

# ELF: Pedagogical and Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Editors:  
Natasha Tsantila  
Jane Mandalios  
Melpomeni Ilkos

2016



Deree-The American College of Greece: Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Natasha Tsantila, editor. | Jane Mandalios, editor. | Melpomeni Ilkos, editor.

Title: *ELF: Pedagogical and interdisciplinary perspectives.* / editors, Natasha Tsantila, Jane Mandalios, Melpomeni Ilkos.

Description: Athens: Deree-The American College of Greece, 2016. | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: ISBN 9786188180307

Subjects: LCSH: English language--Study and teaching. | English language--Foreign countries--Discourse analysis. | English language--Globalization.

Classification: LCC PE1072 E58 2016 | DDC 420--dc23

The publishers and editors of this volume do not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of any information contained therein and hereby exclude any liability of any kind of the information contained. The opinions expressed in the chapters of this volume belong to the author(s) alone and may not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publishers or editors.

Copyright for abstracts and papers written for this volume stemming from the 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference of English as a Lingua Franca is retained by the individual author/s, who should be contacted for permission by those wishing to use the materials for purposes other than those in accordance with fair use provisions of Greek No. 2121/1993 as last amended by No. 3057/2002 (article 81) and by 3207/2003 (article 10 par. 33) and International Berne Agreement of Copyright Law.

## **In honour of Henry G. Widdowson**

We want to express our deep gratitude to Professor H.G. Widdowson for his unstinting and generous support for the ELF7 conference. In addition to providing a motivating and uplifting opening address, he provided invaluable advice on all aspects of the organisation of the conference, both academic and practical. We were honoured by his presence and participation.

# CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>		v
<b>FOREWORD</b>	<i>Tony Buckby</i>	vi
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<i>Natasha Tsantila, Jane Mandalios, Melpomeni Ilkos</i>	1
<b>AN INTRODUCTION TO HENRY WIDDOWSON</b>		5
<b>A Widdowsonean perspective</b>	<i>Sophia Papaefthymion-Lytra</i>	5
<b>COLLOQUIUM 1</b>		7
<b>ELF aware classroom practices and teaching materials: Issues and new perspectives in ELT.</b>		7
Convenors: <i>Lucilla Lopriore &amp; Paola Vettorel</i>		
A shift in ELT perspective: World Englishes and ELF in the EFL classroom .		8
<i>Lucilla Lopriore &amp; Paola Vettorel</i>		
Network –based language teaching and ELF	<i>Enrico Grazzi</i>	16
Teaching towards ELF competence in the English classroom	<i>Kurt Kohn</i>	25
The attitudes of learners and teachers towards ELF-oriented materials, with related implications		33
<i>Reiko Takahashi</i>		
<b>COLLECTING ELF CORPORA AND DESCRIBING ELF</b>		41
ACE Japan: A closer look at the ‘user language’	<i>Anamika Sharma</i>	42
ELF and code-switching: A corpus-based study of visa consultancy posts on Facebook webpages		51
<i>Laura Centonze</i>		
The localisation of ELF. Code mixing and switching between ELF and Italian in Italian internet accommodation forums for international students	<i>Thomas Christiansen</i>	60
<b>THE SOCIOLINGUISTICS OF ELF</b>		70
ELF: Sociocultural characterizations and ELF reformulation strategies in the migration movie		71
<i>It’s a Free World</i>	<i>Pietro Luigi Iaia &amp; Mariarosaria Provenzano</i>	
Humor in academic lectures: A case study in an ELF context	<i>Marina Tzouannopoulou</i>	78
Japanese university students’ attitudes towards their English: Open-ended email questionnaire study		87
<i>Tomokazu Ishikawa</i>		
Positioning in ELF interactions	<i>Berat Baser</i>	95
<b>ELF AND MULTILINGUALISM</b>		103
Plurilingual communication in science laboratory classrooms: A preliminary report on students’ interactive discourse in an English-medium degree programme in Japan.	<i>Harushige Nakakoji</i>	104
Pedagogical implications of teaching through ELF: A case study of United World Colleges and the 1 <sup>st</sup> International School of Ostrava	<i>Veronica Quinn Novotna</i>	112
<b>ELF AND LANGUAGE POLICY</b>		121
Competing discourses between English as a Lingua Franca and the “English without Borders” programme	<i>Telma Gimenez, Taisa Pinetti Passoni</i>	122
English as a Lingua Franca: A weapon or a tool?	<i>Sophia Kitson</i>	129
Reflections based on experience in the Italian university system and in an EU-funded programme for early-career scholars	<i>Laurie Anderson</i>	136



