

## **Focus on the Speaker-Learner in English as a Global Language: Agency and Satisfaction**

November 2022 – Volume 26, Number 3

<https://doi.org/10.55593/ej.26103a2>

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### **Abstract**

In pedagogical debates about Global Englishes (GE) and English as a lingua franca (ELF), there is widespread agreement concerning an urgent need for liberating teachers and students from the normative constraints of ELT's orientation towards standard English by raising their awareness of the characteristics and complexities of GE/ELF communication. ELT students are generally perceived as weak GE/ELF communicators requiring remedial education based on the analysis of recorded GE/ELF exchanges. Contrary to this deficit view, this article calls for acknowledging ELT students as 'speaker-learners', who are endowed with a natural capability for communication including strategic creativity, contextual inferencing, empathetic cooperativity, and communication monitoring. Through a social constructivist lens, they appear as principal agents of 'MY English' development, guided by their personal requirements of communicative and communal success and their aspiration for speaker satisfaction. A normalizing account of GE/ELF communication and an emancipatory MY English perspective on ELT provide the theoretical-conceptual underpinnings of an immersive pedagogical GE/ELF approach, preferably implemented through virtual exchange in a blended learning environment. Pedagogical mentoring is essential for helping students assume MY English responsibility, make best use of their ordinary communicative capability, and exploit the translanguaging range of their resources when faced with unfamiliar challenges in GE/ELF encounters.

**Keywords:** GE/ELF pedagogy, communicative capability, normality of GE/ELF communication, MY English emancipation, pedagogical lingua franca immersion, intercultural virtual exchange

### **GE/ELF Pedagogy – Where Are We?**

Communication under conditions of Global Englishes (GE) and English as a lingua franca (ELF) is generally described as exceptionally complex, with leitmotif reference to qualities like

heterogeneous diversity, multilingual variation, dynamic fluidity, and strategic creativity (Jenkins, 2015; Seidlhofer, 2011). It is thus hardly surprising that Complexity Theory with its focus on “complex, dynamic, non-linear, self-organizing, open, emergent, sometimes chaotic, and adaptive systems” (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 4) has been offered as a metatheoretical framework (Larsen-Freeman, 2018). In this connection, Baird et al. (2014) point out that GE/ELF research “seems ideally placed to embody the complexities of language and thereby contribute to our growing understanding of language and communication in a more holistic way” (p. 172).

The assumption of GE/ELF complexity strongly influences the pedagogical debates in GE/ELF communities concerning ELT and what should be done “to address the mismatch between what is taught in the classroom and how English functions outside the classroom” (Rose et al., 2020, pp. 158–159). According to widespread agreement, a necessary and crucial step is to raise teachers’ and students’ awareness of the nature of GE/ELF communication (Grazzi et al., 2020). As Sifakis (2019) emphasizes:

“... what ELF users know and how they interact should inform lesson plans, teacher training curricula, textbooks, policies, and assessment procedures in ways that will render the ELT experience richer and deeper, and closer to a realistic experience of what has come to be global communication by English.” (p. 293)

Key issues in ELF-aware teacher development are discussed in Sifakis et al. (2019), a collaborative publication covering language awareness (Lopriore), textbooks (Siqueira, Vettorel), materials (Cavalheiro) and tasks (Dewey), issues of intelligibility (Bayyurt), and good practices (Kordia). Launched in 2018, the European Erasmus+ project ENRICH (2018–2021) represents a major step forward with its empirically validated *Continuous professional development (CPD) course* and a *Handbook to English as a lingua franca practices for inclusive multilingual classrooms* (Cavalheiro et al., 2021). In a similar way, and arguing from a Global Englishes perspective, Rose and Galloway (2019) specify and discuss the dimensions and elements of a Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) approach (also see Aoyama & Denton, 2022; Selvi & Yazan, 2021) with particular attention to six GELT principles (pp. 15–16):

1. Increasing exposure to World Englishes (WE) and ELF in language curricula
2. Emphasizing respect for multilingualism in ELT
3. Raising awareness of Global Englishes in ELT
4. Raising awareness of ELF strategies in language curricula
5. Emphasizing respect for diverse culture and identity in ELT
6. Changing English teacher-hiring practices in the ELT industry

