

Factors of English as a Lingua Franca

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Chapter 1: Introduction

People have different styles of communication; the ways in which we speak, listen and behave are all different to each other. I found that there are differences in communication styles when I studied abroad in Australia where there are many people from all over the world. Therefore, last year I attempted to investigate what elements influence certain communication styles. The result was that the practical English used in the real world seems different from English that Japanese teachers teach at school.

Following last year's research, I focused on English as a lingua franca (ELF) as my graduation thesis this year. My thesis is titled 'Factors of English as Lingua Franca' because I would like to know what English usage in the real world is like. Nowadays, English is becoming a widespread language in the world, known as English as lingua franca. In other words, English is not just for native speakers such as Americans, British and Australians but also for a multiplicity of people such as Asians. McArthur (2003) argued that this was naturally caused by the interactions between Westerners and Asians in business because Asia plays an important role in the world economy. Because of this, English usage has changed. For my research, I examined the factors of ELF which were actually researched before in a European context, but not in Asia. Firth (2009) described that there are mainly two frameworks for ELF; Meta-theory and Entailment. Meta-theory is a concept that the present English cannot be explained by traditional applied linguistic theories; English is what native speakers and non-native speakers co-construct together. On the other hand, Entailment is a concept which states that there are specific strategies which occur in ELF. An example of this is back-channeling which is a response such as 'Ah

huh' or 'Okay' (Tanaka, 2008). Consequently, I would like to know what the ELF factors are in an Asian context.

For the research, in order to explore what English usage in an Asian context is like, the data were collected from a project in my university whose participants were Japanese university students as well as international volunteers from various countries. The collected data are based on recordings of conversations which occurred naturally through their interaction on the project. Regarding the current use of English in the world, this study will be meaningful for people who might have an interaction with a mix of people of different nationalities.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this study, two conceptual frameworks were employed for the analysis. The first framework is a concept of ELF argued by Firth (2009). According to Firth, ELF consists of two elements, Entailment and Meta-theory. The second one is a framework of code-switching proposed by Barredo (1997).

2.1. ELF

ELF itself is a concept that has been discussed by many researchers over a decade (e.g. Firth, 2009, McArthur, 2003, and Seidlhofer, 2005). "The term, ELF has emerged as a way of referring to communication in English between speakers with different first languages." (Seidlhofer, 2005, p. 339). ELF interactions take place among non-native English speakers and also including native English speakers sometime. Furthermore, Firth (2009) considers that ELF has two components which details are below.

2.1.1. Entailment

In most cases, ELF users share neither a common native tongue nor a common culture, and ELF is 'a contact language' to communicate each other between them (Firth, 1996). Meierkord (2004) asserts that ELF "emerges out of and through interaction", and she added that "it might well be that ELF never achieves a stable or even standardized form" (p. 129). Through the research, Firth (2009) noted that there are a number of strategies that are often seen in ELF conversation; ELF users

activate complex pragmatic strategies to help them negotiate their variable form. For instance, strategies such as “let it pass” and “make it normal” appear to be commonly deployed (Firth, 2009). Other examples are that ELF users might borrow, use and re-use each other’s language forms, produce nonce words, and switch and mix languages (Firth, 2009).

2.1.2. Meta-theory

Firth (2009) argued that major theories within applied linguistics are being revised and redrawn by reason of social constructionism and post-structuralism. He continues that on the crest of the social and post-structural wave is work in ELF since inherent in ELF scholarship is a post-structural disposition (Firth, 2009). It means, in my understanding, English was used to be a language that was learnt through textbook in school in terms of applied linguistics; however, now English is no longer a formed and governed language but a language that is possibly changing and shapeless. ‘English’ might be varied across the ages.

2.2. Code-switching

Code-switching has so far been discussed by a number of researchers: one of them was Barredo (1997). In this study, the term code-switching was regarded as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems” following Barredo (1997, p. 528). In his paper, he focused on some discourse/pragmatic functions of Basque-Spanish code-switching. Barredo explained that code-switching was a common phenomenon among Basque-Spanish bilinguals.

Through the research, Barredo concluded that a wide variety of purposes were seen in Basque-Spanish bilinguals’ code-switching as other researchers had also previously revealed. Instances of multiple functions and strategies are as follows; to organize or structure discourse, to change the topic by implying to move on to another topic, maintain the authority of utterance among the speakers.

