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## 4 ELF and Translation As Language Contact

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*Anna Mauranen*

### 1 Introduction

At the outset, it might seem that translated language and English as a lingua franca (ELF) have little in common. One is primarily a matter of rendering text into a translator's first language; the other produces spontaneous discourse in a second or additional language. However, if we look at research findings from these two kinds of language use, we find shared strands: in both, traces of at least one other language have been discovered in the primary language of communication. Moreover, observations have been made in both that would seem to suggest parallel processes, such as enhanced explicitness, heavy proportional weight of the most frequent vocabulary, and a tendency towards unusual collocations and multiword sequences. This would seem to warrant a deeper look into the possible connections between these apparently very different kinds of language use: it might tell us something new about multilingual processing, language contact and elements of language change.

Bilingual speakers are no longer seen as two monolinguals in one individual – but languages are nevertheless predominantly viewed as separate and 'complete' in themselves, despite an alternative paradigm questioning this (e.g. Blommaert & Rampton 2011, Canagarajah 2013, Li 2018; see also Cogo this volume). This is an obvious mismatch: most people know more than one language, and so their linguistic repertoires, or idiolects, are heterogeneous in terms of the languages they draw on, but the tacit assumption underlying standard languages is a community of monolingual speakers. Standards are upheld (and renewed) for every language separately, as if each was a self-contained system with no leaks. Leaks are nevertheless inevitable if communities have contacts outside themselves, which is virtually inescapable in today's world, or if they include multilingual speakers, which is also normal in virtually any community. Moreover, standards are in themselves poor representations of internal realities in language communities: they reflect only weakly the heterogeneity in ordinary language practices; nevertheless they are imbued with prestige well beyond the status of just one dialect, style or register, which technically would be a more accurate description of their

nature. Moreover, languages spoken in different countries may go by the same name but maintain different regional standards (English, German and Spanish are typical examples). Despite their shortcomings, standards nevertheless exert a strong normative impact on certain bilingual situations, notably language teaching and translation. ELF, however, falls outside standard languages and is regulated only by speakers' bottom-up, spontaneous norms.

To what extent bilinguals' (or multilinguals', I use the terms here interchangeably) repertoires are integrated in their cognition, and to what extent their languages are separate is not entirely clear (despite no lack of competing models and theories); it would seem, though, that there is more variability than is easy to capture with a single model, and that the degree of integration would appear to vary according to a number of individual and contextual factors. What is well established, however, is that multilinguals are different from monolinguals, and that this concerns their first languages as well as their additional languages (cf. Cook 2003, Cook & Bassetti 2011). A useful concept for describing bilingual competence is Cook's (1991) 'multicompetence', which refers to the knowledge of two or more languages in one mind. The concept is easily extendable to include monolinguals, who also know different registers, styles, dialects, etc., and can alternate between them much like multilinguals switch between languages.

This paper suggests that different kinds of cross-linguistic influence, such as those we find in translations and *lingua francas*, are consequences of language contact in a more general perspective, and that the outcomes of these contact processes manifest themselves at all levels of language. At a collective, macro level of linguistic features, discernible in large corpora, we find that translations, *lingua francas* and often also learner language exhibit certain similarities in, for example, lexis, collocations and word frequencies. At discourse level we find, for example, enhanced explicitness in both second language use (in this case ELF) and translations. Such phenomena, it is argued, reflect language contact in individual speakers' minds and practices – in other words, their multicompetence. These large-scale phenomena result from cognitive and interactive processes of multilingual individuals in situations where we might expect competition from different parts of their language repertoires.

## **2 Interference and Bilingual Contexts**

It has been known for a long time that learners' first languages influence their use of the languages they are learning or have learned. Weinreich (1953) paid attention to bilinguals using their languages differently from monolinguals and called this 'interference'. Many other terms have also been used since, such as 'transfer' or 'cross-linguistic influence'. The latter term, adopted, for instance, in Odlin (2003) and Jarvis and Pavlenko (2007), is perhaps the most neutral

and accurate. The concept of cross-language influence has been a central concern in second and foreign language learning research (SLA) and in translation studies, especially from a normative perspective, which has construed transfer or interference from another language as a major problem. It has nevertheless shown obstinate persistence in output despite the best efforts of generations of educators.

SLA is an active international research field that investigates not only L1 influence or learners' errors, but also numerous other aspects of learner language, as well as processes and progress in acquisition. Despite the field's breadth, the influence of the L1 on the acquisition of an L2 has not ceased to interest researchers. It is studied in terms of processes (e.g. Odlin 2003, Ellis 2007, Nitschke et al. 2010) as well as products, for instance in learner corpora (e.g. Bestgen et al. 2012, Crossley et al. 2015, Wang 2016). Corpus-based L2 studies tend to adopt a normative view of their findings and construe L1-influenced deviations from comparable native-speaker use as indicators of learners' 'problems' and 'difficulties' (e.g. Nesselhauf 2005, Gilquin 2008, Hasselgård & Johansson 2011), which are in need of pedagogic intervention so as to help learners achieve 'native-like fluency and idiomaticity' (e.g. Wang 2016). The SLA field has been severely criticized for imposing this 'deficit model' on learners – that is, for seeing L2 learners as imperfect compared to an ideal native speaker (Firth & Wagner 1997, Jenkins 2000, Seidlhofer 2011) – and for its reluctance to let go of the notion of monolingualism and the implication that the ultimate goal of SLA is a kind of double monolingualism (e.g. Cook 2002, Grosjean 2008, Ortega 2009). Despite critique, the persistent normative notion holds in language education research that L1 influence on an L2 is a problem and steps are to be taken by responsible educators to erase this as completely as possible. A number of scholars nevertheless adopt a more descriptive or theoretical attitude to L1 influence on a learner (e.g. Cook 2003b, Pavlenko 2014, Sharwood Smith & Truscott 2014).