English as a Lingua Franca: The linguistic landscape in Lidras and Onasagorou Street, Lefkosia, Cyprus <i>Dimitra Karoulla –Vrikki</i>	145
<b>ELF AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>155</b>
Unequal encounters in ELF immigration contexts: Failure and success in social, political and religious negotiation <i>Maria Grazia Guido</i>	156
Use of Lingua Franca in student mobility: A study of Turkish ERASMUS students <i>Derya Duran</i>	178
Significance of intercultural competence development for study-abroad students <i>Faruk Kural &amp; Yasemin Bayyurt</i>	184
Study-abroad students' ELF awareness and intercultural sensitivity prior to sojourn: Necessity for training <i>Faruk Kural &amp; Zeynep Kocoglu</i>	193
Could we speak about ELF in Armenia? An exploration of Armenian adult EFL speakers' attitudes towards English <i>Iren Hovhannisyan</i>	201
ELF learners and their refusal strategies: Use of English in ELF contexts <i>Ratchaporn Rattanapumma</i>	212
Achieving politeness in ELF conversations: A functional-pragmatic perspective <i>Bill Batziakas</i>	220
ELF in independent learning: Lessons from an international blog project <i>Claudia Kunschak &amp; Joshua Lee</i>	227
Philosophical approaches to ELF and vice versa. <i>Ana Monica Habjan</i>	234
The negotiation of intelligible pronunciation in English as a Lingua Franca in Northeast Asia <i>George O'Neal</i>	241
English as a <i>lingua franca</i> in Kuwait's secondary schools: The dimensions of the cultural content <i>Marta Tryzna</i>	249
<b>ELF AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION</b>	<b>260</b>
ELF-aware teacher education with pre-service teachers: A transformative and technology enhanced case from Turkey <i>Elif Kemalglou-Er &amp; Yasemin Bayyurt</i>	261
ELF in teacher education programs: Mapping the proposals presented in ELF5 and ELF6 <i>Luciana Cabrini Simoes Calvo, Michele Salles El Kadri, Atef El Kadri</i>	268
ELF in Brazilian teacher education programs <i>Michele Salles El Kadri, Luciana Cabrini Simoes Calvo, Telma Gimenez</i>	278
Making sense of new words and worlds: Early routes to L2 multiliteracies in the Greek context <i>Alexia Giannakopoulou</i>	283
Accent, attitudes, and ownership of English: Perspectives of Italian college-bound youth <i>Jacqueline Aiello</i>	293
English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in relation to teacher cognition in international universities <i>Sami Basbeer Al-Hasnawi</i>	300
Teaching English as a Lingua Franca: Reflections on ELF-related issues by pre-service English language teachers in Turkey <i>Esma Biricik Deniz, Yonca Özkan, Yasemin Bayyurt</i>	308
ELF and teacher schizophrenia <i>Domingos Savio Pimentel Sinqueira &amp; Juliana da Silva Souza</i>	315
ELF across teachers' strategies in TEFL <i>Vasilisa Kazamias, Edgar Joyce</i>	322
/kju:kambɔ(t) /or /kukumber/ ? Preferences and attitudes towards standard accents in the Greek ELF context <i>Anny Georgountzou &amp; Natasha Tsantila</i>	330
Is ELF of benefit in a Japanese educational context? <i>Paul McBride</i>	341
<b>ELF ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION</b>	<b>348</b>

Potential links between ELF and alternative assessment in the EFL multicultural class: Researching teachers' perspectives	<i>Androniki Kouvdou</i>	349
<b>ELF LEARNERS</b>		358
Reconsidering the impact of gender on learners' motivation to learn English		
<i>Areti-Maria Songari &amp; Iren Hovhannisyan</i>		359
"I speak very good English even though I'm not American": Implications from business students' perspectives of ELF	<i>Roxani Faltzi</i>	368
<b>ELF AND TRANSLATION</b>		375
Exploring the mediated side of ELF: Emerging challenges in academic settings		
<i>Claudio Bendazzoli</i>		376
<b>ELF AND WRITING</b>		384
Exploring academic writing skills of Czech university students		
<i>Renata Povolna</i>		385
<b>LIST OF AUTHORS</b>		392

## ELF AND TRANSLATION

**Claudio Bendazzoli** presents a pilot study on the 'English in Italy' project, which investigates the use of mediation through ELF for academic purposes.

