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DEVELOPING ELF RESEARCH FOR CRITICAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION
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Title: DEVELOPING ELF RESEARCH FOR CRITICAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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Running head: Developing ELF for CLE

Abstract
Research in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), that is the medium of communication between people who come from different linguacultural backgrounds, has created a rich body of work in various areas and this article focuses on a more recent development of this research for teachers and teacher educators in the perspective of critical language education (CLE). We explore how ELF research, both the linguistic/discourse-oriented one and the pedagogic-oriented one, can benefit from its links to CLE, with its understanding of teaching for social change. We then refer to aspects of critical transformative theory that become relevant in designing and implementing ELF-aware teacher education programmes, focusing especially on three recursive (non-linear) components, i.e. the phase of exposure, the phase of critical awareness and the phase of development of actions that teachers can implement in their teaching. We finish by exploring the critical role of assessment in language education and conclude by inviting teachers and educators to become involved in ELF research for CLE.

Keywords: English as a Lingua Franca (ELF); critical language education (CLE); ELF-awareness; critical transformative theory; assessment

1. Introduction
English as a Lingua Franca (henceforth ELF) is the medium of communication between people who come from different linguacultural backgrounds and for whom English is the chosen language of communication (Jenkins, 2015a; Mauranen, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011). Research on ELF has been thriving since the year 2000 with empirical work and dissemination efforts being carried out hand-in-hand through publications and conference organization. One such effort is the establishment of the AILA Research Network on ELF in 2011, which today includes more than 100 members, and this paper is the result of the collaboration between a sub-section of this network.

While the ELF research field has grown vastly in these years, with the development of different areas and domains of expertise (see Jenkins, Baker & Dewey, 2018 for an overview of this work), this paper explores an important and more recent development of ELF research and applications which concerns Critical Language Education (CLE). ELF research lends itself quite well to connections with CLE because of its transgressive, post-normative and critical work, both in the more sociolinguistic/discourse dimension and in the more pedagogical/teacher education area.

This article aims to explore recent work in developing ELF research for CLE. We start with a brief exploration of research on ELF and its nature from a linguistic/discourse perspective before moving onto the relevance of this research for teachers and in relation to CLP. We then focus especially on initiatives to develop ELF-awareness through a critical transformative framework and end with exploring the challenges of this development in relation to assessment and testing.

2. ELF research and its developments

2.1 ELF, World Englishes and Global Englishes

To introduce research in ELF we need to refer to the related areas of World Englishes (WEs) and Global Englishes. WEs and the newer area of ELF are quite different in their conceptualisations of language and variety, and the approach to the role of English in the world, but they also have a lot in common as they both orient to cultural and linguistic diversity (in terms of Kachru's 1992 model of English) and both contribute to the overarching paradigm of Global Englishes (Jenkins 2015a), especially in pedagogical terms – that is, that teacher education and ELT should include a diversity of Englishes, that is English as a Native Language (ENL) varieties, WEs varieties and ELF, within their pedagogical practices.

When referring to ELF, however, the discussion becomes more complex as ELF is not a variety as other WEs varieties, i.e., it is not stable, as it is situational, variable, fluid, and complex; and it is not geographically confined, as it covers the whole expanding circle and cuts across the other two circles of English (see Kachru 1992). ELF is a socially constructed medium of communication and as such it would need to be seen as different from a traditional variety in linguistic terms. In fact, the nature of ELF is conceptualised more in relation to complexity theory than to variationist sociolinguistics and is therefore not seen in terms of specific features that would characterise a variety. Instead, ELF is open, unfinalizable, dynamic, contingent, fragmented, variable and inseparable from context (see Jenkins et al 2018). In other words, ELF is not about using a specific variety of English, "nor is teaching towards ELF competence about teaching such a variety" (Kohn, 2018, p. 34).

2.2 Brief overview of research on ELF discourse, attitudes and ideologies

These dynamic and variable aspects of ELF are key to its nature, which distinguish this mode from static descriptions of varieties in terms of features (for instance, fixed items of grammar, lexis, pronunciation and pragmatics), and focus, instead, on processes which emphasise the accommodation work or the strategic practices that users employ in communication. Accommodation and negotiation take centre stage in ELF empirical descriptions, especially the corpus based work, both the large scale projects (see corpora like Vienna-Oxford

International Corpus of English (VOICE), the English as a Lingua Franca in Academic settings (ELFA) corpus and the Asian Corpus of English (ACE)), and the smaller qualitative corpora studies (Cogo & Dewey 2012, among others). These empirical analyses of ELF data have emphasised the key role of accommodation and negotiation strategies for successful ELF communication, rather than correctness according to a native speaker perspective. They have also highlighted empirical findings concerning ELF communication and discourse in terms of pronunciation, lexico-grammar and pragmatics (for an overview see contributions in Jenkins *et al* 2018).