Related worries abound in translation studies. As in learner research, interference is widely regarded as a problem. It is discussed as the systematic bias ('translationese', see, e.g., Gellerstam 1996) that is taken to manifest influence on a translation either from the source language or from a source text. Like translation scholars, many linguists not only reinforce the notion that translations are inherently imperfect (similar to the deficit model of learner language), but also suffer from interference to the extent that they cannot be regarded as serious data. Translations should therefore be excluded from language corpora, for instance. The following quotation from Teubert illustrates the attitude:

Translations, however good and near-perfect they may be (but rarely are), cannot but give a distorted picture of the language they represent. Linguists should never rely on translations when they are describing a language. . . . Rather than representing the language they are written in, they give a mirror image of their source language. (Teubert 1996: 247)

Descriptive translation studies, on the other hand, envisage interference as a phenomenon that is typical of translations in general, whether it presents a problem or not. Baker (1993) suggested it could be a translation universal, that is, characteristic of all translations irrespective of any particular source and target language pair. In a similar vein, Toury (1995) posits ‘the law of interference’ as one of the major regularities in translations. Chesterman (2004) suggests that as interference relates to differences between translations and their sources, it falls within what he calls ‘S-universals’, or source text-related universals. Eskola (2002, 2004), in turn, regards interference as a translation universal, which manifests itself in differences between translated and comparable non-translated texts in the same language, and which can best be detected by large-scale comparisons. This conceptualization corresponds to target language-related universals, or Chesterman’s ‘T-universals’. Lanstyák and Heltai (2012) similarly recognize the influence of the source text in translations. Instead of interference, they speak of ‘discourse transfer’ or ‘contact effects’ as preferable terms, and depict a translator’s output as monolingual, source text-influenced communication. In the non-prescriptive tradition, then, translation studies adopts similar views to more recent and critical views of SLA – cross-linguistic influence is there, but rather than seeking to erase it, it is something we should understand better, and therefore investigate.

Both research traditions, then, use interference (or a similar term) to refer to the influence of one language on the use of another. However, there is a crucial difference between the two perspectives. In SLA and learner language studies, interference refers to the influence of the learner’s L1 on their output in the target language, an L2. By contrast, in translation studies the reverse is the case, and the term is used to talk about the influence of the source language, an L2, on the translator’s output in their L1. The same phenomenon, then – cross-linguistic influence – is observed in both contexts, but attributed to opposite causes.


I make two suggestions in this paper. First, that we can see both kinds of ‘interference’ in more general terms as a consequence of language contact, with manifestations at different levels of language. A related point is made by Lanstyák and Heltai (2012), who compare ordinary language contact (e.g. among bilingual speakers, not necessarily learners) and translations, proposing ‘contact universals’ to cover both bilingual use and translation. It is certainly important to include translations in language contact research, whether we want to look for universals or not. This finds support from the SLA perspective: Cook (2003) observes that, contrary to the usual interpretation, Weinreich’s definition refers to ‘deviation from the norms of either language’ (Weinreich 1953: 1), and thus not just those of an L2. Schmid (2019) argues along similar lines: L1 and L2 affect one another. There is a wider connection to language change: Thomason and Kaufman (1988) proposed that

bilingualism is a major context of contact-induced change, since a speaker's L2 brings about change in their L1.

My second suggestion is that any general account of language contact should grant lingua francas a central place, since they are contact languages by definition (e.g. Thomason & Kaufman 1988, Thomason 2001). For lingua franca research, English is currently the most intriguing case on account of its unique position as a global language and its consequent contact with a major proportion of the world's languages, thus in potential contact – with bidirectional influence – with all of them. English is also the language that currently dominates the global volume of translations. Moreover, there is a clear gap in recent research on how English participates in language contact (e.g. in Schreier & Hundt 2013), in respect of effects from either translation or the use of ELF.

### 3 ELF and Language Contact

Lingua francas are vehicular languages used by speakers who do not share a first language. This traditional definition is perfectly workable for the present purpose. Clearly, much lingua franca use takes place between speakers for whom the language is not their first (or one of them), even though speakers can also find themselves in lingua franca situations using their native languages. Despite the obvious ubiquity of second language use (SLU), and in contrast to learners or translators, relatively little research has been conducted on the use of second languages in contexts outside established L2 varieties, perhaps apart from the study of pidgins or incipient creoles. A notable exception is Cook (e.g. 2003), who employs the term 'L2 user', and since the turn of the millennium, a growing body of research into ELF has emerged, substantially altering the perception of a second language altogether (see, for example, Jenkins, et al. 2018).

Second language users, such as most of those using ELF, can be expected to show some similarities to learners, because by definition SLU implies the acquisition of a new language at some stage. It is likely that the similarities are manifest above all in cognitive processes like activation, retrieval or suppression. We can also expect resemblance to contact-induced varieties, which are subject to acquisitional cognitive processes similar to learner language (see esthrie & Bhatt 2008: 156ff.). Translators might seem to part company from L2 users here because, as a rule, their primary output language is their L1. Yet, like SLUs, they will have learned at least one additional language at some point, and they engage in bilingual activity as they translate. More importantly, on the receptive side they engage in the same processes as L2 users and learners do in making sense of a non-first language. SLU at the cognitive level can thus be compared to learner language and translation; they all involve bi- or multilingual speakers using one of their languages. We can

also view all three as ‘hybrid languages’, following Trosborg’s (1997) characterization of translations. Hybridity has also been invoked in theorizing ELF (Mauranen 2007, Seidlhofer 2011). Hybrid processing results in monolingual output on the surface, while processing a mixture of languages underneath.

Despite similarities in cognitive processes, learners and users cannot be presumed to be identical in their language use, given the inevitably powerful role of the social context. The contexts and purposes of learning an L2 depart radically from those of using one (Mauranen 2012, 2018) and lead to an entirely different orientation to language. Translations, in turn, have their own social purposes and uses, which have little, if anything, in common with learning or SLU.

While there is little empirical research so far comparing ELF and learner language, there is some, notably Laitinen’s work (2016, 2018). He has carried out extensive comparisons involving learner English, indigenized varieties of English, ELF and ‘core’ L1 English. His research is quantitative and structural, which otherwise has been under-represented in ELF research. Laitinen’s typological profiling provides clear indications that, in morphosyntactic terms, ELF is a distinct variety type among Englishes. It clearly differs from learner Englishes in both spoken and written modes, but is instead strikingly close to other SLU varieties – that is, World Englishes – and moreover to core L1 English varieties, particularly in writing.