## Exploring the mediated side of ELF: Emerging challenges in academic settings

Claudio Bendazzoli \*

### Abstract

In this paper I present the *English in Italy* project, which includes different research lines addressing the role and status of English within the Italian context. In particular, I report on the pilot activities carried out to investigate the use of ELF in academic settings. An interview-based survey was conducted with the aim to ascertain to what extent ELF is used in research and teaching, with or without the aid of translation or interpreting services, in both written and oral communication. The respondents provided interesting comments and motivations pointing to a wide range of text types, not limited to research papers, and communicative situations in which ELF has become the default medium to communicate with the rest of the research community and with an increasingly international student population. Although the use of translation and interpreting services appears to be more the exception than the rule in the context taken into account, the respondents' attitude towards language mediation reveals conflicting views on how they fulfill their communicative needs considering ELF or ENL as the gold standard in specific cases. The paper first introduces the general context that prompted the project design with reference to the recent debate on the use of English in higher education in Italy (§1). Then, it provides a brief description of the *English in Italy* project and its main research strands (§2). The next section (§3) focuses on the pilot stage of one of those strands, i.e. ELF in academic settings and its relation with language mediation (translation and interpreting) services, and discusses the preliminary results concerning written communication (§3.1) and oral communication (§3.2). The next steps that will be undertaken in the project are briefly outlined in the conclusion (§4).

**Keywords:** written and oral communication, research activities, Italy, language mediation, proofreading

### 1. Introduction

One of the distinguishing features of English is that it has become a truly global language, as it is now used by a wide range of communities of practice in diverse contexts, with non-native speakers outnumbering native speakers<sup>1</sup> to a great extent. The effects and consequences of such a global and unprecedented diffusion have attracted the attention of several scholars and triggered a particularly lively debate as testified, for example, by the ELF conference series and other initiatives, such as the *English in Europe: Opportunity or Threat?* project (see Pulcini, 2012) and many others. Along these lines, a research group was created at the university of Torino to investigate the status of English in Italy with respect to a variety of settings and usages (not only ELF-related ones). Before outlining the main research strands of this project called *English in Italy: Linguistic, Educational and Professional Challenges* (§2), let us consider the general scenario that prompted its design.

Despite the poor proficiency levels generally displayed by Italian speakers of English (see Eurobarometer 386 data), the increasingly dominant role of English as a language for international communication is also a fact in Italy, including both professional and academic settings. The latter, in this respect, came under the spotlight in 2012 when one of Italy's most renowned higher education institutions, namely the *Politecnico di Milano*<sup>2</sup>, unveiled plans to adopt English as the only language of instruction in all its graduate and PhD programmes as of 2014, thus excluding the Italian language outright. Such a decision was championed by the rector and the highest academic authorities, with mixed reactions, in fact mostly strong criticism, on the part of faculty members and the academic community at large (Maraschio & De Martino, 2013). The news was even reported by international media, such as the BBC (Coughlan, 2012), *the Independent* (Day, 2012), *the New York Times* (Guttenplan, 2012), and *University World News* (Adendorff, 2012) among others. In the article published by the BBC, terms like “shockwaves”, “radical move”, “furious debate”, and “alarm” provide an idea of the conflicting views that emerged as a result of such an English-only policy (Molino & Campagna, 2014). In fact, this could

---

\*University of Torino (Italy), Department of Economic and Social Studies. Email: claudio.bendazzoli@unito.it

<sup>1</sup> According to Eurobarometer 386 (2012), in the EU27 the ratio between native and non-native speakers of English was almost 1:2, with English being the most spread foreign language (38%). The full report can be downloaded from [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_386\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_386_en.pdf); interactive infographics based on the same data set are available from <http://languageknowledge.eu/>.

<sup>2</sup> The homepage in English is available at <http://www.polimi.it/en/english-version/>.

be seen as just the tip, albeit sharply evident, of the much wider iceberg of internationalization as ‘interpreted’ by universities (Campagna & Pulcini, 2014) and the more general anglicization process of academia which is also under way in Italy (Costa & Coleman, 2013; Pulcini & Campagna, 2015).