The area of pragmatics has emphasised the importance of accommodation, i.e. adapting one's speech to the interlocutor's, in pre-empting and solving non-understanding. In recent work the focus has been on pragmatic understanding, especially on how interactants accommodate to each other, construct and negotiate understanding and how they solve miscommunication problems. Findings have shown the productive use of pragmatic strategies, such as strategies related to the negotiation of meaning (e.g. requests for clarifications, reformulations, repetitions and paraphrasing), utterance co-construction, use of multilingual resources (Cogo & House 2018) and non-verbal communication (Birlik & Kaur 2020; Matsumoto 2019), in working towards common understanding. As a result, both researchers and practitioners have emphasised the need to prioritise the teaching of useful pragmatic strategies (Cogo & Pitzl 2016; Vettorel 2020) over emphasis on grammatical correctness. More research into the grammar of ELF is needed, but so far findings have shown (Ranta 2018) that, despite a slight tendency for structural simplification, non-standard grammar does not tend to create problems in communication.

In terms of pronunciation, Jenkins's (2000) seminal work emphasised the need to focus on core aspects of pronunciation, i.e. those aspects that are key to ensure intelligibility, rather than NS-like features, while ensuring a certain level of accommodation among speakers. The Lingua Franca Core (LFC) would include, for example, most consonant sounds, consonant clusters, vowel length and nuclear or tonic stress, but exclude suprasegmentals as these do not seem to hinder communication. Walker (2010) and Kiczkowiak (2020, 2021) have developed the LFC in relation to pedagogy by working on materials, a syllabus and an ELF-oriented approach to pronunciation, including exposure to different accents and accommodation strategies.

In terms of intercultural aspects, research has shown that ELF is not a culturally neutral medium of communication but a complex, fluid and situational one, where a range of cultural identities can be displayed from more local to more global representations. Cultural aspects have been addressed with an emphasis on displays of intercultural awareness (as skills, knowledge and attitudes, see Baker 2015; 2018) in trying to move away from national conceptions of culture to a critical understanding of intercultural practices as emergent, fluid and situational in communication. For instance, cultural aspects may emerge in the construction of idiomatic expressions. Pitzl (2018) has emphasised creativity in idiomatic variation and rich use of re-metaphorization by ELF speakers, showing how non-English idioms can be successfully used or code-switched as multilingual resources in conversation.

In fact, ELF research has started a fundamental shift that decentralises L1 users of English, the so-called native speakers (NS), as the source of language authority for international communication. This goes hand in hand with an emphasis on the localised diversity of ELF usage and the fluid, dynamic and multilingual descriptions, which are hard to fit with the standardisation of English as a prescriptive entity, normally identified with a dominant NS

variety. Moving away from native English varieties also requires that we not only reconceptualise the notion of 'English' per se, and arrive at a more complex understanding of language, but also review our understanding of the ELF user.

From an ELF perspective, the *E* of the acronym is no longer seen as fixed as native standard English, but a more complex understanding of language as an ecologically evolved *E,* which includes and is re-positioned as a multilingual and multimodal linguistic-cultural repertoire which maximises users' translanguaging practices and multimodal understandings (Jenkins, 2015b; Cogo, 2018; Canagarajah, 2013; García, 2009; García & Li Wei, 2014). ELF users are often multilinguals, and for them English is one of the resources in their repertoire, which they would use together with other languages, in bi/multilingual or translanguaging mode (Jenkins, 2015b).

If ELF is positioned within a framework of multilingualism, and for the development of ELF from its Phase 1 to Phase 3 within the multilingual paradigm (Jenkins, 2015b), a sociocultural and sociopolitical level within ELF, or EMF (English as a Multilingua Franca), is important.[1] This condition certainly endorses a strong connection between ELF and Critical Language Education (CLE) (see Section 3). In fact, a CLE perspective to viewing ELF would involve some real-life issues to understand the language use within the various ephemeral intercultural communication, but as equally important, for some seemingly peripheral issues of applied linguistics, including linguistic inequality, language policy, decolonization of knowledge production and planning in education from a critical perspective (Jenkins & Mauranen, 2019; Pennycook & Makoni, 2020; Rose & Galloway, 2019).

2.3 Relevance of ELF for teachers and teacher educators

The shift from identifying and teaching linguistic features to exploring strategies and accommodation as communicative resources provides a new paradigm in ELT, what has been termed as "post normative approach" (Dewey 2012). In this approach, teachers and teacher educators need to rethink the role of standards. While traditionally standard norms of English are conceived as fixed, discrete and representing a specific and normally dominant variety (usually American or British English), in a post normative ELF approach the norms are flexible, situated, changing and diverse (i.e. they might include WEs varieties etc). This may require teachers to engage in a contextualisation of norms and their use, and more importantly, they may need to operate a shift in perspective from standards of correctness to processes of accommodation, pragmatic competence and intelligibility, as important aims in language learning.

The post normative perspective encourages us to see teaching and learning through different lenses. This perspective requires a shift in aim which includes recognising for the multilingual competent user, rather than NS goal. This is a relatively recent shift in ELT but still highly relevant for learners, teachers and teacher educators. The reconsideration and problematisation of standard normativity are also key aspects of a critical pedagogy approach, because the imposition of an NS goal can be extremely problematic, as something demotivating, oppressing and unrealistic, for learners and users alike.

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[1] English as a Multilingua Franca (EMF) is the term introduced by Jenkins (2015b) to indicate the inclusion of ELF in a multilingual perspective in its Phase 3 of development, i.e. from the more descriptive linguistic description of Phase 1, to the focus on accommodation and pragmatics in Phase 2 and the more recent multilingual development in Phase 3.