Where *lingua francas*, specifically ELF, differ from the other contact situations under scrutiny is that they are not confined to contact between two languages; when bilinguals use ELF, they speak English with others from different bilingual backgrounds (say, speakers with German as L1 talk to speakers with Italian as L1). This is more complex than first-order contact between two languages, in Mauranen’s terms ‘similects’, which are parallel idiolects between speakers of the same L1 and English (for example, L1 German speakers using English). ELF is therefore a contact language between similects, a ‘second-order language contact’ (Mauranen 2012, 2018).

Arguably any language contact, including similects, may involve multilinguals, thus more than two languages. The issue is not usually addressed in SLA or in translation studies, where it can conveniently be shelved. By contrast, it is inescapable in ELF, for which the multilingual nature of the contact is a necessary feature. Multilingualism as a crucial component – or indeed as a superordinate – of ELF has been put forward by Jenkins (2015), who speaks of ‘English as a *multilingua franca*’ arguing that multilingualism is the higher-level category of which ELF is a part.

#### **4 Macro Level of Language**

Some linguistic features are surprisingly similar in translations and ELF if we look at them in large quantities, visible in big corpora. In this section, I take up

three kinds of evidence from mainly corpus-based studies in translation studies and ELF research. Where relevant, I make comparisons with findings from learner language. I will be looking at frequencies, grammatical preferences and what in translation research is known as the loss of ‘unique items’.

The relative over-representation of the most frequent lexis in translations was first noted by Laviosa-Braithwaite (1996) in her pioneering research to test Baker’s (1993) hypotheses of translation universals by comparing corpora of translations and texts originally written in the same language. Her sample of newspaper texts was very small, but subsequently other researchers have achieved similar results with larger and more diverse databases, such as the Corpus of Translated Finnish (CTF, *Käännösuomen korpus* 2001, Mauranen 1998). Directly comparable and supportive results were obtained by Nevalainen (2005), who discovered a corresponding pattern of proportional over-representation of highly frequent lexis in Finnish translations relative to original Finnish texts. This study was based on altogether 10 million words of the CTF, with ten source languages from seven genres. Another supportive study on the same corpus was carried out by Tirkkonen-Condit (2005), who discovered that lexical sequences or n-grams behave basically like individual words in this respect: highly frequent n-grams are even more clustered at the top end of frequency lists in translations. In brief, these studies have supplied evidence for lexical simplification in translations, conceived as the proportional over-representation of the most frequent lexis.

What happens in ELF? Apparently a very similar phenomenon. Mauranen (2012) compared the Corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (ELFA 2008) to two corpora with data from English L1 speakers: the Brown corpus (1964) and the MICASE corpus (Simpson et al. 2002). Lexical frequencies ordered by rank in the Brown corpus comply with the general ‘power law’ pattern laid down by Zipf (1935) for language, and it shows among other things that 135 top-ranking words account for 50 per cent of the entire corpus (i.e. of all the running words that make up the database). In ELFA, by contrast, only forty-four of the most frequent words suffice to make up half of the database – in other words, only a third (33 per cent) of the number of distinct words of Brown. This sounds like a dramatic difference. However, Brown is a written corpus that comprises a wide variety of registers and styles, while ELFA is made up of speech and only academic discourse. It is more directly comparable to MICASE, which is also a corpus of academic speech. Clearly, the difference in mode (written vs. spoken) is striking: MICASE requires only the top fifty-eight words to account for 50 per cent of the corpus, which is well under half (43 per cent) of the number in Brown. MICASE, then, is more similar to ELFA than to Brown. This supports the notion that speech is radically different from writing, as Biber (2009) and Dąbrowska (this volume) have discussed in depth. The mode difference has



also been found to hold for academic speech specifically, which resembles spoken language more than it does academic prose (see, e.g., Swales & Burke 2003, Mauranen 2004b, Biber 2006, Biber & Gray 2010). Even when this is taken into account, a notable difference remains between ELFA and MICASE. A corresponding tendency was found by Gilner (2016), who compared ELF and English L1 lexis with a different set of corpora: ELFA and VOICE (2013) together were compared to ICE-CORE (see Gilner & Morales 2011). These findings render ELF comparable to translations: it leads to usage where the most frequent lexis is exceptionally prominent. Learner corpora has revealed a similar predisposition favouring the most frequent vocabulary (e.g. Altenberg & Granger 2002, Granger et al. 2002).

Should we conclude from this that language contact is detrimental to lexical richness? Nevalainen (2005: 156), for example, claims that translations ‘impoverish the language’ lexically by over-representing the most frequent items. The conclusion seems premature, even counter-intuitive, given that contact normally leads to borrowing of different kinds, and lexis is remarkably mobile, adaptable and readily borrowed. A more detailed look yields a more nuanced picture. Lexical distributions in ELF and L1 English speech reveal that, even though relative over-representation is clearly in evidence, the difference levels out already at high-frequency ranks – that is, at about the 200 most common words (Mauranen 2012). If we think of the average person’s vocabulary size, we are talking about tens of thousands, not hundreds of words; the estimated average vocabulary comprises about 20,000–35,000 words at minimum. Moreover, the most frequent vocabulary accounts for most usage in any case: approximately 1,900 of the most frequent words account for about 75 per cent of all English usage (COBUILD 1995). These estimates are based on the average native speaker and mean that less than one-tenth of the words we know account for three-quarters of our actual usage. Even if the most frequent lexis accounts for the best part of any running text, the top-level concentration is hardly likely to wreak havoc on the resources of a whole language. Moreover, Ferraresi & Bernardini (2019) recently compared translations and originals in terms of lexical density and non-core vocabulary (i.e. excluding the top 1,000 commonest items), and found no significant difference in lexical complexity between translated EU texts and comparable untranslated texts.

