguistic practices, renders some persons or activities or sociolinguistic phenomena invisible. Facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme may go unnoticed or get explained away" (p. 974). Lønsmann (2015) argued how participants "erased" (p. 353) the use of other languages except for Danish and English, despite their being part of their communication activity in the workplace. By contrast, English was conceived by these participants as the corporate language, and as the only choice to communicate internationally.

The works discussed above have analysed how English and other languages with which it co-exists in a business setting were perceived by employees, and how the specific context of communication was a determining factor in deciding which

language to use. In the same way, Steyaert, Ostendorp, and Gaibrois (2011) revealed how employees resorted to a certain language depending on location and interlocutors. The authors used a discoursive approach to describe the way in which the complexity of multilingualism was addressed in communication between two corporations: one being mainly national-oriented, whereas the other was more globally oriented. The findings revealed how, in the more globally oriented company, participants described their use of English (the only choice to communicate in lingua franca situations) as not "real" (p. 276), since they declared that it was not based on the NESs' norms. According to them, their usage of English was a simplified version, which they called a "business tool" (p. 276). However, at the same time, English was not perceived as a homogeneous language, and participants—including NESs—reported having difficulties in understanding other NESs' accents. As for the less globally oriented company, negotiation on language choice was a predominant practice: the highest number of speakers of a language was taken into account, or the participants' ability to understand it, determined which language would be used at a certain event. Furthermore, participants adjusted to their counterparts when they knew their L1. Also, particularly when replying to emails, various languages were used simultaneously, since each respondent used their own L1. In email communication also participants frequently resorted to English, both when they did not know each other's L1 and when they had the same L1.

This is in line with Hilgendorf's (2010) study, which disclosed that English was used to communicate among L1 German speakers, especially when certain documents had to be in English, such as the meeting minutes. The local meetings tended to be conducted also in English, even if they were carried out among speakers with the same L1, because these minutes would be consulted by speakers with different L1s. Despite sharing German as L1, because some documentation would be

in English, using this language was seen as a facilitator for the participants who would rather not have the meeting in their L1 and then have to translate the agreements into English for the minutes.

Although the coexistence of different languages in Steyaert et al. (2011) seemed to be relatively harmonious, the results in the nationally oriented company revealed a strong tension between the use of the local languages, German, French and English. For instance, one of the participants alluded to an instance in which he sent emails in English to a new colleague who entered the company and did not know the local languages. Other co-workers criticised his behaviour pointing out that they were not in England, so using English was seen as out of place. Steyaert et al.'s (2011) work contributed to the understanding of how the use of English and of other languages was connected with the particular circumstances of a workplace, such as its orientation towards a global or a national market, as well as how this influenced the way in which the language choice was negotiated.

The difficulties of multilingualism within corporations were also explored by Harzing, Köster, and Magner (2011). These authors conducted a study among managers in eight multinational companies' corporate headquarters in Germany and Japan, and their subsidiaries in Japan and Germany respectively. The aim was to disclose the language difficulties, which they referred to as *barriers*, and how these were solved. Interviewees declared that the usage of multiple languages caused higher costs and slowness in decision-making and, consequently, had a major impact on productivity. According to Harzing, Köster, and Magner, the existence of language barriers was expected, since linguistic divergences between German and Japanese are remarkable. Additionally, interviewees asserted that Japanese seemed to be less skilful in spoken English. To overcome these difficulties in communication, these companies implemented a series of ad-hoc and structural solutions. Ad-hoc

strategies included pragmatic practices, such as asking for repetition and clarification or accommodating to the interlocutors' needs, as well as code-switching. Structural strategies, which required more planning, were used, such as the implementation of a corporate language, namely English; the use of translators, interpreters, and machine translators; and language training. As for the corporate language, there did not seem to be a consensus among employees: some identified English as their corporate language, others considered that English and German were both corporate languages, whereas still others seemed not to be aware of the existence of an official corporate language. This confusion was similar to the one reported in Fredriksson, Barner-Rasmussen, and Piekkari (2006), a study which highlighted how the ways in which languages were managed at a macro-level by the company differed from how they were handled at the micro-level by employees. In this case, German and English were both dominant languages with respect to other languages used in the company. And although there were attempts to establish English as the corporate language, this did not impede the use of other languages, or that German continued to share a central role with it. Moreover, different factors were determining for the predominance of these two languages. Favouring German were the company's background, the German business units, the administrative role of German and, overall, the tradition that German represented. On the other hand, a main factor promoting English was the newness of adopting it as the lingua franca that allowed employees to communicate internationally and to have access to the international market. Additionally, the fact that the language policy was not clearly established provoked tensions. According to Fredriksson et al. (2006), the lack of a corporate language would be perceived as problematic for the image of cohesion and integration that the corporation was supposed to transmit, and which was suggested

by other studies (Barner-Rasmussen & Björkman, 2007; Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999; Sørensen, 2005).

In Harzing et al. (2011) some discrepancies were also found among employees as for the use of English as a corporate language. Some of them reported a resistance to this policy and asserted that they sometimes responded in Japanese to their German counterparts, especially when the former addressed to them in German instead of doing it in English.

As regards the use of translators and interpreters, participants in Harzing et al. (2011) highlighted the high cost of hiring these services, and they declared that they were used in very specific circumstances, such as translating technical documents, or contracts, or providing simultaneous interpreting services at important meetings. Besides the financial costs, the use of translators and interpreters is not always the best solution, as disclosed by Machili (2015). In this study, a senior manager stated that he had to leave his correspondent duties aside to do the extra work of preparing all the materials for the interpreters that were hired by the company, as they were not well versed in the specific topics of the organisation. Although translators and interpreters were competent certified professionals, they did not have enough time to grasp the technicalities of the company. This example highlighted the role of interpreters hired temporarily for corporations as inefficient and was in line with Feely and Harzing (2003), who pointed out the consequent "burden" (p. 43) for employees, who must act as intermediaries besides conducting their primary tasks.

In Harzing et al. (2011), these employees who combined their primary roles in the companies with carrying out intermediary functions were referred to as "bridge individuals" (p. 282) and included bilingual employees, expatriates, as well as inpatriates. The authors disclosed that besides being overworked, this intermediary

role would make these employees communication gatekeepers of relevant information. In other words, by having access to sensitive information due to their language skills, these employees' intermediation could have negative consequences for the correct flow of the information, since they could block, or distort, relevant information for the company (Feely & Harzing, 2003). Despite the financial costs that it could mean for the firm, a viable solution for this situation would be hiring interpreters on a long-term basis. This would allow these interpreters to become experts in the company's business affairs and, as a result, their work would be really helpful for the company (Yoshihara, Okabe, & Sawaki, 2001).

Besides bridge individuals to overcome language barriers, participants in Harzing et al. (2011) regarded language training as crucial. Moreover, most participants declared that English was extremely important for getting promotions in these companies and yet language skills were not part of the criteria in the personnel selection. In light of the results, and given that bridge individuals were vastly used as a method to overcome these barriers, the authors suggested that companies should not only consider their potential employees' technical knowledge but also their ability to speak various languages in the recruitment process.

Another study in which multilingualism was perceived as challenging by employees was van der Worp, Cenoz, and Gorter's (2017). The authors explored how different employees dealt with the use of several languages in their companies. The participants in this study held different positions in 14 companies operating internationally in the Basque Country, Spain. The authors used a holistic approach, as they analysed various languages and the employees' skills, perceptions, practices, and experiences within the broader social context. The findings revealed that English was the language most used to communicate internationally, although Spanish, French, and German were also used for some international communication contexts.

However, these employees, especially those belonging to older generations, did not have sufficient skills to communicate effectively in those languages. Moreover, and in line with Harzing et al. (2011) and Fredriksson et al. (2006), the respondents disclosed that no specific language policy existed in these companies. Consequently, these workers based their language choice on the communication context and tried to solve difficulties by using ad-hoc pragmatic strategies.

The findings also pointed out that the employees' language education received at school was not adequate for the workplace. As a result, employees usually tried to take language courses on their own, whereas in other cases they were offered in-company courses. Nevertheless, the workload and the time constraints were usually mentioned as affecting their attendance. Consequently, this provoked a general feeling of frustration in these employees' learning process.

Although participants were aware that knowing their counterparts' language was beneficial for doing business, language skills were not a priority within the personnel selection criteria, which coincided with the findings in Harzing et al. (2011). Van der Worp et al. (2017) concluded that the three dimensions of their holistic approach were interrelated since the language perceptions and skills of the multilingual workers determined their way of using these languages as well as their way of learning them, and vice versa. Simultaneously, their learning and use of the language were influenced by the social context.

The use of multiple languages within corporations was also explored in Vandermeeren's (1999) survey-based study on the use of different languages as lingua francas in business communication in corporations in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Hungary. The aim of this study was to disclose whether a regular scheme existed in the use of languages by these companies, and how their use could have an impact on the companies' international trading performance. The

results disclosed that besides English, other languages were regarded as necessary by the participants in this study. For instance, German and French were more frequently used for correspondence between German and French companies than English, and many of the corporations in the study preferred to communicate in the L1 of their business counterparts. The author concluded that, in choosing their counterparts' L1 for correspondence instead of English, companies performed better at international trading than when they used English with them. These findings concur with more recent studies led by different organisations and have also emphasised how using different languages would have financial repercussions for companies (ARCTIC,2013; BCC, 2013; European Commission, 2010, 2011).

Besides better performance in business transactions, the use of multiple languages has demonstrated to promote cooperation, as well as solidarity and common ground, and a sense of group belonging among employees (Poncini, 2003, 2013). In Poncini (2003) for instance, the use of English, Italian, French and German during different stages of the business transactions allowed participants to grasp a better understanding of these processes. The possibility of combining different linguistic repertoires made them more prone to collaborate to achieve efficient communication. Moreover, the fact that these interactants were from different L1 backgrounds made them aware of the linguacultural diversity of their team and, within this heterogeneity, they felt a sense of belonging. In other words, these participants perceived that they were in the same situation while using other languages than their L1s. Similarly, in Cogo (2016b), the multilingual business space allowed its participants to feel a sense of equality in their position as speakers of different L1s, all involved in the effort to smooth communication and reach common ground.

The literature examined in this section highlighted the fact that corporations are not monolingual spaces, since different languages and cultures coexist in more or less harmony. Moreover, the presence of multiple languages within corporations may be beneficial, for instance, from the financial point of view for keeping business operations running, while the use of multiple languages allows for diverse spaces for language negotiation. Consequently, the coexistence of different languages affects the way in which their users identify both themselves and others, and the way in which they choose to communicate with others.

1.4.2.4. English language skills within companies: The recruitment process

In view of the impact that languages can have within corporations, it is also necessary to examine research studies on how English is regarded by companies when it comes to the personnel selection process. This section, therefore, explores how companies decide which English language skills are crucial when hiring new employees and which are seen as peripheral for conducting their work.

Different works have focused on the language needs that corporations perceive as relevant for their current and future employees. Studies have pointed out how nowadays English is not regarded as an advantage, but as a condition to be part of the companies' recruitment processes. For instance, Ehrenreich (2010) in her work on a German corporation disclosed that English was not officially the corporate language. However, all participants agreed that English was a "must" (p. 416) for professionals in almost every position and in all locations in these corporations. English was viewed by these employees as an indispensable "tool" (p. 417) to carry out their daily tasks at the workplace, as it was the language in which they conducted international business operations.

Similarly, other scholars have emphasised the relevance of having language skills in English for the recruitment process within companies or getting promotions at the workplace (Crossling & Ward, 2002; Harzing et al., 2011; Machili, 2015; Mohamed, Radzuan, Kassim, & Ali, 2014; Taillefer, 2007). For instance, Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) conducted a study in the Faculty of Petroleum and Engineering (FPE) in Hadhramout University of Sciences and Technology in Malaysia. The authors found that most of the petroleum graduates were rejected when applying to work at the oil companies as a result of their poor performance in English. These results led the former Yemeni Minister of Oil and Minerals to advise these graduates to improve their English skills to increase their opportunities of getting a job. Likewise, Kassim and Ali (2010) carried out a study among engineers from 10 multinational chemical companies in Malaysia which showed that English was necessary for having access to the job market. More specifically, oral communication skills were especially important for conducting teleconferences, building networks, and making new contacts.

Moreover, the participants in these two studies revealed a preference for achieving an NS-like proficiency. This perception differed from Ehrenreich's (2010), in which reaching an NS-like competence was categorised by some participants as being "unrealistic" (p. 418). The idea of being closer to ENL norms seems to be progressively changing, although it could be connected to the particular circumstances of certain countries, such as Malaysia, which considers ENL proficiency to be more prestigious, and to certain business sectors. For instance, Nair-Venugopal (2013) conducted a study in a finance company in Malaysia before becoming a commercial bank first, during the 90s, and then after this process, in 2006. The aim was to analyse whether the expectations in the use of English in the company were the same after the restructuration of the company when it became a

commercial bank. The findings revealed that English was perceived as the language of the workplace, and its use in the older entity was primarily focused on the ENL standard norms of English. Additionally, banks were viewed as a professional sector in which the standard norms of English had been extensively promoted as an image of quality. As a result, the new workers were perceived by the oldest and most traditional managers as having low command of English. However, contemporary workers no longer spoke or wrote according to the NES norms as Malay became the national language and the medium of instruction, which made English lose its supremacy within the national workforce. Nair-Venugopal disclosed that the daily use of English at the workplace in the newly restructured entity was influenced by the local language. In light of these events, English was not used according to the standard norms as claimed by the most traditional sector of staff. Consequently, the old idea about English was not necessarily a valid one for the commercial bank. The author concluded that, in this new organisation, knowledge related to the job, in this case, English for the banking and finance sector, was more important than having NS-like proficiency.

Another study that corroborated that NS-like proficiency was not relevant for being part of the company was Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2010, 2011). The authors had conducted an online survey study between 2007 and 2008 to explore the use of BELF and its role in the global communicative competence among corporations that operated internationally. The findings revealed that employees did not consider necessary to have an NS-like competence in English, but these participants believed that knowledge of jargon, as well as the ability to decide "what to communicate and to whom, when to communicate, and how" (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2011, p. 253), were crucial instead. Having knowledge about specific terminology in English was also perceived as more important than

grammatical accuracy, as the authors declared: "the basic message seemed to be that *"adequately"* good grammar and vocabulary were sufficient" (p. 253; emphasis in original). Furthermore, participants were asked about the most valuable elements for international communication, and the results disclosed a strong agreement towards being direct, clear, and polite. These three skills were perceived as the most relevant ones to communicate successfully in international contexts among participants and were also highlighted in similar studies by other scholars (Munter, 2011; Pullin, 2015).

As regards other aspects related to business communication, respondents expressed that getting the job done was the sign that the communication was successful: "*[i]f communication does not take place, business does not take place*" (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2011, p. 253; emphasis in original). This response demonstrates that communicative competence in English and business know-how were interrelated. Similarly, several studies have disclosed how, in the recruitment process, having skills in English was valued, as long as the candidates could demonstrate professional competence according to the job position. This supports Piekkari's (2008) assertion that "more emphasis tends to be placed on professional competence rather than language competence per se" (p. 132). Therefore, this would explain why some studies revealed that English language skills were not a priority for companies since having these skills would be relevant only if they are connected with the job position (Harzing et al., 2011; Kubota, 2011, 2013; van der Worp et al., 2017).

Besides demonstrating communication skills and know-how, some studies indicated how companies also appreciated characteristics such as having confidence when using English. More specifically, Jämtelid (2002) and Nikko (2007) revealed how managers expressed that they wanted NNESs to be more proactive and have

more confidence to participate in meetings, despite not having a perfect command of the English language. Being confident when using English would also allow employees to participate in more informal interactions and build rapport, an aspect that was also considered to be essential for business operations (Crossling & Ward, 2002; Planken, 2005).

Another skill explored in research about ELF in connection with corporations' needs was intercultural competence. Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2011), for instance, disclosed how participants highlighted the urgency of knowing their counterparts' role and accommodating accordingly to their "different ways of doing things" (p. 255). Similarly, participants in Angouri and Miglbauer (2014) stressed the relevance of paying attention to the ways in which others conduct business tasks and "pick up the routine" (p. 159), which suggests also the need to adjust to the different ways in which others conduct their work.

Along the same lines, Cogo (2016b) revealed that employees regarded intercultural accommodation as vital. More specifically, the author focused on a particular community of practice of workers from corporate investment. These participants declared that they considered themselves to be tolerant towards their counterparts' ways of dealing with business and tried to accommodate to them, and therefore, they expected the same from their counterparts. Moreover, the findings suggested that belonging to the same community of practice made communication—as well as dealing with intercultural experiences—easier, since their members would share their particular ways of communicating and conducting business tasks.

Studies emphasise how it is still necessary for organisations to give more weight to cultural awareness. For instance, some participants in van der Worp et al. (2017) expressed scepticism about acquiring intercultural skills through practice: "*employees are not sensitive to cultural differences*" (p. 14; emphasis in original).

Overall, Spanish participants in this study were aware of the cultural barriers with other countries that apparently could be perceived as easier for conducting business due to the fact of sharing the same language, such as Latin American countries. In fact, they made it clear that not expecting cultural, as well as language barriers, would be erroneous. Interestingly, when asked about the significance of being interculturally competent, participants declared that the intercultural dimension was dismissed from the workshops, conferences, and materials developed by the government aiming at preparing companies for internationalisation.

Besides being aware of other countries' cultural backgrounds, an expertise in the local culture can be also relevant for doing business. Ehrenreich (2010), for instance, disclosed how several multinational companies that also conducted transactions at the local level needed employees with wide knowledge on the local ways of doing business operations. The findings gave conclusive evidence that having employees who were experts on the local language and culture was crucial for conducting transactions and achieving contracts with local companies.

As expected, the works dealing with hiring practices and ELF/BELF identified expertise in the job position as fundamental, whereas having skills in English is secondary. However, at the same time, the works reviewed emphasised that having communication skills in English was indispensable for having access to the current job market. Moreover, according to these studies, intercultural awareness and accommodation are also crucial competencies for being part of the heterogeneous business environment. In other words, the findings show how the perception of language proficiency for companies seems to have shifted towards a BELF perspective; that is, applying English knowledge to a particular working field rather than being native-like competent has become more commonly demanded by corporations. In line with this, linguistic self-confidence and intercultural

competence are indicated in these studies as valuable areas within the applicants' background.

Besides illustrating how significant English is for corporations when looking for potential candidates, the discussion on these studies has concentrated on the consequences of being proficient or not according to the companies' standards. By contrast, and despite including the term *proficiency* in its title, the following section does not focus on the relevance of having command in English, but rather it explores how the concept of proficiency itself has been portrayed within international business communication scholarship, as well as the possibilities that are being considered in order to identify the notion of proficiency in English with a different framework of reference than the ENL. Furthermore, this review of the research on proficiency elucidates some implications for the language teaching field as well.

1.4.2.5. Problematising the notion of English proficiency

Scholars from the applied linguistics field, and especially from BELF, have noted how the approach to the notion of proficiency in English in the international management and business communication field differs from that of BELF. BELF researchers have pointed out how this conceptualisation of English proficiency has not been problematised until recently (Ehrenreich, 2010; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013; Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen, & Karhunen, 2015). Much research has been done to date on how English was used and perceived by companies and added relevant insights. However, many of these works, especially those from the international business and management communication fields dealt with the use of English according to the ENL perspective (i.e. Blazejewski, 2006; Feely & Harzing, 2003; Fredriksson et al., 2006; Maclean, 2006). More specifically, BELF scholars have highlighted that, although many of these works use the concept "English as a lingua franca", they do not usually refer to the same conceptualisation that BELF

does. In these works, participants—especially NNESs—are assessed against the ENL yardstick and seem to be the ones responsible for the difficulties in communication. According to BELF researchers, scholars from the international management and business communication studies seem not to bear in mind that NESs are also responsible for the challenges in communication.

Along the same lines, although in connection with cultural diversity, Pashmforoosh and Babaii (2015) disclosed how, in textbooks designed for students and business professionals, ENL was predominantly presented as the target culture in global business interactions. Moreover, the approach to the cultural content was knowledge-based. Consequently, the authors argued that this material promoted stereotypical information, rather than critical cultural awareness. This same claim on business pedagogical material had been made by Angouri (2010), who declared that "a good deal of this material draws on macro-level observations of differences between different cultures (where the term typically refers to different nationalities) and anecdotal experiences, not always based on rigorous empirical data" (p. 208). In both cases, Angouri (2010) and Pashmforoosh and Babaii (2015) suggested the need for a more critical perspective on the part of writers, publishers, and researchers to leave aside the focus on the ENL as a model for business communication.

According to BELF scholars, international management and business works do not problematise the notion of English proficiency as understood from the ENL. Similarly, they sometimes take an EFL approach for analysing the use of English in business communication. However, the EFL perspective would not be appropriate either, since EFL regards business workers that use English against the ENL yardstick and, moreover, they are viewed as learners that are not able to master the language (Jenkins, 2014; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013; Kankaanranta et al., 2015). Furthermore, BELF scholars emphasise that in taking this ENL/EFL

perspective, these works do not consider the fundamental premise that English in business communication is not used only for interacting with NESs. Therefore, they would tend to ignore that communication with NNESs is much more frequent in the heterogeneous environment of international business.

In line with this, Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2013) compared EFL and BELF to make clear the differences between the two approaches, as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Differences between EFL and BELF approaches

Criterion	EFL	BELF
Successful interactions require	NS-like language skills	business communication skills and strategic skills
The speaker/writer aims to	emulate NS discourse	get the job done & create rapport
NNSs are seen as	learners, "sources of trouble"	communicators in their own right
Main source of problems	inadequate language skills	inadequate business communication skills
"Culture"	national cultures of NSs	business community cultures and individual cultural backgrounds
English is "owned" by	its native speakers	nobody – and everybody

Note. Reprinted from "What language does global business speak?" The concept and development of BELF, by Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen, 2013 (p. 29).

The comparison between EFL and BELF is similar to that between EFL and ELF (Jenkins, 2006a, 2006b, 2012). The difference is that ELF here refers to the business domain: BELF. This table shows how BELF, like ELF, focuses not on the NES model, or on NES cultures or their language skills. What is relevant for an effective

communication in the BELF paradigm is having a combination of elements "involving knowledge and skills of business, culture, and communication" (Kankaanranta et al., 2015, p. 140). That is, BELF users must be able to draw on their skills and communication strategies to get their job done and to create rapport with their interlocutors.

Moreover, in BELF communication the English language does not only belong to their native users; it belongs to every individual in the international business sphere that communicates through English with others who have different L1s. Therefore, measuring workers' language competence according to a set of fixed norms would not be reasonable. Besides, conceptualising English language proficiency according to the ENL norms for business communication would make language a commodity. Consequently, business workers would only be regarded as valid language users as long as they comply with the language standards established from the NES perspective (Angouri, 2014; Heller, 2010; Piller & Lising, 2014). By contrast, BELF scholars argue how language can be legitimately more than a tool, since BELF gives more value to the business workers' ability to maintain rapport with their counterparts, or whether they are aware of how their colleagues from different L1 backgrounds develop their tasks in certain contexts. In other words, BELF is more concerned with how "its users exploit the linguistic resources that are best suited for their varying situational contexts" (Kankaanranta et al., 2015, p. 135).

Under these circumstances, some scholars from the management and business international communication fields have recently proposed a different framework—one that is not based on the NES model—for conceptualising English proficiency in international business communication. For instance, Janssens and Steyaert (2014) suggested the *multilingual franca* approach as a framework to analyse language performance at the workplace. According to these authors, this

proposal sees multinational corporations as places where the global and the local are intertwined and need each other. This would allow researchers to understand the complexity of the global workplace, such as multinational corporations. Moreover, through the multilingual franca scheme, language is conceived as a “social activity” (p. 637) which enables its users to become aware of the linguistic diversity and of the multiple resources that are available to them in these heterogeneous spaces. Janssens and Steyaert detected the need for international management and business studies on English communication to focus on how hybridity, fluid and fixed norms, social relationships, and identity are interrelated processes in the language performance at the global workplace. The multilingual franca project demonstrates also a similar interest of BELF in showing how different elements are integrated into communication, rather than focusing on a set of fixed norms as the valid paradigm to communicate (Kankaanranta, et al., 2015).

BELF scholars have also argued how the problematisation of understanding proficiency of English from an ENL perspective for business communication must be transferred to the teaching field. Teaching the strategies that make communication effective, rather than paying attention to grammatical accuracy with respect to the ENL norms, should be the focus of courses in international business communication in English. According to BELF researchers, students would learn how to put in practice the global communicative competence to get the job done. More specifically, they would be able to express themselves with clarity, directness, and conciseness (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2011, 2013; Pullin, 2015) to become effective communicators. Besides, intercultural accommodation, as well as tolerance towards other languages, should be given more relevance (Cogo, 2016b). In line with this, some scholars (Gerritsen & Nickerson, 2009; Pashmforoosh & Babaii, 2015) have pointed out the need to include activities that stimulate the students’ critical thinking

and awareness of culture for business communication by, for instance, implementing group discussions about how to conduct business with other countries (Pashmforoosh & Babaii, 2015). Thus, having a more critical perspective on how the companies in their own countries and others deal with business would help students be aware of the linguacultural diversity in corporations. Additionally, this intercultural awareness would allow them to create and maintain rapport with their counterparts (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2011, 2013).

In line with the aspects discussed in this section, BELF scholars highlight that it is necessary for researchers from the international management and business communication areas to develop their critical awareness of what English competence is. Therefore, BELF scholarship points out that an analysis more focused on discourse, or on how corporations conceptualise English, would be more efficient to achieve this understanding.

