

## Points of view and blind spots: ELF and SLA

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Despite far-reaching changes in the English-speaking world along with serious critiques of the traditional premises of SLA research, little has changed in the way English is taught to its second language learners. In line with mainstream SLA's view of English learners from the expanding circle as learners of English as a *Foreign Language* (EFL), English is still taught as though the primary need of learners is to be able to communicate with its native speakers, and with the assumption that correct English is either Standard British or Standard American English. This article argues that mainstream SLA research can no longer afford to ignore the massive growth in the use of English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF), highlights the irrelevance for ELF of concepts such as interlanguage and fossilization, and explores the extent to which a number of alternative perspectives offer greater promise for ELF. It concludes by making a case for ELF as neither EFL nor (failed) native English but as occupying a legitimate third space of its own.

*Keywords:* English as a *Lingua Franca*, SLA, language ideology, native speaker, fossilization

제 2 언어 연구의 전통적인 전제에 대한 심각한 비판과 함께 영어권 세계에서 발생하고 있는 광범위한 변화에도 불구하고 제 2 언어학습자들에게 영어를 교육하는 방식에는 거의 변화가 없는 상태이다. 확장되고 있는 영어권의 영어학습자를 영어를 외국어로 배우는 학습자로 보는 주류 제 2 언어습득 연구의 시대착오적인 관점과 함께 정확한 영어는 표준 영국영어이거나 표준 미국영어라는 가정 속에서, 영어 학습자들의 우선적인 필요는 영어 원어민과의 의사 소통할 수 있는 것처럼 교사들은 영어를 가르치고 있다. 이 논문은 주류 제 2 언어 습득 연구는 영어가 세계 공통어로서 광범위하게 확대되어 사용되고 있는 것을 더 이상 간과할 수 없음을 주장한다. 그리고 이 논문은 중간언어 또는 화석화 현상과 같은 개념들은 세계 공통어로서 영어와는 무관함을 부각시킬 것이며 몇 가지 대안적 관점이 세계 공통어로서 영어가 미래의 제 2 언어 습득연구에 제시하는 가능성의 정도를 탐색할 것이다. 이 논문은 한 사례를 통해 세계 공통어로서의 영어는 외국어로서의 영어도 아니며 (실패한) 원어민 영어도 아니며 그 자체로서 합리적인 영역을 차지하고 있음을 주장할 것이다.

*핵심어:* 세계 공통어로서 영어, 제 2 언어 습득, 언어 이념, 원어민 화자, 화석화 현상

## Introduction

It is almost ten years since Firth and Wagner (1997) published their detailed critique of mainstream Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, and even longer since Bley-Vroman (1983), Y. Kachru (1994), Sridhar (1994), Rampton (1987) and others made similar observations. Kachru argued, for example, that known facts about bilinguals' use of language had "not been taken into account in SLA research" and that "[t]he explanation for this phenomenon lies in a pronounced monolingual bias" among SLA researchers (1994: 798), while Rampton pointed out that "[c]odeswitching in socio-linguistics winds up as interference in SLA" (1987: 55).

These scholars' primary concern was with the Englishes of and/or from outer circle contexts. However, the mainstream SLA perspective of which they were critical applied even then to the expanding circle too. And nowadays, with traditional SLA's increasing acceptance of some (but not all) outer circle Englishes as varieties rather than interlanguages, the expanding circle has by default become the prime target of SLA's standard native speaker (NS) ideology. For, as Seidlhofer observes, there is still pervasive in most SLA research "a tenacious deficit view of ELF in which variation is perceived as deviation from ENL [English as a native language] norms and described in terms of errors or fossilization" (2004: 213). Indeed, the only progress made over the past decade appears to have been SLA's gradual (but not universal) switch from the label 'L1 interference' to the less pejorative 'L1 transfer' (or very occasionally 'cross-linguistic influence') to describe the occurrence of L1 elements in expanding circle speakers' English use. The reason for the switch is not entirely clear. Perhaps it signals SLA researchers' growing awareness of the positive role that the L1 plays in the acquisition of an L2<sup>1,2</sup> (see e.g. Odlin 1989). On the other hand, it does not appear to signal any weakening in their conviction that where such L1 transfer deviates from NS use, the result should be regarded as incorrectness rather than legitimate variation, irrespective of whether the communication context is English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). Nor does it imply that SLA researchers believe ELF speakers (just like EFL speakers) should be construed as anything other than "defective communicators" (Seidlhofer *ibid.*) in terms of their differences from NS English.

## EFL vs ELF

SLA researchers' difficulty with ELF resides essentially, I believe, in their inability to distinguish a lingua franca from a foreign language,<sup>3</sup> and given the earlier problem in distinguishing a nativized variety from a foreign language variety (e.g. Selinker 1972, 1992), this is not surprising. The NS-normative tendency in SLA seems to be so deeply entrenched that its

researchers have difficulty in conceiving of any form of correctness that is not commensurate with NS norms.

In the case of a foreign language, the ultimate goal is likely (though by no means certain) to be near-native competence, to the extent that the L2 learner wishes to be able to communicate effectively with *native speakers* of that language. Differences between NS and NNS (non-native speaker) production (and reception), whether linguistic, pragmatic or sociocultural, can, in this sense, be considered errors that result from incomplete L2 acquisition and that require remediation, and code-switching/code-mixing as primarily the result of gaps in knowledge of the appropriate NS forms. This 'deficit' perspective typifies Modern Foreign Language teaching, including EFL, and is generally regarded as uncontroversial by both teachers and researchers, although even here there are alternative views. For example, Cook (2002a,b) prefers to consider L2 users in their own right rather than as failed NSs, and sociocultural theorists such as Donato (2000) regard learners as having agency as transformers of their L2 world rather than being mere conformers to it. Regardless of their research position, the main focus of enquiry for the majority of SLA researchers is, nevertheless, on finding ways of facilitating the acquisition of as near native-like competence as required by the learner, teacher, or 'system', be this by means of tasks, scaffolding, comprehensible input/output, or whatever.

While the position just outlined may (at least in some respects) be a reasonable one to adopt in the case of foreign languages, it is an unreasonable one in the case of either *nativized* or *lingua franca* varieties. Both the nativized Englishes of the outer circle and the lingua franca Englishes of the expanding circle are learnt and used in communication contexts where NSs are not the target interlocutors, and therefore where they do not have the right to regard themselves as the reference point against which correctness is judged. Yet, as I pointed out above, this distinction is seldom appreciated in the case of ELF. For example, in his discussion of the way English is likely to develop *internationally*, Bruton argues that it is inevitable that certain NS varieties will serve as reference points and models, and adds that "[t]hese models are typically the more standardized varieties in any FL [foreign language] teaching" (2005: 256). Thus he conflates ELF and EFL by classifying ELF as a Modern Foreign Language.