The pedagogical measures envisaged by GELT and the ENRICH project imply a deficit view of ELT students’ competence. Considering the normative constraints still dominating learning and assessment, ELT students are deemed in need of remedial education within a conceptual framework of post-normativity (Dewey, 2012) and native-speakerism critique (Fang, 2018; Kabel, 2009). The objective is to liberate them from the norms of standard native speaker English as the language taught by helping them understand and appreciate the non-normative and strategic nature of GE/ELF communication. In this endeavour, insights from GE/ELF research, combined with metacognitive and metalinguistic analyses of observed and lived GE/ELF exchanges, play a key role. Raising teachers’ and students’ GE/ELF awareness is valued as a transformative process (Sifakis, 2019) that will open their pedagogical mindsets for GE/ELF competence development and critical language education (Cogo et al., 2021; Duboc & Siqueira, 2020; Siqueira, 2020).

A quite different, yet complementary view is offered through the lens of translanguaging pedagogy (Brooks, 2022; García et al., 2017) with its focus on liberating bilingual students from the colonial heritage of standard English as the dominant means of pedagogical communication. To ensure educational and social justice, the approach emphasizes students' right to be allowed and enabled to flexibly and purposefully draw on the entire range of their linguistic and non-linguistic resources for meaning-making as a unitary and integrated repertoire (Ortheguy et al., 2019). Translanguaging pedagogy applies to both content and language learning and gives bilingual students not only "the same opportunities to communicate and learn as their white monolingual peers, but also centers [their] repertoires and lifeways rather than attempting to remediate them" (García et al., 2021, p. 215). Translanguaging pedagogy can be and has been extended to embrace educational settings outside decolonial contexts (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022) including ELT and with attention to GE/ELF competence development (Cenoz, 2019).

GE/ELF pedagogy and translanguaging pedagogy both focus on liberating 'speaker-learners' from the normative monolingual dominance of standard English as the target and medium of education, yet with different concerns and solutions. GE/ELF pedagogy aims to compensate for ELT students' purported GE/ELF deficit by drawing pedagogical attention to awareness of and familiarity with GE/ELF communication. Translanguaging pedagogy, on the other hand, emphasizes and supports bilingual students' rights "to be educated on their own terms and on the basis of their own language practices" (García et al., 2021, p. 206). Crucially, the shift is now from a standard-English-only approach to the pedagogical activation and exploitation of students' entire multilingual and multimodal repertoires.

In the following sections, I will take up this focus on the students themselves and their resources and capabilities as speaker-learners. My primary assumption is that successful GE/ELF communication has its deep roots in successful communication in general. In order to understand successful GE/ELF communication, and the kind of competence it requires, we thus need to understand these roots both from a communication and language learning perspective. In this connection, speaker-learners' own requirements of communicative and communal success will emerge as the essential force behind their emancipatory quest for agency and satisfaction.

## **Normalizing GE/ELF Communication**

When compared with the objectives and practices characteristic of the ELT classroom, authentic GE/ELF communication is certainly quite complex. But is it complex when compared to what speaker-learners are familiar with from their everyday encounters with family members across generations, friends from different walks of life, or people they meet at work? To understand the complexity of GE/ELF communication, and its enabling competence, it helps to apply a normalizing lens and look at the pragmatic discourse abilities speaker-learners draw on when using their available linguistic and non-linguistic resources for successful communication in ordinary everyday contexts. In the following passages, I will discuss six key quality features of speaker-learners' communicative capability (Seidlhofer, 2011, pp. 197–198; Widdowson, 2020, pp. 233–243) that serve as a foundation of both ordinary and GE/ELF communication. Special attention will be given to an inward perspective that accounts for the attitudes and strategic processes beneath the surface of speaker-learners' overt communicative practices.

The first quality feature of communicative capability that needs to be mentioned concerns **pragmatic creativity** (Widdowson, 2020, p. 190; also see Pitzl, 2018a). As Widdowson (2003) points out, communicative capability essentially involves being able to learn and use the language "not just as a set of fixed conventions to conform to, but as an adaptable resource for making meaning" (p. 42). And he continues:

“You are proficient in a language to the extent that you possess it, make it your own, bend it to your will, assert yourself through it rather than simply submit to the dictates of its form. [. . .] So in a way, proficiency only comes with nonconformity, when you can take the initiative and strike out on your own.” (p. 42)