Moreover, words do not occur in isolation. The ‘phraseological tendency’ has become well known in linguistics since Firth’s (1957) notion of collocation began to attract wider attention, and is employed by scholars under varying labels and demarcations, such as lexical bundles (Biber et al. 1999), collocational frameworks (Renouf & Sinclair 1991), units of meaning (Sinclair 1996) or formulaic sequences (Wray 2002). These reflect the tendency of words to co-occur, either by convention or a step further, clustering so firmly that

together they come to mean more than the elements separately. Where conventional preferences are not adhered to, amplified variability in patterns can follow, with some resulting expressions imparting a sense of unusualness. This seems to happen in translations: Mauranen (2000) found sequential patterns in translations that diverged from originals in the same language, including collocational tendencies that were sometimes markedly different. For example, Finnish HALUTA 'want to' collocated strongly with OSOITTA 'show' in translations, as in 'I want to show that... ', whereas in original Finnish this never occurred. The typical original collocate of HALUTA was KOROSTAA ('emphasize'), as in 'I want to emphasize that... ', while the typical collocate of OSOITTA was PYRKIÄ 'try', as in 'I have tried to show that... '. Jantunen (2004), in turn, studied degree modifiers and discovered that where originally Finnish texts showed a strong preference for three synonymous modifiers, in translations preference patterns were far less clear and variability more pronounced. In this way, if multiword units are taken to be an integral part of lexical patterning, the idea of overall simplification of lexis is again challenged. It is also important to note that employing fewer individual words to cover large amounts of text in effect means increased variability in combinatorial patterning, because the same frequent forms may engage in novel combinations and thereby enrich the overall lexical range of a text or a language.

Beyond the variability of multiword sequences, translations from different source languages also show divergent degrees of conformity with target conventions, that is, with non-translated texts (cf. Mauranen 2000, 2004a). Intriguingly, translations from other languages than English appear to conform more to target norms than English does. If this tentative finding based on CTF is correct, it supports the notion discussed above that an L2 influences a speaker's L1. Specifically, it alters not only usage, but also L1 intuitions. Why translators' Finnish, in this case, has been modified more by English than by other languages may be attributable to the notable presence of English in Finnish society over several decades, especially compared to other foreign languages: in the media, school, translations and increasingly as a lingua franca in large parts of higher education. Translators working from English may well have internalized this massive influence more than translators from languages less visible in the society. Not only translators are affected in this way; the texts in CTF have also passed through the hands of publishers' editors, who are professional language regulators. We can interpret this as an alteration in collective intuitions about acceptability in Finnish, which has been modified through exposure to English.

Translations thus seem to blur well-established patterns of convention and preference by allowing cross-language influence to spread. Parallel processes can be detected in ELF: not only do conventionally preferred, even fixed patterns become diluted in the sense of becoming more variable, but new

preferences also set in (Mauranen 2012, 2018). For instance, the firmly fixed expression *let me say a few words about it* not only acquires alternatives (e.g. *let me say a couple of words about it*), which would suggest it has been interpreted as a productive frame, but it also gives rise to a new preference: *let me say some words about it*. This formulation, functionally equivalent to the conventional form, is attested in speakers from different language backgrounds. It is therefore not transfer or interference from a single other language, but a fairly typical ELF phenomenon, ‘approximation’ (Mauranen 2012), which can lead to similar manifestations in different speakers’ outputs (see also Carey 2013, Mauranen 2018). It is also noteworthy that these new preferences emerge on which speakers from various backgrounds seem to settle. Some possible ways in which and reasons why this may happen are pursued in Sections 5 and 6.

Learners have been found to deviate from conventional sequences and collocations of the target language, and as Pawley and Syder (1983) noted some decades ago, nativelike mastery of idiomaticity is extremely hard for even very advanced learners (see also Nattinger & DeCarrico 1992). Research has since repeatedly confirmed that learners differ in this respect from native speakers (e.g. Wray 2002, Nesselhauf 2005, papers in Granger & Meunier 2008). For the present context, it suffices to note that such tendencies have been attested; whether it makes sense to require such nativelikeness from learners is another matter.

Multiword units are composed not only of strings of words but also of structural properties, thus straddling lexis and structure. Their importance in cross-linguistic borrowing and change has been noted in earlier research, as in ‘lexico-syntactic calquing’ (Silva-Corvalan 1998): lexical and pragmatic borrowing carry along their structural features, which get adopted together with the lexis. A recent example from Finnish would be the incipient productivity of the calque *pitkässä juoksussa* (‘in the long run’), now producing expressions like *pitkässä kuusessa* (‘in the long fir tree’) in the same function. According to Ellis (e.g. 2017), L2 acquisition is largely a matter of sequence learning. These observations underline the role of multiword units and phraseology in contact, learning and change.

Altered quantitative distributions of grammatical structures have also been found in translations and ELF. Grammatical infelicities are not necessarily at stake: Eskola’s (2002, 2004) investigations of several non-finite syntactic structures of Finnish (what she termed ‘synthesizing structures’) revealed them to be proportionally under-represented in translations. There is nothing ungrammatical about this; it is a distributional phenomenon. Along similar lines, most of the structures that Ranta (2013) compared in ELF and L1 English speech were also basically perfectly grammatical, but with different distributions, like the relative ‘overuse’ of the *-ing* forms of verbs. Similar tendencies are seen in World Englishes (Meriläinen et al. 2017).

One distributional phenomenon is specific to translation: the relative under-representation of ‘unique items’ or ‘untranslatables’ of the target language (Tirkkonen-Condit 2004). Tirkkonen-Condit posited that translations use fewer lexical items that are unique to the target language than texts originally written in that language. Typical cases in her study were Finnish verbs of sufficiency, that is, lexical verbs that contain the semantic feature of ‘sufficiency’, for example *MALTTAA* (‘be patient enough’) or *USKALTAA* (‘have enough courage’). Translations displayed proportionally fewer of them than texts originally written in Finnish. Corresponding tendencies have been noted with pragmatic particles in translated Swedish (Gellerstam 1996) and grammatical structures in Finnish (Mauranen & Tiittula 2005). Mauranen and Tiittula (2005) explored bidirectional English-Finnish and German-Finnish translations, looking at grammatically optional vs. obligatory personal pronouns. Finnish, unlike English and German, is a pro-drop language, that is, personal pronouns are optional in certain contexts; translations towards Finnish reflect this by dropping pronouns. Yet much more often pronouns are retained, which results in several times more pronouns in translations. A specific feature of Finnish grammar is the generic person (‘null person’), a third-person form with no pronoun and generic meaning: Finnish originals, for example *Ei tarvitse sanoa* (‘not-has-to-say’), need translating with a pronoun, as in *You don’t have to say it*. Translations into German and English reflect the difference by adding pronouns where either the Finnish pro-drop feature or the generic person structure occurs.