The differences between ELF and EFL are laid out in Figure 1. On the left-hand side, EFL is shown as a Modern Foreign Language, and there is no particular significance attached to the fact that it happens to be English rather than, e.g., Hungarian or Japanese. Like any Modern Foreign Language, EFL is still seen by the majority of SLA researchers and teachers as dependent on NS norms, and thus from a deficit perspective in terms of any L2 deviations from those norms. Such deviations, including code-switching and code-mixing, are described in terms of both a transfer/interference metaphor and when, as typically happens, acquisition ceases short of native-like competence, a fossilization metaphor (cf. Gass and Selinker 1994; Selinker 1972, 1992).



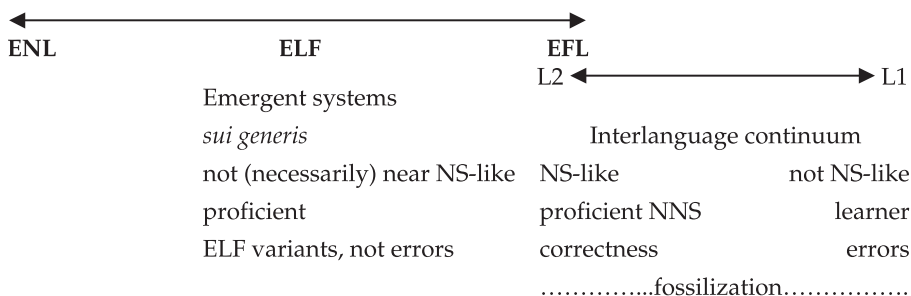
far more information about English than other languages” and therefore tend to use English, as he does himself, to provide their specific language examples.<sup>5</sup> Thus, on the one hand, English is regularly used as the prime instantiation of L2 acquisition, yet, on the other hand, it is the prime example of a language learnt as an L2 that does not fit the general pattern. Far from being foregrounded, it should therefore be excluded from any SLA research where the goal of learning cannot be demonstrated as NNS–NS communication.

One of the accusations frequently levelled at ELF researchers is that they are promoting a policy of ‘anything goes’. This misconception is caused primarily by the fact that, as Figure 1 illustrates, the actual outcome of ELF and EFL may be the same forms reached by different routes. However, the claim that certain forms that are habitually labelled ‘errors’ in EFL may be variants in ELF is based on solid empirical evidence. In particular, the forms occur systematically and frequently, and without causing communication problems, in the speech of expanding circle speakers who have a high level of proficiency (as demonstrated, for example, by their performance in public examinations). Besides, ELF researchers have never claimed that there is no such thing as a *non*-proficient ELF speaker. ELF speakers, just like EFL (and, for that matter, native English) speakers, come in a range of proficiency levels. Some (such as those from whom the majority of ELF researchers collect their data) are expert users as defined by House (2005), Leung et al. (1997), and Rampton (1990), or what I have elsewhere called Bilingual English Speakers.<sup>6</sup> Others are still learners, and yet others have ceased learning some way short of expert (ELF) level. It should be self-evident that these last two groups are *not* regarded as expert speakers by ELF researchers.

In other words, ELF has its own proficiency clines, although progress along these clines in relation to specific ELF varieties (German English, Korean English and so on) is still largely an empirical question. The essential point here is that if – as empirical research is already demonstrating – ELF is *sui generis*, then ELF proficiency levels must also be *sui generis*. They are not imitations of the English that characterizes the different levels of EFL but have their own linguistic characteristics at each stage of development, from beginner to advanced. It follows that ELF also has its own ‘end point’, i.e. where expert level is achieved. This includes both ELF variants that would be considered errors in relation to EFL and, inevitably, given the common ancestor, also variants that *are* native-like, but by default rather than design.

## ELF vs interlanguage

The previous discussion of ELF and EFL leads on to another misplaced belief about ELF: that it is an interlanguage. Because it is not a ‘foreign’ language, however, ELF cannot be linked to the ‘interlanguage continuum’ (Selinker 1972) which is said to characterise the L2 systems of speakers of Modern Foreign Languages. As the right-hand side of Figure 2 demonstrates,



**Figure 2.** ELF vs interlanguage

the interlanguage continuum is bounded at one extreme by the learner's L1 and at the other by the target L2. Most language learners' knowledge of the target language is said to be located at some point on this continuum at any stage in their L2 development. Thus, unless the L2, in our case English, has been acquired to a native-like level, it will deviate in certain respects from the language spoken by its NSs.<sup>7</sup> If the learner continues to improve, the theory goes, they will proceed along the continuum in the direction of NS competence. But unless/until they acquire this (and the majority will not), they are either still learners or have ceased learning and become 'fossilized' users. In either case, their deviations from NS norms are errors. Only if they achieve native-like competence can their English be considered correct, but to achieve this level, it would to all intents and purposes be indistinguishable from the ENL on the left-hand side of Figure 2.

Aspects of interlanguage theory have been seriously questioned (see e.g. Bhatt 2002; Firth and Wagner 1997; Norton 2000; Y. Kachru 1993, 2005). The theory is nevertheless firmly intact among both mainstream SLA researchers and TESOL professionals.<sup>8</sup> As Gardner and Wagner (2004: 12) observe, "[i]nterlanguage was a very important innovative notion. Its assumptions about language and about learning still lie at the heart of SLA". Meanwhile the notion of 'fossilization' is still promoted in SLA publications (e.g. Han and Selinker 2005,<sup>9</sup> the gist of which is little different from Selinker 1972, 1992) and is recycled regularly on teacher training courses and in newsletter and journal articles for teachers. For example, an article in the *EL Gazette* entitled "Beat the fossils to it" likens fossilization to "bad habits" such as smoking and drinking, and provides advice on how to "nip it in the bud" (McCulloch 2003: 12). Whether interlanguage theory is valid even for Modern Foreign Languages is beyond the scope of this discussion. But regardless of its relevance to EFL, it is entirely irrelevant to ELF, where lingua franca varieties of English are emerging in their own right and exhibiting shared features which differ systematically from NS English norms, regardless of the ELF speaker's L1.