Due to this creative quality, speaker-learners’ communicative capability opens up a vast and largely uncharted endonormative space of *possible* means of expression. They are part of what Widdowson calls “the *virtual* language, that resource for meaning making imminent in the language which simply has not hitherto been encoded and so is not [. . .] given official recognition” (p. 48–49; also see Seidlhofer, 2011, pp. 109–112). It is the ‘English to be’, a language in the making, to which the individual speaker-learners add their lexical, grammatical and idiomatic deviations and oddities without ever exhausting the full range of their creative possibilities. And here is the snag. This difference between the comparatively few means of expression they actually create and the many that remain only a possibility calls for a justification of choice. Where do speaker-learners find orientation and guidance when deploying all their inventiveness? How do they manage to leave a footprint in the virtual language with which they are satisfied?

An answer to this question can be found by looking at **strategic processing**, the second quality feature of communicative capability. Strategic processing concerns intentionality: Speaker-learners use their linguistic and non-linguistic resources *in order to* reach a certain goal, which more often than not goes hand in hand with activating their creative potential. All of this calls for orientation and guidance.

In ELT, orientation and guidance are provided by the objectives and criteria specified in the curriculum and supported by the teachers. It should be noted, however, that these educational requirements are imposed from outside the speaker-learners, just like the requirements that might be given with a particular private or work-related context of everyday communication. They are external and can have an impact on the speaker-learners’ communication and learning only to the extent that they are incorporated in their personal requirements of communicative and communal success. In this process, they are adapted and transformed, and eventually become part of where the speaker-learners want to go and who they want to be.

Basic requirements of success concern being able to express intended meanings, be understood, and understand others. But speaker-learners’ requirements go far beyond these aspects of intelligibility and comprehensibility. They may, for instance, include expressing oneself to one’s own satisfaction, speaking like members of a certain community, ensuring rapport with one’s communication partners, or simply complying with certain ELT learning objectives in preparation for an exam. As this list shows, the range of speaker-learners’ requirements of success can be quite diverse. It is influenced by individual dispositions and preferences but also by social conventions and ad hoc conditions of the respective communicative situation, from education to work to leisure. However, being eventually able to meet one’s own requirements cannot be taken for granted. Possible rescue strategies might include being more attentive and trying harder, or simply lowering certain requirements that turn out to be too demanding.

All in all, for both creative and strategic processing, speaker-learners’ own requirements of communicative and communal success serve as beacons of orientation and guidance. They constitute the shaping and controlling force behind their agency and satisfaction, enabling them to make full use of their creative and strategic potential without going astray. Speaker-learners own requirements of success are at the heart of their agency and satisfaction in their strife and struggle for autonomy and emancipation.

The third quality feature of communicative capability concerns **contextual inferencing**. It has this double quality of being strategic and creative, and is at the very centre of how we experience the world (Jackendoff, 1983, pp. 23–37), including ourselves and how we communicate. More

specifically, as an essential part of pragmatic discourse processing (Brown & Yule, 1983; Widdowson, 2007; Widdowson, 2015), contextual inferencing enables us to understand and convey far more than what is explicitly said (Grice, 1975). In this connection, explicatures and implicatures, two types of contextual assumptions identified by Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995), play an important role. The words and structures used in an utterance only specify a propositional skeleton, which is in need of being fleshed out by its readers/listeners. To close remaining gaps in meaning, they generate explicating assumptions as illustrated in the following dialogue (Blakemore, 1992, pp. 57–64):

Ann: *Did you enjoy your holiday?*

Beth: *The beaches were crowded and the hotel was full of bugs.*

The explicatures that contribute to Ann's interpretation of Beth's reply may include "the beaches *I went to*", "were crowded by *other tourists*", "and *in addition*", "the hotel *where I stayed*", or the disambiguation of "bugs" as bedbugs. Quite a different strand of meaning processing concerns the implicating assumptions Ann is likely to draw from Beth's utterance. Plausible options from strong to weak include "I didn't enjoy my holiday", "I will not go there again", "I will sue the travel agency", or "I don't want to be reminded of it".