In all, there is evidence not only from lexis, but also from pragmatics and grammar that translations tend to under-represent unique features of the target language. This would seem to support the relevance of the *text* level in translation: the properties of the text at hand affect its translation. Translations nevertheless also make alterations, reduce or add features; this, in turn, supports the interpretation that translators work at the level of *language* in adhering to the norms and conventions of the target language. Altogether, then, the source influences the translation where preferences rather than, say, ungrammatical structures are concerned, which is why we can discern the influence in large numbers rather than in individual cases. As pointed out in Section 2, we meet similarly detectable novel preferences in ELF corpus data.

The linguistic features discussed in this section may with good reason be described as manifestations of hybridity, as they indicate the influence of at least one other language on the one that is currently being used. It is possible to think of behavioural or cognitive processes that might lie behind these large-scale phenomena, and many scholars in translation studies in fact suggest explanations originating in a translator’s behaviour or cognition. For example, Toury (1995) talks about how the propensity to translate word by word helps ‘the law of interference’ seep into translations. Tirkkonen-Condit (2004)

attributes under-represented items to a tendency to translate literally, and Eskola (2004) invokes stimuli in the source text that have possible, even if not preferred, translation equivalents in the target language. For learners, reasons attributed to transfer effects, learning processes, individual differences and teaching practices have been common. Beyond those, some scholars have pointed out that certain features may simply be less 'learnable' or inherently hard, among them conventionalized or formulaic language (cf. Pawley & Syder 1983). Wray (2002) even suggests that learning formulaic expressions correctly is impossible on account of the different processes of acquiring an L1 and additional languages.

How macro-level phenomena relate to cognitive processes is discussed in connection with cognition in Section 6, but before that the mediating level of social interaction is taken up in the next section.

## 5 Micro Level: Social Interaction

Macro phenomena show the aggregate outcomes of myriad interactions between individual speakers. Where language changes – or is maintained – is in these micro-social face-to-face interactions, and it is through these that linguistic changes diffuse and spread (e.g. Milroy & Milroy 1985, Chambers 2009). ELF interactions are therefore ubiquitous sites of potential language change. Translators of course deal with texts, not face-to-face interaction, but translations nevertheless show interactional features of the kinds that can be discerned in texts (cf. Hyland 2000).

The most straightforward interactive phenomenon that comes up in both translations and ELF is known as explicitation. The term was suggested by Blum-Kulka (1986), and the phenomenon has thereafter been widely accepted as a translation universal, despite some critical voices (Becher 2010). Blum-Kulka found that translations used more cohesive devices than their source texts, later supported in Øverås (1998), who also found more lexical changes towards explicitness than implicitness. Olohan and Baker (2000) discovered more grammatically optional elements, such as relative pronouns in translations (*he said that it's all right* vs. *he said it's all right*), while Kujamäki (2000) reported additions to explanations of cultural and contextual features potentially unfamiliar to readers. Mauranen and Tiittula (2005) found more grammatically optional personal pronouns in translated than in untranslated texts: for instance, the first-person singular pronoun forms *minä/mä* appeared 5.9 times every 1,000 words in originally Finnish texts, but 15.0/1000 w in translations from English. Eskola (2004) detected explicitation in syntax – for example, non-finite constructions translated with finite ones. Similarly, in the following example (from the Finnish-English Contrastive Corpus), the Finnish original (FO) shows a nominal construction (*candidacy*), while the English translation (ET) opts for a whole *that* clause:

FO: *Puolueen johto oli sopinut Kekkonen miehenä tunnetun entisen ulko- ja pääministerin tohtori Ahti Karjalaisen ehdokkuudesta ja puolueen eduskuntaryhmän enemmistö tuki häntä.*

‘had agreed on . . . Karjalainen’s candidacy’

ET: *The party leadership had already agreed among themselves that a known Kekkonen follower, former foreign minister and prime minister Ahti Karjalainen, should be their candidate.*

This case illustrates the increase of syntactic explicitness, or the degree of ‘sentence-likeness’ in translation. Enhanced explicitness thus manifests itself in lexical choices, grammatical structures, discourse management and content elaboration – either as a relationship observed between original texts and their translations, or in comparisons between non-translated and translated texts in the same language. Arguably, this is an interactional feature, indicating a translator’s audience awareness: spelling things out works towards textual clarity. In this way, it bears close resemblance to Sacks et al.’s (1974) notion of recipient design.

ELF research has found similar practices in face-to-face interaction. Manifestations of explicitness of several kinds have been identified, starting from syntax, as in this case of fronting, or ‘left dislocation’, where the subject noun is put before the clause, and a pronoun in the clause refers back to the already familiar subject:

S1: a couple of questions erm *this citizenship* how much does it influence the people. . .

In addition to fronting, tails or ‘right dislocation’ (*in lab studies they are quite similar the genomes*) have also been found for negotiating topics (Mauranen 2007), a preference in verb phrases for the attention-catching, explicit BE + *ing* form (Ranta 2006) and discourse management expressions like metadiscourse (Mauranen 2012). Among the most typical explicitation findings are repetition and rephrasing in dialogue and polylogue (Seidlhofer 2004, Mauranen 2006, Pitzl 2010), and in monologues like lectures (Suviniitty 2012). Explicitation in monologues illustrates the sliding borderline between different kinds of interactivity: translated and other written texts are not categorically distinct from spoken monologues. The mainly qualitative findings on rephrases and repetitions are supported by a quantitative overview (Mauranen 2012), showing that the total number of rephrase indicators is considerably higher in ELF than in comparable English L1 discourse: 78.8 items/1000 w vs. 21.4 items/1000 w, respectively. We can thus talk about explicitation in ELF just as we do in translation.