The problem with classifying expanding circle Englishes as interlanguages is that it ignores the sociolinguistic reality of the vast majority of learners

and users of English in expanding circle contexts, particularly in Europe and East Asia. Admittedly a small number do need English for communication with its NSs, and for genuine learners of EFL, interlanguage may be a valid concept. However, a far larger number seem to have been misled by the prevailing standard NS ideology – which operates at all levels of English language teaching – into believing that their English is interlanguage (whether learner language or fossilized language) because it is not ‘native-like’, and that they need to be native-like in order to achieve success in their lives (see Jenkins forthcoming). Thus, they will accept Davies’s (1989) claim that the use of nonstandard forms by NNSs reflects their partial knowledge of the language, whereas the use of such forms by NSs is merely a performance error. So, for example, proficient ELF speakers reveal themselves as interlanguage speakers if they use the all-purpose tag question form *isn’t it*, whereas (British) NSs who habitually use *innit* to perform the same function do not. But in both cases the form has emerged from contact and is used as a marker of solidarity and identity in the appropriate context of use. In both cases, it is *sui generis*.

The sociolinguistic reality of most expanding circle English users, characterized primarily as it is by lingua franca use (i.e. communication with other NNSs of English rather than with NSs), therefore makes nonsense of the idea that the English of proficient expanding circle speakers is interlanguage when it differs from NS English. Their sociolinguistic reality is, in a multitude of ways, just as different from that of ENL contexts as is the sociolinguistic reality of outer circle English users. Moreover, interlanguages, as Mufwene points out, are “individual phenomena . . . based on no communal norm” (2001: 8), whereas ELF speakers, in practice, are not collections of isolated individuals each independently using English according to an exonormative (NS) standard. They are using English with each other and, in the process, adapting the language to suit their own lingua franca purposes. A reconceptualization of ELF that acknowledges what is happening in practice would emphasize the legitimacy of variation in expanding circle communities of use. It would thus enable members of these communities to cease viewing themselves as interlanguage speakers. Meanwhile, abandoning the unrealistic and unnecessary target of native-like production would also enable learners to spend time in acquiring accommodation skills, which (unlike native-like production) are critical to lingua franca communication (Seidlhofer 2004).

It seems, then, that interlanguage theory and the concept of fossilization are still very much in vogue at the start of the 21st century as the framework within which all English acquisition in the expanding circle is discussed by mainstream SLA researchers and ELT practitioners. This seems to be the case regardless of the specific characteristics and requirements of the social context of English use. ELF users, thus, continue to be regarded anachronistically and inappropriately as interlanguage speakers. Standard texts on SLA such as Lightbown and Spada (1999), a handbook for teachers,

and Mitchell and Myles (2004),<sup>10</sup> a book for students of SLA theory, still frame as interlanguage any L2 output which deviates from the nativelike and assume that full mastery of any language means that of its NSs. Similarly, despite the welcome addition of sociopsychological and identity factors to the debate in Moyer's (2004) book-length discussion of the acquisition of L2 phonology, there is no suggestion that the target can be anything but 'nativeness', or that anything which deviates from it can belong outside the realm of interlanguage phonology, whatever the L2.

Over ten years ago, Yamuna Kachru criticized the "narrow psycholinguistic perspective" of mainstream SLA, with its "focus on the acquisitional stages of learners" which "leads naturally to the IL [interlanguage] hypothesis" (1994: 798). It seems that mainstream SLA researchers still do not acknowledge the critical contribution of language socialization to L2 acquisition and incorporate, as appropriate, a "sociolinguistic perspective of what competent bi-/multilinguals do with different codes in the repertoire" (ibid.). Such a perspective, Kachru argued, in respect of outer circle Englishes, "finds this focus on the unstable stages of learning irrelevant for its purposes" (ibid.). Her words also perfectly capture the same state of affairs in regard to ELF.

## Dissenting voices<sup>11</sup>

A small but increasing number of scholars, some themselves SLA researchers, have in recent years begun taking issue with a number of its claims, primarily in relation to what they see as SLA's overly psycholinguistic approach and neglect of social (sociolinguistic, socio-psychological, and sociocultural) factors.<sup>12</sup> Many of those who have identified problems with mainstream SLA have tended not to take issue with its basic premise of NS normativity. The crucial point, however, is that they do not consider the NS norm to be the optimum target for L2 learners, regardless of which second language they are learning. Instead, they view learners as, for example, having transformative agency (the sociocultural theorists – e.g. Lantolf 2000), as being L2 users in their own right (the 'L2 user group' – e.g. Cook 2002c), or as being entitled to express their social and cultural identity in their L2 (e.g. Norton 2000).

Many of these dissenting voices, like the earlier minority who took social views of SLA (e.g. Beebe 1980; Tarone 1988), nevertheless appear at some level to implicitly accept the NS target of mainstream SLA researchers. This is, I believe, because like the latter, they have not (yet) perceived any distinction between a foreign language and a lingua franca. English apart, it is probably true to say that most, if not all, second languages are currently learned primarily for communication with their native speakers. The problem is that English, too, is regarded in this light, even by most of these dissenters, and lumped together with the other Modern Foreign Languages instead of being treated as a separate case in its majority lingua franca (but not its minority foreign language) use. Thus, the possibility of ELF norms rarely



enters the equation. While some of the challenges to mainstream SLA resonate with ELF, the majority do not refer specifically to it. In the discussion of alternative perspectives that follows, therefore, my focus is on those challenges that I see as having direct relevance for ELF.

I begin, however, with a pair of scholars who do in fact refer both to *lingua francas* in general and to ELF in particular. In their seminal 1997 paper, Firth and Wagner attack mainstream SLA for what they regard as a number of fundamental conceptual flaws and weaknesses. These include: its Chomskyan/psycholinguistic bias and neglect of social and contextual factors; its framing of L2 in terms of interlanguage and fossilization; its fixation with the notion of the NS as the norm and the NNS as a learner; and its use of NS interaction to provide baseline data and assumptions about NNS interaction as, by contrast, handicapped and defective.<sup>13</sup> I will return to some of these points later, but first, let us see what Firth and Wagner have to say about ELF specifically.

Echoing Yamuna Kachru's reference to SLA's "monolingual bias", Firth and Wagner's starting point in their discussion of ELF is the "prevailing monolingual orientation of SLA", in which "interactions with NSs are seen to be the 'preferred' conditions for SLA to occur" (1997: 292). This orientation, they point out, "fails to take account of the multilingual reality of communities . . . and the reality of more transient, interacting groups throughout the world" (*ibid.*). They go on to refer specifically to the international status of English, which, in turn, "means that a *vast* number of NNS routinely interact with other NNS, in which cases English is a *lingua franca*" (*ibid.*, emphasis added). These *lingua franca* English speakers, they observe, are not learners of English but users of the language in their daily lives for a range of purposes and in a variety of social settings. In view of these facts, they find it surprising that SLA studies do not devote greater attention to "FL [*sic*] use (involving both NS–NNS and NNS–NNS) in naturally occurring, everyday (noneducational) settings" (*ibid.*).