Both explicating and implicating assumptions make abundant use of contextual knowledge in the widest sense, including what is known about the writer/speaker. In a spy setting, for instance, Beth's utterance might be understood quite differently, namely, as implying other spies on the beach instead of tourists, bugging devices in the hotel instead of bedbugs, and that she enjoyed her stay since she was in the right place. Explicatures and implicatures thus emerge from the continuous and dynamic interaction of two complementary ways of meaning generation:

- (a) bottom up interpretation of redundantly available meaning indicators in the form of linguistic and non-linguistic means of expression
- (b) top down creation of meaning expectations based on contextual knowledge

Engagement with these processes by readers/listeners is guided by their assumption that in the given communicative situation the means of expression used in an utterance are relevant for inferring its intended meaning. Furthermore, it should be noted that all processing, whether bottom up or top down, is done simultaneously. This explains why explicating and implicating do not follow a strictly sequential ordering. Depending on their contextual knowledge, readers/listeners might grasp essential implicatures even before or without having fully fleshed out the propositional skeleton. Generally, the more they know about the respective writers/speakers and their communicative purposes and intentions, the less dependent they are on information provided by propositional explicatures. If, on the other hand, contextual information is poor, propositional explication becomes more important since it is the main source for readers/listeners to infer possible implicatures.

To better understand the nature of pragmatic discourse processing, it is necessary to distinguish between its role for comprehension and its role for production. In both cases, speaker-learners combine their inferencing abilities with context and partner modelling, but in significantly different ways. For utterance comprehension, readers/listeners rely on their own inferencing abilities carefully tuned to their contextual knowledge (including what they know about the writer/speaker) and their discourse intentions. On this basis, they create a meaning hypothesis concerning the explicatures and implicatures the writer/speaker might intend to convey. For utterance production, writers/speakers assess their communication partners' contextual knowledge, inferencing abilities and discourse intentions as a basis for their own utterance design. Their aim is to choose their linguistic means of expression and non-verbal meaning

signals so as to lead their partners, to the best of their judgement, to generate the intended explicating and implicating assumptions.

Contextual inferencing is at the very heart of speaker-learners' communicative capability. This is true for communication from the beginning to the most advanced stages. Little children make creative and strategic use of contextual assumptions from the very first moment on, even before having language. Because of the contextual inferencing abilities little children are endowed with and develop further in the process of maturation, they can understand utterances made up of words and structures yet unknown to them. This is an essential part of understanding more than what is explicitly said. It is this top down overload of inferential meaning that enables them to infer the meaning contribution of new and unfamiliar words and structures and eventually acquire them.

While strategically creative pragmatic discourse processing is in itself a key quality feature of speaker-learners' communicative capability, it cannot be used to its full potential unless within an environment of supportive attitudes and behaviours. Hence, **cooperativity** is the fourth quality feature; it finds expression in two complementary ways, cooperative behaviour and the assumption of cooperation.

Cooperative behaviour involves, in particular, communicative accommodation (Giles & Coupland, 1991; Jenkins, 2022; Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 101) and co-construction of (meaningful) utterances (Vettorel, 2019). Accommodation is generally understood as referring to speaker-learners adapting their own performance to their partners' comprehension and production abilities and/or the conditions of the communicative situation. Another kind of accommodation involves requirements of success. Speaker-learners might deem it necessary to (a) adapt their performance to new requirements resulting from ad hoc partner negotiation, or (b) down-tune their requirements so that they match their own or their partner's insufficient comprehension or production abilities. When engaging in co-construction, speaker-learners use their own inferencing abilities and requirements of success to intervene in their partner's production process and help them design their emerging utterances.

Cooperative behaviour needs to be complemented by the assumption of cooperativity, which is the key principle in Grice's (1975) seminal account of how speakers manage to mean more than what they actually say. To be successful in this respect, they need to fully exploit their strategic potential; and this hinges on their readiness to assume that their respective communication partners are cooperative in their utterance design and interpretation.

Readiness for cooperative behaviour and for assuming cooperativity do not come naturally. They crucially depend on **empathetic rapport** between the interacting speaker-learners, which constitutes the fifth quality feature of communicative capability. If empathy and as a result cooperativity are weak, even the simplest and most straightforward communicative exchange may end in a serious misunderstanding. Empathy has been identified as particularly essential for intercultural communicative competence, along with attitudes such as tolerance for ambiguity, openness, and flexibility of behaviour (Byram, 1997). But empathy and the other attitudes play a significant role in ordinary communicative exchanges of everyday life as well. All communication is 'intercultural' in the sense of being interpersonal with people having their own specific 'cultures'. Being open for one another is the lubricant of all successful communication regardless of its context, genre, or purpose.