Against this background, English (in Italy) may appear to be perceived more as a threat; in this respect, the title of two volumes specifically addressing the issues referred to above are self-evident: *Fuori l’italiano dall’università? Inglese, internazionalizzazione, politica linguistica* [Should the Italian language get out of university? English, internationalization, language policy] (Maraschio & De Martino, 2013) and *L’inglese non basta: una lingua per la società* [English is not enough: a language for the society] (Villa, 2013). Notwithstanding such a defensive attitude, it is undeniable that English is considered at the same time an essential opportunity due to the global reach afforded by this language when used as a lingua franca, here intended “as any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 7). The ‘unavoidable’ nature of such a choice or option is acknowledged by most Italian learners despite their difficulties in grappling with English. As Severgnini (2014) put it in the title of a provocative review of an equally provocative English language book by Gutiérrez (2014, 2015), “English is very sexy (evitarlo è impossibile)” [(avoiding it is impossible)].

## 2. The *English in Italy* project

The *English in Italy* project<sup>3</sup> includes a number of research strands, each of which addresses the presence and use of English in Italy in a variety of communicative situations and for different purposes. The main areas of investigation are listed below:

- Language contact, with a special focus on anglicisms in general and specialized language (e.g. Italian financial discourse and the use of English loans making it a *lingua* not so *franca*);
- EMI (English medium instruction) in higher education and research publications;
- Translation and interpreting (T&I), particularly the influence of English on audiovisual translation (dubbing and subtitling), the language of conferencing mediated by simultaneous interpreters, and the importance of T&I skills in ELF settings;
- Migratory contexts, again looking at language contact but considering multilingual communities and urban varieties of Italian;

It is clear that the scope of the project is not limited to studying the use of ELF, as it encompasses other spheres of usage in which reference is made to English as a native language too. Nevertheless, my specific interest lies in the areas of EMI as well as conferencing, which involve academic and professional communities of practice and are especially relevant to the use of ELF. In this respect, two different approaches have been adopted so far: (1) an interview-based survey was carried out as part of the investigation in academic settings; (2) a corpus-based analysis has been initiated as part of the study in professional contexts.

Within the academic context, an interview-based survey was piloted in spring 2014 in order to design a wider (internet-based) survey that will be carried out at a subsequent stage. The aim is to explore to what extent English is used, particularly as a lingua franca, in research and teaching activities by academics based in Italy, and whether there is any scope for language mediation services (i.e. translation and interpreting)<sup>4</sup>.

In professional settings, on the other hand, the language of conferencing is being studied by means of the *Directionality in Simultaneous Interpreting Corpus*<sup>5</sup> (Bendazzoli, 2012), in which English is represented in

<sup>3</sup> The members of the research group are Virginia Pulcini (PI), Claudio Bendazzoli, Cecilia Boggio, Giorgia Borri, Luisa Bozzo, Sandra Campagna, Cristiano Furiassi, Gerardo Mazzaferro, Alessandra Molino, Vincenza Minutella, and Maria Francesca Toma (<http://englishitaly.wordpress.com>).

<sup>4</sup> Translation and Interpreting scholars have only recently taken up the ELF perspective to study its implications. See, for example, Albl-Mikasa (2013a, 2013b, 2012, 2010), Reithofer (2010), and Taviano (2013).

<sup>5</sup> The DIRSI Corpus is an electronic corpus of source and target speeches delivered at three medical conferences mediated by professional

multiple ways, i.e. not only as a lingua franca used by participants (English NSs and NNSs) for direct communication, but also by simultaneous interpreters in mediated communication, for whom English becomes a working language (active or passive).

In the following sections I present the preliminary results obtained from the first approach and discuss some of the challenges arising from the ‘mediated’ side of ELF in academic settings.

### 3. ELF and language mediation in academic settings

As a first step in the study of ELF usage in Italian academic settings<sup>6</sup>, an interview-based survey was carried out in my own department at the School of Management and Economics<sup>7</sup> (University of Torino, Italy). The study was planned to be the pilot stage of a larger internet-based survey that will be designed on the basis of the responses obtained in the interviews. The aim of the interview-based survey was twofold: on the one hand, understanding to what extent English, and in particular ELF, is used in research and teaching activities, both in written and oral communication; on the other hand, finding out whether there is any scope for language mediation, i.e. translation and interpreting, in fulfilling the same activities.