At the time of Firth and Wagner's paper, ELF as such was virtually unheard of, despite the publication of earlier work taking a similar position on NNS English interaction (e.g. Firth 1990, 1996; Aston 1993). Their 1997 paper, making as it did such a specific case for the study of ELF within SLA, represented a great leap forward for ELF. Even though they only devoted a small section directly to it and did not fully consider the implications, Firth and Wagner are in the minority of challengers to mainstream SLA who do not even implicitly accept NS normativity as a legitimate concept.

Firth and Wagner's position on interlanguage theory, in particular, has much relevance to ELF. They relate this again to the lack of SLA investigations into what they call "everyday L2 use" (1997: 292). The result, they argue, is the classification of *all* NNSs as learners whose L2 is in transition on its way towards the target of native-like competence, and whose NNS features are errors if they are transitional and fossilizations if they are permanent. Given that the authors have just pointed out that a vast amount of English use is

lingua franca (rather than NNS–NS) use, it follows that their position on interlanguage is particularly meaningful for ELF, even though they do not single English out specifically in their critique of interlanguage.

Rampton (1987) is another case in point. Understandably, he does not refer to ELF as such, given that in 1987 the notion of legitimate expanding circle lingua franca norms was embryonic to the extent that it existed at all. Around twenty years later, his article nevertheless still has much to say to scholars who deny the importance of ELF and instead persist in regarding its (expert) speakers as interlanguage speakers of a Modern Foreign Language. Rampton argues that

at one of the points where IL [interlanguage] scholarship draws closest to sociolinguistics – namely in the study of contextual variability – it runs the risk of remaining restrictively preoccupied with the space between the speaker and his grammar, rather than with the relationship between speakers and the world around them. (1987: 49)

This means, in turn, that SLA researchers focus their attention on examining and explaining the grammatical (and other) differences between NNSs and NSs rather than investigating the regularities and normalities of their successful language use in “the world around them”. And as Firth and Wagner later pointed out, in the case of a vast number of NSs, this means ELF.

As mentioned earlier, although in many instances they resonate loudly with ELF, most of the other challenges to SLA (apart from those made by ELF scholars themselves), and even those far more recent than Rampton’s, do not single out lingua franca (let alone ELF) use for special treatment. For example, the ‘NS user group’ (see e.g. Cook 1999, 2002c), like Firth and Wagner before them, reject SLA’s promotion of the NS as the measure against which L2 performance should be judged. They argue that L2 speakers should instead be studied as users in their own right. However, I sense that these dissenters, unlike Firth and Wagner, still consider a standard NS version of a language to constitute at some level the correct version – a position which seems perfectly reasonable in respect of Modern Foreign Languages but not lingua francas. Cook, for example, refers to the NNS as “the fallible non-native speaker” (2002b: 338). The point these scholars are making, then, is not that they regard NNS versions as correct *per se*, but that they do not consider NS correctness to be necessary, relevant, or even attainable, and therefore that it is futile to discuss NNSs as failed NSs. This implies, in their view, that NSs cannot provide the optimum classroom model or a valid reference point in L2 testing, even if NSs “can continue to provide a convenient common denominator” (Cook 2002b: 336). For, as Cook observes, L2 learners “[w]hatever their age and experience . . . will become L2 users, not native speakers” (*ibid.*).

Cook’s approach to the L2 user as “an independent speaker of language” (2002a: 1) is shared by the other authors whose articles, covering a wide

range of linguistic areas and pedagogic topics, appear in his edited collection (2002c). Their approach is entirely relevant to ELF in the way it removes the onus on NNSs to mimic NSs and to regard themselves as failed NSs when they are unable to do so. However, because they do not consider lingua francas as a separate case,<sup>14</sup> this group cannot accommodate the notion of ELF users as not only L2 users of English in their own right but also users of legitimate varieties of English. On the other hand, Rampton's position on the NS (1990, 1995; Leung et al. 1997), with its promotion of 'expertise' as the main criterion, a concept which "emphasises 'what you know' rather than 'where you come from' " (Rampton 1995: 341), is more helpful to ELF and sits comfortably with the notion of the expert ELF user. And in turn, it implies that in lingua franca communication such as ELF, code-switching and accommodation skills are important indicators of proficiency, while the ability to approximate an NS variety is not. This is a very different approach to NS/NNS differences from that taken by those such as Davies (1991, 2003<sup>15</sup>) and Mukherjee (2005), who support SLA's native-speaker bias.

Sociocultural approaches to SLA share common ground with aspects of the positions outlined above. They also better represent Hymes' much quoted but often misunderstood third parameter of communicative competence: "[w]hether (and to what extent) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) *in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated*" (1972: 12; emphasis added). Those SLA researchers who take account of context tend to interpret Hymes' third parameter as justification for working within a framework of NS communicative normativity. Thus they regard NS interaction as providing baseline data against which NNS learners' interactions can be assessed (a point made by Firth and Wagner; see also Leung 2005). By contrast, for the sociocultural theorists, what is appropriate does not link to NS contexts of use but to the contexts of interaction in which NNSs themselves participate. Here, the construct of mediation becomes central. For according to the sociocultural theorists, language is learned through the mediation of interaction, and as Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000: 169) observe, learners are "socially constituted and always situated beings" who "undeniably belong in their second self-chosen world, not as observers but as fully-fledged participants" (p. 155). In the case of TESOL, much of the meaningful classroom interaction is ELF, with learners being present and future members of an international community made up predominantly of other NNSs.

Another central concern of sociocultural theory is the transformative agency of L2 learners. As Donato (2000: 46) points out,

learners actively transform their world and do not merely conform to it . . . sociocultural theory maintains that no amount of experimental or instructional manipulation (for example, structured input, controlled teacher talk, required information exchange tasks, etc.) can deflect the overpowering and transformative agency embodied in the learner.

Again, this is an aspect of sociocultural theory which contradicts the fundamental conformist tenet of mainstream SLA but on the other hand has much in common with an ELF perspective, whose claim is that ELF speakers, to use Donato's turn of phrase, are transforming their (English) world by means of their lingua franca interactions. It also links with Brutt-Griffler's (2002) position, which holds that ELF speakers (although she does not actually use the term) are not merely recipients of English but, more importantly, agents in its spread and development.

Yet another aspect of sociocultural theory has relevance to ELF. This is the Participation Metaphor (Sfard 1998). Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000: 156) discuss the importance which the Participation Metaphor attaches to "contextualization and engagement with others" in SLA as follows:

Applying such an approach to SLA involves shifting the focus of investigation from language structure to language use in context, and to the issues of affiliation and belonging. Moreover, while AM [Acquisition Metaphor] is about states and the permanence implied by related terms such as 'having' and 'knowledge', PM [Participation Metaphor] is characterized by terms such as 'doing', 'knowing', and 'becoming part of a greater whole' . . . Thus, we can summarize by saying that AM focuses on the individual mind and the internalization of knowledge . . . while PM stresses contextualization and engagement with others . . .