In terms of teaching, a post normative lens also encourages a move away from English-only teaching practices to a more flexible use and appreciation of multilingual resources in the classroom. While English-only policies have dominated ELT around the world, learners come to the English class making use of their own linguistic/cultural profile and translanguaging/translingual practices are starting to be included in the teaching and learning process.

Several proposals for ELF pedagogy have been put forward and, due to lack of space, this article cannot include them all, but will focus specifically on those related to CLE. However, it is important to mention that various researchers and practitioners have contributed to expanding and exploring the potential of ELF for pedagogy and classroom practices, such as the contributors in Bayyurt & Akcan (2015), Bayyurt & Dewey (2020), Gimenez *et al* (2018) and Sifakis & Tsantila (2018), and the contributors that worked on materials development, such as Cavalheiro (2018), among others. All this impressive body of work contributes in different ways to ELF pedagogy and focuses on specific aspects of it, but does not necessarily engage in full with CLE, which is the focus of this paper, and that will be briefly discussed in the next section.

3. ELF and critical language education

Critical language education (CLE) operates within the scope of Critical Pedagogy, which is basically teaching for social change. Those who research and work with critical approaches to language teaching and learning are interested exactly in the intrinsic relationships between language education and social change (Norton & Toohey, 2004). For Crookes (2013, p. 8), CLE "emerges from the interaction of theories and practices of language teaching that foster language learning, development, and action on the part of students, directed towards improving problematic aspects of their lives, as seen from a critical perspective on society."

Language classrooms are not closed boxes where life takes place detached from the real world. On the contrary, they are social spaces in themselves, representing microcosms of a broader social world. Once we understand these spaces as sites of constant struggle and intersections of diverse ideologies, cultures, and identities, we can conceive language pedagogy not as a mere abstract cognitive process where pieces of language become stored in students' brains (Pennycook, 2001), but as "ways that support the development of active, engaged citizens, who will, as circumstances permit, critically inquire why the lives of human beings are materially, socially, and spiritually inadequate, [seeking] out solutions to the problems they define and encounter, and take action accordingly" (Crookes, 2013, p. 8). Critical pedagogy situates the classroom in the wider social context based on the premise that what happens in the classroom ends up making a difference beyond its walls. Within language education, critical practice is 'about connecting the word with the world' (see Freire, 1970; Akbari, 2008), thus recognising language as ideology, and "extending the educational space to the social, cultural, and political dynamics of language use" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 70).

CLE is well-represented from an ELF perspective as "ELF moves the focus from the learning-teaching of preconceived norms to the creation of spaces for negotiations, thus viewing contradiction and conflict as productive and meaningful, conceptualising them as positive in ELT settings" (Jordão & Marques, 2018, p. 53). The critical lens incorporated by such a perspective raises awareness of a clearer understanding of current global

sociolinguistic scenarios and challenges the traditional approaches of language education, which tends to prioritise native norms from a monolingual perspective, with goals far more distant and unrepresentative in today's linguistic landscape with multilingualism as the norm. As Fang and Baker (2021, p. 179) argue, it is important for English language education to adopt a critical lens in order to conduct ELT "in a broader sociolinguistic, sociocultural and sociopolitical perspective with relevant issues in relation to intercultural communication brought to the fore [because] this is the primary use of English globally." By viewing the complex linguistic landscape from an ELF perspective, in particular the aforementioned EMF perspective, researchers have proposed that, among other issues, the field of English language education readdress the norms and re-evaluate the target of ELT in which language policy and practice are both understood from a critical multilingual perspective.

The epistemology and development of ELF provides an effective platform to explore the various issues in relation to CLE. In the first place, applied linguistics is in the 'multilingual turn' (May, 2014), in which a traditional monolingual ideology based on a fixed native standard norm should no longer be regarded as the yardstick in language teaching and learning. Multilingual speakers use not only *languages* but also multimodal and semiotic resources in daily communication for various purposes. It is the full multilingual, multimodal and semiotic repertoires of speakers that position utterance within various emergent speech situations (Lee & Dovchin, 2020; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015).

When posing the discussion on ELF and CLE, then, we also acknowledge the contribution to such developments within the perspective of Critical Applied Linguistics (henceforth CAL), a field that is rapidly developing in the 21st century, mapping the social, cultural, political issues in relation to linguistic theory and practice in both global and local contexts. As an approach in language education and use from a sociocultural, socioeconomic and sociopolitical perspective, CAL "seeks to connect the local conditions of language to broader social formations, drawing connections between classrooms, conversations, textbooks, tests, or translations and issues of gender, class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, culture, identity, politics, ideology or discourse" (Pennycook, 1997, p. 169). CAL is much relevant to ELF studies in dealing with the global spread of English in relation to language and power, linguistic ideology, and a much more complex relationship between language and culture, to recognise the English use not only in contexts where English is not traditionally regarded as a native language (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011), but more widely and recently from the Global South to promote linguistic equality highlighting the voices in the periphery (Baker, 2015; Dovchin, 2018; Pennycook & Makoni, 2020). In fact, both CLE and CAL, especially when considering these emerging epistemologies of the Global South, point to a need for a decolonising of premises and practices related to different areas within language studies and "a delinking from (not a rejection of) a range of assumptions about language and language users" (Pennycook & Makoni, 2020, p. 40).