In addition, switching between languages was considered as an important tool to ease up the negative connotation of utterances, likewise to add some humorous and/ or ironic remarks. Though the participants in Barredo’s study were balanced bilinguals of Spanish and Basque, there are some similarities between his study and

the present research.

These two above-mentioned conceptual frameworks are chosen to observe the data efficiently. Focusing on ELF itself as well as code-switching, I would like to investigate factors of ELF in Asia field.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter introduces Conversation Analysis (CA) which I employ to approach my research question, two data collection methods, the research site and the participants.

3.1. Approach

The author believes that the most suitable approach for the present research is CA to approach the research question, what are the factors of ELF in Asia. ‘CA is the study of recorded, naturally occurring talk-in-interaction.’ (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008). CA was chosen in this study because of its effectiveness in creating objective analysis.

3.2. The Research Site

The data were collected from MSSP (Meisei Summer School Project) in 2013. MSSP is a student-centered project funded by Meisei University and supported by two non-government organizations (NGOs). Meisei students and international volunteers from various countries cooperate to offer free English classes to local children. An intensive English course is offered for two weeks consisting of one preparation week and another teaching week during local children’s summer vacation. In 2013, eighty-one Meisei students, sixteen international volunteers from thirteen different nationalities, and one-hundred and fifty children between six years old and fifteen years old participated in MSSP. Because the participants of MSSP were not only Japanese, English was always required to understand each other: they had to speak English to make and share teaching plans, prepare teaching materials, and have lunch and meetings together.

While MSSP is in session, international volunteers stay in a guesthouse,

which is called “*Geihinkan*”, from the week before MSSP is open until it ends. In *Geihinkan*, there were two leaders who were sent from the NGO to support international volunteers during their stay in 2013. One of the leaders always stayed there. In addition to international volunteers and the leaders, two different Japanese students stayed in *Geihinkan* every day to help and to interact with the international volunteers. Therefore, nineteen people having a mix of gender, age, nationality, culture, religion and mother tongue, usually slept in *Geihinkan* every night.

All of the data for this thesis were collected in the dining room of *Geihinkan* (see the appendix 1). *Geihinkan* is a place where volunteers and students from various backgrounds live together. The dining room of *Geihinkan* is a common space for everybody. The dining room was the room where interactions between the participants took place the most without restrictions of gender, age, nationality, culture and religion.

The reasons why the researcher collected the data in *Geihinkan* were as follows: firstly, the author acted as a student assistant of MSSP as well as one of the guesthouse leaders, so the data were collected in a timely manner whenever it was desired to record the video. Secondly, as mentioned before, *Geihinkan* was the ideal location that I was able to investigate people from various social and linguistic backgrounds. Lastly, the common language used to communicate with each other in *Geihinkan* was English. In other words, ELF was used in *Geihinkan*. Those three reasons made the research site an optimal setting to gather the data of the real usage of ELF in Asia.

3.3. Data Collection Methods

Two data collection methods, video recording and audio recording were used to collect the data by means of CA. In order to see the conversations as they naturally occurred in the guesthouse between various people, the author assumed that setting a video camera on a laptop and recording randomly in the dining room was the best way to observe the interactions between participants. Because the recording device was often present, but not always recording, participants were not always aware that they were being recorded, which made it possible to record natural interaction.

Video recording and audio recording were employed for CA. These two

methods are needed in order to see the data, which were naturally occurring conversation by the participants and expand analytical possibility. Employing not just voice recording but also video recording gave more reliability and validity to analyze conversation; moreover, potential visual data such as body language could be observed by using video recording.

3.4. Participants

The participants for this research were international volunteers and some Meisei students, who stayed in Geihinkan. The following table shows the details of the participants who were directly involved in the collected data (see the appendix 2 to see all the participants' details).

Name	Gender	Country	Japanese level	Age
Alan	Male	Czech Republic	Elementary	21
Carlos	Male	Mexico	Lower Intermediate	26
Gracie	Female	Singapore	Upper Intermediate	21
Kazuki	Male	Japan	Fluent	20
Kyle	Male	The U.S.A.	Intermediate	24
Maria	Female	Russia	Lower Intermediate	19
Patrick	Male	Ukraine	Intermediate	24
Yuhou	Male	China	None	19

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

All the data were collected by video and audio recording in the dining room of the guesthouse to observe naturally occurring conversation among the participants. Twelve videos in total were recorded for a three and half hours. The data shows some frequently occurring patterns in those recorded videos. Two features of ELF and code-switching appeared through the data. These observed patterns are presented in the following four pieces of video data.