Such "engagement with others" in pursuit of effective communication in context is very much in evidence in research which has been carried out into phonological accommodation in ELF interactions (see Jenkins 2000) and is currently proving fruitful in investigations into lexicogrammatical accommodations (e.g. Dewey 2005).

Sociocultural theory also considers the possibility that L2 learners may wish in the process of acquiring the L2 to create for themselves "new and distinct linguistic and ethnic identities, or even communities, that had not existed previously and where for a while no one may be a 'native speaker' of a particular language variety" (Pavlenko 2002: 295–6). The concept of the native speaker is so entrenched in mainstream SLA that it would be unthinkable to consider the possibility of an L2 variety that had no native speakers. Yet in a sense, this is precisely what ELF is. And as Pavlenko points out, such new varieties "allow researchers to ask new and more specific questions about particular communities that L2 users may have, seek, or resist memberships in" (ibid.). They also raise new questions about L2 speakers' identities, which for sociocultural theorists are not fixed and imposed (by NSs) but are in flux and self-determined (see Pavlenko 2002). As far as ELF is concerned, these are highly pertinent issues. However, as Zuengler and Miller demonstrate in their survey of sociocultural approaches to SLA, these and mainstream cognitive approaches currently inhabit "two parallel SLA worlds" (2006: 35).

Returning to Hymes's third parameter, with which this discussion of sociocultural theory began, the work of the sociocultural theorists implies the need for a reassessment of the meaning of the adjective *appropriate* so that it comes to have more in common with the verb *to appropriate*. For ELF, this would mean the legitimate appropriation of the English language by its majority expanding circle users, together with whatever diversity and hybridity suited their own purposes rather than the purposes of inner circle speakers. This would facilitate a number of policy changes in the teaching and testing of English, and could, in turn, positively inform ELF discussions of identity and community membership.

Another alternative, but related, approach to SLA is that advocated by Norton, who studied the English acquisition of five immigrant women in Canada (see e.g. Norton Pierce 1995, Norton 2000). In Norton's approach, social identity and investment are prioritised over individual cognitive processes. Like the sociocultural theorists, she views the acquisition of an L2 as a process connecting the individual to a community rather than as a phenomenon taking effect within what Thorne describes as "a world of a-historical, decontextualized, and disembodied brains" (2000: 220). For Norton, once we start to consider SLA as bound up with social context, issues of social identity and sense of self in relation to the 'target' community members become critical factors in determining the extent of investment in the learning process and integration into the community.

Mainstream SLA research, including sociopsychological approaches (Gardner and Lambert's attitude and motivation studies – 1972; Schumann's acculturation hypothesis – 1978, 1986), also ignore issues of 'legitimate discourse' and the 'power to impose reception' (Bourdieu 1977, 1991). These, on the other hand, are central to Norton's approach, in which motivation to acquire the L2 crucially involves the learner's right to speak (in the target community) and the perceived legitimacy (by the target community) of their discourse when they do so. In a similar vein, Miller, in her study of ten Australian high-school students, invokes the notion of 'audibility', which she defines as "the degree to which speakers sound like, and are legitimated by, users of the dominant discourse" (2004: 291), pointing out that this involves both speaker and listener. Both scholars draw attention to the role of power, and the way it can be used to deny L2 users the right to speak in the first place and to be heard when they do. In the latter case, this could be because an aspect of their language (e.g. their accent) was not considered 'legitimate' in the sense of being acceptable and intelligible to the target community.

Both Miller and Norton reconceptualize motivation as investment, link it with issues of power and identity, and demonstrate how learning outcomes are contingent on the way these issues are resolved. ELF, of course, is rather different from the Canadian and Australian ESL situations studied by Miller and Norton. Their approach to the roles of power and identity in SLA nevertheless has much that can inform ELF research, and the absence of

such considerations means that, with one exception, its researchers are not in a position to investigate the acquisition of English by the majority of expanding circle learners.

The exception is some recent work of Dörnyei and Csizér. These researchers have re-examined motivation and come to the conclusion that the notion of integrativeness needs to be redefined in the light of world English developments, not as “*integration* into the L2 [i.e. NS] community” but as “some more basic *identification process* within the individual’s *self-concept*” (2002: 453; emphasis in original). Such a concept, they argue, “would be suitable for the study of the motivational basis of language globalization”, because “World English is turning into an increasingly international language and it is therefore rapidly losing its national cultural base while becoming associated with a global culture”. This development “undermines the traditional definition of integrativeness as it is not clear any more who the ‘L2 speakers’ or the members of the ‘L2 community’ are” (ibid.).

Finally, although implicit in all the dissenting voices and alternative approaches already discussed, we come to SLA’s Chomskyan underpinnings and those who argue for a greater balance between cognitive and social perspectives on SLA. For, as Wardhaugh points out, “the psycholinguistic approach . . . ignores most of language and all of society” (1998: 589). Roberts is only slightly less hard on mainstream SLA, arguing that “[o]ver the last twenty years SLA studies have not ignored issues of discourse and social context”, but that they nevertheless “give it only a marginal role in the processes of language development” (2001: 108). She adds that “it is the narrow concept of the learner and her capacity to realise specific speech acts which generate the key research questions”, and therefore “[t]he endeavour remains an essentially cognitive one” (p. 109), with “taken for granted notions of what constitutes a speaker of a particular language, what is a non-native speaker, what certain groups count as ‘target language’ and so on” (p. 115). She goes on first to critique second language socialization as an alternative perspective, and then to demonstrate how the notion of language as social practice improves on this by enabling us “to see the ideological in interactions” (ibid.).

The lack of a social perspective is a common complaint of all those who argue against the essentially cognitive approach of SLA and in favour of a greater balance between cognitive-mentalistic and social-contextual orientations (see e.g. Bhatt 2002; Brutt-Griffler 2002; Firth and Wagner 1997; Kasper 1998; Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000; Thorne 2000). Even when book-length attempts have been made to redress the balance, these have not been entirely successful. For example, Kasper and Kellerman (1997), a collection of papers researching L2 communication strategies, has as its subtitle *Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Once inside the book, however, things are not quite so evenly balanced. The first section (five papers) consists of “Psycholinguistic perspectives”. Although the six papers comprising the second section, “Expanding the scope”, have less focus on the individual and

more on collaboration, the approach is still essentially “cognitive-interactional rather than sociolinguistic because it views conversational participants as collaborators in a joint task rather than as agents in social settings and relationships” (ibid.: 130). This thus leaves only the four papers of the third section, “Sociolinguistic perspectives”, to present a truly social-contextual orientation to L2 communication strategies.