The semi-structured interviews were based on a set of 38 items, including 29 closed questions and 9 open questions. The interviews were audio-recorded and only the answers to open questions and any extra comment to closed questions were fully transcribed (approximately 43,000 words). In total, 50 interviews were collected (34 male and 16 female respondents): 45 from members of the Department of Economic and Social Studies; 4 from members of the Department of Management; 1 from the Department of History (University of Bologna). The following table (Table 1) shows the research fields covered by respondents, who are mostly representative of social sciences:

Table 1. *Number of survey respondents by research field.*

Research field	Number of respondents
Economics and Statistics	36
Political and Social Studies	5
Foreign Languages	3
Geography	2
Agriculture and Veterinary Studies	1
Anthropology	1
Law	1
Maths and IT	1

At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to express a self evaluation of their English language proficiency level for each communicative skill (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) on a scale from 1 to 6. Since most respondents were not familiar with CEFR<sup>8</sup> levels, these were not used. However, the score system was designed to mirror the scale structure of CEFR levels as can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2. *English language proficiency self-evaluation scale.*

simultaneous interpreters from/into Italian and English (<http://cartago.llf.uam.es/static/dir-si/dir-si.html>).

<sup>6</sup> The study of English as a Lingua franca in Academic settings (ELFA) was pioneered by Mauranen with the creation of a relevant spoken corpus (Mauranen, 2003). See Mauranen (2007) for an overview of the ELFA research agenda.

<sup>7</sup> The School of Management and Economics comprises two departments: the Department of Management and the Department of Economic and Social Studies. Prof. Sandra Campagna and I conducted the interviews and decided to contact first our own colleagues at the Department of Economic and Social Studies; some interviews also involved some members of Department of Management and one of the Department of History (University of Bologna).

<sup>8</sup> The Common European Framework of Reference consists of three main proficiency levels comprising two sub-levels of proficiency each: A1 and A2 are elementary; B1 and B2 are intermediate; C1 and C2 are advanced (see <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/resources/european-language-levels-cefr>).

Reading						Listening						Writing						Speaking					
1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
elementary		intermediate			advanced	elementary		intermediate			advanced	elementary		intermediate			advanced	elementary		intermediate			advanced

The interviews were held in Italian and participants were reassured that the aim was not to put their language competence to the test. In fact, we were very much interested in cases where low or even zero competence was reported.

The responses provided in the self-assessment section are displayed in the following table (Table 3). It is interesting to note that out of the four communicative skills considered, speaking is the one that was assigned the lowest scores (though the majority indicated a high intermediate or a low advanced competence level). Listening and writing obtained similar scores, with slightly higher levels reported in the advanced band. Finally, reading is the skill with the highest reported command, including subjects with lower levels of competence in the other skills.

Table 3. Survey respondents' self-assessment of their English communicative skills.

	NA	elem. (A1+A2)	interm. (B1+B2)	advanced (C1+C2)
Reading	0	0	11 (4+7)	39 (27+12)
Listening	0	6 (1+5)	20 (9+11)	24 (20+4)
Writing	0	4 (2+2)	20 (7+13)	26 (22+4)
Speaking	1	5 (1+4)	26 (9+17)	18 (16+2)

It is worth specifying that many respondents pointed out that their communicative competence may be pretty high within their field of specialization, but this would not apply to 'casual' conversation or more general communication.

The preliminary results concerning each communicative skill in research activities are presented below, first with reference to written communication (§3.1) and then with reference to oral communication (§3.2).

### 3.1 Written communication

As was expected, considering the general scenario presented above (§1), all respondents confirmed that there is a growing demand for English to communicate in writing not just with NSs but above all with other NNSs making up the scientific community. Obviously there are major differences depending on the research fields under consideration. Some of them, e.g. mathematics and statistics, have been traditionally written about in English even by senior researchers based in Italy since the beginning of their academic career, whereas other fields, such as social studies and history, have counted on a well-rooted tradition of written scientific communication in Italian that is now being replaced by English. The survey respondents agree that writing in English is a must for junior researchers and is also becoming more than just an option for senior colleagues who are more likely to have a weaker command. This trend is in line with the internationalization process affecting research and teaching, but in Italy it has also been