Taking into account the literature reviewed, and more specifically the claim that BELF scholars have made on the need for more studies that examine how English is conceptualised within the business domain, this dissertation intends to disclose how English is used in a specific group of companies—specifically, university spin-off companies in Galicia. Moreover, the usage of other languages would be analysed in order to find out how English interfaces with them. By conducting a series of interviews in these companies, a dual perspective will be applied in order to deal with, on a global level, the use of English—and other languages—in the companies and, on a more individual level, how people who work at these companies conceptualise their use of English and of other languages. Furthermore, the implications for the teaching and the business fields derived from the data gathered on the use of English will be eventually addressed. Therefore, the next chapter details and justifies the methodology followed to conduct this study of these companies' and

these individuals’ perspectives on the usage of English and other languages for business communication.

Chapter 2

Methodology

In this chapter, I outline the research conducted in the field of university spin-off companies to contextualise the business ventures involved in this study (2.1.). Next, I articulate the rationale for the research strategy and the epistemological approach considered (2.1.1.). This is followed by the information on the data sampling regarding the companies and the interviewees included in this study (2.1.2.), and the techniques used to collect the data (2.1.3.). Finally, I detail the procedures that I followed for analysing the data (2.1.4.).

2.1. The context of the study: University spin-off companies

Since most of the subjects for this study are university spin-off companies, it is essential, to begin by introducing some background information as regards the definition and characteristics of these companies, their origin and their relevance for society.

Research into the phenomenon of university spin-off companies to date has proved to be thriving (Arora, 1995; Autio, 1997; Chiesa & Piccaluga, 2000; Condom, 2003; Cotec, 2003; Lockett, Wright, & Franklin, 2003; Matkin, 1990; O'Shea, Allen, Chevalier, & Roche, 2005; Siegel, Waldman, & Link, 2003; Shane, 2004; Siegel, Waldman, Atwater, & Link, 2003). Interestingly, finding a unique definition of the term among authors seems to be still challenging, as there are different opinions

about the criteria by which companies may be considered university spin-offs (Aceytuno Pérez & Cáceres Carrasco, 2009; Iglesias Sánchez et al., 2012; Moncada-Partenó-Castello, Tubke, Howells, & Carbone, 2001; Rodeiro Pazos, 2008). However, the review of the substantial literature on the topic revealed some common characteristics on the descriptions of university spin-off companies which are summarised below.

Firstly, university spin-off companies can be created and managed by researchers and/or professors at a certain university or research centre, or by other external entities that can exploit the knowledge derived from the research that is being done at university, or a combination of them (Beraza Garmendia & Rodríguez Castellanos, 2010; López Martínez, 2006; Meyer, 2006). Furthermore, close collaboration between the institution in which the company was created and the industry is essential to developing strategies that support the companies' costs and financial risks (Clarisse & Moray, 2004; Iglesias Sánchez et al., 2012; O'Shea et al., 2005).

Secondly, university spin-off companies involve a technology and/or knowledge transfer process along with a great component of R&D (Research and Development). More specifically, the aim of university spin-off companies is to use technology and/or knowledge that derives from the research activity done at the university and transfer the results into products or services to the society (Aceytuno Pérez & Cáceres Carrasco, 2009; Clarisse & Moray, 2004; Iglesias et al., 2012; O'Gorman, Byrne, & Pandya, 2006). Consequently, these companies would stimulate the local economy (Aceytuno Pérez & Cáceres Carrasco 2009; Iglesias Sánchez et al., 2012; López Martínez, 2006).

Thirdly, a high proportion of university spin-off companies belong to the IT and the life science fields (Dahlstrand, 1997; Golub, 2003; Lowe, 2002; Mustar,

1997; O'Gorman et al., 2006; O'Shea et al., 2005; Shane, 2004). Belonging to these areas causes these companies' connection with the research centres and universities usually to involve a high expertise in the field (Hsu & Bernstein, 1997), a strong protection for their patents (Lowe, 2002), and an easy commercialisation of their products (Shane, 2004).

Moreover, university spin-off companies usually share other peculiarities, such as their small size (Clarisse & Moray, 2004; Iglesias Sánchez et al., 2012; Ortín, Salas, Trujillo, & Vendrell, 2007; Rodeiro, Fernández, Rodríguez, & Otero, 2010; Stankiewicz, 1994), certain economic difficulties associated with entrepreneurship (Hurst & Lusardi, 2004), heterogeneous and highly qualified teams (Ortín et al., 2008), or the familiarity among the team members since in many cases they knew each other as students before starting up their businesses (Clarisse & Moray, 2004).

As for the seeds of university spin-off companies, the first university business model originated in the US at the turn of the 20th century (Aceytuno Pérez & Cáceres Carrasco, 2009; Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). Some of the pioneering universities and institutions which exploited and commercialised the research results were, for instance, the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) or the University of California, Berkeley (Aceytuno Pérez & Cáceres Carrasco, 2009). These university business ventures became, firstly, a model of reference within the US and, later, for the rest of the world (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). In the case of Europe, the commercialisation of the inventions developed in the university was a critical factor driving the emergence of the university spin-off companies, which gave rise to the concept "entrepreneurial university" (Beraza Garmendia & Rodríguez Castellanos, 2010, p. 117). Thus, this so-called entrepreneurial university has been regarded as a major bridge between university and society (Iglesias Sánchez et al., 2012; Mautner, 2005).

As regards the particular case of Spain, the number of university spin-off companies has been progressively growing during the last two decades (Aceytuno Pérez & Cáceres Carrasco, 2009; Iglesias Sánchez et al., 2012; Ortín et al., 2007; Rodeiro et al., 2010). This growth was especially remarkable at the beginning of the 2000s, when the creation of university spin-offs experienced an annual increase of 72% (Rodeiro et al., 2010). However, scholars have claimed that more research on this type of companies continues to be necessary to disclose more information on different aspects, such as the factors that are key for the transference of knowledge, as well as for their implication for the local economy (Beraza Garmendia & Rodríguez Castellanos, 2010; Iglesias Sánchez et al., 2012; Rodeiro et al., 2010).

In order to elucidate how this study on university spin-off companies has been conducted, the next section details and justifies the research strategy chosen.

2.1.1. Research strategy

The primary focus of this empirical research is to understand *how* and *why* a series of companies and their individuals use English and other languages. Therefore, to obtain qualitative and quantitative data on the views of the companies' staff, as global entities and as individuals, I used a combined research design consisting of qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell, 2002). Bergman et al. (2010) discussed the difficulty of defining a qualitative study in general terms and argued how broad approaches describe it as opposite to quantitative study. Nevertheless, they clarified that the use of one would not necessarily exclude the other:

> It is therefore impossible to give a generic definition of what qualitative research is. As a result, a conventional approach has been to define qualitative research in contrast to quantitative research: qualitative

> methods are non-quantitative, that is, qualitative research does not use statistics or standardized procedures. However, it is not the case that any research which is not quantitative must be qualitative. . . .
> Qualitative research is sophisticated, systematic, and scientific: it is embedded in an understanding of theoretical research which outlines its premises, concepts, and practices. (p. 9)

In line with Bergman et al.'s (2010), this empirical investigation combines both qualitative and quantitative methods. More specifically, the present research pursues qualitative understanding of the reasons behind the participants under study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) since it focuses on gaining comprehension on a particular field: Galician business ventures connected with Galician universities and their usage and perception of different areas related to the usage of English. Furthermore, this study intends to obtain quantitative data to find out, for instance, the number of companies that consider the English language as compulsory, or how many of them have international relations, among other questions that will be discussed in chapter 3. In order to have a better global understanding of how and why participants use English, this research calls thus for a qualitative and quantitative analysis.

The research strategy chosen to implement this empirical analysis is a case study. A case study is an appropriate strategy to answer how and why, that is, explanatory questions (Yin, 2003). This research strategy allows disclosing the way in which and the reasons why a specific entity or groups of entities behave in certain circumstances (Cohen & Manion, 1995). Yin (2003) made also an emphasis on the influence that the context has in the case study:

> A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. In other words, you

would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions—believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study . . . . The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points . . . . In this sense, the case study is not either a data collection tactic or merely a design feature alone but a comprehensive research strategy. (p. 13)

Moreover, according to Yin's (2012) description, the present study must be classified as an embedded, multiple-case study design since the research is conducted in more than in one company with the aim of offering a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perceptions as individuals but also as the global voices of their companies (see Figure 1 below). That is, the embedded units in each case are the company and the individual workers. Figure 1 underneath illustrates Yin's definition of the multiple case study.

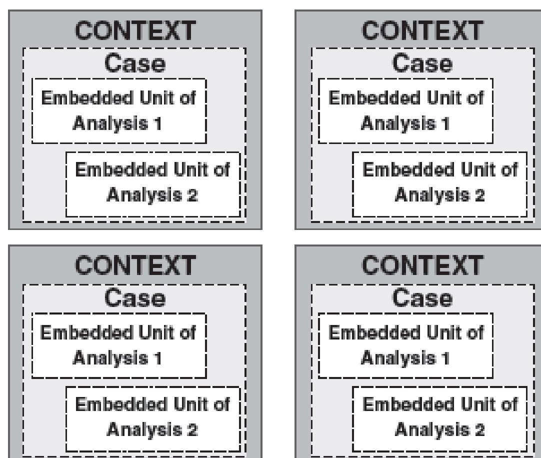

Figure 1. Multiple-case study design (COSMOS Corporation, in Yin, 2012, p. 8).

The contemporary phenomenon to be studied in this research is the usage of English—and other languages—within a concrete corpus consisting of a group of companies connected with the three Galician universities: The University of A

Coruña (UDC), the University of Vigo (UVIGO), and the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC). It must be pointed out from the start that the boundaries between the usage of English and other languages and the specific circumstances of each company are not clear. To make sense of the data in a case study, the researcher must consider then every aspect, circumstance or participant that is involved in it: "[e]ach data source is one piece of the 'puzzle', with each piece contributing to the researcher's understanding of the whole phenomenon" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554). The role of participants and their context is also highlighted in the case study definition provided by M. D. Gall, Borg, and G. P. Gall (1996): "the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon" (p.545). According to this, the present study intends to identify and analyse the circumstances that may have an impact on how and why participants use English and other languages. For instance, how and why their field of activity may have an influence on the way in which they resort to English.

As for the epistemological underpinnings, the present study follows a social constructivist approach since it considers that the realities and the meaning that individuals give to them are created by these individuals (Duff, 2008; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Following this theory, the researcher enables participants to narrate their perspectives, which will allow her/him to grasp a better understanding of participants' viewpoints and behaviours (Duff, 2008; Lather, 1992; Robottom & Hart, 1993). In this study, I conduct a series of interviews in which participants express their views related to their usage of English and of other languages. Then, I—as the researcher—am in charge of analysing how these participants' circumstances could have an influence on their particular views. Ultimately, I am responsible for making sense of these participants' responses.

Summarising, the present research is an in-depth study of a contemporary phenomenon—the usage of English and other languages—within its real-life context—university-related companies—where a wide range of views are pursued and where the underlying research epistemology is based on a social constructivist understanding of the world. A strategy that complies with the needs of this research is a case study. Moreover, a case study is also valuable to compare existing theory with the findings disclosed in a research, which could lead to establish "new hypotheses" (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2000, p. 92). Although the main aim of the present study is not to propose new hypotheses, comparing the findings in the existing literature (Chapter 1) with the participants' views (Chapter 3) will be essential to gain a deeper comprehension on the usage of English and other languages within the business environment (Chapter 4).

It must be noted that although the case study strategy fits the purpose of this empirical research, it has some limitations. Firstly, generalising the findings from a case study can be complex. In line with this, the multiple-case study design is considered to be more reliable as it replicates the findings in different cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Herriott & Firestone, 1983; Yin, 2012). Therefore, it allows a cross-comparison of the results among multiple cases, which could allow generalisations (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2012). The multiple-case study design implemented in this research would allow comparing and contrasting the data among different university spin-off companies in Galicia and identifying trends in their usage of English and of other languages. Nevertheless, the intention of this study is not to generalise the research findings to all existing spin-off companies. The aim is to provide meaningful insights on what is happening in a concrete set of companies and add to the mosaic of studies within the field of English as a lingua franca in particular

and to other research areas connected with international business communication in general.

Another source of criticism in using a case study strategy has concerned its validity. Detractors of the case study strategy have questioned the rigour with which researchers collect their data. This would include, for instance, whether interviewees understand the questions that are being asked to them. In contraposition to this, Yin (2003) has argued that the case study strategy has been commonly misunderstood with case study teaching. According to this author's perspective, while the latter is used by teachers to exemplify a specific idea and despite being useful in pinpointing concrete circumstances for students, it lacks the rigour that the case study has for conducting empirical research.

To provide a valid and comprehensive case study, this section has presented the nature and epistemological underpinnings of this empirical research. Moreover, to comply with the validity and reliability principles, the description of the procedures followed to collect and analyse the data are discussed below.

2.1.2. Data collection: Site and sample selection

Participants in this study are companies connected with the three Galician universities: UDC, UVIGO, and USC. To preserve these participants' privacy, I have made a special effort to not make them recognisable. First of all, I do not use the interviewees' nor their companies' names. Instead, I refer to them by their field of activity or their job positions. Secondly, I do not provide the exact dates of the data collection, but I mention only the approximate time frame. These companies were chosen for convenience and not by random choice. Since these companies were connected with the university environment, access to them was presumed to be easier in comparison with other types of companies, in which the access to elite

informants is usually more difficult (Hertz & Imber, 1993; McDowell, 1998; Mikecz, 2012; Smith, 2006; Thomas, 1993; Welch, Marschan-Piekkari, Penttinen, & Tahvanainen, 2002). Moreover, each of the companies decided who the person interviewed would be. On the one hand, this could entail inconveniences in terms of reliability. This problem relates to the fact of depending on interviews as the main source of the data. That is, no other materials such as emails written by employees, or other documents, are analysed. Moreover—except for three cases in which there was more than one participant in the interview—all the data, knowledge and, in summary, the whole set of details were gathered from one person in each of the companies. On the other hand, questions were formulated repeatedly in different ways as a measure to ensure the interviewees' reconsideration on different aspects and situations. Additionally, interviewees' holding different positions in each of the companies allow for a cross-comparison of participants' responses, such as whether their work duties have an influence in their replies. All these heterogeneous contexts would, in sum, enrich the research analysis (Yin, 2003).

Although most of the organisations involved in this study were university spin-offs, a limited group were not specifically spin-offs, but shared some characteristics with university spin-offs, such as their small size, the R&D component, and the qualified teams. Most importantly, they had certain connections with universities, as they had been provided, at some point, with business incubation spaces, or with other means of support, or promotion of their activity by one of the three Galician universities ("Universidade da Coruña: Oficina de transferencia de resultados de investigación", 2011, 2012; *Uninova*, 2011, 2012; *Uniemprende*, 2011, 2012). Therefore, they were considered as being equally relevant for this study. Specifically, 17 companies of the 21 connected with UDC and six of the 15 companies connected with USC were university spin-offs. All of the 11 companies interviewed in

connection with UVIGO were university spin-offs. In conclusion, 34 of the overall 47 companies involved in this study were university spin-offs, whereas the remaining 13 were connected with these universities by other means, such as sponsorships, partnerships, or were incubated in spaces provided by these universities at their early phases.

The companies included in this study were found in four online catalogues in the Technology Transfer Offices from UDC ("Universidade da Coruña: Oficina de transferencia de resultados de investigación", 2011, 2012) and from UVIGO ("Universidade de Vigo: Oficina de I+D", 2012). In the case of USC, the companies were located in two directory lists: the first one, *Uniemprende* (2011, 2012), a supporting programme especially aimed at spin-offs and other start-ups connected with USC. The second directory was retrieved from the website of *Uninova* (2011, 2012), an incubator for spin-offs from university research groups, or for other start-ups that were also incubated by this academic organisation at their early phase. These four entities that provided this project with information about the companies were created within the framework of strategic plans of Galician universities. Their main objective is to promote the relations between higher education institutions and the business environment and, ultimately, to contribute to the Galician socio-economic setting (*Empresa concepto*, 2011; *Uniemprende*, 2011, 2012; *Uninova*, 2011, 2012).

A total amount of 93 companies was found in the catalogues from the three universities: 35 in the Technology Transfer Office register from UDC ("Universidade da Coruña: Oficina de transferencia de resultados de investigación", 2011, 2012), 14 in the Technology Transfer Office record from UVIGO ("Universidade de Vigo: Oficina de I+D", 2012), and 44 in the catalogues connected with USC –39 of these

companies were listed in the *Uninova* (2011, 2012) incubator directory and 5 in the catalogue of *Uniemprende* (2011, 2012).

Of the overall 93 companies, a total number of 54 responded initially to the request for the interview. However, the number of interviews that was eventually used for this research was 47 altogether. There were several reasons for this. In some cases, it was not possible to communicate with the companies since their contact information was outdated. This was presumably because they changed their physical location or their website, or because they ceased their activity. In other cases, after getting in touch with these companies, it was found that some of them were not active anymore or had administrative complications. Consequently, the interviews with those business ventures were not conducted. Furthermore, two interviews were carried out in companies that were in a stand-by situation, that is, they were active in the past but at the moment of the interview they were not. The data from these stand-by companies was eventually disregarded so as to include only up-to-date information.

The 47 companies involved in the present study are classified attending to their field of activity, in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Companies classified by field of activity

Field	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
IT	13	2	3	18
Engineering	3	3	5	11
Natural sciences	2	6	2	10
Healthcare	2	–	1	3
Humanities	1	2	–	3
Social sciences	–	2	–	2

Moreover, these 47 companies are organised in Table 3 according to the number of employees that worked there at the moment in which the interviews took place.

Table 3

Companies classified by number of employees

No. Employees	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
<10	15	13	9	37
10-20	3	1	1	5
>20	3	1	1	5

In line with the literature on spin-off companies previously discussed, most of the companies that participated in this study were small-size: 37 of the overall 47 had less than 10 employees. And the main fields according to the number of companies that belonged to them were the IT, engineering, and natural sciences.

As regards the interviewees, Table 4 below provides each of the participants' position within the companies as described by the companies themselves:

Table 4

Interviewees' job positions

Job positions	UDC	USC	UVIGO
Administrator	3	1	—
Administrative assistant	—	—	1
CEO	4	2	—
Co-director and founding member	1	—	—
Communications manager	—	1	—
Company promoter	1	—	1
Consulting and engineering team leader	1	—	—
Engineer	5	1	—
Engineering and R+D manager	—	1	2
Head of administration	—	1	3
Innovation manager	1	—	—
Manager	—	—	2
Organisation and systems manager	—	1	—
Partner-employee	3	—	—
Partner and commercial agent	—	1	—
Partner and researcher	—	1	—
Partner consultant	—	1	—
Production manager	—	1	—
Project engineer	—	1	—
Project manager	—	1	1
Research area manager	1	—	—
Responsible for food safety	—	1	—
System administration and support area leader	1	—	—
Technologist	—	—	1

Of the 47 individuals interviewed, 30 were male (17 from UDC, five from USC and eight from UVIGO) and 17 were female (four from UDC, 10 from USC, and three from UVIGO). Moreover, all interviewees were native Spanish speakers except for one, whose native language was French, although he was bilingual in Spanish and French.

The companies included in this study were chosen for three main reasons. Firstly, spin-off companies are a relatively recent phenomenon and there is a necessity of developing more research in this area, as it was observed earlier in chapters 1 and 2. Secondly, as was previously mentioned, these companies were

viewed as more accessible than others. And thirdly, these companies were considered because of their potential interest for Galician universities since they are the ones in charge of reporting the research findings from universities. Nevertheless, this does not mean that it would not be equally interesting to carry out this research on other consolidated and multinational corporations of the Galician region, such as those belonging to the motor, naval, textile, lumber, and pharmaceutical industries, among others (De la Dehesa 2000; Nogueira, 2008; Verdugo, Cal, & Fernández-Jardón, 2001). However, one of the major disadvantages of doing this would be gaining access to enough of them so as for the study to be meaningful.

2.1.3. Data collection techniques

In order to collect the data for this study, which would allow me to disclose how and why a series of companies use English and other languages, I firstly contacted these companies by phone and when this was not possible I sent them an email to introduce myself and the type of study that I was conducting and asked whether they would be willing to participate in this study. After I received the company's positive response, I always attempted to clarify that the aim of my study was not focused on assessing how correct their usage of English was, but on disclosing how relevant English was for them and for what purposes they used it. I proceeded then to collect the data through a series of interviews. These interviews were conducted in two different stages. The first[8] round was carried out between May and July of 2011 and included 18 companies connected with UDC. As for the second round of interviews, they were carried out between November 2011 and December

[8] A preliminary version of the outcomes of this first stage was part of my master's thesis dissertation (Pérez Gómez, 2011), and some of the results were published in a volume by Wąsikiewicz-Firlej, Szczepaniak-Kozak, and Lankiewicz (Pérez-Gómez, 2014)

2012 and included three more companies connected with UDC, 15 with USC and 11 with UVIGO.

Although the primary intention was to conduct all 47 interviews—one interview per company—in person, this was not always possible. Specifically, 21 of the interviews were carried out physically in the companies where the interviewees worked, 13 were conducted on the phone, and the remaining 13 were conducted by email. Moreover, in three cases there were several participants in the same face-to-face interview, although they were considered as one individual for the purpose of the statistics since a response of consensus was given to every question.

Table 5 displays the specific means by which the interviews were conducted in the companies connected with three Galician universities:

Table 5

Interviews in the companies

Companies	Face to face	Phone	Email
UDC	15	6	–
USC	6	4	5
UVIGO	–	3	8
Total	21	13	13

I prepared these interviews in advance in form of a questionnaire. To do so, I used *Proyecto Fortius* (2011)–an assessment of companies' needs from the Leonardo da Vinci's programme within the European Commission—as a model (see Appendix C). The languages that I used to create the questionnaire were Spanish and Galician and participants were encouraged to choose the language with which they felt more comfortable (see Appendix A for an English translated version of the questionnaire and see the original version in Galician in Appendix B).

I organised my questionnaire on the usage of English attending to three major themes: first, the participants' consideration of English; second, the contexts of use

within the companies; and third, the personnel selection criteria. Moreover, the usage of other languages is taken into account by including questions on them within each of these three major parts of the questionnaire. An introductory part was also integrated for gathering specific data related to the field of work of the interviewees and their companies (see Figure 2 below). Dividing the questionnaire into these three main topics was essential for the subsequent analysis of the data, which will allow to find the answers to the four research questions proposed for this study:

1. To what end do participants use English in their companies?
2. How do companies and individuals identify themselves as users of English?
3. How do companies and individuals view other languages in comparison with English?
4. How do participants perceive themselves in international communication?

COMPANY DATA
NAME OF THE COMPANY:
ADDRESS:
PROVINCE:
PHONE NO.:
E-MAIL:
YEAR OF FOUNDATION:
INTERVIEWEE DATA
INTERVIEWEE'S FIRST AND LAST NAME:
JOB POSITION:

FINANCIAL ACTIVITY
PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY: products/services offered by the company (short explanation)

0.1. Which kinds of job categories do the employees hold in your company?

COMPANY STRUCTURE			
*AREAS	FEMALE EMPLOYEES	MALE EMPLOYEES	TOTAL

*i.e.:

- Staff with managerial responsibilities
- Specialised staff
- Administrative assistant staff
- Sales representatives
- Non-specialised staff

Figure 2. Introductory section of questionnaire to gather companies' and interviewees' data.

Nevertheless, some adjustments in the questionnaire were necessary after starting the interviews. More specifically, questions related to the relevance of cultural awareness within the personnel selection criteria were included in the questionnaire after the first two interviews were conducted as it was seen in those two interviews that these questions had been asked the interviewees in order to clarify the meaning within the areas related to the usage of English (see Figure 3 below). I perceived thus

that it would be a complex issue and that adding these questions would be crucial to reflect the views from those participants that responded the questionnaire by email.

3.5.1. Do you think culture is or is not important for your company? Why?

____

____

____

3.5.2. Which cultural aspects do you think are important in the business context?

- **Knowing the customs of the country with which one has business relations**
- **Knowing which types of behaviours are appropriate; the length of a presentation, how to greet, recommend leisure activities according to businesspeople from other countries, etc.**
- **Other aspects:**

  ____

  ____

  ____

Figure 3. Questions on cultural awareness subsequently added.

Qualitative and quantitative data was collected by means of interviews that were semi-structured, as both closed and open-ended questions were inserted. More specifically, qualitative interviewing implements open-ended questions by using *other* sections and *why* utterances, as in the example displayed in Figure 4 below:

3.6. Are there in your company any positions that can be filled by English Philology or Translation and Interpreting graduates?

YES ☐ NO ☐

⇨ **In case of negative answer:**

Specify why these types of applicants are not required:

I am not familiar with the kind of skills of these applicants	☐
There are no job positions that can be filled by these applicants in this company	☐
Other (please, explain below)	☐

____

____

____

Figure 4. Example of open-ended question.