4.1. Entailment

In video 1, the participants were preparing for dinner, and several strategies of ELF were seen. Alan from Czech Republic tried to do something with plates, yet nobody seemed to understand what he wanted to do. In the utterance 2, Kazuki, a Japanese student wearing a pink T-shirt, asked “Do you wanna sheet?” to Alan. Alan

replied “Sheet? ... Shit?” (utterance 3 and 5). After that, the others probably thought he wanted to put what he had on the table. In 14, Gracie from Singapore said “Just put it here.” and others helped. However, what he intended to do was different.

Video 1 Hamburger plates_no subttl



1. Alan : (trying to do something with plate) Plates for this.
2. Kazuki : Ahh. (2.3) Do you wanna sheet? (describing a sheet)
3. Alan : Sheet?
4. Olivia : Shit?
5. Alan : Shit?
6. Others : Shit?
7. Carlos : Ehehehehe.
8. Kazuki : No, no.
9. Alan : It's a, it's a (Spanish). (0.1) Aha.
10. Carlos : It's not hot, right?
11. Alan : Hm?
12. Carlos : It's not hot?
13. Alan : Not hot.
14. Gracie : (pointing the table) Just put it here.
15. Kazuki : What do you, what do you want?
16. Alan : I don't wanna make mess.
17. Carlos : (making room for the plate)
18. Alan : I just, I need it again this plate.
19. Everyone :Ahh. (passing plates for hamburgers)

The author observed several strategies of ELF such as ‘backchanneling’ (Tanaka, 2008) and ‘let it pass’ (Firth, 1996) in video 1. Firstly, when Alan repeated what Kazuki said, backchanneling was used (utterance 2 and 3). According to Tanaka (2008), backchanneling is a strategy to make sure what the interlocutor said by repeating the word or sentences. Secondly, in the utterance 17, Carlos reacted in his ways though what Alan tried to do was unclear; he passed it. Firth noted that ‘let it pass’ is a strategy for ELF; “the hearer thus lets the unknown or unclear action, word or utterance ‘pass’ on the (common-sense) assumption that it will either become clear or redundant as talk progresses.” (1996, p. 243). Consequently, two strategies for ELF, ‘backchanneling’ and ‘let it pass’ were observed in the data.

4.2. Code-switching

As was already mentioned in previous chapters, the participants had to communicate with each other using English during MSSP, and their time in the guesthouse was the part of MSSP. Video 2 emphasizes that they understood that they had to speak English. Patrick from Ukraine suddenly started taking pictures of people around him. One of them, Maria from Russia told him in Russian that he should have asked the permission to take photos of them (utterance 21 and 23). Then Patrick said to her to speak English in the utterance 24.

Video 2 English please. by Patrick_no subttl



20. Patrick : (starting taking pictures of the participants)
 21. Maria : (Russian)
 22. Yuhou : Ahh?
 23. Maria : (Russian)
 24. Patrick : English please. (0.4) I can't understand what you're saying.
 25. Maria : Don't you think you should ask the permission before taking a photo.
 26. Patrick : Nobody does to you. (1.0) Ah, of you of course. (0.1) I always ask you permission.
 27. Maria : Yep.
 28. Olivia : It's fair, huh.

Through the data, the reason why Patrick asked Maria to speak English was probably because Yuhou said “Ahh?” (utterance 22). Yuhou did not understand Russian at all; he and other people could not follow the conversation. The similar data that show the participants were aware of the requirement of English were taken twice in different times with different people. Japanese language such as greetings, a few words and short sentences were frequently seen in the data by non-Japanese participants as well as Japanese sometime. In other words, code-switching between English and Japanese was seen in the data many times. Video 3 is one of the examples. Patrick told Yuhou from China not to pour alcohol any more by saying ‘Kekko desu/ kekko’ (utterance 37) which means, in Japanese, ‘no, thank you.’ in this case.

Video 3 Kekko desu. by Patrick_no subttl



29. Patrick : Yuhou.
 30. Yuhou : Hi.
 31. Patrick : I was the only man here.
 32. Yuhou : Oh, I'm also a man.
 33. Patrick : Now, now. (0.1) When you (0.6) when you came. (0.8) (pointing alcohol) Ah.
 34. Yuhou : Right.
 35. Patrick : Ahh you are so fast.
 36. Yuhou : (pouring alcohol)
 37. Patrick : Kekko desu. (0.2) Kekko. (0.1) Kekko desu. (1.1) Haha.