3.1 Issues and orientations connecting ELF and CLE

Investing in criticality when it comes to ELF implies considering a multiplicity of issues and orientations. In order to develop ELF for CLE, educators should first understand the role of English as the medium of instruction in the classrooms, courses and programmes they teach in different contexts, especially at the local level, and how their learners perceive the potential of incorporating the language into their existing repertoires to function in multilingual and multicultural contextualised practices. This also means empowering teachers as transformative intellectuals, deconstructing ingrained EFL-oriented notions, and engaging

ELF developments with new ways of conceiving and conducting an English pedagogy, which reflects the complexities of the ELF phenomenon, paradigmatic changes, and even epistemic breaks. For instance, recent scholarly works have recognised translanguaging practices in ELT to challenge the traditional native ideology and promote justice in language use and education (Canagarajah, 2013; García & Li Wei, 2014; Fang & Liu, 2020; Tian & Shepard-Carey, 2020). From translanguaging pedagogies, ELF is positioned from a multilingual and multimodal perspective by maximising users' linguistic/cultural repertoire to understand their "multiple discursive practices" (García, 2009, p. 45).

ELF is argued to be further explored from the macro-, meso-, and micro-perspectives (Mauranen, 2018), where it should be viewed to unpack the language use from the linguistic and societal level, language use for social interaction, and individual cognition. However, to a certain extent, the epistemology of ELF emphasises the linguistic and discursive level in intercultural communication, while a critical applied linguistic perspective of ELF should position the social level to understand why and how multilingual speakers create meanings but also challenge such process of meaning making through the deployment of multimodal and semiotic resources. The earlier phases of ELF also divorced the traditional theories of second language acquisition (SLA) based on native norms, and has extended the field of SLA and applied linguistics from the cognitive phase to a more sociocultural turn (Borton, 2013; Firth & Wagner, 2007; Lantolf, 2000; Swain, 2006), and more recently to the complex dynamic system theory (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008) and the multilingual perspective (Cook, 1992; May, 2014). For a further extension of the conversion from a CLE perspective, what might be further done by ELF researchers is to reconceptualise and readdress what *language* and *communication* mean not only from language use *in situ*, but also from a social perspective to delve the complex speech situation from multilingual and multicultural perspective. Such a step forward will link ELF to an understanding of linguistic, multimodal and semiotic resources in communication, language ideologies and practices in relation to identity construction and negotiation, as well as language users' positioning with the so-called lingua franca and some minority languages as linguistic repertoire.

As we can see from the discussion above, ELF accommodates important possibilities to be explored through CLE. In many ways, this move, which can include the most diverse areas within the scope of ELT practices, for sure, has to do with ELF's evolution as a scholarly field. As posed by Kimura and Canagarajah (2018, p. 304), "regardless of one's linguistic background, pedagogies should prepare students for new challenges of the increased global mobility and contact zone interactions." In today's superdiverse world, such a complex task cannot be carried out uncritically, that is, oriented by policies, premises and procedures that still place the English teacher in a position of a practitioner who basically operates the system, unaware of the outcomes and implications of a thriving research field such as ELF and other interrelated ones. ELF aligned with CLE, for sure, opens up great and important avenues to be explored within English language pedagogy, including teacher education, ELT practices, and testing/assessment. That is what will be discussed in the section which follows.

3.2 Applications for Teacher education

It becomes clear from the above that overcoming the deeply entrenched NS ideology that *a priori* marginalises the ELF discourse as inherently deficient is far from a straightforward task. As mentioned earlier, it requires empowering language users to problematise the power imbalances embedded in traditional normative narratives about language and communication, embrace the complexities of interactions in ELF, and exploit their multilingual and other

resources in any way they deem appropriate each time, as equally valid communicators who are liberated from other- or self-imposed restrictions posed by the NS ideal. The emphasis that has been placed on the need for a paradigm shift starting from the education of teachers of English, comes, in this regard, as no surprise—it is the teachers and, through them, the learners of English around the world, who may principally act as agents of "change in established ways of thinking" (Widdowson, 2012, p. 5).

To that end, from a critical theory perspective, it is crucial that both teachers and learners recognise and challenge hegemonic normative assumptions that have been unquestioningly taken for granted. As Wang, Torrisi-Steele and Hansman (2019) argue, however, raising awareness of the nature of such deep-seated beliefs is "only part of the journey toward the ideals of empowerment and liberation" (p. 238). So understanding why assumptions perpetuating the superiority of the NS are false and unjust and, then, how ELF discourse works, is not enough. What is further required is "becoming critically aware of how and why *our* assumptions have come to constrain the way *we* perceive, understand, and feel about our world" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 167; emphasis added) and, on that basis, "changing these structures" to gain and act upon "a more inclusive, discriminating and integrative perspective" (ibid.). What is necessary, therefore, is that we view teacher and language education from the lens of *critical transformative learning* (Jones, 2020), placing emphasis on fostering a fundamental change in inequitable frames of the outside social world through a fundamental change in the inside world of the individual. This is precisely where the relevance and usefulness of the construct of ELF awareness (Sifakis, 2014, 2019; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018) lies in relation to achieving the much-needed paradigm shift in ELT.