Furthermore, qualitative data was gathered by questions related to the following aspects:

- Companies' field of activity
- Interviewees' job position
- Relevance of English, in general, for conducting work
- Presence/absence of international relations
- Importance of English and other languages for international relations
- Consequences of use of English (i.e. new job positions)
- Difficulties when using English
- Job-related activities conducted in English/other languages
- English training (in/out company)
- Incentives given to employees for working on their English skills

- Methods used for sourcing candidates
- Candidates' profiles
- Relevance of English for hiring applicants
- Requirement of language certificates (English/other languages)
- Relevance of cultural awareness
- Job opportunities for graduates from the field of English studies

Quantitative data was addressed by questions that focused on the following details:

- Size of companies
- Classification of skills in the personnel selection criteria according to their relevance for the company
- Ranking of English-related areas in the applicants' curriculum in order of preference

Quantitative interviewing included also open-ended questions with the expression *other*–meaning "could you think about any other areas that had not been already mentioned here?"—embedded in a closed enquiry, such as in the example provided in Figure 5 below:

3.5. As regards the English skills in your applicants' curriculum, which are the most useful English areas for the company?

AREAS	1st (VERY USEFUL)	2nd (USEFUL)	3rd (SLIGHTLY USEFUL)	4th (NOT USEFUL)
Translation/Interpretation				
Oral and/or written communication				
Technical vocabulary/jargon				
Cultural awareness				
Other				

Figure 5. Example of a closed question with an embedded open-ended enquiry.

Interviews were considered as appropriate means of gaining deep understanding within the context of the conversations (Kvale, 1996), even in the case of the interviews conducted by email, as open-ended questions were provided in all cases, as ideal mechanisms to foster meaningful responses (Patton, 1990). Moreover, these open-ended questions allow interviewees time and space to reflect on their answers (Berg, 2004), as well as to propose any alternatives that they might consider pertinent to the interview.

All the face-to-face interviews—except for one case in which the interviewee declined—were digitally recorded with the participants' permission, to pay full attention to the answers, comments, and other crucial non-verbal details made by the interviewees. As to the interviews that were conducted by email, the research goals were explained to the interviewees and they were also given instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire, which they completed and sent back by email.

After gathering all the data, the analytical process began. What follows is the description of all the steps taken.

2.1.4. Data analysis procedures

This case study was not initiated by predicting any patterns, but by asking an open-ended enquiry: how and why do companies and their personnel use English in particular and other languages in general? Then, this general question was particularised in more precise—albeit, still open—ones, which became the four research questions that this project aims to answer:

1. To what end do participants use English in their companies?
2. How do companies and individuals identify themselves as users of English?
3. How do companies and individuals view other languages in comparison with English?
4. How do participants perceive themselves in international communication?

Because of what I saw as relevant after the literature review, I was interested in these four aspects of one main, general question, but–for clarity's sake and keeping the interviewees in mind—I "translated" them into three main categories in the questionnaire: consideration of English and other languages, contexts of use, and personnel selection criteria. For this reason, I also decided to analyse and discuss the data in the next chapter according to the three main topics in my questionnaire.

To perform this complex analysis, it was necessary to establish a clear connection between the three main themes of the questionnaire and the four research questions. As far as the first research question is concerned, the objective was to disclose the purposes for which participants used English. Hence, data related to each of the interviewees' background, such as the type of company, the job positions held, or the relevance of English were considered. Similarly, questions on

international relations provided me with the participants' particular views on English through connections with other organisations. Besides tackling their international networks, the influence that English had for these participants' job duties, or for hiring new employees, was scrutinised. In line with the recruitment process, enquiries on different English areas, or on job opportunities for English language experts also generated substantial data on the role that English had in these companies. Moreover, other enquiries that a priori would not seem directly connected with this research question, such as the methods used for sourcing candidates, was also evaluated in order to find how these interviewees' fields of work and their professional networks could have an impact in their usage of English.

Table 6 below outlines the enquiries analysed in connection with research question 1: To what end do participants use English in their companies?

Table 6

Questions analysed in connection with research question 1

Sections	Questions
Introductory section	Companies and interviewees' data
Consideration of English	1.1. Relevance of English
	1.2.1. Relevance of English for international relations
	1.3.1 Changes in job positions due to English usage
Contexts of use	2.1. Tasks conducted in English
	2.2. Other tasks conducted in English
Personnel selection criteria	3.1. Methods for sourcing candidates
	3.2. Candidates' profiles
	3.3. Requirement of English
	3.3.1. Requirement of language certificates in English
	3.5. Relevance of English-related areas
	3.6. Job opportunities for graduates in English studies

In order to fully grasp participants' self-conception as English users in research question number two, it was necessary to review various issues such as the

value that English had for these participants in general, or the concrete situations in which they resorted to this language, as well as the intricacies related to its usage. Furthermore, questions on whether these participants considered appropriate to be rewarded according to their language performance—including the possibility of being assessed towards ENL norms—or about the relevance of requiring certain skills and/or certifications—based on ENL standards—from their applicants was useful in order to discern specific trends in participants' self-perception as English users, i.e. being closer to ENL or to ELF/BELF.

Table 7 below displays the enquiries made in connection with research question 2: How do companies and individuals identify themselves as users of English?

Table 7

Questions analysed in connection with research question 2

Sections	Questions
Consideration of English	1.1. Relevance of English
	1.2.1. Relevance of English for international relations
	1.3.2. Difficulties due to the usage of English
Contexts of use	2.3.2. Incentives for improving English skills
Personnel selection criteria	3.3. Requirement of English
	3.3.1. Requirement of language certificates in English
	3.5.1. Relevance of cultural awareness
	3.5.2. Perception of certain cultural aspects for doing business

As regards the third research question, the analysis focused on those enquiries that elicited information on how participants dealt with various languages. Therefore, in this section, the questionnaire focused on participants' international relations, tasks, or language requirements from applicants, as their answers about

these issues helped to elucidate these companies' and individuals' perceptions of languages other than English.

Table 8 below shows the enquiries analysed in connection with research question 3: How do companies and individuals view other languages in comparison with English?

Table 8

Questions analysed in connection with research question 3

Sections	Questions
Consideration of English	1.2.2. Relevance of other languages for international relations
Contexts of use	2.1. Tasks conducted in other languages
Personnel selection criteria	3.3.2. Requirement of certificates in other languages
	3.4. Relevance of knowing languages in general and relevance of oral and written communication

Understanding how participants regarded themselves—in terms of linguacultural awareness and performance—in international communication was the aim of research question number four. Enquiries dealing with any aspects of international communication were meticulously reviewed. For instance, questions on participants' daily duties allowed for a better comprehension on how they perceived themselves while communicating with others by email or by other means. Analysing questions on training activities or on candidates' requirements helped to unravel which resources these participants had for international communication, and which ones they expected from their candidates.

Table 9 below displays the enquiries analysed in connection with research question 4: How do participants perceive themselves in international communication?

Table 9

Questions analysed in connection with research question 4

Sections	Questions
Consideration of English	1.2. Presence/absence of international relations
	1.2.1. Relevance of English for international relations
	1.2.2. Relevance of other languages for international relations
	1.3.2. Difficulties due to the usage of English
Contexts of use	2.1. Tasks conducted in English
	2.1. Tasks conducted in other languages
	2.2. Other tasks conducted in English
	2.3.1. English training
	2.3.2. Types of English training activities
Personnel selection criteria	3.2. Candidates' profiles
	3.3. Requirement of English
	3.3.1. Requirement of language certificates in English
	3.3.2. Requirement of certificates in other languages
	3.4. Applicants' job-related skills (technical/human/conceptual)
	3.5. Relevance of English-related areas
	3.5.1. Relevance of cultural awareness
	3.5.2. Perception of certain cultural aspects for doing business
	3.6. Job opportunities for graduates in English studies

Bearing the above considerations in mind, the analysis of the data is based on an inductive approach: the data was collected with the aim of answering a series of questions and then drawing conclusions. More specifically, the analysis of the data in this study consists of an iterative process of description, analysis and interpretation (Wolcott, 1994) as shown in Figure 6. This procedure started by transcribing all the interviews in electronic format to maintain the integrity of the research in terms of reliability (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). The next step was creating a very basic database with all the responses from each individual participant. In this database, I organised the interview data according to the three major topics that were developed for the

questionnaire. Then, I created subtopics within each of these three major themes. This process allowed me to compare the participants' responses across the three main topics and across companies easily. Moreover, through this process, I was able to draw conclusions both at the individual and the global level. That is, I could focus on the perspectives revealed by each of the interviewees as individuals since they expressed their views as employees. At the same time, their responses also revealed each of their companies' attitudes as global entities.

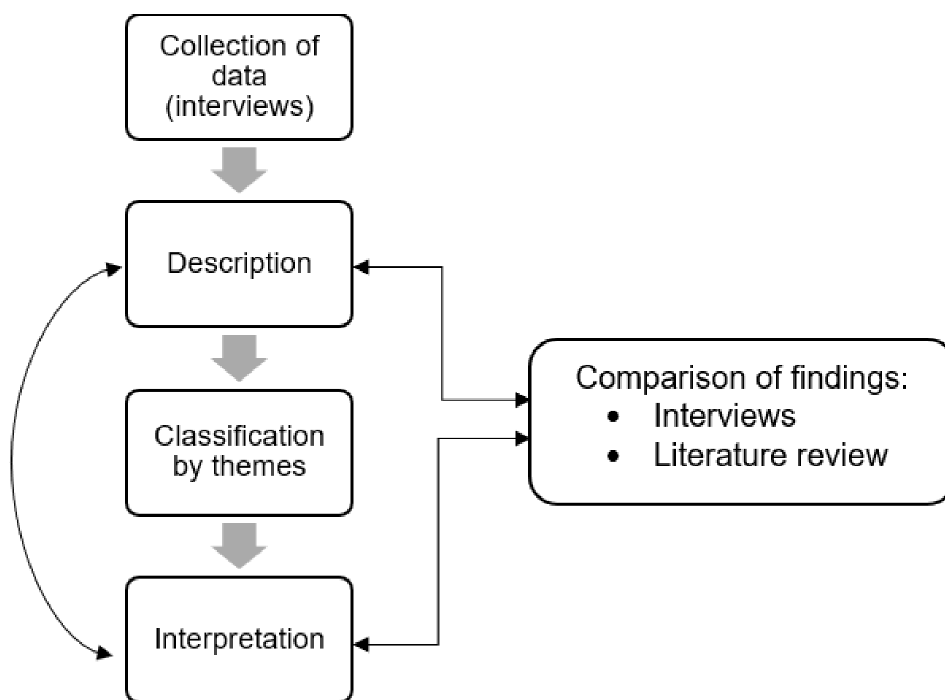

Figure 6. Iterative analysis based on Wolcott's (1994) approach.

In the process of describing, classifying, and interpreting the data, I also compared my findings with those of the studies reviewed in the theoretical framework. This entire analysis procedure is not linear, but it entails the understanding of the different themes and the attention to the possible emergence of new patterns (Creswell, 2012). In other words, this iterative analysis required cross-comparison among the cases and observation in order to ascertain which general trends emerge. Cumulative meaning was gained at the end of the process.

In the next chapter, I present a cross-comparative analysis on the results of this embedded multiple-case study which will be organised attending to the three main concerns structuring the questionnaire: consideration of English and other languages, the contexts of use, and the personnel selection criteria. Finally, I will discuss these results in connection with other studies examined in the literature reviewed in chapter 1.

Chapter 3

Findings and discussion

The present chapter describes and analyses the results of the case study conducted among Galician companies connected with the three public Galician universities, in order to disclose how and why they use English and other languages. The findings are described according to the three major themes of the questionnaire, which aim at answering the four research questions posed in this study. Firstly, how participants consider English and other languages is discussed, that is, what degree of relevance is given to English and other languages in these companies (3.1.). Next, the analysis focuses on the specific contexts in which English and other languages are used (3.2.). The last part of the chapter discloses the value that participants assign to English and other languages in the personnel selection criteria (3.3.).

3.1. Consideration of English and other languages

This section examines the results on the companies' and individuals' views on the relevance of English and other languages for their ventures. More specifically, it focuses on the results related to the fields in which these companies and individuals develop their activity in order to find out how the area of work for the companies and the individuals may have an influence on the degree of relevance that they give to the English language (3.1.1.). The discussion moves on to the level of consideration that participants give to the usage of English and other languages in their international

relations, as it intends to disclose how the presence or absence of international relations may have an impact in the way in which interviewees consider English, as well as other languages, in these companies (3.1.2.). Eventually, the results from this section are analysed in connection with similar works from the review of literature (3.1.3.).

3.1.1. Field of activity

As was seen earlier in chapter 2 (2.1.2.), most of the companies that participated in this study belong to the technical and scientific fields, namely, IT, engineering, and natural sciences. A substantially lower number was linked to the areas of healthcare, humanities, and social sciences (see Table 2). Bearing in mind that English usage has vastly spread, especially in the IT and engineering fields (De la Cruz Cabanillas et al., 2007; Křepelka, 2014; Ostler, 2005), and in natural sciences (Hamel, 2007; Rahimi & Bagheri, 2011; Wulff, 2004), it could be expected that English would be at least necessary for all of them. In order to find whether this was indeed the case, participants from the 47 companies were asked on their consideration of English as follows:

1.1. To what extent do you think the English language is worthy of consideration in your company? Why?

- *Not necessary: we only use Spanish and/or Galician*
- *Useful but not necessary*
- *Useful: English is used occasionally*
- *Necessary: English is frequently used*
- *Essential: English is used in most of the cases*
- *Compulsory: English is used always*
- *Other*

Table 10 shows the degree of consideration that participants from companies connected with the three Galician universities gave to the English language and the fields to which they belonged.

Table 10

Companies' consideration of English and field of activity

Relevance	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
Useful but not necessary	1 IT 1 Engineering 1 Humanities	—	1 Engineering	4
Useful	1 Engineering	1 IT 1 Social Sciences	2 Engineering 1 Healthcare	6
Necessary	6 IT 1 Natural Sciences	2 Humanities 1 Engineering 1 IT 1 Natural Sciences	1 Engineering 1 IT 1 Natural Sciences	15
Essential	3 IT 1 Engineering 1 Healthcare	3 Natural Sciences 2 Engineering	—	10
Compulsory	3 IT 1 Healthcare 1 Natural Sciences	2 Natural Sciences 1 Social Sciences	2 IT 1 Engineering 1 Natural Sciences	12

English was regarded as useful but not necessary by four companies, as they asserted that they did not need the English language to communicate. In addition to this, some participants specified that their work was only conducted in Spain, as remarked by an IT CEO and a humanities administrator, both connected with UDC. Moreover, the respondent from the humanities area declared that some co-workers had studied English philology even though their work consisted in the distribution of digital books in Galician and, therefore, they were not working at that moment with English texts.

Participants' rationale for considering English as useful, necessary, essential, or compulsory in their companies is summarised in Table 11. Some interviewees appear in more than in one category as they pointed out to more than one of these reasons.

Table 11

Companies' consideration of English and rationale

Rationale	Useful	Necessary	Essential	Compulsory	Total
Conducting research	–	2	12	3	17
Working on specialised tasks	–	6	5	3	14
Being in contact with companies from abroad	1	2	1	6	10
Expanding to other countries	6	1	1	2	10
Applying and/or collaborating in international projects	1	3	–	1	5
Communicating with co-workers from other countries	–	–	2	2	4

As can be seen in this table, conducting research for their work, i.e. reading about technical procedures or writing papers, was the most common reason why companies considered English as essential. For instance, a healthcare research area manager connected with UDC admitted: "English is used in one hundred per cent of our research" ("usamos o inglés para o cen por cento da nosa investigación").

Working on specialised tasks, i.e. developing IT software or creating patents, was another popular reason expressed by 14 participants when justifying their consideration of English. This can be summarised in words of an engineering partner and commercial agent connected with USC: English "is the lingua franca in this field" ("é o idioma vehicular neste campo"). In another case, the internal documents of a company from the natural sciences connected with UDC were created in English

since they were thinking of hiring workers from other countries –according to a partner-employee.

Being in contact with companies from abroad was indicated by 10 ventures. This was the case of a company from the natural sciences field connected with USC that considered English essential in order to communicate "with a significant number of customers from other countries" ("o inglés é esencial, xa que contamos cun importante número de clientes doutros países"), as reported by an organisation and systems manager. Besides being in contact with other countries, a particular endeavour to expand abroad was mentioned by 10 companies, and some of them promoted their companies by using English in their web sites or social media. In words of a humanities project manager connected with USC: "English is important nowadays to make your company known to other countries" ("o inglés é importante hoxe en día para darse a coñecer de cara a outros países").

Other reasons expressed by participants in their consideration of English were the submission of applications and collaboration in European projects. Additionally, an engineering head of administration connected with UVIGO highlighted that "as a result of the current financial situation, the company is looking for international funding" ("dada la situación financiera actual, la empresa está buscando financiación en el exterior").

Communicating in English with co-workers from other countries, such as Germany, France, or UK, was indicated by companies that considered English as essential or compulsory. For instance, a head of administration from the natural sciences field connected with USC declared that English was compulsory to communicate with their colleagues since their commercial director was from the UK.

Taking into account the participants' replies overall, English is indispensable to some extent in these companies for reasons related to their specific fields, but also

for other, different circumstances: as a means to have access to specialised information, to conduct research and make their results available internationally, to communicate with co-workers that are non-native Spanish/Galician speakers, to make themselves reachable in the global market, as well as to have access to it.

In line with this desire of becoming international, the section below discusses in more detail the influence that companies' international relations have in their consideration of English as well as of other languages.

3.1.2. International relations

This section presents the results related to the companies' international relations or their lack thereof in order to disclose how these could have an impact on the participants' consideration of English and of other languages. Therefore, the data related to the companies that had or did not have international relations is described, including relations with English-speaking countries, that is, those located in the inner circle (Kachru, 1985). This will allow to further analyse, in the discussion section (3.1.3.), how having or not international relations could have an influence not only on the participants' consideration of English but also on their self-conceptualisation as users of English and their self-perception in international communication.

In the questions analysed above, some of the interviewees referred to their contact with companies from other countries as their main reason for using English. Still, they were asked further about their international relations and the relevance that English and/or other languages would have for those relations:

> *1.2. Does your company have any types of international relations with other companies or institutions? YES/NO*
>
> *In the case of a positive answer:*

Please, indicate the main reasons for those relations:

- *The company is headquartered abroad*
- *The company has one or more subsidiaries abroad*
- *The company has strategic agreements with companies from other countries*
- *The company has business relations with other companies from abroad*
- *Other reasons*

With which countries?

1.2.1 English language for those relations is:

- *Useful but not necessary*
- *Necessary at some point, at least for having fluent relations*
- *Compulsory; otherwise those relations would not exist*

In the case of English language not being necessary, explain why.

1.2.2. Apart from English for those international relations, indicate if there are other languages which you consider:

- *Useful but not necessary*
- *Necessary*
- *Compulsory*
- *Using other languages is NOT necessary*

Of the overall 47 companies, 39 had international relations. Table 12 below illustrates the 15 UDC-related companies—out of 21—with international relations and the degree of consideration that informants gave to English and other languages in these relations.

Table 12

UDC Companies' consideration of languages for international relations

Languages	Useful but not necessary	Necessary	Compulsory
English	1	4	10
French	3	—	—
Galician	—	1	—
German	3	—	1
Italian	3		—
Portuguese	1	—	—
Spanish	—	1	1
Swedish	1	—	—

As can be seen in this table, among these 15 companies, only one interviewee—an IT CEO—regarded English as useful but not necessary because they only had international relations with Portugal and, therefore, Galician and Spanish were enough since Portuguese and Galician "are pretty similar" ("parécense bastante").

In four other UDC-related companies, participants considered English necessary for their international relations. In one of these, an IT engineer asserted that they had international relations with suppliers from the US. In another one, an engineering CEO declared that German was compulsory and more necessary than English for them because of their frequent contact with Germany. Moreover, they also used German to communicate with companies from Poland while French and Italian were considered useful but not necessary. However, this interviewee acknowledged that using French was very much appreciated in their relations with their French counterparts, as he asserted: "French people usually prefer to be addressed in French rather than in English" ("os franceses prefiren que se lles fale en francés máis que en inglés"). In another company from the engineering field, the respondent—an innovation manager—regarded Italian as useful but not necessary in their international relations with Italy.

In 9 other UDC-related companies with connections to English-speaking countries, all interviewees considered English as compulsory. In five of these companies, languages such as Portuguese, Swedish, German, Italian, and French were considered as being useful but not necessary for their international relations. One other respondent—a consulting and engineering team leader from the IT sector—declared that Spanish was compulsory for their international relations with countries from South America.

13 out of 15 companies connected with USC had international relations. Their consideration of English and other languages is displayed in Table 13.

Table 13

USC Companies' consideration of languages for international relations

Languages	Useful but not necessary	Necessary	Compulsory
English	2	3	8
French	5	—	—
Galician	—	1	1
German	1	—	—
Italian	3	—	—
Portuguese	1	1	2
Spanish	—	1	1

In two of these 13 companies, interviewees regarded English as useful but not necessary because one company did business with France and Portugal, as reported by a CEO from the natural sciences area. Additionally, French and German were regarded by this respondent as being useful but not necessary for their international relations. As for the other company, a humanities project manager declared that English was not necessary for their international relations since they only had contact with Portuguese-speaking countries. Consequently, Galician and Spanish were declared compulsory.

Three other companies considered English as necessary for their international relations: in one these, an IT communications manager declared that they did some business in the US. In another company, a partner and researcher from the humanities admitted that they had some connections with the UK and the US, with which they communicated in English mainly to make written requests, as well as to send queries to institutions. To these employees, French and Italian were also useful but not necessary for their international relations with France and Italy. Still, the interviewee pointed out that most of their clients were Spanish speakers.

In eight other companies, respondents regarded English as compulsory for their international relations. Five of them included English-speaking countries among those with which they had international relations. In one of these, a project engineer from the social sciences considered Galician, Portuguese, and Spanish as necessary since their international relations were mainly with Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries. Additionally, French and Italian were considered by this informant as being useful but not necessary. In another company among the eight that considered English as compulsory, an IT administrator asserted that they had international relations with Germany and Portugal and regarded Portuguese as compulsory, whereas they considered French as useful but not necessary. Participants in other two companies among these eight considered Portuguese, Italian, and French as useful but not necessary for their international relations. Regarding the 11 companies connected with UVIGO, all had international relations. Table 14 displays the consideration that these ventures gave to English and other languages in their international relations.

Table 14

UVIGO Companies' consideration of languages for international relations

Languages	Useful but not necessary	Necessary	Compulsory
English	2	4	5
French	2	—	—
German	1	—	—
Portuguese	1	—	1
Russian	1	—	—
Spanish	—	1	1

Two engineering companies considered English as useful but not necessary for their international relations with Portugal. Additionally, a project manager asserted that, besides Portugal, they had frequent relations with companies from Colombia, so for them Spanish and Portuguese were logically compulsory. The other interviewee—a head of the administration—asserted that German was useful but not necessary for their international relations.

In four other companies, respondents considered English necessary for their international relations. One of them—an IT head of administration—asserted that they had international relations with the UK. This respondent also found Spanish a necessary language for their international relations with Mexico. In another company among these four, a technologist from the healthcare area considered French as useful but not necessary for their relations with France.

In five other companies, participants considered English as compulsory. Two of them included English-speaking countries among the companies with which they had their international relations, whereas in the remaining three, respondents considered Portuguese, French, and Russian as useful but not necessary. Moreover, in one of these, an engineering manager maintained that any other languages, in general, could be useful but not necessary for their international relations as they had

contact with Portugal and were planning to expand their venture to UK, Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands.

Three companies had declared that they had international relations with Spanish-speaking countries, but they did not mention the need of using Spanish at all for these relations. It seems that these interviewees have internalised the usage of Spanish to the extent that they did not reflect upon the fact that it was a necessary language for them. One of these companies was connected with USC and the interviewee—a partner and researcher from the humanities area—asserted that they had business relations with Mexico and Venezuela. The remaining two were connected with UVIGO: one of the respondents—an IT manager—frequently worked with Colombia and Mexico, whereas the other one—an engineering head of administration—had relations with Peru.

The results analysed in this section confirm the prevalence of English as the language choice for international communication. Although these companies have contact with other countries besides English-speaking ones, the usage of other languages is not common among them, except in those cases in which Portuguese-speaking countries are involved. In those situations, participants usually resort to Portuguese or Galician. Nevertheless, the results have shown how Spanish—the local language, in combination with Galician—is generally disregarded in questions about relevant languages despite being used for communication in international relations with Spanish-speaking countries. These results are discussed in more detail below.

3.1.3. Discussion

The field in which participants develop their daily job has proved to be one of the factors that determines the level of relevance that English has for them. Participants pinpoint the technical nature of their field of work, such as IT or

engineering, as a major reason for needing English. This depicts the predominant presence of English in many technical fields, most of whose documentation and literature has been—and continues to be—developed in English (De la Cruz Cabanillas et al., 2007; Krěpelka, 2014; Ostler, 2005). Using English is conceived by interviewees as a facilitator for their work (Hilgendorf, 2010; Steyaert et al., 2011) and as a must (Lønsmann, 2015). Moreover, participants use English in their companies' web sites, social media, or research papers, in order to be known internationally, which matches findings in other studies (Ammon, 2001; Di Bitetti & Ferreras, 2016; Ferguson, 2007; Giannoni, 2008; Hurn, 2009; Narvaez-Berthelemot & Russell, 2001; Swales, 2004; UNESCO, 2005, 2009). In addition to the companies' interest of being known beyond the national borders, and besides their field of activity, participants refer to expanding abroad as another main reason for using English. Thus, those companies in which interviewees have frequent international relations are the ones that regard English as necessary or compulsory for conducting those relations. However, when companies' contacts abroad are predominantly with Portuguese or Spanish speaking countries, English is regarded as useful but not necessary. Consequently, international relations per se are not the most influential factor in the participants' general consideration of English, but the particular circumstances of those relations are, for instance, the frequency with which they take place and the countries involved.