Patrick said “Kekko desu/ kekko” to refuse Yuhou’s offer to drink more in 37. It seemed that Patrick has softly rejected by using Japanese instead of English. That means Patrick might have used Japanese to mitigate face threatening act (FTAs). FTAs, argued by Roberts (1992), are certain behaviour when people do something negative to their company. Patrick employed positive politeness not to make Yuhou feel worse. Patrick possibly employed code-switching from English to Japanese to ease up on making Yuhou feel uncomfortable by saying “Kekko desu” (utterance 37).

There were a number of utterances of Japanese language in other data too. In video 4, there are eight participants in the room. Two of them are invisible on the screen, with only their voices heard. Alan greeted all the participants in the room, except Carlos, one Mexican participant, with a hug by saying “Oyasumi/ oyasuminasai” in Japanese, which means good night. Likewise, all the participants except Kyle, one American, replied to him by using “oyasumi” in Japanese. Alan greeted only Carlos “good night” in Spanish (utterance 75); code-switching between English and Spanish was also seen in video 4.

Video 4 Oyasumi_no subttl



38. Alan : Good night! (0.4) (thinking) Aw, oyasuminasai.
39. Kaori : Oyasumi. (waving her hand to Alan)
40. Alan : Oyasumi. (2.5) (waving his hands) Oyasumi. (hugging Hikari)
41. Hikari : Ah, oh my god. (0.1) Oh.
42. Alan : What? (2.3) Oyasuminasai. (hugging Olivia)
43. Olivia : Oyasumi.
44. Alan : Olivia, oishisou. (0.6) Oishi.
45. Kaori : Ahahaha.
46. Kyle : It's very wrong.
47. Alan : Qing, oyasuminasai. (hugging to Qing)
48. Qing : Oyasumi. (0.4) Good night.
49. Hikari : You had a shower?
50. Alan : Nope.
51. Hikari : You had a shower?
52. Olivia : Sweating!
53. Kyle : No.
54. Kaori : Ahahaha.
55. Kyle : That wasn't in a shower.
56. Alan : Aya! (0.4) Kaori!
57. Kaori : Are?
58. Alan : Kaori!

59. Kaori : Hai!
60. Alan : Hai, oyasuminasai. (hugging and kissing Kaori)
61. Kaori : Oyasuminasai.
62. Alan : Hey, Maria. (0.1) Oyasuminasai.
63. Maria : Oyasuminasai.
64. Alan : Okay, well too looks, boring. (3.0) Kyle, oyasuminasai. (hugging Kyle)
65. Maria : Even Kyle, but not me.
66. Others : Ahahaha.
67. Kyle : You are, you are much scarier.
68. Alan : I say again, boring.
69. Kyle : You are much scarier than I am.
70. Alan : Selina!
71. Selina : Good night.
72. Kyle : You have shown a willingness to hold a knife.
73. Alan : Oyasuminasai. (hugging Selina)
74. Selina : Oyasuminasai.
75. Alan : (Spanish) (speaking to Calros) (looking at Maria) Hello. (1.2) Ush. (swaying toward Olivia and Qing)
76. Everyone :Ohh.
77. Olivia : oh my god.
78. Qing : Oh my god.
79. Alan : Hello! (0.6) I'm here again.
80. Hikari : Ahahaha.
81. Alan : (leaning on Maria) No?
82. Maria : what no?
83. Alan : (reaching his arms up) No, me?
84. Maria : (looking at Alan and putting snacks down)
85. Alan : Okay. (1.5) I'm so sorry. (0.7) Maria, I'm so sorry, I tried but you said no.
86. Maria : I didn't say no. (hugging each other with Alan)
87. Alan : Ohh. (1.4) Yep, oyasuminasai. (waving his hands)
88. Everyone : Oyasuminasai. (waving back to Alan)
89. Alan : Hikari! (hugging Hikari again)

90. Hikari : I love you, Alan. (0.1) Daisuki. (0.1) Oyasumi.
91. Alan : Oyasuminasai.
92. Hikari : Have a sweet dream.
93. Alan : Sweet dream tonight.

In video 4, which is two minutes and fifteen seconds in length, *oyasumi/oyasuminasai* were used in total twenty times (eleven times by Alan: nine times by the others) not including “good night” in English. Video 4 was taken on the last night in the guesthouse. By this time everyone had a close relationship with each other, and it was time to say good bye. It can be observed that code-switching “*oyasumi*” was used as a ‘membership marker’ to show peer identity.