Dialogic explicitation practices in ELF have also been connected to the more general interactional process of accommodation (Jenkins 2000, Seidlhofer 2011, Mauranen 2012). In interactional linguistics, accommodation

refers to the way speakers adjust their speech in accordance with the contingencies of a changing situation (cf. Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018), but ELF researchers, drawing on accommodation theory (Giles 1973), also include speakers' convergence or divergence at various levels and kinds of expression, from phonology to discourse. Converging or diverging on speech characteristics between speakers can broadly be seen in terms of willingness to align their situation models, which, according to Pickering and Garrod (2004), is what enables successful communication. Alignment in interaction takes place through automatic processes across levels of linguistic representation like lexical choices, pronunciation or grammar. It is a property of social interaction, but at the same time it is interwoven with cognitive processes.

The connection between social interaction and cognition is perhaps most perceptible in spoken dialogue, in this case ELF. When speakers look for the least common denominator that would support interactional fluency, it is likely that the best guesses would be those that are the most widely shared. High-frequency items are good candidates, as their chances of being known to both parties are the best. In this way, the preference observed at the macro level (Section 4) is produced and reproduced in interaction, which also strengthens already well-entrenched cognitive representations of language. Apart from actual face-to-face interaction, an attempt to ensure that situation models get shared can be conceived analogously in translation, too: for translators, the many forms of explicitation may be a deliberate strategy aimed at accommodating their readers' assumed situation models.

We have thus found signs of enhanced explicitness at discourse level, in individual texts and speech in both SLU and translations. In addition, we have seen that they relate to the macro level of language, as well as to cognitive processes.

## **6 Cognitive Level**

Multilingual individuals processing language are at the heart of language contact. Sajavaara made a pertinent observation some twenty-five years ago in respect of learners and contrastive linguistics:

the interlingual contrast is not housed directly in the two language systems but is mediated through the language learner . . . , i.e., it is buried in the minds of bilingual language users. (Sajavaara 1996: 31)

While the present concern is neither with interlingual comparisons nor primarily with learners, the significant point is that 'objective' sets of differences between language systems are far less relevant for speakers than human bilingual perception. Bi- or multilingual processing is where we might expect to find important shared phenomena in SLU, translation and learner language.

Multilinguals operate unavoidably as multilinguals even if they find themselves in a monolingual environment; their whole repertoire is involved in all their communicative activity.

Research in cross-linguistic influence and multilingualism suggests that bilinguals cannot entirely quench other languages than those they are predominantly using at any given time. It is clear that bilinguals are able to operate monolingually (e.g. Paradis 2004) – that is, without overt code-switching – but even if they do not overtly use another language, its elements are still alive in their processing system (e.g. Dijkstra & Van Heuven 2002). The L1 affects a speaker's use of a given target language, but so do their other dominant languages (e.g. Winford 2003), and the L1 is also subject to influence from other languages (e.g. Cook 2003b, Section 4 above). It seems, in short, that influences run along multidirectional courses among speakers' linguistic repertoires.

As already noted at the end of Section 4, researchers in translation and learner language have been inclined to offer explanations that invoke behavioural or cognitive processes to tendencies observed in production data. I look at some of the principal tendencies discussed in Sections 4 and 5 at the macro and interactional levels and seek to relate them to cognitive processes in this section: those pertaining to large-scale tendencies like frequencies, and those concerning the interrelations of interaction and cognition, mainly priming.

To begin with frequency, the main observation in all three contact situations was that translators, ELF users and learners were falling upon the most frequent vocabulary items more than comparable, presumably largely monolingual populations using their first languages. This was normatively construed as a problem at the collective level, with strong implications that it is also a 'problem' at the individual level, reflecting simplifying processes in translation and inadequate command of the language in learners. As already observed (Section 4), the differences, although real, only concern a small section of the highest-frequency vocabulary, which accounts for the best part of any language use. From a cognitive viewpoint this means that the bulk of our language experience consists of the most frequent items, both in reception (when others use them) and in production (when we use them ourselves). Therefore, these items ought to be most strongly entrenched in any individual's mind. The same goes for structures: frequent constructions are altogether processed faster and with less effort because people have had more opportunity to practise them (cf. Dąbrowska 2004). It is hard to see how such processes in themselves would be different for L1 and L2, even if different contexts of experience may give rise to divergences in output. For example, a greater quantity and intensity of experience in L1 would mean a greater aggregate amount of activation and would thus keep activation thresholds low in the L1, also thereby probably ensuring and maintaining accessibility to rarer items.



Conversely, some contexts like immigration may provide more activation for an L2, and as non-selected items gradually raise their activation thresholds (e.g. Paradis 2004, Sharwood Smith & Truscott 2014), make the L1 less accessible. Contextual variation therefore means that general predictability for the ease of access of items or structures is relatively low for individual cases.

Very common items, whether lexical or structural, should be strongly represented in a lingua franca because they can be processed faster and more effortlessly by all. As discussed in Section 5, ease of processing benefits interactional fluency, and the ensuing activation of frequent items is apt to enhance their entrenchment even further. The tendency may be additionally augmented by the potentially high processing load brought about by the sheer unpredictability of many ELF encounters, as we may assume that well-entrenched items are most accessible even under heavy processing pressure.

Translators also face a high processing load: receiving input in one language and producing output in another means that they are constantly moving between activation and suppression of items from the languages with which they are working. The Activation Threshold Hypothesis put forward by Paradis (2004) holds that, for a given item to be selected in a multilingual's mind, its activation must exceed those of competing items, which are simultaneously inhibited, and their activation thresholds raised. In contrast to L2 use, there is no one 'more activated language' (Pavlenko 2014: 223) in translation that would be the more accessible overall; translators alternate continually between activation in two languages. If it is also the case that multilinguals' processing systems are non-selective with regard to language, as Paradis suggests, then related items such as translation equivalents should be activated along with items in a source language. This is, of course, exactly what we find in professional translators. Even though most of the research manifesting simultaneous activation in bilinguals has dealt with homographs or cognates across languages, while unrelated words have not shown an equal degree of simultaneous activation (Van Assche et al. 2012), there are also indications that translation equivalents may cause cross-linguistic priming, to which we return later in this section. Overall, then, there seem to be indications of a cognitive basis for an enhanced presence of the most frequent vocabulary in translations and SLU, because the high processing loads imposed by simultaneous pressure to activate and suppress items from different languages would favour the most entrenched vocabulary from each.