influenced by recent research quality assessment initiatives<sup>9</sup>, in which higher evaluation scores were assigned to contributions (e.g. volumes, chapters, papers and so on) published in international (non-Italian) outlets. This has often meant that a contribution written in Italian, thus published with a domestic publisher, would be ranked lower than the same contribution published as an international ‘research product’, in many cases written in English, with a strong impact on the editorial policies of many domestic journals and book series, which are now switching to an almost English-only approach<sup>10</sup>. Whereas there is general acceptance of this trend, the need to preserve the Italian language in specific scientific fields is particularly felt whenever research results need to be disseminated to the general public and, above all, to local authorities (the latter are often sources of funding). Moreover, there is still a common perception of the ENL standard as a golden rule for publications submitted to top-ranked journals, whereas attitudes appear to be more flexible in case of ‘lower targets’.

Overall, respondents stated that they can manage the relevant LSP in English (albeit with some major differences or issues due to false friends) fairly well, but difficulties arise as soon as they have to deal with complex reasoning, highly structured argumentation, rhetorical devices and subtleties. As a result, editing and proofreading services are much more popular than translation ones, above all for top-ranked outlets. Indeed in-house language support services are offered or simply recommended by most journals, though they are quite expensive and in the respondents’ experience it is not always possible to afford them due to the scarcity of research funds. That is why they are used only for ‘prestigious’ outlets, where ENL remains a sought-after benchmark regardless of the prevalently ELF composition of the target research community. There seems to be plenty of cheaper proofreading services advertised online, but feedbacks from those who resorted to them are not always positive. Freelancers also send emails to offer their translation and proofreading services. However, translators are not particularly trusted due to their assumed lack of command of specific terminology; once again, what ELF academic writers need is support to improve their style, wording and formal aspects. Only in a few cases professional translators were involved, and respondents always mentioned the fact that they know these professionals personally and that they sometimes had briefing sessions with them to discuss terminological issues.

Moving to other types of written texts, the use of English has become an obligation in case of institutional communication directed to a more and more international community of students (though international students are rarely NSs in the context taken into account) and scholars. This is the case regardless of individuals’ skills in English writing, therefore it can be expected that specific strategies are adopted. For instance, syllabuses to be published online, including the description of course aims and methods, must be provided by lecturers both in Italian and in English. In this case, the subjects with zero, elementary or low intermediate command have had their syllabuses translated from Italian into English, or simply proofread, by a native speaker (rarely a professional translator). Most of the time aid was sought from other colleagues with higher proficiency or from native English language instructors working in the same institution. The subjects with high intermediate or advanced competence do not normally ask for any help to draft this type of texts in English, thus feeling at ease with the notion of ELF rather than ENL in the final output.

Another example concerns abstracts that are sent in response to a call for papers: even for paper proposals that will be delivered in languages other than English, submitting an abstract in English has become mandatory in a growing number of cases. Once again, translation or proofreading services are provided by colleagues or language instructors and rarely by professional translators.

A large majority of respondents also mentioned recommendation letters among the texts they are required to write in English. These are usually needed by students willing to apply to study programs

<sup>9</sup> Notably the so called VQR or “Valutazione della Qualità della Ricerca 2004-2010” conducted by the Ministry of Education was based on three main criteria: “rilevanza; originalità/innovazione; internazionalizzazione” [significance; originality/innovation; internationalization] ([http://anvur.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=28&Itemid=119&lang=it](http://anvur.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28&Itemid=119&lang=it)).

<sup>10</sup> See, for instance, the case of the *Italian Economic Journal*, which was announced in late 2014 and is presented as “A Continuation of *Rivista Italiana degli Economisti* and *Giornale degli Economisti*”. In particular, “ItEJ merges the *Rivista Italiana degli Economisti* (RIE), the journal founded by the Italian Economic Association in 1996, with the *Giornale degli Economisti* (GdE), founded in 1875 and enriched by contributions from renowned economists, including Amoroso, Black, Barone, De Viti de Marco, Edgeworth, Einaudi, Modigliani, Pantaleoni, Pareto, Slutsky, Tinbergen and Walras” (<http://www.springer.com/economics/journal/40797>).



abroad and such requests are also made to colleagues who possess low competence in English writing. In this case there seems to be greater acceptance of ELF over the ENL standard; at the same time, ready-made templates retrieved from online dedicated websites and applicants' support are among the strategies used to produce these texts.

Finally, another example of ELF written communication that has become increasingly common concerns referee reports in evaluating papers and research project applications. However, this text type was mentioned during some of the last interviews and could not be explored in greater detail.