The sixth quality feature of communicative capability concerns the need for continuous **communication monitoring** before, during and after an exchange. Monitoring has been a hotly debated topic in SLA research in connection with the distinction between explicitly learned and intuitively acquired grammatical knowledge. According to Krashen's (1988) monitor hypothesis, speaker-learners' performance draws on their acquired knowledge, whereas their learned knowledge is only available as a 'monitor' device that enables them to check the

correctness of their performance output (for a critical appraisal, see Kohn, 1990, pp. 161–185). In the present context, the perspective is an altogether different one. Communication monitoring is a strategic process by which speaker-learners aim to improve the fit between their communicative performance and their personal requirements of communicative and communal success. In this process, they may attend to the entire range of their requirements, and their monitoring scope may also include their partners' performance. In practice, however, culture-related considerations of politeness and face, or simply a common preference for smooth communication usually impose more or less far-reaching restrictions on the kinds and extent of communicative monitoring actually used (Hoffstaedter & Kohn, 2019; Kohn, 2020b, pp. 64–70).

Two observations regarding speaker-learners' communicative capability should be noted: First, the quality features mentioned – from strategic, creative and inferential processing to cooperativity and empathetic rapport to communication monitoring – specify abilities that are firmly grounded in their practices of ordinary everyday communication. Second, these abilities also help speaker-learners make the best use of their linguistic and non-linguistic resources when addressing GE/ELF-related challenges. When speaker-learners are taking their first steps in GE/ELF encounters, everything they need is thus in place, ready to be activated and to be further enhanced and adapted as their communicative experience expands. This normalizing communicative capability perspective emphasizes that GE/ELF communication is part and parcel of communication in general. GE/ELF communication only appears as special when compared to the restricted communicative practices in the ELT classroom.

Additional evidence of the normality of GE/ELF communication is provided by the disruptive problems and challenges speaker-learners may encounter and be required to deal with in ordinary everyday communication. Utterances are hardly ever produced without more or less severe handicaps for the addressee(s). This can be due to, for example, a mismatch between the communication partners' purposes and intentions, unequal communicative proficiencies, differences regarding background knowledge and contextual assumptions, or noise in the channel. An especially important characteristic of production processing that is easily overlooked concerns “the gradual formulation of thoughts while speaking” (Kleist, 2010/1805–1806). The familiar statement, “This is what I wanted to say”, is actually misleading. Usually, speakers/writers do not start from a pre-fabricated meaning intention for which they then try to find an appropriate expression. On the contrary, more often than not, their meaning intention is initially rather tentative. It unfolds by and by and gains substance in meandering ways in the course of production.

This meaning creation process is not only influenced by speakers/writers' evolving intention but also in a feedback loop by the words and structures they use themselves as well as by backchanneling reactions from their partners. Yet, speakers/writers have semantic authority over their meaning (Braun & Kohn, 2012, p. 194). At the end, they are fully justified in confirming that this is how they *wanted* their utterance and its meaning to emerge and that they are satisfied with what they have achieved. These conditions of utterance production may easily lead to self-repairs, structural breaks, restarts, and thematic shifts on the *textual* surface of the pragmatic *discourse* event (Widdowson, 2004, pp. 1–15). Such surface turbulences are most apparent in the oral mode, but they can be witnessed in the written mode as well, provided the entire writing process is taken into account instead of merely the polished end result.

While disruptive characteristics of discourse production may, at times, be more pronounced under conditions of GE/ELF performance, they are generally similar in nature to what speaker-learners are familiar with from their everyday communicative experience. When faced with the textual discontinuities, fluctuations and fragmentariness of GE/ELF utterances, speaker-learners thus intuitively resort to their communicative capability to ensure a pragmatically coherent discourse. In simultaneous and intertwined bottom up and top down processing, they

make strategic and creative use of their contextual inferencing skills, which are further strengthened and enhanced through increased cooperativity and empathetic rapport. Furthermore, essential support and facilitation are provided by a typical characteristic of utterance-based communication, namely, the usually highly redundant occurrence of linguistic and non-linguistic indicators of meaning.