Another macro-scale phenomenon described in Section 4 that sheds light on cognition and changing intuitions is the way in which translators use multiword sequences. As transpired from Mauranen (2000), multiword sequences in translations not only deviated from those in comparable original texts, but the subtler difference emerged that translations from English diverged more from

typical Finnish patterns than translations from other languages. It would thus seem that English had had a stronger impact on translators and editors than the other languages, altering their first language intuitions. Although a corpus-based observation, it also ought to reflect the intuitions of the individuals involved, which would appear to fit the observations of bilingual behaviour made by, for example, Weinreich (1953), or papers in Cook (2003) and Cook & Bassetti 2011).

This tallies with accounts from other non-English-speaking countries where ‘anglicisms’ in translations have struck researchers. For example, Lanstyák & Heltai (2012) report on the increase of certain Hungarian constructions at the expense of others in spontaneous Hungarian use as a consequence of the growing presence of English in Hungarian society. Although all these cases concern English – which is currently particularly conspicuous everywhere – it would seem plausible that all languages act on each other in similar ways in any society that has multilingual speakers.

Several of the phenomena discussed in this paper can be related to the generally automatic, non-conscious process of priming, a tendency of speakers to repeat what they have recently comprehended or produced. Interaction is a central site of priming: alignment with your interlocutor generates priming effects through the brain’s strong attuning to its social environment, that is, to other people (e.g. Hari et al. 2016). Conversation thus acts upon the brain. The interface between interaction and cognition is crucial for understanding how linguistic influence passes from one individual to another: we receive enormous amounts of linguistic input daily – why do we later repeat some things from what we have heard or said, but not everything?

As far as ELF is concerned, one of the most intriguing facets of priming from previous research is that it can take place even when the relevant expression is perceived to be ungrammatical. When ELF users accommodate to each other’s speech, they may also repeat non-standard forms:

S1: yeah and they are not **publicised**

S2: no they are not **publicised** no, but er that's a question of. . .

S1: yeah that's . . . I most certainly agree that you can't **publicise** in in in the scientific journals. . . (ELFA corpus 2008)

Here a thesis examiner (S1) and a doctoral candidate (S2) are discussing whether some of the candidate’s data has been published or not. S1 produces an approximation of the standard form, as is quite typical in ELF discourse. Whether such priming has persistent effects on the speakers remains an open question if we cannot follow them further, but there are examples of the same approximate forms (e.g. *registrate*) occurring in several independent ELF contexts, as well as on the Internet (Mauranen 2018). While previously familiar items in these encounters undoubtedly get further reinforced, it is also

possible that novel items, such as approximations, become salient and learnable. Earlier findings suggest that priming tends to be larger for less frequent than more frequent constructions, possibly on account of the surprise they cause. As Pickering and Garrod (2017: 187) speculate, ‘the strong priming of rare forms may reinforce the memory for such forms and hence promote language change’.

For translations, the particularly relevant kind of priming is cross-linguistic priming. Expressions or utterances people have encountered in one language tend to affect their expressions in another (see, e.g., Pickering & Garrod 2017). It is therefore a good candidate for explaining in cognitive terms why – or how – we receive and pass on influences, and how texts in one language may prime us to emulate some of its features in another. Kujamäki’s (2004) study of student translators showed that source expressions greatly reduced the selection of items most specific to the target language (Finnish, the participants’ L1). He constructed a short text including three Finnish-specific lexical items relating to snow and driving conditions (*kinos*, *hanki*, *keli*) and had them translated into English and German. The English translations were two compounds *snowbank* ( $\approx$  *kinos*), *snowdrift* ( $\approx$  *hanki*) and a hypernym *conditions* ( $\approx$  *keli*). When students were asked to translate the German and English texts into Finnish, nearly two-thirds used a less target-specific item. This indicates the strength of cross-linguistic priming, and in behavioural terms we could say it supports the influence of the source text on the translator. On the other hand, one-third of the translations rendered the source input with the specific, uniquely Finnish item. This reflects a shift to activating the target language. It would seem, then, that alternate activations take place while moving from source input to target output; the tendency of the source input to activate closely parallel items in the output appears to overpower the tendency to shift more completely to target language activation for most people, even though not all. Cross-language priming would therefore seem to be the cognitive basis for what at the macro level of language manifests itself as the relative under-representation of target language-unique lexical or pragmatic items. Since between-language priming has also been found for structural influences, we might hypothesize that structures behave analogously to homographs or cognates across languages (Van Assche et al. 2012): if equivalent structures exist in languages, they should be activated simultaneously. Such processes could therefore underlie the findings in Eskola (2004) and Mauranen and Tiittula (2005). Thus, where translation equivalents exist, or are possible renderings of the source text stimulus, it is not surprising that translators select those over possibilities that are more distant, for example by being single-word renderings or more common but less equivalent structures in the target language.

We have seen in this section that high processing load, changing activation thresholds and priming effects provide a cognitive basis for understanding

macro-level effects of the propensity to rely heavily on the most frequent vocabulary, as well as the tendency for approximations and non-standard or non-preferred items to appear and spread. The processes take place in both translations and ELF. The main mediating factors would seem to be interaction in ELF, and the continual need to alternate between textual activation and suppression in translations.