Likewise, the title of Candlin and Mercer’s (2001) *English Language Teaching in its Social Context*, another collection of research-based papers, leads readers to believe that they will find a range of sociolinguistic, ethnographic and social-psychological orientations to ELT, all sharing a common grounding in social context. However, this is not necessarily the case. Even though social context is actually the stated theme of the book, some of the content in the first part, “How is language learning explained?”, is traditional SLA-oriented, while social context tends to be narrowly defined throughout the book as the *classroom* context. Thus, there is little consideration of the fact that social context involves questions relating to learners’ use of English *outside* the classroom and hence, with few exceptions, little reference to questions concerning English language norms, ideology, legitimacy, identity, power, appropriation and the like. In fact, apart from the paper by Roberts, there is little focus on *language* (as contrasted with *teaching*) at all. And even in Roberts’s case, there is still an assumption that language socialization means socializing learners *into* the second language (which begs the question “whose norms?”). Admittedly, this assumption is relevant to the context that concerns Roberts, that is, minority groups in a majority country. Nevertheless, given the vast number of lingua franca speakers of English (and they also probably constitute the largest group of learners of English), the omission from this volume of any reference to ELF speakers’ social contexts, and the language issues involved, is a serious one.

Two more recent books also take a critical look at SLA. One of these is Seeley and Carter (2004), who devote a substantial chapter of their book on applied linguistics to critiquing SLA, as well as touching on the subject elsewhere in the book. This contrasts significantly with most other volumes on applied linguistics and SLA, which still tend to present conservative orientations to SLA as received wisdom, and if they mention other orientations at all, to present them as peripheral. The other is Block (2003), a book-length treatment advocating a “social turn” in SLA. The appearance of these two books within a short space of time is interesting in itself, as it suggests that the dissenting voices are being heard and the alternative approaches being taken seriously. Prior to this, criticisms of SLA had been restricted to journal articles and, more recently, to books which critique SLA in the process of presenting alternative orientations (e.g. Lantolf 2000; Norton 2000).

Both Seeley and Carter (2004) and Block (2003) cover a range of issues relevant to ELF. Seeley and Carter, for example, criticize SLA’s tendency to treat target languages as homogenised, to adopt a simplistic view of social group membership and therefore of social identity, and to classify people as

NS and NNS according to preconceived, pseudo-scientific concepts. On the other hand, the book has little to say about language *per se*. This is reasonable, given that their title does not lead the reader to believe that language will be a particular concern, although disappointing in respect of ELF.

In his deconstruction of mainstream SLA, Block also covers a range of issues that resonate with ELF. These include: SLA's monolingual bias, its generic approach to *the* foreign language classroom, its unproblematic and simplistic approach to the concepts 'L1', 'native language' and 'mother tongue', its loose use of the term 'second' in SLA, its misinterpretation of Hymes' communicative competence, and its neglect of learner identity. On the other hand, as far as ELF is concerned, there is an inexplicable gap in Block's discussion of language: his failure to distinguish between a foreign language and a lingua franca.<sup>16</sup> The term 'lingua franca' does not even appear in the index.<sup>17</sup> This means that Block's approach to language is premised in its entirety on *foreign* language acquisition and, in turn, leads him to adopt a conservative, NS-normative view of the concept 'target language' which, ironically, is identical to the SLA view that his book is designed to counter. Such an approach may indeed be appropriate for genuine foreign language (including EFL) learners. But as was pointed out above, and as Firth and Wagner (1997) – a source to which Block refers many times – observe, it is decidedly not the case for lingua franca (including ELF) learners.

### Implications of SLA discourses and counter-discourses for ELF

From an ELF point of view, then, mainstream SLA has a number of ideological blind spots. Some of these relate to SLA as a whole, while others relate to ELF in particular. It will also be clear that in my view the alternative approaches outlined above hold a good deal more promise for ELF learning and use than traditional cognitive approaches.

As far as the teaching and testing of English in the expanding circle are concerned, one major problem we face is the assumption that teaching methods based on mainstream SLA research, currently Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Learning and Teaching (TBLT), are indisputably relevant to lingua franca (and all other) needs. Nunan, for example, in his discussion of the impact of English as a global language on teaching practices in the Asia-Pacific region,<sup>18</sup> says the following:

All of the countries surveyed subscribe to principles of CLT and in a number of them, TBLT (the latest methodological realization of CLT) is the central pillar of government rhetoric. However, in all the countries surveyed, it would seem that rhetoric rather than reality is the order of the day. Poor English skills on the part of teachers as well as inadequate teacher preparation make it very difficult, if not impossible, for many teachers to implement CLT in their classrooms. In places such as Hong



Kong and Taiwan, where principles of TBLT are beginning to appear in commercial textbooks aimed at the public school sector, most teachers have a poor understanding of these ideas, and it remains to be seen whether they will be able to use these materials effectively. (2003: 606)

This paragraph raises a number of questions concerning appropriate norms, goals and methods, and who has the right to decide. I will leave aside any comment on the reference to the ability of teachers in the Asia-Pacific region to understand concepts relating to teaching methodology and focus instead on the issue of methodology itself.

Nunan uncritically assumes here that CLT and TBLT are the optimum methods for teaching English in the Asia-Pacific region and problematizes only the ability of local teachers to implement them. This ignores the many problems that have been raised not only in relation to the exporting of Western methods in general (see e.g. Holliday 1994) but specifically in relation to these two methods/approaches (nobody, even their own proponents, seems quite sure which to call them).

In his review of Ellis (2003), Swan raises a number of concerns with TBLT and concludes that

its claim to be an approach, and its dismissal of traditional teaching, is based entirely on hypothesis . . . theoretically and empirically ill-supported: the belief that the acquisition of all aspects of language necessarily takes place on-line during communicative activity. (Swan 2005a: 255; see also Swan 2005b)

It is this “empirically ill-supported” approach that Nunan and many others seem to be promoting as the most appropriate for all learners of English irrespective of their lingua-cultural context of learning and use. This is precisely Block’s point when he argues that

researchers interested in TBLT appear to be heading towards a model for language teaching which will be applicable across contexts worldwide, what in essence (and despite protestations by authors such as Willis 1996, and Skehan 1998, that their pedagogical recommendations do not constitute a method) will be a new global method for language teaching. (2002: 124)

Similarly, in a seminal challenge to CLT in which he draws on research into World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca, and on social approaches to SLA, Leung (2005: 119) argues that the transfer of the concept of communicative competence from research to English language teaching has “produced abstracted contexts and idealized social rules of use based on (English language) native speakerness”. He sees the way in which CLT has been interpreted and operationalized over the past thirty years as having