Following the findings in other studies (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Lønsmann, 2015), participants view English as the key that opens the doors to internationalisation, which consequently implies financial benefits for their companies. English gives these companies and its workers a certain status, as it allows them to expand internationally. As a result, individuals who consider themselves proficient users of English see more opportunities of becoming better

valued not only in their companies but also around the world (Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, & Kankaanranta, 2005; Marschan et al., 1997). In other words, English is seen as a commodification since its value would be proportionally related to the financial profits and/or international connections that can be obtained through its usage. At the same time, participants' conceptualisation of English as key to do business with other countries has a clear impact on their language choice for international relations. Therefore, when comparing the relevance of other languages with English, the former are perceived as being secondary to English. Moreover, the instrumental perception that companies and their individuals transmit in relation to English can be applied to other languages as well: participants are aware that knowing other languages may have financial benefits for their companies, such as increasing their exportations abroad (ARCTIC 2013; BCC, 2013; European Commission, 2010, 2011; Vandermeeren, 1999). In fact, there are a few cases in which interviewees show themselves more inclined to use their counterparts' L1, especially those who reported using Portuguese. These instances recall Steyaert et al. (2011), in which participants preferred to adopt their counterparts' L1 when they were able to do so.

In the present study about companies based in Galicia, participants are particularly willing to use Portuguese, and even more so Galician, in their international relations with Portuguese-speaking countries. However, this does not mean that these informants are more aware than other interviewees of the advantages of using other languages. This rather implies that using Portuguese or Galician for those relations does not represent much effort for them. Even if they decide to communicate in Portuguese, the similarities between the two languages would make it easier for them to learn it, in comparison with other languages. Consequently, companies and their individual workers take advantage of this

favourable communication conditions to establish international relations with those countries.

Likewise, the use of Spanish goes unnoticed by some of the participants who have international relations with Spanish-speaking countries, and they do not even include it among the languages with which they conduct international business. This concurs with the erasure process disclosed in Lønsmann's (2015) study, in which participants, despite using languages other than English for conducting their work, did not mention them as being work-related. In the present study, it can be theorised that the usage of Spanish—being the native language of these interviewees—has been internalised and its use does not require the effort that a foreign language would do. Therefore, some participants do not reflect upon Spanish as an essential language to conduct their international relations with Spanish-speaking countries. Moreover, limitations related to skills, time, and finances would be among the reasons behind the answers of interviewees that reported not using languages other than English, which are in line with other works reviewed (Harzing et al., 2011; van der Worp et al., 2017).

It must be also pointed out that English, as well as other languages, are not regarded only as an instrument for making financial profits. In the present study, the usage of languages is also perceived as a social activity, which is in the same line of ELF and multilingual research findings (Baird et al., 2014; Canagarajah, 2011; Janssens & Steyaert, 2014; Jenkins, 2015). That is, participants' usage of English and of other languages would promote a social practice that allows them to reflect their own experiences when communicating with others. This perspective is clearer in the answers of those participants who use English, German, or French to communicate with their co-workers. This suggests that these participants attempt to accommodate to the communication needs of their colleagues and, ultimately, this promotes

mutual understanding. Furthermore, this social perception of languages can be extrapolated to all participants as they would use English and/or other languages, including the local ones—Spanish and Galician—, to create a sense of empathy, closeness, and rapport with other individuals independently of each other's L1 (as in Cogo, 2016b; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen 2011, 2013; Poncini, 2003, 2013). The need to establish contacts abroad would involve a social activity that can be analysed from a dual perspective: at the company's level, these relations would offer a corporate image of openness towards other countries; at the individual level, establishing contacts abroad would imply the promotion of certain empathy and trust among these workers, so that both parties can reach common ground and obtain positive outcomes in terms of social value.

In conclusion, the analysis of the results in this section has shown that participants' consideration of English and of other languages is clearly influenced by their field of activity, their particular needs at the workplace, as well as the contact with entities from other countries. At the same time, this contact with others adds more complexity to their conceptualisation of languages that go beyond their specific working needs, as languages become also part of their social activity.

In line with these participants' working needs, the following section explores further the contexts in which they use English and/or other languages.

3.2. Contexts of use

This section analyses the different contexts in which English and other languages are used by taking into account the different replies given by the respondents from the 47 companies included in this study. Firstly, the results related to the tasks in which respondents use English and/or other languages are detailed (3.2.1.). This is followed by a description of the results on whether participants have

difficulties related to the usage of English and their possible consequences (3.2.2.). Next, the discussion focuses on the means that companies and their workers have for dealing with those difficulties and, particularly, for disclosing whether training or incentives are offered by these companies (3.2.3.). Eventually, these results are evaluated in comparison with other research studies discussed in the theoretical framework (3.2.4.). Moreover, companies' international relations are taken into account to explore their influence on the tasks conducted by participants, as well as in the presence or absence of difficulties as reported by them.

3.2.1. Tasks

Interviewees were enquired as to how they used English for conducting a series of activities in which they might need to write, speak or read in English:

2.1. Specify below the types of activities in which you use English:

- *WRITING: Letters, emails, reports, memoranda, other*
- *SPEAKING: Giving presentations, speaking on the phone, conducting negotiations, giving/receiving commands, other*

2.2. Is the English language used for carrying out any of the following tasks?

- *Reading technical publications about methods and procedures*
- *Participating in courses or seminars related to your job*
- *Studying programmes and operation systems to learn about them*
- *Conducting bibliographical research*
- *Attending to meetings to:*
    - *establish rules or procedures*
    - *assess the progress with projects*

  - *assess department strategies*

- *Discuss and/or consult about plans and/or objectives with*
  - *colleagues*
  - *supervisor*
  - *someone else from another company*
  - *other*

It must be noted that, except for one, all companies in which informants reported speaking English in different tasks (i.e. participating in conferences, speaking on the phone, conducting meetings, giving presentations, and negotiating) had international relations. Table 15 below displays the assignments and the frequency with which participants from companies connected with the three universities reported using English.

Table 15

Tasks and frequency

Tasks	UDC		USC		UVIGO		Total
	F	S	F	S	F	S	
Reading field-related literature	21	–	15	–	11	–	47
Communicating by email	13	4	12	1	6	1	37
Writing reports/technical documents	14	1	1	9	4	–	29
Participating in conferences/seminars	8	2	1	8	7	2	28
Speaking on the phone	8	2	7	2	4	1	24
Conducting meetings	6	–	5	1	3	4	19
Giving presentations	3	–	6	–	5	–	14
Negotiating	5	–	1	–	1	1	8
Interacting in social media	–	–	–	1	2	–	3
Translating documents/contents	–	2	–	–	–	–	2

Note. The abbreviations F and S refer to the frequency with which respondents conducted those activities: F= frequently and S = sometimes.

As can be seen in the table, the most frequent task carried out in English—and by all 47 companies—was reading. Specifically, interviewees conducted literature research related to their field, and they also studied programmes and working procedures. Moreover, reading was the only task conducted in English in five of these 47 companies: two of them had no international relations, according to an IT engineer connected with UDC and an engineering and R+D manager from the natural sciences field connected with USC. Main connections with Portuguese and/or Spanish speaking countries were adduced in the remaining three: two—from the engineering sector—connected with UVIGO and one, an IT administrator connected with USC, who added that—despite being in the process of establishing some business connections with Germany—his company's activity targeted the Portuguese-speaking market at that moment.

Communicating by email in English was another recurrent task among companies in general and it was the sole means of interaction for international relations in three of them, according to an engineer and a CEO, both from the IT field and connected with UDC, and a humanities partner and researcher connected with USC. By contrast, emailing in English was unusual for those companies with no international relations. This was the case of four companies: two of them from the IT sector and one from the engineering field, connected with UDC, and one from the natural sciences connected with USC, in which interviewees declared that they did it occasionally—and mainly—to communicate with providers.

Writing reports and technical documents in English was less habitual among companies connected with USC and UVIGO than in those connected with UDC. This was presumably so due to the fact that a large number of UDC ventures were from the IT area, where respondents remarked that creating technical documents in English was very common. Moreover, an IT communications manager connected

with USC highlighted the relevance of writing their research papers in English and remarked that, otherwise, "you do not have as much relevance abroad" ("en el tema de los papers, si no utilizas el inglés no tienes tanta presencia fuera").

Regarding the rest of duties addressed in this section of the questionnaire, they were rarely performed in English, especially among companies with no international relations, as was the case reported by an engineering and R+D manager connected with USC. This interviewee affirmed that they sometimes used English for writing on work-related topics on social media, for elaborating curriculums, and for speaking on the phone to ask for information related to their work. Similarly, conducting meetings with members from other companies and institutions from abroad was infrequent in the companies interviewed. However, there were some exceptions, as in one company connected with USC, where a head of administration from the natural sciences field pointed out that 90% of their meetings were carried out in English. Additionally, and despite not writing in English, two companies often held meetings in English due to their respective relations with Italy and the Czech Republic, as informed by an engineering innovation manager connected with UDC and an engineering head of administration connected with UVIGO.

Translating was also reported as scarce and anecdotal, as highlighted by a humanities administrator connected with UDC. According to this respondent, Galician and Spanish were more frequently needed than English since those were the languages of the texts with which they regularly worked in their company.
Apart from English, there were four different foreign languages that were used for a series of tasks in six companies with international relations. Table 16 displays these four languages and the participants connected with the three universities. In some cases, interviewees reported using more than one of these languages.

Table 16

Companies and usage of other languages

Languages	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
Portuguese	–	3	2	5
German	1	–	1	2
Italian	–	–	1	1
French	–	1	–	1

Portuguese was frequently used in five companies for communicating by email, writing reports, speaking on the phone, and giving presentations. German was often used in two companies for participating in conferences and seminars. One of these also frequently communicated by email and by phone in German, as reported by an engineering CEO connected with UDC, whereas in the other German was used for interacting in social networks, as remarked by an IT manager connected with UVIGO. In this same company, Italian was used to speak on the phone and write technical documents.

As regards the usage of French, conducting literature research and reading technical documents was normally done in one of the natural sciences companies connected with USC that also used Portuguese, as stated by a production manager.

Considering the results presented in this section, English was regularly used in companies with international relations for speaking and writing tasks, and it was predominantly used also in other means of communication and tasks –particularly for reading. The influence of conducting these activities and of having or not international relations will be also explored in the section below and in connection with the presence or absence of difficulties when using English.

3.2.2. Difficulties and/or consequences

Participants were enquired about the existence of difficulties connected to the usage of English via the following questions:

1.3.2. Does this company have any difficulties derived from the presence or absence of the English language use? Have there been any in the past? YES/NO

Please, explain which types of difficulties:

(i.e.: linguistic, financial, other)

Respondents from 23 companies reported having problems with different areas related to English language usage, as shown in Table 17. In some cases, participants appear in more than one category as they had difficulties in more than one area.

Table 17

Difficulties related to English usage

Areas	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
Oral fluency	5	5	5	15
Writing	3	1	1	5
Listening comprehension	3	1	1	5
Technical jargon	1	1	1	3
Reading comprehension	—	1	1	2

Although most of these participants pointed out that these difficulties did not impede them from communicating well enough to conduct their daily job, they referred to different areas as being especially challenging for them. Oral communication was reported in 15 companies, all of which had international relations. Seven of these had contact with English-speaking countries and, in one of them, the respondent—an engineering and R+D manager from the natural sciences area connected with UVIGO—reported having general pronunciation problems. Indeed, interviewees from all 15 companies wished to be more fluent, particularly in small talk, as particularly commented by a head of administration from the natural sciences field connected with USC when declaring that although they “managed well” (“manexámonos ben”), they “don’t have the same fluency [as one does in one’s native

language]" ("non tes a mesma fluidez que na túa lingua nativa"). Conducting negotiations was also generally regarded among these 15 companies as especially hard within oral communication. Respondents considered that negotiations were always delicate contexts and using another language increased their complexity. Some interviewees highlighted how oral communication is more difficult than writing, and a company promoter from the natural sciences field related to UVIGO reasoned that "when you write you have more time to think about it" ("cando escribes tes máis tempo para pensar"). Furthermore, the lack of conversational practice through time was pointed out as a cause that makes it harder to communicate in English, as remarked by a CEO from the natural sciences field connected with USC, who declared that "speech feels rusty" ("a fala síntese oxidada").

Writing in English was reported as being difficult by five companies –all of them with international relations. Three of these were connected with UDC and, in one of them, an IT administrator highlighted that although it was not such a relevant issue, it represented a challenge to a certain degree: "[writing in English] requires more effort than doing it in your native language" ("escribir en inglés require máis esforzo que facelo na lingua nativa"). Moreover, a lack of general proficiency in both written and oral English was indicated by a CEO from the engineering field connected with USC.

Listening comprehension and, particularly, grasping different accents, was reported as being problematic by participants in five companies. Except for one company connected with UDC, all these ventures had international relations. Additionally, in one of the companies connected with UDC, an engineering CEO pointed out that he and some of his co-workers had lived abroad. This respondent adduced that, despite having certain difficulties to grasp different accents in English,

their experiences abroad had helped them to develop their communication skills not only in English, but also in German.

Three companies reported struggling with technical jargon. In one of these—which was connected with UDC and was the only one among them with no international relations—an administrator from the humanities field asserted that their difficulties in English were connected with IT vocabulary, but adduced a lack of training in technical vocabulary in general: "it would be still difficult for us [to deal with technical vocabulary] in Galician or Spanish. Therefore, when it comes to English, we find it even more difficult" ("xa sería difícil de por si tratar con vocabulario técnico en galego ou castelán, polo que cando o facemos en inglés resúltanos aínda máis difícil").

Reading in English was found demanding in two companies. However, this issue was also classified under the category of technical jargon since interviewees had problems understanding technical terms in the literature that they read for their work. For instance, in one of these companies, a partner and researcher from the humanities field connected with USC asserted that they found reading about history in English hard. In line with the case on IT jargon previously mentioned, this interviewee's reponse diagnosed a need for more training in technical English.

Besides the areas discussed above, there were some other issues pointed out by interviewees that suggested situations of exclusion (as in Charles & Marschan-Piekkari, 2002; Machili, 2015), linguacultural assumptions (Rogerson-Revell, 2007), and lack of accommodation of NESs (Ehrenreich, 2010; Franklin, 2007; Incelli, 2013). As regards the situations of exclusion, they occurred in two companies connected with UVIGO: one was related to proficiency; the other to the company's specific policies—and was consequently not perceived as an actual issue by the interviewee. In the first case, an engineering manager declared that they did not have

a good command of English in any of the areas mentioned in the questionnaire, especially in oral communication and, because of this, the company could not access international markets other than Portugal. In the second case, an IT administrative assistant stated that English lessons were specifically offered to CEOs and managers since these workers were the ones that actually needed English.

Difficulties related to linguacultural assumptions were found in two other companies. In the first one, this assumption involved power-distance relationships (Bjørge, 2007) and emerged while the interviewee—a system administration and support area leader from the IT area connected with UDC—narrated an anecdote in which he was misunderstood by a member of a foreign company when saying goodbye in an email. This participant used *cheers* to greet an email recipient who held a position higher than his own. Although this salutation was perceived as a normal behaviour among workers with different positions in the participant's company, the recipient felt offended by the sender's informality. In the second company, the linguacultural assumption issue was related to the adjustments required by other countries' regulations (as in Angouri & Harwood, 2008). In this case, a manager from the IT field connected with UVIGO pointed out that they did not have problems linguistically speaking. However, the respondent acknowledged that adjusting all their documents in order to comply with the legal requirements of other countries was extremely arduous.

The lack of accommodation of native-English speakers in international or ELF communication was reported by one company connected with USC. In this case, an engineering partner and commercial agent declared that they did not have difficulties when using English, as they practically always communicated with their international contacts by email. Furthermore, this interviewee remarked that their usage of English was not focused on grammar accuracy, but on achieving

understanding for their business purposes: “the English we use is not a philologist kind of English, but it is more of a business kind” (“el inglés que nosotros utilizamos no es un inglés de filólogo, sino que es un inglés más bien comercial”). However, he highlighted how communication with other non-native English speakers was easier than with native English ones: “I understand much better a German person speaking English than an English person speaking English” (“entiendo mucho mejor a un alemán hablando inglés, que a un inglés hablando inglés”).

In the remaining 24 companies, participants reported not having difficulties when using English. Table 18 displays the rationale adduced by participants from companies connected with the three universities. Some interviewees appear in more than one category as they pointed out more than one of these reasons.

Table 18

No difficulties related to English usage

Rationale	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
Sporadic communication in English	5	2	5	12
Main contact with Portuguese and/or Spanish speaking countries	2	3	6	11
No international relations	4	2	–	6
Living-abroad experiences	2	3	–	5

Communicating sporadically in English was mentioned by 12 companies and, in half of them, it was done only by email. These include two companies with no international relations and connected with UDC, where employees needed to communicate with providers, as reported by an IT CEO and an engineer from the engineering field.

Having international relations predominantly with Portuguese and/or Spanish speaking countries was indicated by 11 companies, seven of which had also alluded to sporadic communication. Additionally, an engineer from the engineering field connected with USC stated that the technical character of their English usage

was another reason for not having difficulties: "the English we use is very technical, so we are very familiar with it" ("o inglés que nós utilizamos é moi técnico, polo que estamos moi familiarizados con el").

Living abroad experiences were mentioned by five companies as a major reason for not finding the usage of English challenging. An IT engineer connected with UDC declared that he and his co-workers sometimes moved to the countries where their counterparts' companies were located in order to work with them for certain periods of time. Likewise, a healthcare research area manager connected with UDC maintained that in some cases employees moved to the UK and the US—among other countries—to develop different projects or collaborations. Consequently, this respondent emphasised that they required a good level of English that allowed their workers to communicate with certain fluency. Three interviewees connected with USC—a social sciences partner consultant, a natural sciences production manager, and a humanities project manager—declared that they had lived, respectively, in the US, UK and Ireland, and the Netherlands. Moreover, in the company from the humanities sector, the respondent had also mentioned sporadic communication and relations with Portuguese and/or Spanish speaking countries as the reason for not having difficulties.

Participants were also enquired whether there were any changes in their companies due to the usage of English. On the one hand, this question could reveal challenging situations for employees, such as becoming bridge individuals (as mentioned in Feely & Harzing, 2003; Harzing et al., 2011), that is, employees who must leave their main duties aside to conduct intermediary tasks, i.e. translating and/or interpreting from/to English and Spanish. On the other hand, this question could reveal workers' empowerment within the company by different means (as mentioned in Virkkula-Raeisaenen, 2010), i.e. being promoted. In other words, the

aim of this enquiry was to ascertain whether the usage of English had specific consequences related to the employees' roles within these ventures:

1.3.1. Were there any changes in the job positions due to the English usage? YES/NO

None of the interviewees reported changes in their job positions due to the usage of English in their companies.

In line with the challenges of using English, the next section discloses the types of measures that companies and/or employess adopted in order to overcome them, and whether the employees were encouraged by any means to improve their performance in English communication.

3.2.3. Training and incentives

Participants were asked whether, if necessary, they had training programmes in their companies to help them to improve their performance in English:

2.3.1. Does your company have any types of English training activities? YES/NO (why?)

- *Courses organised outside the company (external)*
- *Courses organised inside the company (internal)*
- *Conferences, workshops, and seminars*
- *Training on a staff rotation basis, exchange, temporary transfer, etc.*
- *Self-learning (learning on their own)*
- *N/K/A*
- *Other (specify)*

English training activities were provided by five companies of the overall 47. Two of these were connected with UDC and belonged to the IT field. In the first one,

despite not having international relations, a co-director and founding member asserted that an English teacher was available for employees who were willing to receive lessons and that workers had a certain flexibility to schedule their English classes within their working day. As for the second company, it had expanded abroad, established their headquarters in the US and had business relations with some other foreign countries. Consequently, a consulting and engineering team leader declared that employees were offered English lessons, as well as flexibility so that everyone could attend. In connection with USC, two companies from the natural sciences field offered their employees English lessons. In one of these, an organisation and systems manager explained that English training was "essential to work adequately" ("é imprescindible para o desempeño das funcións") since they had to write a substantial amount of papers for international publications, participate in international conferences frequently, and work in close collaboration with companies, institutions, and customers from other countries. In the other company, a head of administration responded that they offered English training to employees since they conducted meetings and conferences and wrote for specialised publications, all of which were done in English. Besides, according to this participant, their company had created a subsidiary in the US. The fifth company, connected with UVIGO, only provided English training to CEOs and managers, and was thus mentioned earlier as a case of exclusion (3.2.2.).

In the remaining 42 companies, interviewees reported not having any type of formal English training activities at the workplace. However, six of these affirmed that they were considering the option for the future. Two of these wanted lessons with an emphasis on conversation skills, as reported by an IT administrator connected with UDC and a CEO from the natural sciences field connected with USC. One other company connected with USC was very interested in taking a business

English course, as stated by an engineering and R+D manager from the natural sciences area.

In 36 of those 42 companies with no in-company English courses, respondents referred to alternative training activities that were useful to put their English skills into practice. It must be noted that some companies appear under more than one category as they referred to more than one activity.

Table 19

Alternative English training methods

Training	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
Courses at institutions	14	–	5	19
TV programmes in English	10	5	–	15
Learning by doing daily work	4	3	7	14
Living-abroad experiences	3	4	1	8
Lessons with private tutor	1	1	–	2
Co-workers from other countries	1	1	1	3
Web translators	–	1	–	1

As can be seen in Table 19, there were three methods predominantly used among these 36 companies. Specifically, taking courses at institutions was reported by 19 companies as interviewees asserted that they were carrying out at that moment, or had carried out at some point, English language courses at the State-run Language School[9], or at the Language Centre of their corresponding universities. Watching television programmes in English was stated by 15 companies as being a helpful means to practise English language skills, especially listening comprehension of different Englishes. The third most popular method was learning by doing their daily work. These interviewees concurred that conducting daily tasks in English, such as reading, writing technical reports, or communicating with others by different means

[9] Escuela Oficial de Idiomas.

(i.e. email, phone, face to face) were convenient practices to keep their communication skills up to date when using English.

Although reported by just a few companies, other activities were considered as enriching ways to improve confidence in English communication skills, such as living abroad, which eight companies mentioned. Two respondents from the IT and the engineering fields connected with UDC and another one from the IT sector connected with UVIGO declared that they themselves or their co-workers spent some periods of time working or collaborating with other companies abroad. Other participants had lived in different countries before starting to work in their current companies. For instance, an IT communications manager connected with USC remarked that he and some of his colleagues had lived in the Netherlands and Ireland. This respondent maintained that although he and his co-workers considered that oral communication in English was difficult, this experience had enhanced their oral skills and had boosted their confidence in international communication contexts.

Having co-workers from other countries was reported as being a helpful means of practising English by three companies, where employees increased their language confidence as they communicated in English with their co-workers on a daily basis. Taking private English lessons was only reported by two companies: in one of them, these lessons were focused on oral communication skills, as stated by an IT CEO connected with UDC, whereas in the other, they focused on English grammar and were only taken by one of the coworkers of a production manager from the natural sciences field connected with USC. Additionally, an engineering CEO asserted that on-line tools such as web translators were all they needed since they used English mostly for writing documents.

Having no English training activities was specified by six companies as interviewees adduced that they had enough proficiency to conduct their daily work. Three of these ventures—a humanities administrator and an IT engineer, connected with UDC, and an USC natural-sciences field worker responsible for food safety—had no international relations. The other three companies belonged to the engineering field and their main international relations were with Portuguese-speaking countries, as declared by an engineer connected with USC, and a project manager and an engineering and R+D manager, both connected with UVIGO. Moreover, the last one emphasised that English was not important enough for them to have English training.

In addition to the companies' international relations and their specific needs, participants from seven ventures indicated financial constraints as another reason for not having English training at the workplace. Three of these companies were connected with UDC: two belonged to the IT sector and one to the natural sciences area. The remaining three were connected with USC: two belonged to the natural sciences field and one to the engineering area. In the two companies connected with USC from the natural sciences, interviewees had previously declared that they wanted English training at the workplace in the future. However, the recent creation of their business ventures was mentioned as a delicate moment for investing in English training resources.

Financial constraints were also a determining factor in the replies to the question on whether incentives were offered to those employees who improved their skills in English:

> *2.3.2. Are employees given any incentives to improve their English level, in the case of there being room for improvement? i.e.: an increase in their salary, or other. YES/NO*

- *In the case of a positive answer: Which types of incentives?*
- *In the case of a negative answer: Why not?*

Four companies provided some type of incentives to their employees. The first one was connected with USC and was among the five that offered English training to their employees. In this case, a head of administration from the natural sciences area specified that offering English lessons for free was a significant stimulus for their employees. The remaining three companies were connected with UVIGO and encouraged their employees to enhance their English skills through different methods. For instance, having flexible working hours for those who wanted to take English courses was reported by a project manager from the engineering field. Receiving a better qualification in their assessment and, consequently, being promoted was indicated by another engineering manager. Participating in conferences and seminars abroad or working in companies from other countries that were cooperating with them were other incentives remarked by an IT manager.