Drawing on the 'transformation theory' as put forward by adult education theorist Jack Mezirow (1991, 2000), ELF awareness has been (and is still being) developed as a comprehensive framework for enhancing teachers' (but also learners' and other

ELT stakeholders') capacity to bring about "change first in their own mindsets and then in their teaching context" (Sifakis, 2014, p. 327), in view of the contemporary realities in ELF. As Sifakis and Bayyurt clarify, this involves engaging actively with insights gained from ELF research and "developing one's own understanding" of the reasons why and the ways in which ELF can be integrated in one's teaching practice, "through a continuous process of critical reflection, design, implementation and evaluation of instructional activities that reflect and localize one's interpretation of the ELF construct" (2018, p. 459). ELF awareness, in this sense, means a lot more than simple awareness of ELF; it has an explicit developmental focus pertaining to the ways in which a teacher may make sense of and enact one's professional role (Sifakis & Kordia, 2019).

Mezirow's transformation theory is highly useful in terms of trying to determine what elements may form a teacher's professional role in relation to ELF and, on that basis, how one's interpretation of them may change. What is particularly important in this respect is his distinction between *habits of mind* and resulting *points of view* which make up an individual's *frames of reference*, that is, the higher-order worldviews, or mindsets, that fundamentally shape one's thinking, feeling and acting in every possible domain of life (Mezirow, 2000). Habits of mind are broad sets of predispositions that we have acquired through experience within the socio-cultural environment; these include, of course, assumptions that we have "uncritically assimilated from others" (ibid., p. 8), primarily "parents, teachers and other mentors" (Taylor, 2017, p.17), making us unquestioningly trust in the dominant ideologies and cultures we have grown into. These habits of mind are expressed as points of view, namely "sets of immediate specific expectations, beliefs,

feelings, attitudes and judgments" (Mezirow, ibid., p.18). Transformative learning, then, involves critically "examining, questioning and revising" (Cranton & Taylor, 2012, p. 5) points of view resulting from habits of mind that may delimit and distort the way we perceive and respond to reality. In the framework of ELF awareness, this essentially entails re-framing a native-speakerist sociolinguistic habit of mind, which is typically anchored in a teacher's frame of reference about his or her role inside and outside the classroom and manifests itself in his or her personal and professional life through a range of relevant points of view (Sifakis & Kordia, 2019, 2020).

Along these lines, Sifakis (2019) highlights that ELF awareness has three major components, which, from a critical transformative perspective, also illustrate the areas that the transformation of a teacher's native-speakerist habit of mind may apply to. These components are:

1. "Awareness of language and language use" (ibid., p. 291), which refers to critical engagement with the nature of ELF discourse, also includes a key metalinguistic dimension, and paves the way for a critical questioning of hegemonic assumptions related to "normativity, appropriateness, comprehensibility and ownership of English" (ibid.). This awareness is essential in the process of transformative learning – it entails identifying and, when necessary, re-conceptualising points of view such as that every 'deviation' from NS norms *de facto* constitutes an undesired 'linguistic error'.

2. "Awareness of instructional practice" (Sifakis, op. cit.), which pertains to everything that a teacher does (or does not do) inside or outside the classroom and the reasons why this is so. This requires placing curricular-, courseware- and policy-related aspects of teaching under the microscope but, primarily, it requires focusing on assumptions that compose one's "personal theories about instruction" (ibid.) in relation to mainstream and insights offered by ELF (and other relevant perspectives). These assumptions above all relate to one's definition of 'good teaching', including error-correction, especially in reference to the fact that ELF is not 'teachable', at least not in the way that teachers have been familiar with (Sifakis et al, 2018).

3. "Awareness of learning" (Sifakis, op. cit.), which refers to the major impact that ELF may have on learners, implies a deeper understanding of the nature of 'context' when it comes to language acquisition and a corresponding appreciation of the legitimacy of different uses of English, including online and social media uses. Transformative learning, in this respect, includes critically assessing, for example, the emphasis that is usually placed on exposing learners only to NS communicative contexts based on the point of view that "the more convincingly a learner can imitate the linguistic and cultural behaviour of a NS, the better learner he/she is" (Sifakis & Kordia, 2019, p.181).