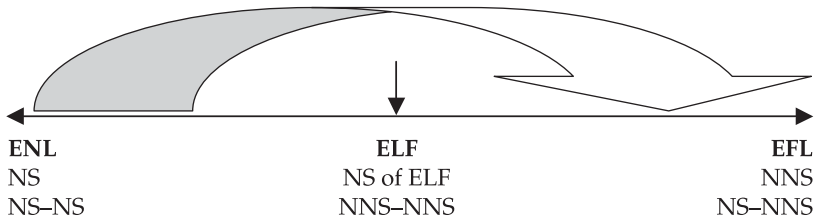
“psychologized and reified the social dimension” (p. 138). With curriculum knowledge being based primarily on NS idealizations and ‘social’ being reduced to mean classroom interaction, communicative competence, argues Leung, has been “insulated . . . from the developments in English and the myriad ways in which it is now understood and used in different contexts” (p. 139). He concludes by calling for it “to reconnect with the social world if the concept . . . is to mean anything more than a textbook simulacrum of Englishes in the world” (p. 139).

Leung’s position contrasts dramatically with what Littlewood (2004)<sup>19</sup> says about communicative competence. Having pointed out (2004: 503) that “developments in linguistics and related disciplines have led to a much wider conceptualization of the knowledge and abilities that second language learners need to acquire”, Littlewood recommends to readers “the seminal article of Canale and Swain, 1980”, an article that Leung (2005) critiques for its native-speakerism. Littlewood goes on to present a list of items that communicative competence is “now usually recognized as including”. These are: linguistic, discourse, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural competence. There is no reference to the possibility that appropriate linguistic behaviour in any of these cases might mean something other than that of the native speaker. Indeed, there seems to be no awareness that learners of English might have something other than ‘foreign’ language learning in mind, and that their target might be lingua franca use or even to become an ‘L2 user’ (Cook 2002b) rather than to approximate native speakers.

I conclude with a point about native-like targets and learner choice. One of the criticisms regularly levelled at ELF researchers is that we wish to deny learners the choice of ‘aspiring’ to speak English like its NSs. Cook, however, takes a very different view from that of mainstream SLA researchers (and compilers of NS English corpora). He argues as follows:

An objection that is sometimes raised to the argument against the native speaker model is that it is the L2 users themselves who want to be native speakers . . . Their attitudes are the product of the many pressures on them to regard L2 users as failed natives. Bilinguals have accepted the role assigned to them in a society that is dominated by monolinguals and where bilingualism is a problem but monolingualism is not . . . *But this acceptance of the native speaker model does not mean these attitudes are right.* Members of various groups have indeed wanted to change the colour of their skin, the straightness of their hair, or the shape of their eyes to conform to other groups, but this desire highlights the status of various groups in society not the intrinsic deficits in other groups. (1999: 196; emphasis added)

The NS language ideology underpinning SLA research bears a heavy responsibility for the professed desire of many NNSs of English to sound as ‘native-like’ as possible. Learner choice is, of course, essential, and I would



**Figure 3.** Locating ELF in a third space

not wish to patronize anyone by saying otherwise. However, the choice needs to be made in full knowledge of the sociolinguistic facts and without pressure from the dominant NS community, otherwise, as Bhatt (2002: 99) observes, “aspects of language use, such as language ‘choice’ become less questions of choice than of economic, political and social coercion”. In effect, those who are coerced thus will have taken on “the unitary identities (shaped by notions of deficiency, inferiority, and disadvantage) conferred on them by the dominant discourses” (Canagarajah 2004: 117).

ELF is not the same as EFL, nor is it failed ENL. It can be said to occupy its own space between them, a ‘third space’ (Bhabha 1994), or perhaps a ‘third culture’ (Kramsch 1993a) or ‘third place’ (Kramsch 1993b). This is demonstrated in Figure 3, where the arrow linking ENL and EFL indicates their interrelationship and the dependence of the latter on the former, while ELF floats freely and independently in the space between.

Like Bhabha, ELF researchers dislike the limitations of binaries, in ELF’s case the binary of ENL–EFL. For this places everything that is linguistically acceptable and ‘legitimate’ on the NS side, and everything that is unacceptable and ‘illegitimate’ on the NNS. On the other hand, if we interpret ELF as occupying a third space, we open up the possibility of accepting norms which differ from those of NSs rather than simplistically defining all that differs from NS English as wrong by default. As if in answer to the fundamentally NS ideology of mainstream SLA research, Piette (2005: 76) points out that “linguists are studying the development of ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) with fascinating results, the ELF magically toppling the assumptions of its near homonym, EFL”.

## Notes

I would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers as well as Constant Leung, Henry Widdowson and Barbara Seidlhofer for their helpful comments on the first draft of this article.

1. Even those who still subscribe to the behaviourist concepts of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ transfer (see Ellis 1994: 300) might find it odd to talk of ‘positive interference’, which seems to be a contradiction in terms.

2. Despite the theoretical recognition of the positive role of the L1 in L2 acquisition, there is little evidence of this having much effect in practice. The English Only movement is thriving in the US and (if not by name) in many other EFL/ESL learning contexts.
3. An exception is Klein and Perdue (1997). An anonymous reviewer pointed out that their 'basic variety' could be considered a lingua franca.
4. Thus, the monolingual bias of which Yamuna Kachru speaks prevails in spite of the knowledge of the beneficial role of the mother tongue in the acquisition of subsequent languages. It is also problematic, even in the case of EFL, to the extent that learning a second language is always a bilingual activity and never a monolingual one (see Widdowson 2003).
5. In his 2004 article on second language learning, Littlewood also uses French, German and Spanish language examples. However, he does so only to demonstrate problems for French, German and Spanish learners of EFL, not to discuss the learning of these languages, even though they are far better instances of Modern Foreign Languages than English is. In fact Littlewood does not mention the concept of ELF (by any name) and considers SLA only in terms of 'second' and 'foreign' languages, although he uses 'second' as a cover term for both (2004: 502).
6. Bilingual English Speakers can be both NNSs and NSs, although given the numerical facts, they are more likely to be the former. They contrast both with Monolingual English Speakers and with Non-Bilingual English Speakers (NNSs who are not proficient in ELF). One of the main purposes of the classification was to remove what I see as an irrelevant distinction between NNSs and NSs as far as ELF (not to mention the nativized Englishes) is concerned (see Jenkins 2000: 9–10).
7. Despite the conceptual shift from Contrastive Analysis (CA) in the 1950s, through Error Analysis in the 1960s, to Interlanguage Theory from the 1970s, such deviations from native-speaker norms continue to be identified by CA. In fact, CA still thrives as a field of enquiry and pedagogic tool, although nowadays removed from its behaviourist associations and more closely linked with the concept of interlanguage. For example, the 4th International Contrastive Linguistics Conference (held in Santiago de Compostela, Spain in September 2005) focused on contrastive interlanguage analysis (CIA). According to the call for papers, CIA aims to improve understanding of NNS language by comparing it with NS and NNS varieties. In the first case, comparison "highlights the features of nativeness and non-nativeness of learner language", and in the second case, it "determines whether the non-native features are limited to one group of non-native speakers (in which case it is most probably a transfer-related phenomenon), or whether they are shared by several groups of learners with different mother tongue backgrounds (in which case the most likely explanation is a developmental difficulty)" (<http://www.usc.es/iclc4>). Meanwhile, Swan and Smith's *Learner English. A teacher's guide to interference and other problems*, a book based on contrastive analysis and widely used by ELT practitioners, was published in a second edition in 2001. There is no suggestion in either source that the English of 'non-native speakers' might not be learner language, i.e. interlanguage.
8. Some scholars who focus on outer circle contexts have also been slow to question interlanguage theory with respect to the expanding circle. And a few (e.g. B. Kachru 2005) openly dispute the notion of ELF altogether. In Kachru's case, this