How GE/ELF speaker-learners actually deal with the comprehension and production problems and challenges they are faced with depends on their requirements of communicative and communal success — that is, on what they want to achieve and who they want to be in English. The requirements relevant to them in a certain communicative situation influence whether they use their communicative capability in a more extended or more basic way. Is it mainly about understanding and being understood, or do they want more in terms of, for instance, self-expression, language and style, or participation? In this respect, external judges such as teachers or researchers are of limited value. Ultimately, it is all about the speaker-learners themselves, their personal requirements, their linguistic and non-linguistic resources, and the self- or partner-oriented strategies they deploy to monitor and ensure communicative and communal success and satisfaction.

Finally, this account of GE/ELF communication through the lens of ordinary everyday communication would not be complete without reference to the communicative adequacy of the linguistic repertoires involved. More often than not, GE/ELF speaker-learners experience “lack of express-ability” (Albl-Mikasa, 2013, p. 112) because of a discrepancy between their communicative intention and the linguistic means of expression available to them. However, when trying to cope with comprehension or production problems arising from this discrepancy, it is again their communicative capability they rely on, guided by their requirements of communicative and communal success. Even a misunderstanding does not mark the end. Particularly when carried by a spirit of empathetic cooperativity, the interacting partners easily engage in extended processes of meaning negotiation, which do not only solve the initial problem but may also open up opportunities for learning and further repertoire development.

## **MY English and the GE/ELF Future of ELT**

Just as GE/ELF communication is grounded in ordinary everyday communication, so is teaching for GE/ELF communication grounded in how we acquire languages. The way teachers understand language learning shapes how they understand and implement language teaching. More often than not, however, they seem to be caught between two stools: on the one hand, innovative beliefs about the pedagogical value of principles such as autonomy, cooperativity and authenticity, and on the other hand, a somewhat strict orientation toward the language taught.

Communicative approaches in language teaching usually go hand in hand with greater tolerance regarding GE/ELF deviations from target language norms, but getting closer to the target is still deemed desirable and likely to be rewarded. This conflict cannot be resolved without examining the language learning assumptions by which our pedagogical preferences and decisions are shaped. From a social constructivist perspective, speaker-learners acquire the English taught, or any other target language, by creating their own version of it in their minds, hearts and behaviour. Acquiring English is about developing ‘MY English’ (Kohn, 2018a), that is, the “idiolect” speaker-learners create for themselves as their “own unique, personal language” (Li, 2018, p. 18).

However, the processes involved are not arbitrary and idiosyncratic. Anchored in communicative cooperation with others, they are influenced and shaped by both individual and social forces, always mediated and guided by speaker-learners’ own requirements of communicative and communal success. A MY English understanding of language learning also



highlights the translanguaging nature of speaker-learners' repertoire(s) and processes for meaning making. MY English is not a homogeneous body of means of expression. Rather, it incorporates varieties speaker-learners build up in correspondence with their requirements of success, ranging from standard to casual and non-standard to boldly creative. When aiming to make their GE/ELF communication appropriate according to their own criteria of satisfaction, they can rely on this range of MY English varieties to meet their translanguaging needs and purposes.

This social constructivist perspective has far-reaching implications for teaching English. It emphatically draws attention to speaker-learners' role as principal agents of learning, not as an option of choice but as a fundamental condition of their human nature. If learning a language, or learning in general, is not possible without leaving one's own signature, pedagogical recognition and empowerment instead of mere tolerance is the only adequate answer. As a consequence, ELT needs to shed its often hidden, more or less strict copying orientation toward the language taught and replace it by an open social constructivist orientation. With this shift, the pedagogical task of helping ELT students acquire the English taught appears in a new light (Kohn, 2011; also see Seidlhofer, 2011, pp. 175–208). It is revealed as crucially being concerned with helping them make English their own, to their own satisfaction, and guided by their personal requirements of communicative and communal success (Kohn, 2020b).

To reach these goals, it is true that speaker-learners need to be directed towards the variations and vagaries of GE/ELF communication in real-life contexts as argued by proponents of GE/ELF-aware pedagogy. However, this should be done in a personalized and normalizing fashion and with an emphasis on practising how to make best use of their communicative capability while addressing GE/ELF-related challenges they actually encounter themselves. Adequate conditions can be provided through an immersive pedagogical lingua franca approach (Kohn, 2020a). Based on a social constructivist understanding of speaker-learners as agents of their own satisfaction, it enables speaker-learners of different linguacultural backgrounds to meet in transient international groups (TIG) (Pitzl, 2018b) and engage in ELF transcultural communication (Antonello, 2022) using MY English as a pedagogical lingua franca.