In all the remaining 43 companies, interviewees replied categorically "no" to this question. In 10 of these, respondents referred to the financial limitations as the main reason for not offering incentives to their employees. Five of these were connected with UDC, four belonged to the IT area and one to the natural sciences field. Two were connected with UVIGO: one belonged to the engineering sector and the other to the IT area. The remaining three were connected with USC: two from the natural sciences field and one from the engineering sector. In this one, a partner and commercial agent highlighted that "incentives are necessary in order to continue practising a language and not lose skills" ("los incentivos son necesarios para continuar practicando un idioma y no perder habilidades"). For this reason, this company did not discard the idea of offering incentives to their employees in the future.

As for the remaining 33 companies in which incentives were not given, they considered that making progress in English was not a priority at the company's level, but it was assumed that it was in the workers' best interest.

3.2.4. Discussion

The results analysed above have shown that English was extensively used by participants for acquiring information related to their fields. These findings are in line with the review of literature that emphasised how English has become the predominant language in publishing in general (Narvaez-Berthelemot & Russell, 2001). It is not surprising, then, that workers from the companies in this study need English to search for information in different areas, such as humanities, social sciences (Fantognon et al., 2005), natural sciences (Brambrink, et al., 2000; Eggly et al., 1999; Glaze 2000), and IT (De la Cruz Cabanillas et al., 2007; Krěpelka, 2014; Ostler, 2005) since they are more commonly available in English than in other languages. Moreover, the usage of English as a major language in scholarly publications is connected with the search for funding, promotion of opportunities and international recognition (Curry & Lillis, 2004; Feng, Gulbahar, & Dawang, 2013; Lee & Lee, 2013; Moreno, 2010). Therefore, as some respondents in the present study point out, choosing English for publishing research works rather than other languages is the means to get internationally known.

In line with the companies' endeavour of becoming international, the results in the present study have revealed that participants use English for carrying out many other tasks, i.e. participating in conferences and seminars, communicating by email or through social media, and developing their company websites. Nevertheless, the frequency with which these participants use English for speaking and writing tasks is highly influenced by the presence or absence of international relations and,

more specifically, by the countries with which they have these relations. For instance, those companies with no international relations or those that were in contact mainly with Portuguese and/or Spanish speaking countries were the ones in which English was less used for speaking. In contrast, the companies with relations in which languages other than Spanish and/or Portuguese were involved used English more frequency for their daily tasks.

English is used in these companies for other pragmatic reasons, e.g., for writing reports or other documents, since it is the language employed in the technical literature that they read. This pragmatism would be also the reason behind the low use of English for translating documents and texts, since they would be directly produced in English. This recalls Hilgendorf's (2010) findings, in which the author disclosed how employees used English for meetings, to facilitate the process of transcribing the meeting minutes in English. Given the participants' familiarity with technical English applied to their work, writing technical reports and developing other internal documents directly in English—rather than writing in their L1 and translating into English—would save them a substantial amount of time and effort. Futhermore, in other cases, writing in English facilitates that employees from other countries understand these documents. This was also the case in Steyaert et al. (2011), in which participants used English in the company internal emails so that workers with different L1s could understand the messages. Therefore, using English in companies' documents or in email communication as in the cases reported in the present study would promote mutual understanding among individuals from different linguacultural backgrounds, which concurs with other ELF research findings (Jenkins, 2009b; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010; Mauranen, 2006b; Pitzl, 2015).

Apart from English, languages such as Portuguese, Italian, German, and French are used in a few companies for communicating via phone and/or email, participating in seminars, conducting literature research, or creating technical documents. Moreover, bearing in mind the discussion in section 3.1.3. ("Consideration of English and other languages"), some participants are aware that using their counterparts' L1 could enhance their international relations, especially when it comes to using Portuguese. The results have suggested that, in those cases, Portuguese was perceived as easier to learn in comparison with other languages, since it would require a lower investment of time, money, and effort. Therefore, participants from companies that have frequent contact with Portuguese-speaking countries are more inclined to communicate in Portuguese with their counterparts from those countries. However, in their relations with other countries with no Portuguese or English as their L1s, English is the language choice of communication. The usage of other foreign languages for international communication seems to be thus conditioned by the investment of time, money, and effort that learning a new language would imply for these participants and their companies. Consequently, the general idea among participants in this study is similar to Lønsmann (2015) and van der Worp et al. (2017) since participants consider that using other languages is not a priority, as long as communication in English is feasible.

Although English facilitates certain aspects of these companies and workers' duties, it does not mean that its usage is unproblematic. The results have indicated that oral communication fluency, especially in small talk, is the most challenging area for participants, which does not point to linguistic deficiency necessarily, but to lack of pragmatic skills (Ehrenreich, 2010; Forey & Lockwood, 2007; Harzing et al., 2011; Kassim & Ali, 2010; Rogerson-Revell, 2007). In other words, participants are generally well equipped to use English in the technical aspects related to their work.

However, having a more informal conversation in English with other workers requires empathy and practice in pragmatic skills so as to anticipate the others' reactions and adjust to the context in which communication takes place. This also recalls the linguacultural assumptions disclosed in the results in an example reported by a participant who failed to understand that their expectations and their counterparts' could substantially differ (section 3.2.2.). Adjusting to the norms and regulations of other countries can be complex since participants must be fully aware of the different circumstances that apply in those countries and accommodate their documents in order to conduct business with them (Angouri & Harwood, 2008). Besides the linguacultural assumptions, deficiency in pragmatic skills in a delicate scenario such as negotiations—an area reported as being also challenging among participants—would increase the tension among the parties involved (Ehrenreich, 2010). Another area in which informants show concern is the grasping of different accents in English. On the one hand, this can be related to the participants' lack of frequent contact with different Englishes (Charles & Marschan-Piekkari, 2002; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 2011; Rogerson-Revell, 2007). On the other hand, participants' difficulty in understanding others' way of speaking English, especially if these are native speakers, could suggest a lack of accommodation in the NESs' side (Charles, 2007; Ehrenreich, 2010; Franklin, 2007; Rogerson-Revell, 2007). However, this was specifically reported in only one company, in which the interviewee highlighted that communication with NNESs was easier than with NESs. Moreover, in a few cases, the results have disclosed a lack of acquaintance with specialised English vocabulary in fields such as the humanities and the social sciences. In this respect, those who as students had dealt with English for technical and other specific purposes are more confident in handling the technical aspects of

English than those who are not familiar with technical English or with specialised literature.

As for the cases in which participants declared not having difficulties when using English, the results have demonstrated that having or not international relations with English-speaking countries is not a determining factor for the presence or absence of difficulties. But what seems to be essential is the frequency of international communication and the means by which this takes place. Consequently, in the companies in which international relations are not regular, or in which communication is sporadic and by email, difficulties are not reported. Likewise, the cases in which most of the international relations are with Portuguese and/or Spanish speaking countries, problems are not mentioned either since these participants use English with less frequency than those who have relations with other countries. Besides the influence of international relations and the ways in which participants communicate with their counterparts from other countries, the presence or absence of difficulties in using English would relate to the participants' personal experiences. Interviewees that lived abroad for a certain period of time felt more confident in their English communications skills.

Moving on to the question of the changes and/or consequences for the interviewees in their job positions or in other areas of their companies, due to the usage of English, the most notable consequence is the loss of opportunities for expanding abroad. Similarly, losing business opportunities with companies from other countries can be attributed to the lack of use of other languages. That is, it could be theorised that participants' disregard for their counterparts' L1 in their international relations could mean losing business opportunities with companies from countries with no English as their L1 (ARCTIC 2013; BCC, 2013; European Commission, 2010, 2011; Vandermeeren, 1999; van der Worp et al., 2017). Although

the literature on international business and management communication pointed out also to frequent cases in which employees' proficiency in English made them more powerful within companies than others (Blazejewski, 2006; Vaara et al., 2005; Virkkula-Raeisaenen, 2010), this was not found in the present study. Still, certain advantages did exist within the companies in which employees have a high level of command in English: companies in which interviewees give English higher consideration and express more confidence in their English communication skills are the ones that typically have more regular international relations with countries in which English is used. Therefore, as mentioned in the literature reviewed, an increased power can indeed be found in the companies interviewed for this study that can be linked to competence in using English but—unlike in the previous studies—this power applies to the companies as a whole, rather than to their individual workers.

Regarding the changes in job positions because of the usage of English, it can be maintained that in all cases participants would act as bridge individuals (Harzing et al., 2011) since most of these companies are very small (usually three to five employees). As a result, each company member must do everything. That is, although there were no changes in the interviewees' job positions as a result of their use of English, they also were made responsible for completing other tasks in English which may or not have been part of their job description, i.e. creating internal documents, producing content for their companies' websites, or proofreading their co-workers' research papers.

Financial limitations affect the possibility of offering incentives for employees with best linguistic abilities. Still, in a few cases employees' interest in practising or improving their English skills were rewarded with flexible working hours, promotions, or English training at the workplace. In fact, these results have proved

that participants are widely aware of the effort that developing and/or keeping competence in the English language implies. Ackowledging this through incentives would have twofold implications: on the one hand, employees who receive incentives would feel encouraged by their companies to work on their English language skills; on the other, these workers would be regarded as assets by their organisations, as being better prepared to communicate in English would enhance the companies' international relations.

Probably due to financial constraints, English training is not a common practice among the companies in this study as only five ventures provide it, and in one of these cases, it is restricted to top-tier personnel, which is in line with the findings in other studies (Machili, 2015; Marschan-Piekkari, 2002). Consequently, employees in lower job positions cannot enhance their networks abroad, which would preclude them from advancing in their professional careers (Machili, 2015; Marschan et al., 1997; Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999). Still, the results have disclosed participants' keen interest in keeping their English language competencies up-to-date since many of them use their own time for practising the language. Furthermore, participants' language focus is not directed towards developing a native-like competence, but rather they are clearly committed to having English competence adapted to their job (Ehrenreich, 2010; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 2011). Some informants take or have taken formal courses in English, which is in line with the findings in other studies (Ehrenreich, 2010; van der Worp et al., 2017). More specifically, in those studies as well as in the present one, participants reported that they were taking or at that moment or had previously taken courses at different institutions to improve their English skills. Participants in Ehrenreich (2010) revealed their disappointment with the teaching methods and expressed their desire for taking English courses that were tailored to their job needs,

a wish that was shared also by some participants in the present study. Thus, some hoped to enrol in a business English course, whereas others emphasised their preferences for carrying out courses more focused on developing their conversational skills.

Alternatives to traditional courses for practising English were reported by interviewees. One of these techniques was learning by doing, which was also recorded in Ehrenreich (2010). That is, some participants in the present study also consider that doing their work is a helpful means to improve their command of English. Learning by doing would also be connected with the business know-how, which is part of the global communicative competence pointed out by Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2011, 2013). More specifically, the authors defined business know-how as the concrete knowledge that employees would acquire for conducting their work and that would be a part of the employees' communication strategies necessary for the business field. According to this, the participants that reported practising English through their daily tasks in the present study would be developing their communicative competence related to business know-how. As was mentioned above, besides learning by doing their work, some participants refer to their experiences of living abroad as a means that has helped them to communicate in English better. These respondents demonstrate more self-confidence in their English skills in comparison with the rest of informants. Moreover, living in different countries would allow these workers to be in contact and communicate with people from different linguacultural backgrounds. That is, they would have the opportunity to experience communication in a true ELF environment (Borghetti & Beaven, 2015; Cogo, 2010; Kalocsai, 2011). It must also be noted that living in Spain and being Spanish natives, the opportunities for participants to be in daily contact with English

outside work would be limited. Therefore, watching television programmes in English allows these employees to be exposed to different Englishes.

Despite the participants' general interest in using and practising English, there were cases in which English training was regarded as not being necessary. These interviewees consider that they already have sufficient command of the language to do their work, a perception similar to those already recorded in other, similar studies (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Ehrenreich, 2010). Furthermore, these findings recall Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2010, 2011), in which participants measured their English communication competence in terms of achieving their goals at work. Along the same lines, participants in the present study consider that their English usage is successful as long as they manage to get their job done and, for this reason, being close to a native-like competence is irrelevant for them.

Bearing in mind the companies' needs, the next section analyses in more depth how they recruit their candidates in order to disclose the relevance that English and other languages have for the hiring process.

3.3. The personnel selection criteria

This section describes and discusses the results related to the recruiting process in the companies, in which the influence of their field of activity and their international relations will be also considered. Firstly, the methods that companies use for sourcing candidates are examined, as these will offer insights on the types of networks that are valuable for companies when they search for prospective workers (3.3.1.). Likewise, the adjustment of the candidates' profiles to the companies' requirements are analysed (3.3.2.) and, particularly, the job possibilities for applicants with a background in English studies are explored in these business

ventures (3.3.2.1.). Furthermore, the importance that companies give to languages in general (3.3.3.) and to English in particular (3.3.3.1.) when hiring potential candidates is discussed. Another topic that will be examined within the consideration of languages for the personnel selection criteria is how companies and individuals perceive the relation between language and culture. Specifically, this section intends to ascertain the degree of the participants' cultural awareness when they communicate with others in English or in other languages and whether this skill is demanded from candidates (3.3.3.2.). Eventually, the results from this third main section of the chapter will be analysed in connection with findings from other studies reviewed in the theoretical framework (3.3.4.).

3.3.1. Methods for sourcing candidates

Participants were asked about the methods that were used in their companies for finding potential candidates:

> *3.1. Indicate which of the following job searching methods are the ones most used in your company:*
>
> - *Advertisement*
> - *Job Centre*
> - *Personal network*
> - *Recruitment company*
> - *Temporary job agencies*
> - *Other (specify)*

Table 20 outlines the different methods that were used for sourcing candidates in the companies connected with the three universities.

Table 20

Methods for sourcing candidates

Methods	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
Personal network	12	8	8	28
University	14	7	3	24
Advertisement	9	4	5	18
Recruitment company	2	4	1	7
Social network services	1	1	2	4
Other	–	1	1	2
Temporary job agency	–	1	–	1
None	1	–	–	1
Local job centre (SNE[10])	–	–	–	–

Respondents from the overall 47 companies that participated in this study declared using sourcing methods except for one. In this company, an IT engineer connected with UDC asserted that they did not use any sourcing method as they had not hired anyone else since the company was created.

As can be seen in Table 20 above, the personal and the university networks were the most common contexts in which candidates were sourced. Some respondents highlighted that their reason for this was that they knew other people with the same career pathway since, in many cases, they had been colleagues in the same university department. In other words, interviewees' alma mater allowed them to know people with the same job experience and from the same working background. The third most popular method for sourcing candidates was advertising, as 18 companies used advertisements in job websites on the Internet for searching for potential candidates. Other sourcing mechanisms such as resorting to recruitment companies, temporary job agencies and social networks were employed by a small number of companies, whereas the local job centre, which in Spain is managed by the SNE, was not used by any of them.

[10] Sistema Nacional de Empleo.

Two systems other than the ones proposed were reported by two companies from the natural sciences field. In the first case, a production manager connected with USC declared that candidates who wanted to work in their company had to contact them directly via email. As for the second company, an engineering and R+D manager connected with UVIGO asserted that besides resorting to social networks, they used specific websites related to their area of research.

3.3.2. Candidates' profiles

Participants were asked about the professional profile that their companies required from applicants:

3.2. What specific knowledge is required for this job?

Table 21 shows the fields of knowledge needed from the job applicants within the companies interviewed and connected with the three Galician universities.

Table 21

Fields of knowledge required

Fields	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
IT (Computing/ICT/Telecommunications)	18	3	6	27
Natural sciences (biology, chemistry)	4	6	4	14
Engineering/Technical education	2	3	5	10
Economics/Business Administration	3	2	2	7
Humanities	2	3	–	5
Healthcare	2	–	1	3
Creative/Graphic design/Web design	3	–	–	3
Research	–	2	–	2
Consultancy	–	1	–	1
International relations	–	1	–	1
Maintenance	–	1	–	1
Political sciences	–	1	–	1

The most commonly required set of skills in the applicants' curriculum was that related to IT, although not in a similar manner by the companies connected with the three universities. IT was the most commonly demanded profile by UDC and

UVIGO companies: by 18 of the overall 21 and by 6 of the overall 11, respectively. In the ventures connected with USC, the natural sciences was the most needed field instead: by 6 of the overall 15 companies. Bearing in mind that 13 enterprises of the overall 21 connected with UDC belonged to the IT field, it is not surprising that this was the most demanded knowledge area. Moreover, other companies which did not belong to the IT sector expected this type of skills from their applicants as well. These participants adduced that, regardless of their field, workers needed extensive knowledge of IT to carry out their duties. For instance, there were companies from the engineering area that worked with technologies related to Geographic Information Systems or to biomechanics, as well as others from the humanities sector that worked with digital contents. Therefore, apart from requiring knowledge on their specific domain, they needed IT skills from their potential candidates.

In line with the fields of knowledge demanded, interviewees from the companies connected with the three universities were asked about the degree of importance that a series of hard and soft skills had for their companies. Hard skills in the context of this study must be understood as the "specific, teachable abilities that can be defined and measured, such as typing, writing, math, reading and the ability to use software programs" (*Investopedia*, 2017), and soft skills as the "interpersonal skills such as the ability to communicate well with other people and to work in a team" (*Collins English Dictionary*, 2017). The question was raised as follows:

> *3.4. From 1 meaning that they are of very little relevance, to 5 meaning that they are very relevant: Which degrees of relevance have the following skills in the selection process?*

Table 22 summarises the results obtained from the answers given to this question by focusing on those skills that were graded with a five, that is, those regarded by participants as the most important ones.

Table 22

Most valued skills in the applicants' curriculum

Skills	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
Responsibility/commitment	14	10	10	34
Teamwork	13	10	7	30
Flexibility/self-learning	16	6	7	29
Analytical mind	10	9	5	24
Programming	16	3	4	23
Office automation	10	7	4	21
Oral and written communication	3	9	6	18
Global view	5	5	7	17
Languages	5	4	4	13
Prospects	4	4	5	13
Planning strategies	4	3	3	10
Negotiation skills	3	1	4	8
Leadership	3	1	1	5
Financial management	1	–	1	2
Other skills proposed by respondents				
Creativity	1	–	–	1
Innovation	1	–	–	1
Ambition	1	–	–	1
Sociability	–	1	–	1
Research	–	1	–	1

Considering the results from Table 22, soft skills such as responsibility and/or commitment, teamwork, flexibility and/or self-learning, and analytical abilities were the most highly regarded by companies when looking for a potential employee. Hard skills such as programming and office automation were highly rated by nearly half of the companies, whereas oral and written communication and knowledge of languages were of great value for just over a quarter of the overall companies. As for the specific area of languages, it will be discussed in more detail in section 3.3.3. below, as it focuses on the requirement of languages in the candidates' recruitment process. Of all the skills in the applicants' curriculum, leadership was the least required one, since interviewees in 42 out of the overall 47 companies maintained that sharing their responsibility roles was more important for them.

Apart form the skills proposed, participants were asked whether they had in mind any other competencies that were not included in the list and that could be relevant for applicants. Most of the respondents considered that the list was a comprehensive one. Nevertheless, five participants pointed to, respectively, creativity, innovation, ambition, sociability, and research know-how as useful abilities in the applicants' background.

3.3.2.1. Job opportunities for graduates in English studies

Concerning the professional profile that companies needed from their candidates, interviewees were also enquired whether applicants with a background education in English studies would have any opportunities to work at these companies:

> *3.6. Are there in your company any positions that can be filled by English Philology or Translation and Interpreting graduates?*

Table 23 below shows the results on the companies' requirement of graduates from English studies.

Table 23

Companies' requirement of English graduates

Requirement of English graduates	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
At some point in the present/past	5	1	2	8
In the future	8	5	1	14
Not needed	8	9	8	25

The need for translators and/or language consultants at the moment of the interview or at some point in the past was reported by eight companies from various domains: five from IT, two from engineering, and one from healthcare. English linguistic services were required for various reasons and with different degrees of frequency. Only two ventures demanded these services very often for translating and

proofreading research papers and other documents, as stated by a consulting and engineering team leader from the IT area and a company promoter from the healthcare field, both connected with UDC. Among those that needed English graduates sometimes was a co-director and founding member connected with UDC whose company hired English philology graduates to create web contents in English. In another case, applicants from the field of English studies were recruited on the condition that they also had extensive knowledge of IT, as indicated by an IT administrator connected with USC. Furthermore, this interviewee's company was the only one in which candidates from the English language field were hired as in-company personnel. The other seven companies suggested that engaging English language experts as in-company staff was not profitable at that moment.

The future requirement of applicants with a degree in English studies was pointed out by 14 companies from different fields: six belonged to the IT sector, five to natural sciences, two to humanities, and one to social sciences. The types of duties expected from these applicants covered translations, as well as proofreading of research projects and software programmes. All 14 companies hoped to hire English experts "in the future when the company gets bigger" ("no futuro, cando a empresa medre"), as highlighted by an IT administrator connected with UDC since they were "very small" companies ("somos unha empresa moi pequena"), also stressed by an engineering and R+D manager from the natural sciences connected with UVIGO. In line with financial limitations for recruiting these types of applicants, a partner from the natural sciences area connected with UDC remarked that it would not be possible to hire those services at that moment since "it would be risky, financially speaking" ("sería arriscado, falando en termos económicos"). Additionally, this interviewee emphasised that employees' command of English was good enough to carry out their daily duties.

There was only one company among these 14 that would hire graduates in English studies in the future as in-company services, as reported by a humanities administrator connected with UDC. In the remaining 13 ventures, most of the interviewees concurred with the seven that required English services at that moment or had required them in the past, as they considered that collaboration with linguistic experts would be sporadic. Consequently, they concurred that "it is not worth hiring someone on staff" ("non merece a pena contratar a alguén en plantilla"), as stated by a partner consultant from the social sciences area connected with USC.

Applicants from the field of English studies were not needed at that moment or would not be needed in the future in 25 companies from the following domains: nine from engineering, seven from IT, five from the natural sciences, two from healthcare, one from the humanities, and another one from the social sciences. These 25 participants virtually agreed that those services were not among their priorities as they themselves felt competent enough to carry them out as part of their regular tasks. In one of these companies, a research area manager from the healthcare sector connected with UDC highlighted that the translations they needed were focused on specific medical areas and were conducted by a co-worker with good command of English and from the same healthcare field. In another company, an IT administrative assistant connected with UVIGO claimed that besides being proficient in English, potential workers would need other studies related to Business Administration or telecommunications.

Despite being confident in their English linguistic abilities and, in line with the group of the 14 companies discussed above, some respondents still pointed to the small size of their ventures and their financial circumstances as the main reasons for not hiring English language experts. For instance, an IT system administration and support area leader connected with UDC remarked that they had hired a graduate in

English philology for some time to conduct technical translations in the past. Although this interviewee considered that recruiting applicants with that particular academic background was important to have quality translations, he admitted that this was a big financial investment for the company. Therefore, this organisation got rid of those services in order to tackle other priorities.

Being small size was also mentioned by an IT communications manager connected with USC and an engineering project manager connected with UVIGO as another justification for not requiring English language experts. However, rather than pointing to financial issues, these enterprises referred to the small size in relation to their international scope since they had very few contacts from other countries.

Considering the overall interviewees' replies, hiring applicants from the field of English studies would not be a priority for most of these Galician companies. In the cases in which these services were needed, they would be hired on an outsourcing basis. On the one hand, financial constraints would be one of the reasons for not hiring experts in English. On the other hand, the extremely specialised fields of these companies required highly qualified employees, which would also explain why more than half of them felt competent enough to deal with very concrete tasks in English in their field.

3.3.3. Relevance of languages

Besides the skills discussed above, interviewees were enquired on how important they considered language knowledge in their applicants' profile. Table 24 shows the degree of relevance that participants gave to the general knowledge of languages as a skill in their candidates' curriculum.

Table 24

Consideration of languages in the applicants' curriculum

	Very important [5 points]	Important [4 points]	Average [3 points]	Not very important [2 points]	Not important at all [1 point]
UDC	5	4	11	1	—
USC	4	3	8	—	—
UVIGO	4	4	2	—	1
Total	13	11	21	1	1

On the one hand, knowing languages was regarded as very important or important, by more than half of the companies. Being accurate when using any language was particularly emphasised by a partner-employee from the natural sciences connected with UDC, as he described himself as being "very particular" ("moi puntilloso") about spelling. On the other hand, the knowledge of languages was perceived as not being very important, or not important at all, by two companies: both had asserted that they did not need any other languages for their daily tasks besides the local ones —Galician and Spanish. As for the remaining 21 ventures, they considered knowing languages as an average skill in the applicants' curriculum.

In order to obtain more information on how interviewees deemed languages in the applicants' profile, they were further enquired whether they asked for certificates in languages other than English:

> *3.3.2. Does your company require any certificates in languages other than English? YES/NO*

None of the companies called specifically for certificates in other languages. However, respondents in 11 companies pointed to different degrees of requirement of other languages in their applicants' curriculum. Table 25 displays the cases in which other languages were considered in the applicants' curriculum and how they were regarded.

Table 25

Companies' requirement of other languages than English

Consideration	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
Required	2	2	1	5
Added advantage	2	2	1	5
Assumed	—	1	—	1

Five companies required German, French, and Portuguese from their prospective employees. Moreover, a natural sciences production manager connected with USC declared that their candidates were interviewed in French. Galician and Spanish were also asked from applicants in two of these five ventures, as reported by a natural sciences company promoter connected with UVIGO and a humanities administrator connected with UDC. The latter affirmed that, although they did not require language certificates from their applicants, they did ask for a degree in Galician studies.