A particularly important question that arises at this point is how exactly a teacher may raise one's ELF awareness through critical transformative learning. Sifakis and Bayyurt (op. cit.) highlight the significance, first, of critical reflection and, second, of reflective practice, namely the application of reflection to one's context for decision-making and improvement purposes (Roessger, 2014). What is critical reflection, though, and how can it turn into action? For Mezirow (1991, 2000), as well as other critical theorists (e.g., Brookfield, 2017; Moon, 2004; Schön, 1987), critical reflection is more than simple thinking about or discussing problematic issues. It involves "a 'turning back' on experience" (Mezirow, 1998, p. 185) in order to engage in an "intentional reassessment" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 15) of one's ways of interpreting that experience. Transformative learning, in this sense, may occur not

only when exploring *what* we think, feel and do and *how well*, but most importantly, when we identify, question and re-address *why* we think, feel and act in a certain way. In other words, transformative learning may take place through critical reflection on the presuppositions upon which one's taken-for-granted habits of mind and relevant points of view are predicated, which includes an explicit re-examination of their origins (such as ideologies we have uncritically espoused) and possible consequences. This inherently metacognitive process is often triggered by a "disorienting dilemma" (a perceived mismatch between, for instance, new information and what we think we already know) and, when accompanied by an exploration and "provisional trying" of new courses of action, it may lead to the enhancement of one's "self-confidence in new roles" and, thereby, to a fundamental change in one's sense of oneself within society (Mezirow, 2000).

The ELF-aware teacher education framework, as described by Sifakis (2014, 2019) and Sifakis and Bayyurt (2018), provides useful information about how transformative learning through critical reflection may be promoted in practice as regards the aforementioned three components of ELF awareness. The framework consists of three, not necessarily linear, phases. The first phase involves prompting teachers to engage actively with issues relevant to language use and language learning (as per the first and third component of ELF awareness) and critically explore the complexities of English-medium communication, in relation, to their own, as well as their learners', experience in using ELF (Sifakis, 2018, 2019). This is precisely where disorienting dilemmas may be generated, which could be further analysed during the second phase, focusing, this time, on their instructional practice and their overall perception of their role as teachers of English (the second component of ELF awareness). The third phase involves engaging teachers in the development, implementation and evaluation of action plans for their classroom (reflective practice) which "integrate their own understanding of ELF (and EIL and WE) with the needs and idiosyncrasies of their learners" (Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018, p.461).

Critical reflection on the *what*, *how* and *why* of one's experience as a user and teacher of English, and, even, as a prior learner (Sifakis, 2007, 2014), is of paramount importance across all phases. Points of view guided by a taken-for-granted normative habit of mind may be brought into the surface and eventually challenged and transformed through progressively more demanding open-ended linguistic, metalinguistic and metacognitive questions that touch upon all areas included in the construct of ELF awareness (Sifakis & Kordia, 2020). With respect, for instance, to the example about the nature of the 'linguistic error' that was mentioned earlier, such questions could include (Sifakis & Kordia, 2019):

- *What exactly is a 'linguistic error' to me? What criteria do I use to define it? In what ways does my view relate to the current realities in ELF communication and to what I have experienced as a user of English?*
- *How have I formulated this view of a 'linguistic error'? How appropriate and relevant are the criteria I have used? How could my view become more accurate? How could that be reflected in my classroom?*
- *Why have I formulated this view in the first place? To what extent has my educational background (for example, my teachers or trainers), my teaching context (for example, my courseware), my social environment (for example, my colleagues) and the dominant ELT ideologies (for example, as regards the 'linguistic superiority' of the native speaker) influenced this view? What would changing it imply for my professional role?*

3.3 Applications for language pedagogy

The ELF awareness framework seeks to link the insights of ELF research (such as the importance of accommodation strategies in ELF interactions, or the role of established norms in learning and using English in these settings) with the principles and processes of CLP. What the discussion so far illustrates is that the ELF awareness raising process is an intrinsically bottom-up process that focuses on the interplay between the external world, including the ELF communicative context, and the internal world of individuals, including the ways they perceive and act within the ELF communicative setting. What does this interplay involve, though, within an actual classroom, as regards language pedagogy? The construct of ELF awareness and the critical transformative perspective discussed previously offer valuable insights concerning the ways in which the learners themselves may develop as "socially responsible, clear-thinking decision-makers" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8), to the extent that their age and stage of cognitive development make it possible.

In practical pedagogical terms, it is possible to raise learners' ELF awareness in a series of steps: first, by drawing learners' attention to practical aspects of their lives involving the use of English outside of their teaching context and raising their awareness about the relevance and usefulness of norms; secondly, by progressively exposing learners to appropriately designed prompts that invite them to think critically about and challenge established, and potentially problematic, notions in communication involving non-native or native users of English; and thirdly, by encouraging learners to take on a new identity as they embrace their role as ELF users and become more confident and empowered learners of English.

As already mentioned, a central element in the pedagogical process of raising learners' ELF awareness is the importance of points of view, including attitudes, reflecting, in this case, a sociolinguistic habit of mind that guides the way students perceive and enact their own role as learners and, at the same time, as users of the language. Being exposed to examples of ELF discourse can be a very useful tool, but it is the pedagogical activities and questions designed to be used with these inputs that will determine the actual journey that learners will take in becoming ELF aware. There is extensive investigation on learners' and teachers' attitudes and deeper convictions about the key concerns and insights that ELF research raises (for an early review see Jenkins, 2007). What this research showcases is a range of perspectives that are informed by different people's language learning experiences, their self-perception as users of English as well as of their own L1, even their beliefs about whether discussing ELF-related concerns is appropriate for EFL contexts that are heavily impacted by a testing culture (e.g. preparing for a high-stakes examination—see discussion in Sifakis et al 2020). Even in teaching contexts that are more open to such discussions, it is expected that there are obstacles to engaging learners in such activities. Curricular pressure, time availability, other stakeholders' (e.g., parents', sponsors' or fellow teachers') expectations can often have a major influence on practitioner decisions to integrate these activities (Sifakis 2009).