More often than not, the ELT classroom has a tendency towards linguacultural homogeneity, mutual familiarity and at best weak authenticity. It is, therefore, not always the most suitable place for implementing this kind of pedagogical lingua franca immersion. Approaches to virtual exchange and telecollaboration technologies (O'Dowd, 2021) offer a promising way out of these limitations. Online communication environments such as text chat, a collaborative Padlet pinboard, BigBlueButton video conferencing, or the TeCoLa virtual world make it possible to 'flip' international and transcultural communication activities that are pedagogically desirable but not actually feasible in a classroom context to outside the classroom group, time and location (Kohn & Hoffstaedter, 2015; Kohn, 2018b; European Erasmus+ project TeCoLa, 2016–2019). Furthermore, communication flipping greatly extends the range of potential participants by including students or experts from other countries and linguacultural communities. There is ample evidence that students' readiness and ability to activate their communicative capability when confronted with problems and challenges of GE/ELF communication can be significantly improved through virtual pedagogical lingua franca immersion. Kohn and Hoffstaedter (2017) observed "manifestations of learner agency in particular in connection with communicative participation, topic development, languaging for communicative success and rapport building" (p. 357) as well as attention to speaker satisfaction as evidence of emerging non-native speaker emancipation (pp. 360–363). Also see Gijzen's (2021) study on *Task engagement in virtual pedagogical lingua franca communication*.

The descriptor "pedagogical" emphasizes the need for immersive GE/ELF exchanges to be pedagogically embedded. That is, they should be organized within a blended learning

environment in which preparatory and follow-up activities in the classroom are used to ensure pedagogical integration of the virtual exchange with the main body of teaching and learning. More specifically, these activities are needed for pedagogical mentoring interventions that help speaker-learners make the leap from communicative classroom tasks to natural communication in the virtual GE/ELF environment. In this connection, two general objectives of pedagogical mentoring deserve special attention:

- raising speaker-learners' awareness of the social constructivist MY English nature of communication and language learning
- familiarizing them with the possibilities and functions of monitoring their own and their partners communication

MY English awareness plays a crucial role in speaker-learners' communication and learning activities since it helps them understand the role of their personal requirements of communicative and communal success as a primary force of orientation and guidance. MY English awareness also makes it possible for them to see and acknowledge that, in the end, it is themselves who are in charge of and responsible for their success and satisfaction.

Against this backdrop, a key task of speaker-learners' communication monitoring under GE/ELF conditions concerns negotiating requirements with communication partners and teachers. Relevant questions include: What are my requirements in this particular communicative situation regarding, for example, comprehension, expressing myself, or interacting with others? In what ways are my requirements different from the usual requirements in class? Do my requirements comply with those of my communication partners?

Other key tasks of communication monitoring are related to speaker-learners' wish to improve their own and their partners' communicative performance. In our case study on virtual GE/ELF conversations between Dutch and German secondary school students (Hoffstaedter & Kohn, 2019; Kohn, 2020b, pp. 64–70), the students' overt communication monitoring was rather reserved and, in this respect, similar to what they were used to from ordinary everyday communication. Resorting to 'let it pass' and 'wait and see' strategies, their self-oriented comprehension monitoring seemed to lag behind the problems they actually encountered.

Self-oriented production monitoring was far more frequent. This might be evidence of a gap between communicative ambition and available express-ability, but it is also consistent with formulating one's thoughts through speaking (Kleist, 2010/1805–1806) and emphasizes the relevance of output processing and languaging (Swain, 2005). In contrast, overt partner-oriented monitoring, be it focused on comprehension or production, was only weakly represented. Furthermore, overt monitoring of one's own or one's partner's empathetic rapport did not occur. All these limitations in the students' monitoring behaviour are, arguably, due to a combination of four factors:

- not wanting to interrupt the conversational flow
- considerations of politeness
- a low-stakes attitude towards the respective conversational exchange
- a focus on task completion over communication

While the first three factors underline the ordinary communication character of the observed GE/ELF conversations, the fourth one is particularly interesting since it shows an effect of the school setting. For some students, getting the task done by finding the right answers seemed more important than engaging in a cooperative conversation, which, as a result, reduced their perceived need for communication monitoring. This school effect was prominently observed in a constellation in which the dominant communicator tended to upstage her weaker and insecure partners. As regards pedagogical mentoring for enhanced communication monitoring, it is thus important to help students embrace the communicative character of the immersive pedagogical

GE/ELF exchanges and guard against falling into familiar task routines. As a prerequisite, it is essential for them to understand the crucial role of communication monitoring when applying their communicative capability as best as they can to ensure and improve their communicative success and satisfaction.