is because the original sense of the term 'lingua franca' was different from its meaning in the phrase 'English as a Lingua Franca', and also because the term is apparently "loaded" (p. 224), although he does not explain why he considers this to be so. Other outer circle scholars such as Lowenberg (2002) and Canagarajah (2005) are far more receptive to ELF.

9. Han and Selinker end their article by noting that "the construct of fossilization has enjoyed much popularity in the second language acquisition research literature as well as in the literature and discussions about second language teaching" (2005: 466–7). The eminent SLA researcher Mike Long is thanked in their acknowledgements for his "valuable input" into the article. And note that Long himself published an article on the subject of fossilization two years earlier. He begins his article by observing that "fossilization has become widely accepted as a psychologically real phenomenon of considerable theoretical and practical importance" (2003: 487), although he goes on to criticise aspects of fossilization theory and speak in favour of an alternative phenomenon, 'stabilization'. As far as ELF (and outer circle Englishes) is concerned, however, there is little difference between the two.
10. In fairness to Mitchell and Myles, they do at least devote two chapters to, respectively, sociocultural and sociolinguistic perspectives on SLA. However, even in these chapters, like Moyer, they still operate with an assumption of NS normativity and NNS deviation from it as, by definition, interlanguage error.
11. I have borrowed this phrase from Seidlhofer (2004: 213).
12. I am not including in my discussion the claims against SLA that relate exclusively or primarily to English use in outer circle contexts.
13. Firth and Wagner's paper seems to have caused something of a stir in the SLA community. Several of its members wrote critical responses in defence of their ideology and methods (e.g. Gass 1998; Long 1997; Poullisse 1997), claiming that Firth and Wagner's paper was irrelevant to SLA and naïve, and reasserting their position in which L2 acquisition is central and L2 use peripheral. Firth and Wagner in turn replied to their critics arguing that such a response in effect "erects barriers, sealing off the area of SLA as a kind of intellectual 'private property' of documented, card-carrying SLA researchers" (1997: 91). All the papers that form this debate can be read together in Seidlhofer (2003).
14. Although Cook (2002b) mentions the lingua franca core, he does not discuss it within a framework of legitimate ELF varieties but within a framework of L2 users' needs.
15. Davies problematizes the desire to abandon traditional NS models for English, arguing that it would "take learners into a setting without maps" (2003: 164). He goes on to contend that Seidlhofer's "ambition" to compile an ELF corpus is "huge" (too huge to be accomplished, he seems to imply) because "the range and variety of such interactions is boundless" (p. 165). Oddly, this is not an issue that he or anyone else has taken up in relation to (equally boundless) corpora of NS interactions. He then quotes my point (Jenkins 2000: 160, though he wrongly attributes it to Seidlhofer) that "[t]here is really no justification for doggedly persisting in referring to an item as 'an error' if the vast majority of the world's L2 English speakers produce and understand it", as if in support of his observation that "[i]t is understandable that Seidlhofer should wish to overturn the native speaker model" (p. 165). However, he leaves the reader wondering why he believes this is "understandable". Judging from the conclusion to the book, in

- which he presents his own view of ELF (or International English, as he calls it) as meaning “using one or the other Standard English in international settings” (p. 215), this is not because he sympathizes with Seidlhofer’s wish.
16. Block does refer to the use of English as a Lingua Franca, but only in passing (2003: 48) and as a subdivision of English as a Foreign Language. Evidently, though, he has not fully grasped the notion of ELF, as he follows a now out of date distinction made by Berns (1990) in which she had contrasted Germany and Japan. Learners in the former, Berns had argued, need English for lingua franca communication both inside and outside Europe, while learners in the latter need English to communicate with the ‘West’, and primarily the USA. As far as Japan is concerned, this is no longer the case, as English is now needed primarily for lingua franca uses both within and outside East Asia. Thus, German and Japanese English learners now have more that links them, use-wise, than differentiates them.
  17. Nor does either ‘English as a Lingua Franca’ or ‘English as an International Language’ appear. Meanwhile, Block’s only suggestion for improving on the ‘S’ in ‘Second Language Acquisition’ (2003: 57) is, in line with Rampton, to substitute either ‘additional’ or ‘other’. Neither, however, enables us to refer specifically to lingua franca learning/use, which can no longer be treated as some kind of ‘sub-category’ of SLA, by whatever name, but forms a category, not to mention an entire research agenda, in its own right.
  18. Two of the countries surveyed by Nunan, Malaysia and Hong Kong, are technically in the outer circle. However, issues of appropriate norms and methods apply just as much, and some would say even more, to these regions than they do to the expanding circle countries in Nunan’s survey. In addition, the outer circle countries of the Asia-Pacific region also use English as a lingua franca, both with each other and with expanding circle speakers.
  19. Littlewood’s article on second language learning appears in a recent handbook of applied linguistics (Davies and Elder 2004) and as such is presumably intended as a state-of-the-art survey of the field. However, for the most part it consists of traditional SLA concepts such as transfer, generalization and simplification, and provides overwhelmingly mainstream SLA explanations for L2 development. Most of the SLA theories discussed are cognitive-oriented, and even when it comes to context-oriented theories, only half a page is devoted to *social* context (the acculturation model and social identity theory), although, in fairness, Littlewood points out that he will not deal with social factors as these are dealt with in a separate chapter. However, the implication is that social influences are to be considered a separate issue rather than fundamentally central to L2 acquisition.

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