It has been suggested (Sifakis & Fay 2018) that a pedagogically sound way to raise learners' ELF awareness is through the design and implementation of appropriate metacognitive and metalinguistic questions. Such questions function in ways that are very similar to those suggested for teacher education in the previous section, but, of course, they need to be tailored to the learners' specific profiles and needs. Metacognitive questions "help language learners reflect upon and refine their beliefs and knowledge about learning" (Wenden, 1998, p. 515) and can therefore function as a means of drawing learners' attention to their own

individual perspectives about the ways in which ELF interactions could influence and inform their own learning of the language (Sifakis 2019). Metalinguistic questions prompt learners to consider examples of ELF discourse (taken from their own lives, existing ELF corpora or from online resources) and draw their attention to the syntactic, morphological, lexical, phonological, pragmatic and sociocultural features that are at play (Hu, 2002). This results in boosting learners' awareness of the different translanguaging processes and other accommodation strategies that ELF users (including themselves) display and offers opportunities to discuss their own perceptions about normativity, appropriateness, comprehensibility, and ownership of English, as well as "uncover" the sources and reflect on the consequences of these perceptions, to the extent that they are willing to do so.

3.4 Applications for assessment

Another important aspect incorporating in developing ELF for CLE is related to language testing and assessment, which always manifest power and oppression (Jenkins & Leung, 2019; Shohamy, 2017). For example, the English language is argued as a gatekeeper for international university entry and many job sectors in many countries, including those from the expanding circle. International tests, including IELTS and TOEFL, act as an invisible yardstick for mainstream English testing and assessment. As contended, assessing candidates against a native norm should also realise the complicated language contact, and critical language testing is to recognise the uses and consequences of language use in education and society from a multilingual perspective (Jenkins, 2020; Shohamy, 2017). A critical approach to assessment from an ELF perspective recognises the sociocultural lens of the use of English in relation to other languages. Based on this, we believe that engaging in CLE would entail recognising the social value of language assessment, extending the conversation from testing the four skills only, to further '*pinpoint*, *critique* and *negotiate* linguistic and pedagogical ideologies' (Fang, 2018, p. 23; italics in original) in English language assessment.

Developing assessment is by no means an easy job, especially in ELF, because of its fluid, contingent, and dynamic nature. Current English language examinations, to a large extent, still ignore to test people for things they do need in the increasingly mobile and superdiverse world (Jenkins & Leung, 2019), exposing the unfairness of tests "in the way they exclude candidates [...] because their English is not sufficiently native-like" (Jenkins, 2020, p. 474). An ELF assessment should move away from standard language ideology to reconceptualise the understanding of language proficiency and language standard because such a goal is neither realistic nor desirable (Hamid, 2014; Jenkins & Leung, 2019; Shohamy, 2018). In fact, an ELF assessment would challenge the unjust orientation of language assessment "as tools for ideology and for unrealistic goals of the 'native-like' proficiency" (Shohamy, 2018, p. 587). This not only requires a bottom-up ideology shift from the test-takers, but more importantly, effort from the test designers, particularly from international standardised test level. However, we do not argue that assessment should replace the current proficiency construct but to "function as an add-on in contexts […] where ELF competences are expected to come into play" (Harding & McNamara, 2018, p. 579).

Another challenge of developing assessment, specifically testing, concerns the strong links with the power and gate-keeping market needs for the large international testing bodies. In order to address this challenge in higher education, a recent proposal by Jenkins and Leung (2019) has focused on the possibility of using self-assessment, by candidates who are preparing university entrance exams, to replace standardised English language tests.

However, Jenkins (2020) also foresees some challenges of candidate self-assessment to university enrolment including lack of materials, students' motivation in self-assessment, face validity, and students who over- or underestimate themselves in the self-assessing process. While ELF assessment may still be in its infancy and need more research, it is high time that the field of language testing should re-address the necessity of incorporating ELF into testing and assessment for fairness when dealing with power and ideology issues (Harding & McNamara, 2018; Jenkins, 2020; Shohamy, 2017).

It is within this complex and challenging scenario that Shohamy (2018) proposes a more direct connection between ELF and what she has termed Critical Language Testing (CLT). As equally defended by other specialists in the area, Shohamy argues that these historically "unjust tests" need to be questioned at different levels, starting with whether they "reflect the current and updated comprehension of the construct that is being assessed," and that it is important to concentrate our efforts in creating more democratic and inclusive tests. So, once we consider the global multilingual and multicultural landscape when it comes to English use nowadays, ELF is to be introduced as a central trait in English tests, as it "poses deep questions about the very knowledge that should be included on tests or 'make up' tests" (Shohamy, 2018, p. 587). In other words, ELF is to remind us that it is critical to address what is the very language that will be assessed/tested in a given context so that the mastery of that language will indeed provide clear evidence of the person's language quality (Shohamy, 2018).