To sum up, data analysis reveals that ELF in the guesthouse contains several strategies. In addition, code-switching between English and Japanese commonly appeared in the data, and it was localized; furthermore, Japanese used in the guesthouse were applied for mitigation of FTAs (Roberts, 1992) and for membership marker.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

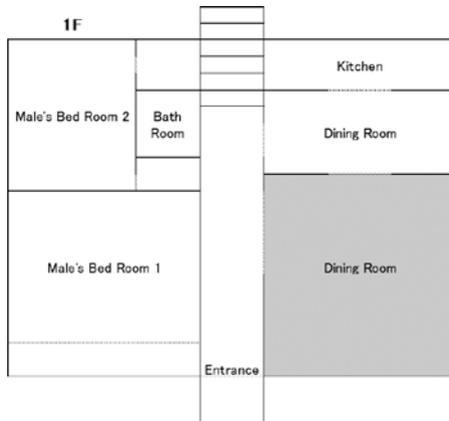
In this study, the researcher observed interaction among people from different cultural backgrounds, the data of which were collected through video and audio recordings in the guesthouse. In conclusion, the author found out that ELF in the guesthouse composed of a number of interesting and unexpected features specific to the local use of ELF.

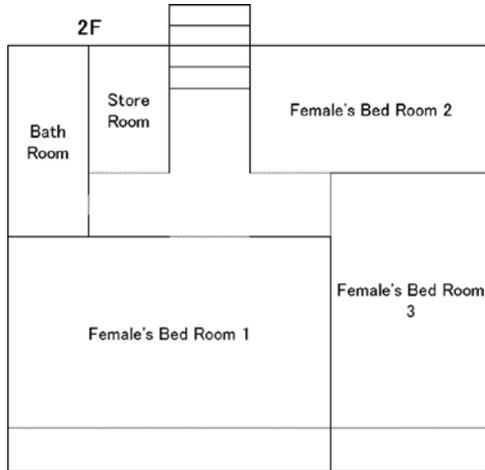
As the previous studies revealed, certain strategies for ELF such as ‘back-channeling (Tanaka, 2008)’ and ‘let it pass (Firth, 1996)’ were commonly seen in the data. In addition, although they understood that they had to speak English in the guesthouse, they frequently switched the languages from English to another language. When it happened, localized code-switching between English and Japanese was used the most. Through the data, it can be observed that there are two purposes

for code-switching: mitigation for FTAs (Roberts, 1992) and membership marker. The participants may have sometimes switched to Japanese to reduce the nuance of utterances that sound impolite or not nice to say directly in English. Also, they might have used Japanese as a membership marker in order to show that they belong to the same community or society by saying ‘Japanese’ as if by code. It is firstly because their English was high enough to convey what they wanted to say when they changed to Japanese. Secondly, it is because Japanese used in the guesthouse was so basic that the majority of participants understood what they meant, otherwise they could let it pass the Japanese since every time it was not important to understand the meaning of the conversation. They could move on to the next topic without problems. Accordingly, factors of ELF in the guesthouse were a variation of English that has ELF strategies and localized code-switching.

In this paper, the data were collected in the guesthouse used by a part of a university project. The participants shared many differences, such as culture, language and age. Despite the common language for the project was being English, the usage of Japanese for code-switching was seen in the data, which was not expected. The author believes that more research for ELF factors is required since there might be more ELF interactions with people from different backgrounds in the future.

Appendix 1





Appendix 2

Name	Gender	Country	Japanese level	Age
Alan	Male	Czech Republic	Elementary	21
Carlos	Male	Mexico	Lower Intermediate	26
Elisa	Female	Italy	Elementary	24
Frieda	Female	Germany	advanced	23
Gracie	Female	Singapore	Upper Intermediate	21
Hikari	Female	Japan	Fluent	21
Jonny	Male	Canada	Elementary	21
Kaori	Female	Japan	Fluent	20
Kazuki	Male	Japan	Fluent	20
Kyle	Male	The U.S.A.	Intermediate	24
Maria	Female	Russia	Lower Intermediate	19
Mircea	Male	Romania	None	35
Olivia	Female	Hungary	Lower Intermediate	21
Patrick	Male	Ukraine	Intermediate	24
Qing	Female	China	Elementary	21
Roberto	Male	Mexico	Upper Intermediate	24

Selina	Female	Mexico	Elementary	19
Yuhou	Male	China	None	19
Yu-lan	Female	Taiwan	advanced	21

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