## 7 Conclusion

We have traced contact-influenced language use in translations and ELF and noted a few similarities. On occasion, learner language has also been included. It is possible to recognize a certain hybridity that ensues from each: language affected by multilingual contact. In itself this is not new, but the present perspective with the three-pronged approach brings together contact influences from quite different settings that are rarely, if ever, investigated together. Some features, like high proportions of the commonest words and 'untypical' collocations, are shared in all three – but their import is also questioned. Translation and ELF both manifest enhanced explicitness in discourse, together with simultaneous simplification and augmented variety in lexis. Translations and learner language show proneness to interference from another language: translations reportedly from the source language or source text; learner language supposedly from their first language. In ELF, such effects from specific other languages have not been teased out, as they would not contribute much to understanding the special characteristics of ELF, which result from complex multilingual influences. The evidence for the priming effect on ungrammatical items in ELF nevertheless testifies to a closely related process. Moreover, a wealth of evidence already accumulated from other sources, together with spot checks (e.g. progressives in Ranta 2013 and in Meriläinen et al. 2017) suffices to corroborate the presence of speakers' L1 in ELF. It is presumably also simplistic to talk about contact between only two languages in translation and SLA. Reality must be fuzzier, as linguistic influences come from many sources and directions to anyone's experience.

This paper has argued that the overarching phenomenon behind the observed effects is language contact. Contact was examined at three levels: cognition, interaction and language as a collective entity. As cognitive processing activates and suppresses items and structures, frequent vocabulary is likely to be strengthened in the process, as it already presumably contains the most robust items in speakers' repertoires; if competing systems are active in a speaker's mind, the most entrenched parts of each are likely to become more salient, other things being equal. Other things may not be equal, though, and priming effects for one thing may clearly alter item salience. Most SLA research (e.g. Ellis 2007, Hawkins & Filipović 2012) seems to assume, at least

tacitly, that whole language systems are separate in speakers' minds, even though the assumption is probably not very solid (Cf. Pavlenko 2014, Schmid 2019). Given the considerable uncertainty around this, research methods may also hide processes in multilingual activity. One issue is the nature of frequent vocabulary: we tend to measure it for each language separately, but in an individual's mind the languages, and items from each, may intermingle so that their strongest words originate in different languages. That is, the frequency list of an individual's most entrenched vocabulary may consist of interleaved L1, L2 . . . Ln items.

Bilingual text processing, as in translation, is likely to be primed by the source text to foreground items and structures shared in the two languages at the cost of non-shared material. This may result in unusual or infrequent structures in the target text, even new collocations, which may look 'untypical' from their target language viewpoint.

In ELF, priming effects come about mainly through interaction, apt to strengthen items with wide currency, like common lexis and structures. Yet, approximate expressions and innovations also often work well in conversation if they give sufficient clues to their meaning in the context. If interlocutors accept them, they stand a good chance of being reinforced for the speaker, while interlocutors on their part can be primed by them and potentially diffuse them further. Despite this potential, it is uncertain how persistent priming effects are. Pickering and Garrod (2017) argue that priming is more likely to be effective coming from interaction than mere exposure, such as listening to a debate. Chambers (2009) in turn suggested, from a sociolinguistic viewpoint, that not all interaction is equally conducive to the propagation of linguistic innovations, but that peer interaction is more effective than socially asymmetrical interaction. Putting these together would lead us to expect the least priming effect in listening, more in interactions and most in interactions among peers. Nevertheless, in academic contexts where asymmetrical institutional positions seem to override native-speaker status (Mauranen 2013, Hynninen 2016), they may also result in priming – the educational setting may simply prompt it because students tend to orient to what the professor says. This needs further research, as does priming in translation, because clearly priming can effectively take place through texts (e.g. Hoey 2005).

Translations indicate unmistakable priming effects from texts. Clearly, the intense engagement with text in the translation process is quite different from listening to other people talk, and it would seem reasonable to expect the process to exert a special kind of influence. The powerful presence of other languages in, for example, digital and traditional media may also emanate more overall influence than is detectable in small-scale experimental studies or in single-language corpus research (see, however Laitinen & Lundberg in this volume). Individuals' linguistic intuitions are inclined to change on account of

extensive exposure to foreign languages. This can feed upwards to the macro level in the shape of greater acceptability of, for instance, English-influenced multiword units in a non-English language community (cf. Mauranen 2000), but need not be limited to single-language influence.

The collective, macro level of language manifests the aggregate effects of the levels below as frequencies, patterns and preferences, and in its turn reflects back those patterns onto individual speakers through many channels. The picture is nevertheless becoming more diffuse with developments particularly from globalization and digitalization in contemporary societies. For any national language this means not only fraying boundaries but also new sources of internal heterogeneity, as sites of text and talk are differentially favoured or accessible to groups divided by, say, age, language and socio-economic or ethnic position. To make sense of the ensuing mixing of languages or their elements, we may have to let go of many assumptions concerning the separateness of languages at each of the levels of contact we have considered here.

The sites of contact we have investigated turn out to share many properties and a general character of hybridity. However, whereas translation and SLA manifest first-order language contact, ELF is different. First-order contacts (similects) come together in ELF interaction and affect each other, constituting second-order contact, which is qualitatively new. In the process, the influences make up what could be depicted as a multidimensional space, a 'contact universe' with multiplex links in innumerable directions. ELF impacts the individual user, individuals in interaction and usage in the aggregate. Moreover, it is regulated from the bottom up only, and any incipient norms (see Low 2016) arise from interaction. Because ELF, unlike national, standardized languages, is unregulated from the top down, it throws new light on how self-organizing patterns take shape, and can potentially show these processes more clearly than regulated languages do.

We can therefore expect that ELF opens a new window to theories of language as a complex dynamic system (see Schneider 1997 and this volume Mauranen 2017, 2019, Vetchinnikova 2017, Larsen-Freeman 2018, Vetchinnikova & Hiltunen this volume). The magnitude and scale of English and its links with nearly all other languages in the world makes its contact potential unique and sets it up as a major driver in changing not only English but the global linguistic landscape. At the same time, it raises questions with regard to other kinds of contact: how simple or bilingual are they? Translations take place between two languages, but translators are usually multilingual; surely their multilingualism affects their work in more ways than one. Overall, multilingual users may have more complex cognitive representations of languages that develop in contact with other multilinguals, even if they are mainly drawing on one language at a given time.

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