Applicants' knowledge of other languages would be an added advantage for five other companies: French was indicated by an IT communications manager connected with USC, and German by an engineering head of administration connected with UVIGO. Having knowledge of any foreign language was seen by three other companies as an extra skill in their candidates' background. Similarly, having a certificate in any foreign language would be considered as an added advantage in the applicants' curriculum, but not as a requirement for working at their companies, as highlighted by a co-director and founding member connected with UDC, and a communications manager connected with USC, both from the IT area.

As for the assumption of other languages in the candidates' background: French, German, and Italian were pointed out by a humanities partner and researcher connected with USC.

Additionally, the usage of Portuguese had been previously reported as compulsory for international relations by an IT administrator connected with USC and an engineering project manager connected with UVIGO. However, none of these two companies specifically demanded this language from their prospective employees.

3.3.3.1. Requirement of English

Moving on to the companies' specific demand for English from their applicants, participants were asked as follows:

> *3.3. This company considers English knowledge in the candidates' profile as:*
>
> - *A requirement*
> - *Advisable*
> - *An added advantage*
> - *Irrelevant*

Table 26 illustrates the results obtained in this question attending to the companies' requirement of English in their applicants' curriculum.

Table 26

English consideration in the companies' selection criteria

Consideration	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
Required	10	10	5	25
Advisable	3	2	4	9
Assumed	4	2	1	7
Added advantage	3	1	—	4
Irrelevant	1	—	1	2

As can be seen in Table 26 above, knowing English was regarded as a requirement in the applicants' profile in more than half of the companies. In 23 of these, participants had reported having international contacts and, in 16 of these

companies' relations, English-speaking countries were involved. Moreover, reading and writing comprehension in technical English were expressly required from candidates in two companies, as stated by an IT CEO connected with UDC and a humanities project manager connected with USC.

As for the remaining degrees of consideration, 20 companies still regarded English as being relatively relevant for their potential candidates. More specifically, nine of these ventures considered English as advisable in their applicants' profile: six of these had international relations and three of them included English-speaking countries among their contacts. Seven others assumed English in their candidates' curriculum: five of these had international relations and, in two of them, English-speaking countries were involved. Additionally, English was firstly pointed out as being advisable by a partner and researcher from the humanities connected with USC, and as being irrelevant by a company promoter from the natural sciences connected with UVIGO. Nevertheless, these two informants reconsidered their answers and, eventually, declared that English knowledge was rather expected from prospective employees. Four other companies perceived English as an added advantage in their applicants' curriculum. All of them had international relations, and two of these were in contact with English-speaking countries.

Having English knowledge was not relevant when looking for a potential candidate in two companies. In the first case, a humanities administrator connected with UDC had previously declared that they used Galician and Spanish to carry out their work. For this reason, this respondent pointed out that they did not include English as a requirement in their applicants' curriculum. As for the second company, an engineering and R+D manager from the engineering sector connected with UVIGO highlighted that their international relations were not very frequent. Hence, they only recruited applicants with technical expertise related to their field. It must

be recalled that English was used in all companies, at least for reading literature related to their field. Moreover, the latter had earlier asserted that they sometimes hired English translators. Still, these two companies considered that English was irrelevant in their applicants' curriculum.

Similar to the question dealing with languages other than English discussed above, interviewees were asked whether they needed any kind of certificates from their applicants to demonstrate their English knowledge:

> *3.3.1. Does your company require any language certificates in English? YES/NO. Specify.*

All interviewees replied categorically "no" to this question and they coincided with the relevance of showing English language skills by putting them into practice. In order to check their applicants' familiarity with English, these companies resorted to alternative methods. Table 27 outlines the diagnostic means used by companies to find out their candidates' command of English.

Table 27

Methods for assessing the applicants' English language command

	UDC	USC	UVIGO	Total
Oral interviews	2	5	2	9
Living-abroad experiences	1	2	2	5
Other	1	—	—	1

Among those ventures that conducted oral interviews, eight had considered English as a requirement in their applicants' profile. In one of these companies, a research area manager from the healthcare sector connected with UDC remarked that the person in charge of performing the oral interviews in English had graduated in English translation and interpretation studies.

Regarding those companies that reported living-abroad experiences as a means that would guarantee their candidates' appropriate command of English, all required English, except for one connected with UVIGO, where a company promoter from the natural sciences area had considered it advisable.

Interestingly, prospective employees that were Spanish and/or Galician native speakers were screened out by one company connected with UDC. That is, according to an IT CEO, they specifically looked for non-native Spanish applicants "so we can use English orally and on a daily basis" ("preferimos contratar a falantes que non sexan nativos españois, xa que así podemos usar o inglés de forma oral no día a día").

Besides being enquired on the requirement of English in their companies, participants were asked to rate a series of abilities related to the usage of English:

3.5. As regards the English skills in your applicants' curriculum, which are the most useful English areas for this company?

- *Translation/Interpretation*
- *Oral and/or written communication*
- *Technical vocabulary/jargon*
- *Cultural awareness*
- *Other*

Participants ranked the relevance of these areas in order of preference from first to fourth positions, from most to least useful. It must be noted that there were cases in which interviewees placed more than one area in the same position.

Table 28 below shows the results classified from the most to the least valued areas of English in the applicants' curriculum. As for the area of cultural awareness, it will be discussed in section 3.3.3.2. below.

Table 28

Consideration of English areas in the applicants' curriculum

	Oral and written communication				Technical vocabulary				Translation and interpreting			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
UDC	11	5	3	2	11	6	2	2	10	2	5	4
USC	9	4	2	—	9	5	1	—	8	5	2	—
UVIGO	8	3	—	—	4	5	1	1	3	3	4	1
Total	28	12	5	2	24	16	4	3	21	10	11	5

Oral and written communication was regarded as the most relevant area, or as very significant, as it was placed in first and second positions by 40 companies. Participants agreed that amongst all English skills, this was an outstanding strength in their applicants' curriculum. In line with this, a healthcare research area manager connected with UDC declared that oral communication competence in English was a priority when looking for new employees and highlighted how difficult it was to find workers with these skills. On the opposite side of the table, seven companies regarded oral and written communication in English as less important or not important at all. According to these respondents, writing and speaking in English was rarely or even never done at the workplace. Moreover, none of the two UDC companies that placed oral and written communication in English in fourth position had international relations, as reported by an IT administrator and an IT engineer.

Likewise, 40 companies placed the domains of technical vocabulary and translation and interpreting first and second, respectively. They virtually concurred when remarking that their technical background made them look for prospective employees with knowledge in English related to their specialised fields. The latter area was considered as relevant or very relevant by 31 companies since they regularly consulted a vast number of documents that were available only in English. Consequently, these participants put a special emphasis on the importance of hiring

candidates with a certain ability to translate and interpret information in English. Moreover, an engineering CEO connected with UDC underlined the value of acquiring translation and interpreting skills in order to avoid misunderstandings in oral and written communication.

Among those companies that perceived technical vocabulary and translation and interpreting skills as less useful or not useful at all, there was a general assumption that candidates would already have these skills as part of their technical expertise. Therefore, they gave less priority to those two areas explicitly. For instance, an engineer from the engineering field connected with UDC maintained that their candidates would deal with technical terms at an early stage of their engineering studies and, for this reason, they would have an appropriate command of this domain.

In addition to the areas proposed, all informants were asked whether any other subjects related to English language usage would be worthy of consideration in the applicants' curriculum. Two companies responded in the affirmative: in the first case, an engineering CEO connected with UDC stressed the need for having candidates with a blend of English language communication competence and cultural awareness of the countries with which they had international relations. In the second company, an engineering and R+D manager from the natural sciences field connected with USC pointed out, as a matter of urgency, that not only their potential candidates, but also they should have skills specifically related to business English.

Bearing the results analysed in this entire section in mind, participants consider that applicants' knowledge of languages must be proved on a practical scheme, that is, being successful when conducting their daily tasks. Furthermore, using various languages in job interviews, as well as living-abroad experiences prove

to be valuable methods to demonstrate language command. Finally, companies generally expect their prospective workers to be proficient in English rather than in other foreign languages.

3.3.3.2. Cultural awareness

This section intends to find out how meaningful cultural awareness is for the companies' selection process as well as for the individual participants. Interviewees were enquired on their consideration of cultural awareness within the section on the importance of different areas involved in the usage of English discussed above. Table 29 underneath classifies the results attending to the companies' connection with the three Galician universities and the participants' ranking of cultural awareness related to English communication in the applicants' background.

Table 29

Relevance of cultural awareness in the applicants' curriculum

	1st (Very useful)	2nd (Useful)	3rd (Slightly useful)	4th (Not useful)
UDC	3	1	3	14
USC	2	1	8	4
UVIGO	—	6	3	2
Total	5	8	14	20

Besides ranking the relevance of cultural awareness in the candidates' curriculum, participants were asked about the significance of culture in general, that is, not only in connection with communication in English but with other contexts within their working environment:

> *3.5.1. Do you think culture is or is not important for your company? Why?*
>
> *3.5.2. Which cultural aspects do you think are important in the business context?*

- *Knowing the customs of the country with which one has business relations*
- *Knowing which types of behaviours are appropriate: the length of a presentation, how to greet, recommend leisure activities according to businesspeople from other countries, etc.*
- *Other aspects*

Candidates' cultural awareness was considered as very relevant by five companies. These interviewees emphasised how cultural awareness was indispensable for establishing and maintaining business relations with companies from other countries. Moreover, according to a humanities project manager connected with USC, "culture, along with language, is a fundamental tool to get on in the world" ("a cultura, en combinación coa lingua, é unha ferramenta fundamental para moverse polo mundo"). In line with this, an engineering CEO connected with UDC had previously declared it ideal for applicants to have a combination of technical and cultural knowledge. When this respondent was specifically asked on the topic of cultural awareness, he remarked that a negotiation might not be successful because of unawareness about other countries' traditions, or others' cultural conventions related to their ways of conducting business. To clarify his answer, he provided the following example: "you must bear time in mind with U.S. workers. Imagine that they give you three minutes to present an idea: if you do not respect that, your chances of doing business with them are likely to be ruined" ("tes que ter en conta o tempo cos traballadores estadounidenses. Imaxina que che dan tres minutos para que lles presentes unha idea. Se non respetas iso, é moi probable que as túas posibilidades de levar a cabo negociacións con eles se vaian ao traste").

Cultural awareness was regarded from two different viewpoints by a head of administration from the natural sciences field connected with USC. On the one hand, this interviewee asserted that cultural awareness was not important in the context of domestic relations and she pointed out that "it's the others who adjust to the local customs" ("son os outros os que se adaptan aos costumes locais"). However, she described it as "vital" for their international relations.

Eight other companies placed cultural awareness in the second position while asserting that this topic deserved being noted when choosing among potential candidates, and likewise when dealing with companies from abroad. They also alluded to other concrete reasons, such as minimising the risk of cultural shock, promoting empathy, gaining access to foreign markets, or creating a sense of mutual understanding with their customers. Nevertheless, in the context of negotiations, an engineering and R+D manager from the natural sciences sector connected with UVIGO pointed out that cultural awareness was not "a market priority" for them at that moment ("non é unha prioridade de mercado"). Similarly, a company promoter from the natural sciences—also connected with UVIGO—emphasised that having information about other workers' professional experiences rather than knowing their cultural background was more helpful for them.

Respondents from 14 companies placed cultural awareness in the third position as they considered that cultural skills in English or in any other languages were not a priority in the applicants' curriculum. Moreover, this area would be an unnecessary "bottleneck" within the personnel selection process, as claimed by an engineering manager connected with UVIGO. These interviewees pointed to the technical character of their companies as a main justification for not being interested in the opportunities that cultural awareness might have for their companies. In this respect, these informants preferred that prospective applicants were cognisant of

other countries' technicalities, such as financial risks before investing in them, as reported by an engineering manager, or their export and import policies, as remarked by an IT manager –both connected with UVIGO. Another explanation for these companies' low concern about their candidates' cultural awareness was the general assumption that, since their prospective workers—as well as their current ones—held university degrees, they would be acquainted with "different types of behaviours" ("diferentes tipos de comportamentos") related to personal, collective and corporate spheres, as stated by an engineering project manager connected with UVIGO.

Despite considering cultural awareness as not very useful in their applicants' backgound, 14 participants agreed that having knowledge of different cultures and acting accordingly was still relevant in the context of international relations. For instance, an engineering and R+D manager from the natural sciences connected with USC referred to the notion of culture as being "part of the heritage" and "an essential element for expanding overseas" ("a cultura é fundamental como parte do noso legado . . . ademais de ser un elemento esencial para expandirse no estranxeiro"). Besides taking their counterparts' cultures into account, a natural sciences CEO connected with USC argued that "reasserting your position and sticking with your own customs when negotiating is also crucial" ("reafirmar a túa postura e manter os teus costumes cando negocias tamén é fundamental").

Other respondents maintained that cultural awareness was extremely important when dealing with non-western cultures. The idea of business culture homogeneity among countries was observed by a partner consultant from the social sciences connected with USC as he declared that he and his co-workers "barely" perceived cultural differences in their relations with the US and Brazil. Along the same lines, an engineering partner and commercial agent, also connected with USC,

referred to the "Asian culture" in contraposition to the "European one" and remarked that the latter "is more similar to ours" ("la cultura europea es más parecida a la nuestra"). However, this interviewee admitted that it was an ambiguous perception since "at a first sight [other European cultures] seem to be like ours, but they are not" ("a primera vista se parecen a la nuestra, pero no lo son"). Consequently, certain behaviours that might be pereceived as acceptable locally could be offensive for others: "octopus [which is a Galician culinary delicacy] is a delicate matter, for instance, in the case of dealing with German people" ("el pulpo es un tema delicado, por ejemplo en el caso de los alemanes").

Cultural awareness was placed in the fourth position by 20 other companies, as they considered that it was not relevant enough for carrying out their work or for selecting their applicants. Their rationale was focused on the frequency and type of contact in international relations. More specifically, lack of international connections was reported by seven participants, whereas nine referred to the infrequent contact and absence of face-to-face communication as causes for dismissing the cultural factor. In one of these nine companies, cultural awareness was an assumed skill, since an IT communications manager connected with USC asserted that it was "a matter of common sense" ("es una cuestión de sentido común") and he pointed out that "anyone with a minimum of social skills" ("cualquiera que tenga un mínimo de habilidades sociales") could communicate with others, independently of their cultural background.

Hesitant replies to taking cultural aspects into account were given by three companies as respondents declared that it "could be" relevant for establishing and maintaining international relations. Furthermore, in one of these, an IT CEO connected with UDC admitted that, despite having international relations, they had never thought about that question before. Also, among these three, an engineering

head of administration connected with UVIGO stated that cultural awareness was not a priority within their company, albeit acknowledging that "it is important to know how to behave with people from different cultural backgrounds and ascertain what is considered as appropriate or inappropriate in other cultures" ("é importante saber como comportarse con persoas doutras culturas e coñecer o que está ben visto e o que non").

Culture was also felt as homogenegous among countries by an engineering and R+D manager connected with UVIGO who indicated that they did not perceive significant differences among countries while insisting that "companies behave dishonestly and despicably in all parts of the world" ("as empresas compórtanse de xeito deshonesto e ruín en todas partes; non hai diferenzas significativas entre países").

In addition to the replies analysed above, two other companies expressed confusion about the implications of cultural awareness related to the usage of English or of any other languages. Although they held discussions and meetings with companies from other countries, these informants did not understand the link between language and cultural awareness on the one hand and their work on the other. In order to help these participants understand the sense of cultural awareness and its implications for their ventures, the question was explicated: how they would deal with their counterparts' idiosyncrasies, or whether they remembered any specific situation in which they noticed their concept of cultural awareness was challenged. In the first company, an IT system administration and support area leader connected with UDC realised that his anecdote on a linguacultural misunderstanding in an email—discussed earlier in section 3.2.2. within this chapter—could be an example of being unaware of the influence that one's cultural background, as well as others', would have in international communication.

Consequently, this participant, who firstly placed cultural awareness in the fourth position, reconsidered his reply and set it in the second place. In the second company, a project engineer from the social sciences area connected with USC firstly asked for clarification and then ironically questioned if the enquiry referred to "knowing, for instance, when the British people have tea?" ("saber, por exemplo, cando toman o té os británicos?"). After the question was clarified, this respondent asserted in a more serious tone: "knowing how to behave in different cultural contexts is supposed to be important" ("suponse que é importante saber como comportarse en diferentes contextos culturais"). Nevertheless, this interviewee emphasised that this was not very relevant for them at that moment, nor for their potential applicants, and she eventually placed cultural awareness in the third position.

Bearing in mind the results examined in this section, participants show certain degree of cultural awareness related to general behaviour and social perception, that is, they exhibit concern for others and for how others view them in return. Nonetheless, some participants do not seem to be meaningfully aware of the influence that cultural awareness may have on their language usage in international communication, as well as on their business ventures.

3.3.4. Discussion

The overall results presented in this third part (3.3.) of the chapter have shown that the criteria for selecting candidates in the Galician companies interviewed are, as could be expected, related to the companies' main field of activity and the applicants' abilities in different areas, but they include also an assessment about their usage of English and of other languages.

Firstly, companies are more inclined to hire applicants that are connected with their personal network, and in most cases, this means that they belong to the same university environment. University and personal contacts are key to find individuals with similar work experiences and research background: by hiring these applicants, these organisations seem to value not only their academic records (Ortín et al., 2008) but also their social value as trustworthy individuals, since they would have frequently met at a previous stage in their careers (Clarisse & Moray, 2004). In line with this, companies in this study require applicants with professional profiles related to the main field of activity of their ventures—IT, natural sciences, and engineering—which matches also the results of similar studies on spin-off companies (Dahlstrand, 1997; Golob, 2003; Lowe, 2002; Mustar, 1997; O'Gorman et al., 2006; O'Shea et al., 2005; Shane, 2004). Therefore, IT (being the main field of activity of UDC-related enterprises) is the most demanded profile in the candidates' curriculum in this group of companies, while natural sciences is sought after in those connected to USC, and engineering in those to UVIGO.

Taking these findings into account, it can be theorised that these companies' main field of activity, as well as their interest in applicants from their personal network, would cause a lack or scarcity of contacts within the field of languages. Consequently, applicants from the area of English studies are not so often required or considered. Moreover, if these candidates are employed by these companies, they are hired on an outsourcing basis whenever English experts are required for very specific tasks, such as conducting translations. As regards other daily professional duties, participants generally consider that they are fully prepared to carry them out. That is, in line with the conclusions in other studies (Harzing et al., 2011; Kubota, 2011, 2013; Piekkari, 2008; van der Worp et al., 2017), participants in this research consider that potential candidates must, first and foremost, demonstrate competence

in the company's area and, secondly, be able to apply their English language skills to their job.

Hiring English language experts could help these companies be relieved from certain tasks—such as translations of technical documents, websites, or research papers—which might prevent them from focusing on their main duties (Harzing et al., 2011). In like manner, language consultants could be of assistance to the companies when assessing prospective employees' language command during interviews in English. Besides collaborating in these types of tasks, language consultants could be assets in order to help these companies enhance their international relations, i.e. identifying employees' communication weaknesses, offering support to increase their confidence in international communication, strengthening their intercultural perspectives (Galloway, 2013; Lopriore & Vettorel, 2016). However, as has been mentioned in other works (Harzing et al., 2011), companies' financial constraints negatively impact the demand of English language experts for conducting specialised tasks.

Participants in this study euphemistically allude to the small size of their companies as a rationale for not hiring applicants from the English language field. Recruiting English-related experts is perceived as a high financial hindrance, especially for those companies that at the moment of the interview were just starting to run. As a result, most workers in these organisations must share the responsibilities related to foreign language skills in order to complete different types of assignments, which is another common characteristic in spin-off companies (Clarisse & Moray 2004; Iglesias Sánchez et al., 2012; Ortín 2007). That is, besides carrying out their specific work, employees must deal with certain tasks that would be typically conducted by professionals from the English field, i.e. creating and/or translating documents and web content in English. In fact, being able to share

responsibilities with a team rather than being a leader is a crucial skill for these companies when searching for candidates: all members must demonstrate certain teamwork spirit as they collaborate in every task.

Moving on to the relevance of languages in the applicants' curriculum, the results appear to be contradictory. On the one hand, participant companies are aware—at least to a certain extent—that knowing their business partners' and even co-workers' languages could be beneficial when dealing with companies from other countries, and that it would be an outstanding skill in their applicants' background. Companies that have relations with Portuguese-speaking countries are cases in point as they usually resort to Portuguese or Galician. On the other hand, and in line with the review of literature (Harzing et al., 2011; van der Worp et al., 2017), participants in this study assert that knowing languages is not a priority for them and neither is for their potential candidates. For instance, companies take for granted that, as long as applicants know Galician, they would be able to communicate with their Portuguese counterparts. Consequently, knowing Portuguese is not always required from candidates in companies that have contact with Portuguese-speaking countries.

As for the specific case of English within the applicants' curriculum, it is the main language required in these ventures. The significance that they give to different areas of English depends on the contexts in which these candidates need to make use of the language. In this respect, English oral and/or written communication skills are highly demanded, especially—and unsurprisingly—by companies who frequently speak and/or write in English. Furthermore, companies consider more important that their employees demonstrate practical skills in English, so they can transmit their ideas effectively. That is, companies deem more valuable that their prospective employees know how to apply their English knowledge to their work than show grammatical accuracy, an idea that was also stressed in the review of ELF literature

(Björkman, 2009; Breiteneder, 2005; Firth, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010). It is not surprising therefore that certificates—in English or in any other languages—are not required by these companies, but having experiences abroad, conducting interviews, and completing work successfully are considered as suitable methods to assess candidates' proficiency in English and in other languages. In conclusion, the results have disclosed that companies, as well as individual participants, value that their candidates are ELF users rather than being closer to an English native-like competency.

ELF is also present in the participants' conceptualisation of cultural awareness. However, there are divergent perspectives, as the results have shown differences between ideology and practice. On the one hand, participants' idea of culture coincides with that presented in ELF/BELF research (Jenkins, 2012, 2015; Pölzl & Seidlhofer, 2006), since they recognise that using English would not imply a connection with the native English cultural context (i.e. British/American). But at the same time participants are aware that using English in their business interactions would be related to the context in which communication takes place and with the individuals with whom they communicate. In line with this, respondents concur that cultural awareness must be based on respect towards others (i.e. showing concern on how they are perceived by others and how they must behave towards them) and assume this same level of concern in their applicants' background.

On the other hand, participant companies do not commonly reflect a deep level of awareness about how their own linguacultural background, as well as their counterparts', has an influence in each communication context individually. In many cases, participants' perceptions on cultural awareness are more focused on what is to be expected as appropriate or inappropriate behaviour towards their counterparts, which seems to be frequently based on finding stereotypical differences among them,

i.e. Asian culture vs. European, time management, food, or companies' attitudes. In other words, participants seem to understand the notion of culture as a fixed construct, and as one that can be easily simplified into a set of behaviours (Angouri, 2010; Pashmforoosh & Babaii, 2015). Moreover, the results suggest that companies and their individuals consider that cultural awareness is relevant as far as face-to-face communication is concerned. In this way, these participants seem to ignore, for instance, that their linguacultural identity would be also reflected, in writing, in the forms in which they adjust written contents to others, e.g. in email communication (Bjørge, 2007; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005), websites, or reports. Bearing this in mind, it can be concluded that respondents in this study perceive their linguacultural background as independent from their usage of language. In other words, participants conceive culture and language as separate entities.

Besides conceiving language and culture as separate elements, a utilitarian ideology is disclosed in the participants' views of cultural awareness. From a global perspective, that is, at the companies' level, cultural awareness is not a priority as long as financial gains are not obtained through it. At the individual level, the results have also shown that cultural awareness is regarded by some participants as a commodification: the value they give to culture depends on the profits they could obtain from it. These participants deem cultural awareness unnecessary unless certain company circumstances, such as their international relations, require it. Yet they do not always see how showing cultural awareness may promote empathy and rapport with others (Crossling & Ward, 2002; Planken, 2005), which as a result would be beneficial for their business ventures and for themselves. Consequently, some of these informants focus more on the idea of cultural awareness as an abstraction, rather than viewing it as another ability that promotes communication

among individuals and identifies their own values when they are in contact with others.

Considering the findings on cultural awareness, it can be argued that participants generally dismiss its influence on their way of using language. At a superficial level, it seems that participants do not bear in mind the outcomes that cultural awareness may have for their companies or for themselves. Nevertheless, these informants still show certain degree of concern on how they are perceived by others. That is, when participants are forced to reflect deeper on the consequences of cultural awareness, they demonstrate that they are in fact cognisant of the fact that the way in which they interact with others will lead to very different results, from establishing rapport and creating robust relations with others, to causing misunderstandings and risking their international relations. Therefore, rather than suggesting that participants do not grasp the influence of cultural awareness, the analysis of the results suggests that they need some space to reflect on it. Taking this into account, personal experiences will have a great impact on the way in which participants understand more directly the sense of cultural awareness. Experiences that involve being in contact with individuals from different lingua-cultural backgrounds—i.e. living abroad, having co-workers from other countries, growing their international network—will help participants acquire a wider perspective of themselves as individuals in a very concrete part of the business environment and as global citizens of the world (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Lønsmann, 2015).