4. Future developments

In this paper we have reflected on ELF research and its development for CLE. As discussed, it is important to view English not only as a language per se from the ELF perspective, but also provide room for CLE from a critical sociocultural, socioeconomic and sociopolitical perspective in ELT (Fang, 2020; Pennycook, 2017).We have put together our own understanding and expertise of the field in these areas and how we have approached the links and influences between ELF empirical research and its applications in CLE. However this is a relatively new area of development within ELF and there needs to be more work to further understand how ELF could be implemented from a CLE perspective when "viewing language policy, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment related to the English language in the 21st century" (Fang & Widodo, 2019, p. 8). First, future developments could first focus on practical classroom applications with examples for teachers and in terms of more research about effective classroom application (Choi & Liu, 2020; Fang & Ren, 2018; Sung, 2020). This work would need to be backed up by more (action) research with teachers on different aspects, such as use of metacognitive strategies for raising ELF awareness; more (action) research in terms of studies that explore teachers' reflective practice in their own context, how they have developed a transformative pedagogy in their classes; and more research in terms of applications for assessment. Through practical classroom applications from teachers, students can also gradually develop an awareness of ELF-aware mindset for a conducive learning atmosphere.

Another area where further research is needed refers to the process of ELF awareness itself and the ways in which it can be promoted both in teacher education and in language pedagogy (Rose, McKinley & Galloway, 2021). This primarily includes empirical research that may deepen our understanding not only of how teachers and learners may perceive and enact their own roles within the language classroom in view of ELF but also of the elements

and aspects that may render their practice as "*good ELF-aware practice*" in their own context (Sifakis et al, 2018, p.198; italics in the original). What is crucial, in other words, is exploring, through multiple data collection techniques, such as questionnaires, one-to-one or focus-group interviews, reflective journals, documents (for instance, lesson plans) and, of course, observation, how the various aspects of raising one's ELF awareness may work in practice (for instance, transformative learning through critical reflection on topics relevant to the three components of ELF awareness) and how exactly this process may affect one's thinking, feeling and acting within the classroom setting and the broader social environment (for instance, how an ELF-aware English language learner may perform in real-life communicative interactions in ELF). In turn, such empirical studies may indeed contribute to the development of a system of documenting and evaluating ELF-aware practices, which could be employed not as a means of 'assessing' or 'measuring' the extent to which teachers and learners may have achieved certain predetermined outcomes but, rather, "as a way of raising awareness" (Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2016, p.151)—as another highly useful tool toward fostering their development.

Furthermore, it is also important to develop an understanding of how CLE, as mediated through the more practice-oriented framework of ELF awareness, can impact language education policy on several levels. In this regard, it would be interesting to establish the varying degrees of openness and flexibility reached in critical, ELF-aware curricular innovations of different EFL contexts (cf. Dendrinos & Gotsoulia, 2015). For example, one hypothesis would be to test whether the curricula designed in high-stakes examination contexts are less prone to ELF-aware innovation than state-run curricular orientations (cf. Lo Bianco, 2013). Another front that needs attention has to do with current higher education policies, especially when involving multilingual students (Jenkins, 2014). In particular, future investigation of language policy can focus on the negotiation between top-down national/institutional language policies and bottom-up practices and needs to address how language policies would dwell in various contexts. At the moment, these policies normally favour NS language proficiency and norm-driven assessment standards, thus ignoring the diversity of student populations. In turn, ELF-aware language policies at institutional level (at least) can offer the theoretical underpinnings along with research evidence in order "to demonstrate to university staff that what is relevant is accuracy and effectiveness in reporting findings and arguments" (Wingate, 2018, p. 436), not the native-likeness of grammar or other linguistic aspects, still overtly entrenched monolingual beliefs and orientations.

5. Conclusions

As mentioned in the beginning of this paper, ELF research has been very prolific in a relatively short period of time, and the idea that the political and pedagogical implications of ELF should be framed within a critical perspective has surely gained momentum, as ELF entails a significant amount of reconceptualization of consolidated views about language and predominant teaching practices.

We are a group of researchers in this area that are excited about inviting teachers from different contexts and realities to collaborate in further investigation, and we hope to have explored the many ways in which teachers and teacher educators can engage with and develop ELF for their CLE. For us, this dialogic process holds great potential to enlarge the scope of ELF research as a whole, aiming at the development of robust sources of both theoretical and practical knowledge teachers and teacher educators can turn to in order to incorporate critically oriented work into classrooms all over the world.

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Title: DEVELOPING ELF RESEARCH FOR CRITICAL LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Response to reviewer – after revision

Thank you for reading and commenting on our article after revision.

Response to reviewer – first version

Response to reviewer 1

We thank the reviewer for their comments and analysis of the content of our manuscript. We have addressed their suggestions and we think the revised version is improved thanks also to their suggestions.

We have modified the manuscript as follows:

1.in response to the reviewer's comment on devoting more space "to reviewing some findings, key arguments and recent concepts of descriptive ELF research in more detail" we have expanded Section 2.2 (Brief overview of research on ELF discourse, attitudes and ideologies).

2.in response to the suggestion to summarise the central part, we have trimmed parts of Section 3 (ELF and CLE)

3.in response to the suggestion to include more discussion of Future Developments we have expanded on the final part accordingly.

Thank you for your feedback.