In general terms, only 15 respondents declared that the need to produce texts in English has always characterized their academic activities, whereas 33 respondents agreed that the influence of the English language in their written production is a recent phenomenon, which started approximately at the beginning of the new millennium. Only 7 subjects reported that they have no scientific publications in English: three of them are specialized in linguistic studies for other languages (French and German) and three others have been active in scientific research for more than 35 years now and belong to the senior generation of academics for whom English may still be an option. However, as mentioned above, this is true up to a certain point, since course syllabuses, abstracts, recommendation letters for students, and referee reports were mentioned by the vast majority of subjects, if not all of them, as part of their written production in a language that is constantly moving along a continuum between being used as a *lingua franca* and keeping its native standards in mind.

### 3.2 Oral communication

Considering the self-assessment of communicative competence provided by respondents (§3), both listening and speaking skills are relatively weaker than reading and writing skills. A recurrent comment in this respect was that the main difficulties lie in managing casual and informal exchanges much more than oral communication based on technicalities and LSP.

As regards speaking, presenting papers in English has now become common practice even in local events with an exclusively domestic audience (i.e. only Italian NSs are present). Although this may sound pointless, there are two factors at the basis of this sort of extreme ELF situation: on the one hand, technical English terms are so commonly used in Italian academic discourse that scholars find it is easier to express themselves entirely in English; on the other hand, the use of multimedia communication, e.g. streaming or posting videos on dedicated repositories online, extends the scope of the audience *in absentia* and the use of ELF can guarantee maximum access to international recipients.

Interpreting is perceived as a luxury and more suitable in case of events open to the general public or involving local authorities. In the academic circles taken into consideration, counting on interpreting services is more the exception than the rule. Interestingly, should interpreters be available, two thirds of respondents said that they would prefer to speak English anyway, even in case of low intermediate competence, as they feel they would have greater command of content, which is what counts most, regardless of form; they also prefer to have direct communication and feel the recourse to interpreting equipment as burdensome. This does not apply in case of high-level meetings in which utmost importance is attached to form. Other reasons also concern personal satisfaction and face saving (prestige), or one's academic affiliation.

As regards listening skills, again there is general distrust of interpreting services, as they are perceived as distracting. On the other hand, some respondents admitted that some accents are particularly hard to understand, e.g. speakers of ELF with French, Indian, Chinese (and Italian) accents, though many reported considerable recent improvements. In fact, the main obstacle to understanding oral communication was attributed to a lack of public speaking skills, which were reported to be generally good in case of NSs. Similarly, comprehension difficulties are also found in case of read outputs, but again this would not be the case with NSs who are perceived as following a clear layout in their presentations. Some respondents even mentioned the fact that they feel sorry for NSs who are likely to be annoyed by unskilled presenters mistreating the English language as they speak what is considered an impoverished version of English. Among the reasons behind respondents' preference to deliver their paper presentations without the help of conference interpreters is the widespread use of slides, which

provide enormous support to both the presenter and the audience. However, when slides are not available, as is the case in Q&A sessions and debates, interpreters would be most welcome to aid participants in expressing their views effectively and understanding counter arguments and observations made by other speakers.

#### 4. Conclusion and future research

In this paper I presented the preliminary results obtained from an interview-based survey on the use of ELF for academic purposes in Italy, considering both written and oral communication in research activities, as well as the scope of language mediation (i.e. translation and interpreting). The survey also included other questions concerning teaching activities, but due to space limitations these were not included here.

The next steps will be to move from this pilot study to a large scale, internet-based survey that will be designed to investigate the most controversial issues raised by respondents. As part of the *English in Italy* research project, another research strand will address spoken communication using a corpus of conference presentations mediated by simultaneous interpreters, thus representing English not only as a lingua franca, but also as an active or passive working language. Hopefully, these multiple approaches will be helpful to obtain a fuller picture of the global lingua franca par excellence and its major implications in professional and academic settings.