In summary, the analysis of the results in this last section on personnel selection criteria has revealed that the companies in this study and their workers are more inclined to hire applicants from their working and personal network. These applicants are selected by their high qualification in the field of each of these companies. The usage of English comes as a relevant skill as long as it is connected to

their job, whereas the usage of other languages is an extra skill, which makes English the prevalent language when it comes to personnel selection criteria. It can be concluded that these companies and their workers are thus interested in prospective employees that are ELF users rather than users with a native-like proficiency in English. Finally, despite showing interest in candidates with English, or—more accurately—ELF skills, cultural awareness is generally ignored when hiring potential applicants.

The next chapter summarises the findings by addressing each of the research questions proposed in this empirical research. This will offer a clearer perspective of the implications that this study has for the teaching and the business fields.

Chapter 4

Conclusions

Chapter 3 has provided a rigorous analysis of how and why participants use English in companies connected with the three Galician universities. More specifically, the analysis has focused on three main topics: firstly, the companies' consideration of English, that is, how relevant English is for these participants; secondly, the contexts in which companies use English, which has examined the different tasks in which participants may need English; and thirdly, the personnel selection criteria, which has explored whether English is a requirement when looking for prospective workers. Moreover, the usage of other languages has been discussed in each of the three sections of the chapter, so participants' perceptions of other languages vis-a-vis English could be disclosed.

In order to achieve a deeper comprehension on these three topics, which structured the questionnaire presented to the interviewees, I initially articulated four research questions, which I now turn to: first, I outline the findings that reveal how participants use English in the companies included in this study (4.1.1.); next, I present the conclusions on companies and individuals' conceptualisation of their usage of English (4.1.2.); then, I offer a synopsis of their perceptions of other languages in comparison with English (4.1.3.); and, finally, I review the way in which

participants regard themselves in international communication (4.1.4.). After the summary of findings, I discuss the main implications for the business and teaching fields (4.2.) and I describe the limitations of this study and present some suggestions for further research (4.3.).

4.1. Summary and discussion of major findings

4.1.1. To what end do participants use English in their companies?

English is essential in these companies for establishing and maintaining international relations; as long as employees are able to communicate in English with other workers, this will secure companies' access to the global market (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Lønsmann, 2015). Participants use, thus, English for communicating by email, speaking on the phone, participating in meetings, and negotiating with their counterparts from other countries. Besides being an indispensable means for these companies' international relations, English is crucial for employees as it allows them to keep up with the specialised literature in their fields. In line with this, companies in this study expect a certain level of proficiency from their applicants. However, prospective workers are not chosen on the condition that they are proficient in English, but it is the other way around: candidates that endeavour to work at these companies must be experts in the companies' field and, then, they must know how to apply their English knowledge to the companies' requirements, i.e. by being able to participate in meetings that are conducted in English, by writing emails to communicate with their peers from other countries, by creating technical reports, or by understanding specific procedures described in the literature related to their fields. Therefore, applicants are expected to have a level of command that meets companies' working needs, which are mainly connected with

IT, engineering, and natural sciences. For this reason, professionals from the area of English language studies are not regularly hired, but they are sporadically recruited for conducting translation tasks.

4.1.2. How do companies and individuals identify themselves as users of English?

Companies and individuals share a similar perspective on their usage of English, which is connected with the ELF paradigm. More specifically, at the companies' level, the usage of English is perceived as an instrument that can report benefits to them, i.e. in order to create relations with companies from abroad, or to increase their existing ones. At the individual level, participants show also a utilitarian view, since they consider English useful as long as they can obtain some advantage from it. Given that participants consider English as another tool that enables them to get their job done, their usage of the language is very pragmatic (Hilgendorf, 2010; Steyaert et al., 2011). That is, participants do not regard English as a Native Language as a reference model, but they consider more important being able to communicate in English with others to successfully perform their duties (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 2011).

Nevertheless, participants have also a perception of English as a social activity (Baird et al., 2014; Canagarajah, 2011; Janssens & Steyaert, 2014; Jenkins, 2015) that is manifested at the individual level rather than at the corporate realm. More specifically, the usage of English among informants has positive repercussions for them as individuals in their communication with others. On the one hand, English allows participants to create empathy and achieve mutual understanding when they communicate with their co-workers with different L1s, or with workers from other companies abroad (Crossling & Ward, 2002; Planken, 2005). On the other hand,

English would also promote a sense of belonging to the same community among these participants as they would be sharing the challenges involved in using a language that is not their L1 (Charles, 2007; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010).

Taking all these aspects into account, participants in this study can be categorised—globally and individually—as ELF users: they are focused on getting their job done while using English, and they do not consider being perfectly accurate in terms of grammar indispensable. At the same time, they see English as a means that allows them to establish relations with others. In other words, companies and their individuals are ELF users who perceive English as the means to achieve their goals as global and individual entities.

4.1.3. How do companies and individuals view other languages in comparison with English?

Companies and individuals perceive other languages as an extra advantage, not as necessary for developing their work. That is, participants acknowledge that being able to communicate in their counterparts' native languages can be beneficial for their international relations (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Machili, 2015; Vandermeeren, 1999). However, pursuing this further would imply a high investment of time, money, and effort for them. In this regard, both companies and individuals regard English as a lingua franca, a facilitator that saves time, money and effort that they otherwise would have to dedicate to learning other languages. English is thus valued by these companies and their individual workers more than other languages (Lønsmann, 2015; van der Worp et al., 2017). Furthermore, the usage of local languages has been internalised among participants. Even though they use Spanish and Galician for communicating in their international relations, they assume

these languages in their own repertoire and in that of their applicants. Therefore, these informants' attitudes towards the local languages have demonstrated to be similar to the erasure process described in Lønsmann's (2015) since, even though participants use these languages, they do not normally recognise them as being necessary for conducting their work.

4.1.4. How do participants perceive themselves in international communication?

Although participants generally regard themselves as confident users of English for carrying out their work, international communication is generally perceived as being a challenging scenario, since various circumstances come into play: using a different language than their L1, facing cultural diversity, and managing uncertain communicative expectations. Furthermore, these challenging situations are connected with the participants' need for improving certain aspects related to language usage, such as their pragmatic skills, as well as their ability to demonstrate cultural awareness. In this respect, participants show some concern on how they would be perceived by others and how others would be regarded by them in return (van der Worp et al., 2017). However, they do not reflect on the influence that their linguacultural background has when using English or any other languages. For instance, participants do not usually bear in mind the consequences that their background might have for establishing new relations with companies from other countries or maintaining the ones they already have (Bjørge, 2007; Incelli, 2013; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005). Moreover, participants' personal experiences have impacted on their interaction with others as regards their cultural awareness. Particularly, those who have spent a certain period of time living in other countries

have become more conscious of how their own attitudes and others' are involved in the communication process.

4.2. Implications for the business and the teaching fields

Considering the findings in this study, companies could develop a series of strategies in order to help them reassert their confidence in international communication contexts:

Firstly, in order to improve their employees' pragmatic and cultural skills, companies could organise support group meetings with workers from other countries on a regular basis to discuss work-related topics, but also to engage in small talk more often. They could share their concerns about the usage of English or any other languages in international communication, offer their own views on their particular environment and gain insight on how others conduct their work. Besides increasing employees' cultural perspectives, these practices would allow them to build rapport and become familiar with different Englishes (Pashmforoosh & Babaii, 2015; Pullin, 2015).

Secondly, participants in this study overcame their challenges in English communication by resorting to different methods, such as taking language lessons, doing their daily work in English, communicating with co-workers from different countries, or living abroad. Therefore, taking into account that time and money are assets in the business environment, another practice that could be useful for improving communication skills in English is that in-company employees communicate sometimes with one another in English, i.e. discussing technical literature or internal documents, even if they share the same L1 (Hilgendorf, 2010; Steyaert et al., 2011). Doing so could increase workers' confidence, especially among those that have not regularly experienced contact with speakers from other

linguacultural backgrounds, but still need to transmit self-assurance when using a language that is not their native one in their international relations. This could also help those employees with less technical background to acquire more knowledge in technical English, as they could collaborate with their co-workers to become more familiar with certain technical aspects.

Thirdly, as regards the usage of languages other than English, the above strategies could also be applied among workers who have a certain knowledge of languages other than English and their shared L1. For instance, in cases in which two co-workers have some command in Italian, they could try to communicate between themselves in Italian and to do so with Italian workers in their international relations, instead of using English. By using other languages, participants could build rapport with workers from other countries and gain insights on the ways in which others communicate outside of their usage of English (Cogo, 2016b; Poncini, 2003, 2013). That is, they would be developing their pragmatic and cultural skills in connection with a language different than English and their L1.

Fourthly, companies that are more solvent could hire language experts so that these could tailor language methods that meet companies and individuals' requirements. That is, language consultants would offer employees adequate guidelines for managing pragmatic, cultural, and linguistic skills in English, or in any other language that these companies may need. For instance, these language professionals could assist workers with writing emails so as to adapt their style to meet the recipient's linguacultural expectations. Moreover, language experts that were often required for translation tasks in these companies could be hired on a long-term basis, since this would allow them to become specialised in these companies' activities, as well as part of the companies' business culture (Harzing et al., 2011; Machili, 2015; Yoshihara et al., 2001).

As regards the implications for the teaching field, the findings disclosed in this study point out some directions:

Firstly, it would be necessary to develop more courses in English, but also in other languages, with a primary focus on pragmatic skills (Ehrenreich, 2010; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010). This would help students to learn how to engage in small talk, create rapport, accommodate to others, and acquire intercultural skills, which are essential competencies in any context, and particularly in the business environment (Cogo, 2016b; van der Worp et al., 2017).

Secondly, participants from fields such as the humanities and the social sciences revealed difficulties with technical English in this study. For this reason, it would be essential to put more emphasis on specialised technical English as connected to these fields. In this way, students would become familiar with knowledge from areas that will be also connected to their prospective work for conducting certain tasks, such as developing technical projects or dealing with digital media, among others.

Thirdly, institutions must encourage international communication among students, and an essential means to do so is to continue promoting mobility programmes (Borghetti & Beaven, 2015). When international mobility does take place, the organisation of activities that facilitate the integration of students from diverse linguacultural backgrounds would also be crucial. More specifically, these integration activities must also be targeted at local students so that they are prompted to communicate with students that come from other countries. For instance, organising dinners at local students' homes, or coordinating other events that involve the participation of local and visiting students. This would help students—local and foreign—to learn more about each other's linguacultural backgrounds.

Finally, it is vital that business English communication researchers collaborate closely with teachers of English for business purposes. More research within the international business communication field is needed so that the findings can help to advance new methods and/or materials that can be used for teaching English connected with the business field (Pullin, 2011, 2015).

4.3. Limitations of this study and suggestions for further research

The conclusions of this research must be viewed with a caveat. They are based on a review of related literature and a multiple case study, which means that the findings are exclusively linked to these two sources. What was concluded in this research cannot be automatically and generally applied to all companies. Instead, this study will be of interest to researchers and institutions concerned with the scholarship of international business communication in English and it will add to the mosaic of research in this field.

Another aspect that presents limitations is the questionnaire developed to conduct the interviews. Respondents could be biased by the way in which the questions were proposed. Still, their responses are a valuable input to increase the perspectives on English language usage within the business environment, as well as its interface with the usage of other languages.

Even though this research covers a wide range of aspects related to international business communication and offers meaningful insights, there is room for further analysis:

First of all, other methods can be used to obtain relevant data, i.e. participant observation or focus groups. Moreover, and in connection with the ELF/BELF claim, discourse analysis could be conducted on different communication materials, such as

meetings or emails, as these would also offer deep understanding on participants' perceptions and usage of languages.

Secondly, most of the companies in this study belonged to the IT, engineering, and natural sciences fields. Therefore, increasing the corpora of domains by including other types of companies would enrich the analysis of the connection between their context and their usage of English and other languages.

Finally, since this study has disclosed significant insights on language performance and living-abroad experiences, a more in-depth analysis on questions related to staying abroad can be tackled. This would help to fully grasp other views on how these experiences can have an impact on language usage within companies.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire on the usage of English in Galician spin-off companies (English version)

COMPANY DATA
NAME OF THE COMPANY:
ADDRESS:
PROVINCE:
PHONE NO.:
EMAIL:
YEAR OF FOUNDATION:
INTERVIEWEE DATA
INTERVIEWEE’S FIRST AND LAST NAME:
JOB POSITION:

FINANCIAL ACTIVITY
PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY: products/services offered by the company (short explanation)

0.1. Which kinds of job categories do the employees hold in your company?

COMPANY STRUCTURE			
*AREAS	FEMALE EMPLOYEES	MALE EMPLOYEES	TOTAL

*i.e.:

- Staff with managerial responsibilities
- Specialised staff
- Administrative assistant staff
- Sales representatives
- Non-specialised staff

1. CONSIDERATION OF ENGLISH

1.1. To what extent do you think the English language is worthy of consideration in your company?

Not necessary: **We only use Spanish and/or Galician**	☐
Useful but not necessary	☐
Useful: English is used occasionally	☐
Necessary: English is frequently used	☐
Essential: English is used in most of the cases	☐
Compulsory: English is used always	☐
Other	☐

Why?

____

____

____

1.2. Does your company have any types of international relations with other companies or institutions? YES/NO

YES ☐ NO ☐

⇨ **In the case of a positive answer:**

Please, indicate the main reasons for those relations:	
The company is headquartered abroad	
The company has one or more subsidiaries abroad	
The company has strategic agreements with companies from other countries	
The company has business relations with other companies from abroad	
Other reasons	
With which countries?	**COUNTRIES** **Please, specify the countries' names**
Europe	
Rest of the world	

1.2.1 English language for those relations is:

- **Useful but not necessary**
- **Necessary at some point, at least for having fluent relations**
- **Compulsory; otherwise those relations would not exist**

⇨ **In the case of English language not being necessary, explain why:**

____

1.2.2. Apart from English for those international relations, indicate if there are other languages which you consider:

- **Useful but not necessary**
- **Necessary**
- **Compulsory**

☐ **Using other languages is NOT necessary**

1.3. Consequences for the company:

1.3.1. Were there any changes in the job positions due to the English usage?

YES ☐ NO ☐

⇨ **In the case of a positive answer:**

WHAT KIND OF CHANGES	IN WHICH POSITIONS	NO. OF NEW POSITIONS	NEW SPECIALISATIONS

1.3.2. Does this company have any difficulties derived from the:

- ○ **Presence**
- ○ **Absence**

of the English language use? / Have there been any in the past?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Please, explain which types of difficulties:

(i.e.: linguistic, financial, other)

____

____

2. CONTEXTS OF USE

2.1. Specify below the types of activities in which you use English:

USAGE		
WRITING Letters, emails, reports, memoranda, other	**SPEAKING** Giving presentations, speaking on the phone, conducting negotiations, giving/receiving commands, other	**OTHER LANGUAGES**

2.2. Is the English language used for carrying out any of the following tasks?

TASKS	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
Read technical publications about methods and procedures			
Participate in courses or seminars related to your job			
Study programmes and operation systems to learn about them			
Conduct bibliographical research			
Attend to meetings to: • establish rules or procedures • assess the progress with projects • assess department strategies			
Discuss and/or consult about plans and/or objectives with colleagues supervisor someone else from another company			
Other:			

2.3. English language training:

2.3.1. Does your company have any types of English training activities?

YES ☐ NON ☐ **[Why NOT?]:**

⇨ **In the case of a positive answer:**

ACTIVIDADES	¿EN QUE OCUPACIÓNS?
Courses not organised by the company (external)	
Courses organised by the company (in-company courses)	
Conferences, workshops, and seminars	
Training on a staff rotation basis, exchange, temporary transfer, etc.	
Self-learning (learning on their own)	
N/K/A	
Other (specify)	

2.3.2. Are employees given any incentives to improve their English level, in the case of there being room for improvement? i.e.: an increase in their salary, or other.

YES ☐ NO ☐

⇨ **In the case of a positive answer:**

Which types of incentives?

____

____

____

⇨ **In the case of a negative answer:**

Why not?

____

____

____

3. **PERSONNEL SELECTION CRITERIA**

3.1. Indicate which of the following job searching methods are the ones most used in your company:

- o Advertisement
- o Job Centre
- o Personal network
- o Recruitment company
- o Temporary job agencies
- o Other (specify) ....

3.2. Candidate profile:

What specific knowledge is required for this job?

____

____

3.3. This company considers English knowledge in the candidates' profile as:

- o A requirement
- o Advisable
- o An added advantage
- o Irrelevant

3.3.1. Does your company require any language certificates in English?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Specify: which kind of certificates?

____

____

____

3.3.2. Does your company require any certificates in languages other than English?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Specify: which kind of certificates?

____

____

3.4. From 1 meaning that they are of very little relevance, to 5 meaning that they are very relevant:

Which degrees of relevance have the following skills in the selection process?

JOB COMPETENCES						
TECHNICAL SKILLS						
Office						
Programming						
Languages						
Financial management						
Other (specify)						
HUMAN SKILLS						
Leadership						
Analytical mind						
Flexibility/self-learning						
Oral and written communication						
Teamwork						
Responsibility/commitment						
CONCEPTUAL SKILLS						
Global perspective						
Planning strategies						
Prospects						
Negotiation skills						

3.5. As regards the English skills in your applicants' curriculum, which are the most useful English areas for this company?

AREAS	1st (VERY USEFUL)	2nd (USEFUL)	3rd (SLIGHTLY USEFUL)	4th (NOT USEFUL)
Translation/Interpretation				
Oral and/or written communication				
Technical vocabulary/jargon				
Cultural awareness				
Other				

3.5.1. Do you think culture is or is not important for your company? Why?

____

____

____

3.5.2. Which cultural aspects do you think are important in the business context?

- **Knowing the customs of the country with which one has business relations**
- **Knowing which types of behaviours are appropriate: the length of a presentation, how to greet, recommend leisure activities according to businesspeople from other countries, etc.**
- **Other aspects:**

____

____

____

3.6. Are there in your company any positions that can be filled by English Philology or Translation and Interpreting graduates?

YES ☐ NO ☐

⇨ **In case of negative answer:**

Specify why these types of applicants are not required:

I am not familiar with the kind of skills of these applicants	☐
There are no job positions that can be filled by these applicants in this company	☐
Other (please, explain below)	☐

____

____

____

Appendix B

Questionnaire on the usage of English in Galician spin-off companies

(original version in Galician)

DATOS DA EMPRESA
NOME DA EMPRESA:
ENDEREZO:
PROVINCIA:
TELÉFONO:
CORREO ELECTRÓNICO:
ANO DE CREACIÓN:
DATOS DA PERSOA ENTREVISTADA
NOME E APELIDOS:
CARGO DENTRO DA EMPRESA:

ACTIVIDADE ECONÓMICA
ACTIVIDADE PRODUTIVA: produtos / servizos que presta (breve explicación)

0.1. ¿Como se distribúen os traballadores e traballadoras da súa empresa por categorías profesionais?

ESTRUTURA / ORGANIZACIÓN DA EMPRESA			
***DEPARTAMENTOS**	**TOTAL**	**Nº MULLERES**	**Nº HOMES**

*Personal directivo con responsabilidade
*Persoal técnico / cualificado
*Persoal administrativo de apoio
*Persoal de vendas
*Persoal non cualificado

1. CONSIDERACIÓN DO INGLÉS

1.1. ¿Que consideración lle merece o inglés en relación coa súa empresa?

Non é necesario: **É suficiente con utilizar os idiomas oficiales da comunidade**	☐
É útil pero non necesario	☐
É útil, úsase nalgúns casos	☐
É necesario, úsase a miúdo	☐
É imprescindible, úsase en moitos casos	☐
É totalmente obrigatorio, úsase sempre	☐
Outra	☐

Explique por que

____

____

____

1.2. A empresa, ¿ten algún tipo de relación con empresas ou institucións do estranxeiro?

SI ☐ NON ☐

⇨ **No caso de resposta afirmativa:**

Por favor, indique os principais motivos para esas relacións:	
A empresa ten unha matriz no estranxeiro	
A empresa ten unha ou varias filiais no estranxeiro	
A empresa ten alianzas estratéxicas con empresas estranxeiras	
A empresa ten relacións comerciais con outras empresas extranxeiras	
Outros	
¿Con que países mantén a súa empresa esas relacións?	**PAÍSES (Por favor, indique os nomes dos países)**
Europa	
Resto do mundo	

1.2.1. O inglés é para estas relacións un idioma:

- **Útil pero non necesario**
- **Necesario, polo menos para que as relacións sexan relativamente fluídas**
- **Obligatorio, sin el non poderían levarse a cabo estas relacións internacionais.**

⇨ **No caso de non ser necesario explique por que:**

___

___

___

1.2.2. Ademais do inglés, para este tipo de relacións internacionais, que <u>outros idiomas</u> son:

- **Útiles pero non imprescindibles:**
- **Necesarios:**
- **Obrigatorios:**

☐ **NON é necesario empregar ningún outro idioma**

1.3. Consecuencias para a empresa:

1.3.1. ¿Producíronse cambios no contido das ocupacións en relación co uso do inglés nesta empresa?

SI ☐ NON ☐

⇨ **No caso de resposta afirmativa:**

QUE CAMBIOS	EN QUE POSTOS	Nº DE EMPREGOS A CREAR	NOVAS ESPECIALIDADES

1.3.2. Nesta empresa, ¿existen ou existiron dificultades pola

- **Presenza**
- **Ausencia**

do uso do inglés?

SI ☐ NON ☐

Por favor, especifique que tipo de dificultades (COMPETENCIAS se fora preciso):

(Ex. : Dificultades a nivel lingüístico,económico, etc.)

2. CONTEXTOS DE USO

2.1. Especifique debaixo os tipos de actividades nos que usa inglés

USO		
ESCRIBIR cartas, correos, informes, memoranda, outros	**FALAR** Presentacións, no teléf., negociacións, Dar /recibir ordes, outros	**OUTROS IDIOMAS**

2.2. ¿Úsase o inglés para levar a cabo algunha das seguintes tarefas?

TAREFAS	SI	NON	Á / V
Ler publicacións técnicas sobre procedementos e métodos			
Participación en cursos ou seminarios relacionados co traballo.			
Estudo de programas e sistemas de operación existentes para obter e manter a familiaridade con eles.			
Levar a cabo investigacións bibliográficas necesarias para o desenvolvemento do seu traballo.			
Asistencia ás reunións: • de información nas que se definen normas de procedementos. • estado de avance dos proxectos. • revisar estratexias do departamento ou división			
Discusión e/ou consulta dos plans e/ou obxectivos cos: • compañeiros • superiores • alleos á empresa			
Outras:			

2.3. Formación en lingua inglesa:

2.3.1. ¿Lévase a cabo algún tipo de actividade de formación en lingua inglesa?

SI ☐ NON ☐ **[por que NON?] :**

⇨ **No caso de resposta afirmativa:**

ACTIVIDADES	¿EN QUE OCUPACIÓNS?
Cursos deseñados e organizados fóra da empresa (xestión externa)	
Cursos deseñados e organizados dentro da empresa (xestión interna)	
Conferencias, obradoiros e seminarios	
Formación planificada por rotación, intercambio, traslado temporal, etc.	
Autoaprendizaxe (formación por conta propia)	
NS/NC	
Outras *(especificar)*	

2.3.2. ¿Existe algún sistema para animar ou incentivar aos traballadores e traballadoras a que melloren o seu nivel de inglés, no caso de que o precisen? Ex.: subida do salario, etc.

SI ☐ NON ☐

⇨ **No caso de resposta afirmativa:**

¿Cal / cales?

___

___

⇨ **No caso de resposta negativa:**

¿Por que non?

____

____

____

3. CRITERIOS PARA A CONTRATACIÓN DE PERSOAL

3.1. Dos seguintes métodos de procura de traballadores/as, sinale os dous máis usados na súa empresa:

- Anuncios
- SNE (Sistema Nacional de Empleo)
- Contactos persoais
- Empresa de selección de persoal
- Empresa de traballo temporal
- Outros *(especificar)* ....

3.2. Perfil da persoa candidata:

Con que formación se contrata;

____

____

3.3. A empresa inclúe o coñecemento do inglés como:

- **Requisito**
- **É recomendable**
- **É un plus**
- **É irrelevante**

3.3.1. ¿Esíxese algún tipo de acreditación do inglés?

SI ☐ NON ☐

¿Cal / cales?

____

____

____

3.3.2. ¿E doutros idiomas?

SI ☐ NON ☐

¿Cal / cales?

____

____

3.4. Cunha nota do 1 (moi pouca) ao 5 (moita) valore:

¿Que grao de importacia teñen as seguintes aptitudes dos candidatos á hora de seren contratados?

COMPETENCIAS PROFESIONAIS						
CAPACIDADES TÉCNICAS						
Ofimática						
Programación						
Coñecemento Idiomas						
Control e xestión de custos						
Outras (especificar)						
CAPACIDADES HUMANAS						
Liderado						
Capacidade analítica						
Flexibilidade e capacidade de autoaprendizaxe						
Comunicación verbal e escrita						
Traballo en equipo						
Responsabilidade e grao de compromiso						
CAPACIDADES CONCEPTUAIS						
Visión global						
Estratexia de planificación						
Visión de futuro						
Habilidade negociadora						

3.5. Á hora de ter en conta os coñecementos de inglés dun candidato: ¿Que áreas da lingua inglesa pensa que lle poderían ser de máis utilidade nesta empresa?