In addition to this communication perspective, speaker-learners' communication monitoring can and should be considered from a learning perspective as well. Clearly, each instance of communication monitoring (e.g., "Please repeat.", "What does 'avoid' mean?", "What do you call these long and thin things you use to drink from a glass?") offers an opportunity for learning. The learning value of pedagogical GE/ELF immersion is therefore closely correlated with the depth and thoroughness of communication monitoring. For this reason, the monitoring conventions speaker-learners are familiar with from ordinary everyday communication do not necessarily yield best results for the pedagogical purpose of immersive GE/ELF communication. In ordinary communication, keeping communication monitoring at a bare minimum might be fully appropriate. In pedagogical GE/ELF immersion, however, with its overall emphasis on communication *learning*, communication monitoring should be specifically attended to and further augmented. To increase the learning value of pedagogical GE/ELF immersion, it might even be advisable to encourage "the interacting speaker-learners to develop their skills and readiness for communication monitoring beyond the routines of ordinary communication" (Kohn, 2020b, pp. 69–70).

## Concluding Remarks

Against the backdrop of a social constructivist MY English perspective on communication and language learning, this article has argued for reconciling GE/ELF pedagogy with ELT's widespread preference for standard English as the language taught (Kohn, 2019).

Depending on their socio-cultural and political background, teachers or students might feel inclined to reject native speaker varieties of standard English. Contrary to mainstream opinion in the field, however, a certain pedagogically mediated version of standard English should not be excluded simply because of the conditions and requirements of GE/ELF communication. Rather, what counts in the end is what speaker-learners are allowed, encouraged and supported to do with it to make it their own. In this process, speaker-learners' personal and normal 'outfit' plays a key role, including, most crucially, their capability for communication and language learning in general as well as their requirements of communicative and communal success as beacons of orientation and guidance.

According to this understanding, awareness of the characteristics and challenges of GE/ELF communication is important, albeit in the speaker-learners' own authentic experience. Through virtual pedagogical GE/ELF immersion, they become aware of their own responsibility for agency and speaker satisfaction.

"The emancipatory project of GE/ELF pedagogy thus shifts from liberating speaker-learners from [standard English] to empowering them to make it their own. It is their social constructivist capability for MY English communication and learning that incorporates the possibility of non-native speaker emancipation." (Kohn, 2022, p. 124)

Furthermore, there is an interesting synergy effect: By deploying and exercising the full range of their ordinary communicative capability when addressing initially unfamiliar challenges of GE/ELF communication, speaker-learners are likely to improve the quality of their communicative performance in general. However, to bring about these pedagogical benefits, mere exposure to pedagogical GE/ELF immersion is hardly sufficient. Generally, a fair amount of pedagogical mentoring is needed to help speaker-learners make best use of their

communicative capability from strategically creative and inferential processing to cooperativity and empathetic rapport to communication monitoring.

The linchpin element in this connection is speaker-learners' – and teachers' – awareness and acceptance of the social constructivist MY English condition and its implications for learning and teaching. Last but not least, it is worth noting that the immersive GE/ELF pedagogy approach offers a new and promising perspective for transformative and continuous teacher development.

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## Acknowledgments

Part of the research this article is based on was supported by the European Erasmus+ project TeCoLa (grant agreement: 2016-1-NL01-KA201-022997). The article reflects the views of the author, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. My special thanks go to Petra Hoffstaedter, Laura Kohn, and Ian McMaster for valuable discussions and comments. I also would like to thank two anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback.

## To Cite this Article

Kohn, K. (2022). Focus on the Speaker-Learner in English as a Global Language: Agency and Satisfaction. *Teaching English as a Second Language Electronic Journal (TESL-EJ)*, 26 (3). <https://doi.org/10.55593/ej.26103a2>

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