#### About the author

**Claudio Bendazzoli** is assistant professor of English Language and Translation at the University of Torino. He obtained an MA in Conference Interpreting (Italian, English, Spanish) and a PhD in Interpreting Studies from the Department of Interpreting and Translation of the University of Bologna at Forlì, Italy. His main research interests are Interpreting Studies, Corpus Linguistics, theatre and drama education applied to interpreter training, Ethnography of communication, Business English, Web 2.0, English as a medium of instruction, ELF. **Email:** claudio.bendazzoli@unito.it

#### References

- Adendorff, L. (2012, May 13). English-only postgraduate courses at Milan Polytechnic spark protest. *University World News*. Retrieved from: <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20120509174302914>
- Albl-Mikasa, M. (2013a). ELF speakers' restricted power of expression. Implications for interpreters' processing. *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 8(2), 191-210.
- Albl-Mikasa, M. (2013b). Express-ability in ELF communication. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, 2(1), 101-122.
- Albl-Mikasa, M. (2012). Interpreting quality in times of English as a lingua franca (ELF): New variables and requirements. In L. Zybatow, A. Petrova & M. Ustaszewski (Eds.), *Translation Studies: Old and new types of translation in theory and practice. Proceedings of the 1st international conference TRANSLATA «Translation & Interpreting Research: yesterday - today - tomorrow», May 12-14, 2011, Innsbruck* (pp. 267-273). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Albl-Mikasa, M. (2010). Global English and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF): Implications for the interpreting profession. *Trans-kom*, 2(3), 126-148.
- Bendazzoli, C. (2012). From international conferences to machine-readable corpora and back: An ethnographic approach to simultaneous interpreter-mediated communicative events. In C. Falbo & F. Straniero Sergio (Eds.), *Breaking Ground in Corpus-Based Interpreting Studies* (pp. 91-117). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Campagna, S., & Pulcini, V. (2014). English as a medium of instruction in Italian universities: Linguistic policies, pedagogical implications. In M. Guido & B. Seidlhofer (Eds.), *Textus. English Studies in Italy. Perspectives on English as a Lingua Franca*, 27(1), 173-190.
- Costa, F., & Coleman, J. A. (2013). A survey of English-medium instruction in Italian higher education. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 16(1), 3-19.

- Coughlan, S. (2012, May 16). Italian university switches to English. *BBC News Business*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-17958520>
- Day, M. (2012, April 14). Italian university switches to English. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/italian-university-switches-to-english-7643884.html>
- Gutiérrez, L. (2014). *English is not easy: L'infalibile metodo per memorizzare la lingua di sua maestà*. Milano: BUR.
- Gutiérrez, L. (2015). *English is not easy: A Visual Guide to the Language*. London: Gotham Books.
- Guttenplan, D. D. (2012, June 11). Old Italian school to switch instruction to English. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/11/world/europe/11iht-educside11.html?\\_r=2&](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/11/world/europe/11iht-educside11.html?_r=2&)
- Maraschio, N., & De Martino, D. (Eds.). (2013). *Fuori l'italiano dall'università? Inglese, internazionalizzazione, politica linguistica*. Roma/Bari: Laterza.
- Mauranen, A. (2003). The corpus of English as a lingua franca in academic settings. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(3), 513-527.
- Mauranen, A. (2007). Investigating English as a lingua franca with a spoken corpus. In M. C. Campoy & M. J. Luzón (Eds.), *Spoken Corpora in Applied Linguistics* (pp. 33-56). Bern: Peter Lang.
- Molino, A., & Campagna, S. (2014). English-mediated instruction in Italian universities: Conflicting views. *Sociolinguistica*, 28(1), 155-171.
- Pulcini, V., & Campagna, S. (2015). Internationalisation and the EMI controversy in Italian higher education. In S. Dimova, A. K. Hultgren & C. Jensen (Eds.), *English-Medium Instruction in European Higher Education. English in Europe, Volume 3* (pp. 65-87). Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Pulcini, V. (2012). English in Europe: Debates and discourses. *The European English Messenger*, 21(2), 42-46.
- Reithofer, K. (2010). English as a lingua franca vs. interpreting: Battleground or peaceful coexistence? *The Interpreters' Newsletter*, 15, 143-157.
- Severgnini, B. (2014, June). English is very sexy (evitarlo è impossibile). *Corriere della Sera*. Retrieved from <http://lettura.corriere.it/english-is-very-sexy/>
- Seidlhofer, B. (2011). *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford: OUP.
- Taviano, S. (Ed.). (2013). *Special Issue: English as a Lingua Franca. Implications for translator and interpreter education. The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* 7(2).
- Villa, M. L. (2013). *L'inglese non basta: Una lingua per la società*. Milano: Bruno Mondadori.