ÁREAS	1º (MOI ÚTIL)	2º (ÚTIL)	3º (TAMÉN LLE SERVE PERO MENOS)	4º (NON)
Tradución / Interpretación				
Comunicación oral e/ou escrita				
Vocabulario especializado / xerga				
Conciencia cultural				
Outras				

3.5.1. Considera que a cultura é ou non é importante para a súa empresa? Por que?

____

____

____

3.5.2. Que aspectos da cultura pensa que son importantes á hora de facer negocios?

- **Coñecer as costumes do país co que negocia**
- **Saber que tipo de comportamento é o adecuado; a duración dunha presentación, como saudar, que tipo de ocio recomendar acorde ás costumes dos empresarios do país extranxeiro, etc.**
- **Outros aspectos:**

____

____

____

3.6. Na súa empresa, ¿existen postos que poidan ser cubertos por titulados en Filoloxía Inglesa ou Tradución e Interpretación?

SI ☐ NON ☐

⇨ **No caso de resposta negativa:**

Especifique a razón ou razóns polas que a súa empresa non necesita titulados da área de inglés:

Descoñezo as capacidades destes titulados	☐
Na miña empresa non hai postos que requiran este tipo de titulación	☐
Outros (por favor, especifique debaixo):	☐

____

____

____

Appendix C

Proyecto Fortius

(used as a model to develop the questionnaire)

Necesidades de RRHH de las empresas

Proyecto FORTIUS > Programa Leonardo da Vinci > Comisión Europea

Cuestionario sobre necesidades de Recursos Humanos con titulación universitaria por parte de las empresas en relación con las Áreas de CC Sociales

I Plantilla con titulación universitaria

I.1. En su empresa, ¿existen puestos que requieran formación universitaria? Sí ☐ No ☐

➢ En caso de respuesta afirmativa:

I.1.1. Aproximadamente, ¿qué porcentaje suponen los universitarios sobre el total de la plantilla en su empresa? ____ %

I.1.2. Priorice las áreas formativas de las que proceden los titulados universitarios contratados por su empresa (marque 1º para la más demandada, 2º para la siguiente y así sucesivamente, asignando el último valor a la categoría menos demandada)

	1º	2º	3º	4º	5º	No demanda
Ciencias Sociales, Jurídicas y de la Comunicación	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Humanidades	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Arquitectura, Ingenierías y Tecnología	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ciencias Experimentales	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ciencias Biomédicas y de la Salud	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I.1.3. ¿Cómo cree que están de preparados para el mercado laboral los titulados universitarios al finalizar sus estudios?

Muy poco	Poco	Normal	Bastante	Mucho	No sabe
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I.1.4. ¿En qué aspectos considera que su preparación es deficiente?

- En ninguno, puesto que considero que están suficientemente preparados ☐
- Tienen un gran desconocimiento del mundo laboral ☐
- Desconocen el funcionamiento interno de las empresas ☐
- Falta de habilidades personales ☐
- Falta de competencias profesionales ☐
- Falta de formación práctica ☐
- Otra (por favor, especifique debajo): ☐

➢ En caso de respuesta negativa: (responda a las siguientes preguntas y FIN DE ENCUESTA)

I.1.5. Especifique la razón o razones por las que su empresa no necesita titulados universitarios:

- Porque la actividad de la empresa no requiere perfiles universitarios ☐
- Por desconocimiento de sus capacidades profesionales ☐
- Prefiero contratar a personas procedentes de la Formación Profesional ☐
- Porque las aspiraciones salariales de los universitarios son superiores a las de trabajadores con menos formación ☐
- Otra (por favor, especifique debajo): ☐

I.1.6. Su empresa, ¿subcontrata algún tipo de servicio profesional?

- No ☐
- Sí, la contabilidad ☐
- Sí, servicios tributarios ☐
- Sí, los servicios de publicidad y marketing ☐
- Sí, las selecciones de personal ☐
- Otra (por favor, especifique debajo): ☐

I.2. ¿Considera que las especializaciones universitarias existentes se adaptan a las necesidades de personal de su empresa? Sí ☐ No ☐ No sabe ☐

I.3. Por favor, indique las especialidades universitarias que más le cuesta encontrar para su plantilla:

1 |
2 |
3 |

I.3.1. *(Sólo en caso de respuesta a la pregunta anterior)* ¿Por qué cree que le resulta tan difícil cubrir tales puestos?

- No hay muchos titulados de esa especialidad ☐
- Es difícil encontrar titulados con las habilidades profesionales necesarias ☐
- Otros (por favor, especifique debajo): ☐

Necesidades de RRHH de las empresas

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I.4. Valore **la importancia para su organización** de las siguientes competencias o habilidades profesionales en los titulados universitarios:

COMPETENCIAS PROFESIONALES	Muy poca	Poca	Normal	Bastante	Mucha	No sabe
Gestión del tiempo – capacidad para organizar y planificar	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pensamiento crítico y solución de problemas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Negociación e influencia	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Capacidad de adaptación a cambios	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conocimiento de los clientes y sus necesidades	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trabajo en equipo	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Liderazgo	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comunicación verbal y escrita	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Habilidad en el uso de las nuevas tecnologías	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Habilidad para establecer contactos y relaciones	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conocimiento de idiomas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I.5. Por su experiencia con titulados universitarios, ¿cómo considera que los **recién titulados universitarios** tienen de desarrolladas tales habilidades cuando se incorporan al mercado laboral?

COMPETENCIAS PROFESIONALES	Muy poco	Poco	Normal	Bastante	Mucho	No sabe
Gestión del tiempo – capacidad para organizar y planificar	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pensamiento crítico y solución de problemas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Negociación e influencia	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Capacidad de adaptación a cambios	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conocimiento de los clientes y sus necesidades	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trabajo en equipo	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Liderazgo	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comunicación verbal y escrita	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Habilidad en el uso de las nuevas tecnologías	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Habilidad para establecer contactos y relaciones	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conocimiento de idiomas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

II Area de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales

II.1. En su empresa, ¿existen puestos que requieran formación universitaria y que se cubran o puedan ser cubiertos por titulados en Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales? Sí ☐ No ☐

➢ En caso de respuesta afirmativa:

II.1.1. Especifique las **DOS titulaciones de esta área** que más útiles le resulten para su empresa
(indique 1º para la que más y 2º para la siguiente) - (en caso de que sólo se trate de un área, especifique sólo ésta)

	1º	2º	También le sirve, pero menos	Desconozco la titulación
Licenciatura en Administración y Dirección de Empresas (ADE)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licenciatura en Ciencias Actuariales y Financieras	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licenciatura en Economía	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licenciatura en Estudios conjuntos ADE y Derecho	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licenciatura en Investigación y Técnicas de Mercado	☐	☐	☐	☐
Diplomatura en Empresariales	☐	☐	☐	☐

II.1.2. ¿En qué aspectos considera que los titulados de las dos titulaciones anteriormente señaladas necesitan ampliar sus conocimientos?

Conocimientos Titulación 1ª		Conocimientos Titulación 2ª	
Control de calidad	☐	Control de calidad	☐
Medioambiente	☐	Medioambiente	☐
Prevención de riesgos laborales	☐	Prevención de riesgos laborales	☐
Gestión de personal y Recursos Humanos	☐	Gestión de personal y Recursos Humanos	☐
Gestión Empresarial	☐	Gestión Empresarial	☐
Estrategias empresariales	☐	Estrategias empresariales	☐
Mejora de habilidades personales	☐	Mejora de habilidades personales	☐
Informática	☐	Informática	☐
Idiomas	☐	Idiomas	☐
Área Jurídica	☐	Área Jurídica	☐
Área comercial y marketing	☐	Área comercial y marketing	☐
Producción y logística	☐	Producción y logística	☐

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Otros (por favor, especifique debajo) ☐ | Otros (por favor, especifique debajo) ☐

➢ En caso de respuesta negativa:

II.1.3. Especifique la razón o razones por las que su empresa no necesita titulados en el Área de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales:

- Desconozco las capacidades de estos titulados ☐
- En mi empresa no hay puestos que requieran este tipo de titulaciones ☐
- Subcontrato los servicios que podrían prestar este tipo de titulados ☐
- Otros (por favor, especifique debajo): ☐

III Área de Humanidades (Filosofía y Letras)

III.1. En su empresa, ¿existen puestos que requieran formación universitaria y que se cubran o puedan ser cubiertos por titulados en Humanidades? Sí ☐ No ☐

➢ En caso de respuesta afirmativa:

III.1.1. Especifique **las DOS titulaciones de esta área** que más útiles le resulten para su empresa
(indique 1º para la que más y 2º para la siguiente) - (en caso de que sólo se trate de un área, especifique sólo ésta)

	1º	2º	También le sirve, pero menos	Desconozco la titulación
Licenciaturas en Filología	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licenciatura en Filosofía	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licenciatura en Geografía	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licenciatura en Historia	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licenciatura en Historia del Arte	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licenciatura en Historia y Ciencias de la Música	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licenciatura en Teoría de la Literatura y Literatura Comparada	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licenciatura en Traducción e Interpretación	☐	☐	☐	☐

III.1.2. ¿En qué aspectos considera que los titulados de estas áreas necesitan ampliar sus conocimientos?

Conocimientos Titulación 1ª		Conocimientos Titulación 2ª	
Aspectos económicos y financieros	☐	Aspectos económicos y financieros	☐
Estrategias empresariales	☐	Estrategias empresariales	☐
Gestión Empresarial	☐	Gestión Empresarial	☐
Gestión de personal y Recursos Humanos	☐	Gestión de personal y Recursos Humanos	☐
Mejora de habilidades personales	☐	Mejora de habilidades personales	☐
Informática	☐	Informática	☐
Idiomas	☐	Idiomas	☐
Área Jurídica	☐	Área Jurídica	☐
Área Comercial y Marketing	☐	Área Comercial y Marketing	☐
Producción y Logística	☐	Producción y Logística	☐
Otros (por favor, especifique debajo)	☐	Otros (por favor, especifique debajo)	☐

➢ En caso de respuesta negativa:

II.1.3. Especifique la razón o razones por las que su empresa no necesita titulados del Área de Humanidades:

- Desconozco las capacidades de estos titulados ☐
- En mi empresa no hay puestos que requieran este tipo de titulación ☐
- Subcontrato los servicios que podrían prestar este tipo de titulados ☐
- Otros (por favor, especifique debajo): ☐

IV Area de Ingeniería Química

IV.1. En su empresa, ¿existen puestos que requieran formación universitaria y que se cubran o puedan ser cubiertos por titulados en Ingeniería Química? Sí ☐ No ☐

Necesidades de RRHH de las empresas

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V Estructura de plantilla de la empresa

V.1. ¿En qué año dio comienzo la actividad empresarial? ☐

V.2. Nº de empleados de su empresa y su distribución por género:

TOTAL	Hombres	Mujeres

V.3. Aproximadamente, ¿cuántos trabajadores y trabajadoras hay en su empresa en relación al tipo de contrato?

	TOTAL	Hombres	Mujeres
Con contrato fijo			
Con contrato temporal			
Autónomos			
En prácticas			

V.4. ¿Cómo se distribuyen los trabajadores y trabajadoras de su empresa por categorías profesionales?

	TOTAL	Hombres	Mujeres
Personal directivo con responsabilidad			
Personal técnico / cualificado			
Personal administrativo de apoyo			
Personal de ventas			
Personal no cualificado			

V.5. Su empresa, ¿tiene relaciones comerciales con empresas/instituciones extranjeras? Sí ☐ No ☐

➢ **En caso de respuesta afirmativa**:

III.4.1 Por favor, indique los principales motivos para tales relaciones:

- Mi empresa tiene una filial en el extranjero ☐
- Mi empresa tiene una matriz en el extranjero ☐
- Mi empresa tiene alianzas estratégicas con empresas extranjeras ☐
- Mi empresa tiene relaciones comerciales con otras empresas extranjeras ☐

III.4.2 ¿Con qué países mantiene su empresa tales relaciones?

- Países miembros de la Unión Europea ☐
- Países en vías de adhesión a la Unión Europea ☐
- Otros países europeos ☐
- Resto del mundo ☐

VI Encuestado

VI.1. ¿Posee titulación universitaria? Sí ☐ No ☐

➢ **En caso de respuesta afirmativa** por favor, especifique a continuación su titulación:

____

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Appendix D

Resumen en español

Los estudios pertenecientes al campo del inglés como lengua franca y del inglés como lengua franca de los negocios (ELF/BELF) hacen hincapié en cómo la noción de competencia en lengua inglesa basada en el hablante nativo inglés no se ha cuestionado hasta hace poco (Ehrenreich, 2010; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013; Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen, & Karhunen, 2015). Concretamente, los investigadores de ELF/BELF han remarcado que los estudios correspondientes al área de la comunicación internacional empresarial y de gestión han abordado el uso del inglés desde la perspectiva del inglés como lengua nativa (Blazejewski, 2006; Feely & Harzing, 2003; Fredriksson, Barner-Rasmussen, & Piekkari, 2006; Maclean, 2006) en lugar de considerar que la mayor parte de la comunicación internacional tiene lugar entre hablantes de inglés no nativos. Por consiguiente, los materiales pedagógicos que se elaboran para la enseñanza del inglés en el ámbito empresarial toman como referencia al hablante nativo de inglés. De este modo, los investigadores del campo de ELF/BELF han enfatizado la necesidad de llevar a cabo más estudios que analicen la forma en la que los individuos conceptualizan el uso del inglés.

Considerando estas circunstancias, el objetivo de esta tesis doctoral es averiguar cómo y por qué se usa el inglés en las empresas spin-off relacionadas con las tres universidades gallegas: la Universidad de A Coruña, la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela y la Universidad de Vigo. Particularmente, este estudio pretende dar respuesta a cuatro cuestiones principales:

1) ¿Con qué fin usan el inglés los participantes en sus empresas?
2) ¿Cómo se identifican a sí mismos las empresas y los individuos que las componen, a través del uso del inglés?
3) ¿Qué percepción tienen de otros idiomas, en comparación con el inglés, las empresas y sus trabajadores?
4) ¿Cómo se ven a sí mismos los participantes en el ámbito de la comunicación internacional?

Las empresas spin-off universitarias se escogieron para este estudio, en primer lugar, por su fácil acceso en comparación con las grandes multinacionales (Hertz & Imber, 1993; McDowell, 1998; Mikecz, 2012; Smith, 2006). En segundo, por su conexión con el ámbito universitario, puesto que transfieren la tecnología y/o el conocimiento proveniente de las universidades. Por último, por su implicación en el desarrollo de la economía regional (Beraza Garmendia & Rodríguez Castellanos, 2010; Iglesias Sánchez, Jambrino Maldonado, & Peñafiel Velasco, 2012; Rodeiro, Fernández, Rodríguez, & Otero, 2010).

En cuanto a la estrategia de investigación que se emplea en este trabajo, es un estudio de caso práctico, puesto que se centra en un grupo concreto de empresas y de individuos. Además, para dar respuesta a las cuatro cuestiones planteadas anteriormente, se llevaron a cabo una serie de entrevistas entre los trabajadores de estas empresas. De este modo, este estudio pretende ofrecer una perspectiva dual sobre el uso del inglés: a nivel global, aborda la visión por parte de las empresas,

mientras que a nivel individual tiene por objetivo averiguar la percepción por parte de los entrevistados.

A continuación, se detalla la estructura de la tesis respecto al contenido que trata cada uno de los capítulos para, finalmente, profundizar en las conclusiones.

El capítulo 1 (“Theoretical framework”) recoge el marco teórico en el que se basa este proyecto. Este capítulo ofrece primeramente un breve resumen acerca de la expansión del inglés y cómo se originó el fenómeno de lengua franca. El capítulo progresa a través de una extensa revisión de los estudios realizados en el ámbito del uso del uso del inglés como lengua franca (ELF), desde sus inicios, en los años 80, hasta la actualidad, mediante los cuales se revisan los avances conectados con las principales áreas lingüísticas: la fonética, el léxico y la gramática y la pragmática. Además, debido al desarrollo exponencial de estudios ELF en el ámbito académico y empresarial, se dan a conocer las perspectivas más destacables dentro de los mismos.

El capítulo 2 (“Methodology”) se centra en la metodología empleada para llevar a cabo este estudio. Por tanto, se detalla la estrategia de investigación, consistente, por un lado, en un estudio de casos múltiples, con los que se pretende afianzar esta investigación. Este método permite, además, comparar los datos, es decir, posibilita realizar un análisis cruzado de los mismos. Por otra parte, las entrevistas a las empresas seleccionadas sirven para conocer de modo más profundo cómo y para qué utilizan el inglés cada una de ellas. Asimismo, los resultados obtenidos se analizan en comparación con estudios similares del marco teórico, revisados en el capítulo 1. Cabe puntualizar que el presente estudio no pretende extrapolar los resultados obtenidos a otras empresas del entorno, sino que el objetivo primordial es informar de los aspectos y circunstancias concretas de las empresas que conforman esta investigación.

En lo que a la recogida de datos se refiere, se elaboró un cuestionario dividido en tres grandes áreas, con la intención de que las preguntas fuesen suficientemente claras para los participantes, así como para facilitar el posterior análisis de los resultados y obtener finalmente las respuestas a las cuatro cuestiones planteadas en esta investigación.

El capítulo 3 ("Findings and discussion") constituye la parte central del estudio empírico. Teniendo en cuenta la forma en la que se pretende abordar el análisis del uso del inglés dentro de las empresas spin-off universitarias en Galicia, este capítulo se compone de tres partes principales: la consideración del inglés y de otros idiomas, los contextos de uso y, por último, el proceso de selección de personal. En lo que a la primera sección se refiere, el análisis se centra en revisar los campos en los que las empresas llevan a cabo su actividad, así como la presencia o ausencia de relaciones internacionales. Este proceso permite averiguar el impacto que tienen ambos factores para el uso del inglés, así como para otros idiomas. En cuanto a la segunda sección, se analizan las tareas específicas en las que los participantes hacen uso del inglés y de otros idiomas, teniendo en cuenta también las dificultades e implicaciones que tienen para ellos y sus empresas. Asimismo, con el propósito de conocer mejor cómo los participantes afrontan dichas dificultades, el análisis profundiza en los métodos a los que recurren las empresas y sus trabajadores. La tercera y última parte del capítulo, examina el proceso de selección de personal en relación con las necesidades lingüísticas de las empresas. Por tanto, el estudio se centra en descubrir cuáles son las características generales que más se solicitan a los candidatos, para ahondar en los requisitos lingüísticos determinados que tienen estas empresas. Además, se analizan las oportunidades laborales dentro de estas compañías para los aspirantes del área de los estudios ingleses.

El capítulo 4 ("Conclusions") ofrece una síntesis de las conclusiones de este estudio, además de exponer las implicaciones para el ámbito empresarial, así como para el área de la enseñanza de idiomas. Finalmente, el capítulo hace hincapié en las limitaciones que tiene el presente trabajo, a la vez que da a conocer algunas posibles vías de interés para continuar investigando a fondo las cuestiones lingüísticas en el área empresarial de cara al futuro.

En lo que respecta al fin con el que las empresas de este estudio usan el inglés, las conclusiones revelan que es un idioma fundamental a la hora de establecer y mantener relaciones internacionales. Es decir, mientras que los trabajadores de estas compañías sean capaces de comunicarse en inglés con empleados de otros países, su acceso al mercado global estará garantizado (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Lønsmann, 2015). Concretamente, los participantes utilizan el inglés para diversas tareas, como comunicarse por correo electrónico, hablar por teléfono, participar en reuniones y negociar. Además de ser una herramienta esencial para sus relaciones internacionales, el inglés permite a los empleados tener acceso a las publicaciones científicas de sus respectivos campos. Por tanto, estas empresas esperan un cierto nivel de dominio de la lengua por parte de sus candidatos. No obstante, las compañías no seleccionan a los futuros empleados en base a su competencia en inglés, sino que los aspirantes han de justificar, primeramente, que están altamente cualificados en la rama técnica de la compañía (entre las que destacan la informática, la ingeniería y las ciencias naturales), al tiempo que son capaces de aplicar los conocimientos del inglés a ese ámbito concreto. Esta alta especialización de las empresas hace que estas, a su vez, no contraten normalmente a profesionales del área de los estudios ingleses.

Con relación a la forma en la que se autodefinen las compañías y sus trabajadores como usuarios de inglés, cabe señalar que ambos comparten una visión

similar y muy próxima al paradigma del inglés como lengua franca (ELF). A nivel global, es decir, como empresa, el uso del inglés se percibe como un instrumento que posibilita la creación de contactos internacionales, así como la consolidación de las relaciones que ya tienen. A nivel individual, los participantes muestran también una visión utilitarista, puesto que el inglés es relevante para ellos, en tanto que su uso pueda reportarles beneficios. Teniendo en cuenta que los participantes perciben el inglés como una herramienta más, a través de la cual lograr sus objetivos a nivel laboral, el uso que hacen del idioma es altamente pragmático (Hilgendorf, 2010; Steyaert, Ostendorp, & Gaibrois, 2011). Por tanto, el inglés nativo (ENL) no representa un modelo de referencia para estos participantes, sino que para ellos prima la función práctica del idioma para cumplir con sus quehaceres profesionales (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010, 2011).

Además de la visión utilitarista, los participantes de este estudio conciben la lengua inglesa desde una perspectiva social (Baird, Baker, & Kitazawa, 2014; Canagarajah, 2011; Janssens & Steyaert, 2014; Jenkins, 2015), la cual es más evidente en el plano individual que en el corporativo. Por un lado, el inglés permite a los participantes empatizar, a la vez que consiguen alcanzar un entendimiento mutuo cuando se relacionan con compañeros que tienen lenguas nativas diferentes a la suya, o con trabajadores de compañías de otros países (Crossling & Ward, 2002; Planken, 2005). Por otro lado, el inglés también fomenta un sentimiento de pertenencia al grupo entre los participantes, puesto que cuando estos se comunican con hablantes de diferentes lenguas, pueden compartir con ellos los inconvenientes que supone usar un idioma que no es el nativo (Charles, 2007; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010).

Considerando los aspectos mencionados, podemos categorizar a los participantes de este estudio, global e individualmente, como usuarios de inglés

como lengua franca (ELF). Para ellos es prioritario cumplir con sus obligaciones laborales mediante el uso del inglés, por lo que no consideran indispensable hacer un uso absolutamente riguroso en términos gramaticales. De este modo, podemos concluir, que tanto estas empresas como sus empleados, son usuarios de ELF para los que el inglés es el medio para conseguir sus metas a nivel global e individual.

Respecto a la valoración de otros idiomas en comparación con el inglés, las compañías y sus empleados consideran que no son imprescindibles para realizar su trabajo, sino que son una ventaja añadida. Es decir, los participantes son conscientes de que comunicarse con trabajadores de otros países en la lengua nativa de estos puede ser beneficioso para sus relaciones internacionales (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Machili, 2015). Sin embargo, ello conllevaría una considerable inversión de tiempo, dinero y esfuerzo. En este sentido, las empresas y los individuos ven el inglés como un elemento facilitador que les ahorra ese tiempo, dinero y esfuerzo, que tendrían que dedicar al aprendizaje de otros idiomas. Esta es la razón primordial por la que el inglés tiene más valor para los participantes, respecto a otros idiomas (Lønsmann, 2015; van der Worp, Cenoz, & Gorter, 2017). Los resultados indican, además, que los participantes han interiorizado el uso de las lenguas locales. Así, a pesar de que también usan el castellano y el gallego para comunicarse con algunos países, los participantes tienen asimilados estos idiomas en su propio repertorio lingüístico, así como en el de sus futuros trabajadores. Esta actitud es similar a la que describe Lønsmann (2015), puesto que, en ambos casos, los participantes utilizan otras lenguas, pero no las reconocen como necesarias para llevar a cabo su trabajo.

Finalmente, en cuanto a la autopercepción de los participantes en la comunicación internacional, estos se muestran generalmente seguros de sí mismos como usuarios de inglés a la hora de realizar su trabajo. Sin embargo, debido a las complejidades que conlleva usar una lengua diferente a la nativa, enfrentarse a la

diversidad cultural, así como gestionar unas expectativas de comunicación inciertas, el contexto internacional todavía supone un desafío. Estas dificultades también subrayan la necesidad que tienen los participantes de mejorar ciertos aspectos del uso del lenguaje, principalmente las habilidades pragmáticas y la conciencia sociocultural. En cuanto a esta última, los participantes manifiestan cierto interés acerca de sus percepciones sobre los demás y viceversa (van der Worp et al., 2017). No obstante, cuando los participantes hacen uso del inglés o de otros idiomas, la mayor parte de ellos no reflexiona suficientemente acerca de la influencia que tiene su bagaje lingüístico-cultural, por ejemplo, a la hora de crear vínculos con empresas de otros países, o de mantener los que ya tienen (Bjørge, 2007; Incelli, 2013). Los resultados también muestran cómo las experiencias personales de los individuos son determinantes a la hora de interpretar las realidades socioculturales que los rodean. Así, aquellos participantes que han vivido durante cierto periodo de tiempo en otros países son más conscientes de cómo sus propias actitudes y las de los demás están profundamente involucradas en el proceso comunicativo.

Este trabajo pone de relieve los diferentes usos que tienen los idiomas en el ámbito laboral, donde el inglés continúa siendo predominante, no solo en el plano de la comunicación internacional, sino también como medio de acceso al conocimiento científico-técnico. En este sentido, esta tesis supone un avance para conocer más a fondo la interrelación de las perspectivas que tienen determinadas empresas sobre el uso de las lenguas con las circunstancias específicas que las rodean. Las conclusiones de este estudio señalan, por tanto, la necesidad de seguir llevando a cabo investigaciones en el área de la comunicación internacional y poder así contribuir al desarrollo de materiales para la enseñanza del inglés y de otros idiomas.

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