

Rethinking the Assessment Model for English as a Lingua Franca

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Abstract—This paper gives a description of the emergence of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), its debates and how its pervasive nature has started to shift the concept of competent speakers from gaining the native speakers' proficiency into becoming the resourceful speakers who are able to communicate in diverse communities. This paper provides the overview of the current existing language assessment models and how they contrast to ELF communication model which emphasises more intelligibility than the accuracy of the native speakers' norm. By providing the conversation excerpts from the students' works, this paper proves how fossilised norms fail to assess the intelligibility and the achieved goal of the communication thus suggest the implication for the language educators. The suggestions include raising the awareness of the language educators to be more flexible when assessing the students' oral production of ELF, to focus on how the students make the negotiation and meaning making, deal with phonological differences, and use ELF pragmatics. Finally, how the goal is achieved through the fluidity is what inevitably needed to be paid attention to.

Keywords—*ELF, language assessment, intelligibility, standard norms*

I. ELF EMERGENCE AND ITS DEBATES

The notion of the English as a Lingua Franca (EFL) has been particularly burgeoning in the past decades. The concept of using English which takes place among the non-native speakers has taken over a lot of attention from scholars. The emergence of ELF could be linked to Kachru's theory [1], [2] about the three circles of English. Kachru's phenomenal theory has grouped people based on their relationship to English in which those who were born geographically in the UK, US, AUS and New Zealand are said to be in the 'inner' circles. Those who have the historical relationship with English – the postcolonial regions such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Philippine are put in the second circle called as 'outer circle'. Meanwhile those who neither live in the above-mentioned countries nor have the historical bond to the inner circle countries are put into the latest circle called 'expanding circle'. This theory has been greatly rejected by scholars as it creates castes in the ownership of English, but inevitably provokes further thinking. In fact, the number of people speaking English in the expanding circle in fact outnumbers those in the inner circle in which the communication is much more intercultural and international. Therefore, there comes a question about whose norm is to be used. Jenkins [3] then comes up with the ideas of ELF in which she proposes that any use of English between the speakers who do not share the same first language and without the interference of the native English speakers are coined as the use of ELF. As the time goes, she has been working with empirical works in which she

collects the pattern of the non-native speakers (NNSs) speaking English through their pronunciation. Jenkins through her work finds out that NNSs speaking English usually adjust their pronunciation to a more familiar way to make their communication more intelligible [4]. She further accumulates the similar patterns of the NNSs pronunciation in a corpus called Lingua Franca Core [5]. Her works receive positive feedback from another scholar. Seidlhofer [6] soon supports the concept by establishing Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English, and Mauranen [7] establishes the corpus of ELF in university setting called as Corpus of Academic English [8].

However, ELF is not without debates. A number of scholars have also accused that the establishment of ELF is a defect kind of English which is likely designed to change the Standard English (SE) [9], [10]. Besides, Taylor [11] has implicitly addressed that the scholars who are working on ELF are those who try to be kind to the expanding-circle speakers - having 'bleeding heart'. To these pessimisms toward the use of ELF, scholars like Canagarajah [12], [13] and Jenkins [14] assert that SE is what should be taught at class. ELF is not a design, but a product of spoken SE in an international context which is highly multicultural. Canagarajah [15] further reminds that ELF can only be used in communication because it is not a system which is fixed. ELF is something that is continuously negotiated through the conversation and switched based on who the interlocutors are [16].

Therefore, though it seems that there are now two streams in the use of English, Pennycook [17] proposes that the aim of using English should no longer be aiming at one particular stream, like how to gain the native speaker's proficiency but how to be a resourceful speaker. Along with, Kirkpatrick [18] comes up with the emphasis that teaching English should grow awareness about being an intercultural speaker so they could switch and drop their Englishes while they are talking to different people should be the focus of learning English at class. Canagarajah [19], coins this situation as "shuttle between communities" (p. XXV) in which one is able to negotiate the meaning in diverse situations making him a proficient speaker. Further, Canagarajah states that "in a context where we have to constantly shuttle between different varieties and communities, proficiency becomes complex. To be really proficient in English today, one has to be multidialectal. This does not mean that one needs production skills in all the varieties of English. One needs the capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication. The passive competence to understand new varieties is part of this multidialectal competence ... Proficiency means, then, the ability to shuttle between different varieties of English and different speech communities" [12] (p.233).

During this time, the use of SE has been fossilized within the classroom assessment. The syllabus is set to meet either 'British or American' English proficiency and the assessment is designed against the competence of the native speakers [4]. The learning model is somehow designed to imitate and adopt the norms of the native speakers fully [20] thus considers any forms out of the norms are incorrect. As ELF has now started to gain recognition, and been now started to be introduced at classroom, another issue which comes to consideration is 'how to assess ELF in the classroom'. Scholars have come to realise that SE assessment format might be 'ill-equipped' and not valid to be tested against ELF [21]-[27].

II. CURRENT LANGUAGE TESTING AND MODEL ASSESSMENT

The current language tests known this time include International Language Testing (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and Pearson Test of English (PTE). These language tests, in one way or another, promotes that they internationally measure the language users. Claiming that they use the speakers not only from one specific country only like the UK but also US, New Zealand, and Australia are thought to add their 'internationalness'. Against this, Jenkins and Leung [21] criticise the "internationalness" (p.6) meant by them as internationally marketed instead of internationally designed content.

The reasons behind the use of these assessments have also been considered to resist the ELF. Taylor [11] claims that the use of these assessments is acting as gatekeepers, representing fairness because the use of ELF is too varied thus cannot be tested equally. ELF gives the learners the freedom of choosing what English they aspire for themselves.

To some degree, these assessments are acceptable to those who are using English as a foreign language (EFL). Those who are going to move to the English-speaking country somehow need to take this test as they will be using the language to converse with the native speakers. These assessments can be used to determine the entrance eligibility to the degree program, working in professional field, making visa and gaining citizenship in the in the native English countries. However, it may not be relevant if assessed against the students who use the language who use the English to converse for with those who are non-native speakers.

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is now commonly used as a reference for the assessments in the expanding countries. The students are assessed according to the skills of the native speakers. Again, CEFR is designed to be in comparison with the native speakers which is acceptable for EFL but not ELF. The knowledge and the culture assessed in CEFR are those of the native speakers' making it inflexible to EFL which is rich in cultures and diverse in languages.

In classroom, the idea that the one true English is either British or American English is deeply rooted. Students therefore are imposed to the cultures and the norms of SE. The assessment is therefore is designed to assess whether the adoption and the imitation have reflected those of the native speakers. The emphasis put in the teaching of English during this time has always been the correctness [8]. This leads to the thought that any other form of norm which does not suitable to SE is incorrect.

The correctness embedded here may be well accepted in the written form of English. However, it may make a

difference in the spoken English in ELF. It may be good at explaining the accomplishment of the performance but fails to indicate whether or not the goal of the communication achieved in a rich context of ELF. The concept of correctness is against intelligibility in ELF. The communication is successful if both the speakers have got the messages implied in the conversation. In fact, SE norms fail to assess the negotiation, clarification, paraphrasing, and code-switching done by the speakers to get their message delivered, [29] of how the conversation becomes more relaxed, and promotes the cultural identity. Therefore, a more context-based and culturally-aware assessment is highly in need [28].

Scholars have called more attention to design the assessment which could address ELF better. Harding [30] thus suggests that researchers in language assessment are in need of careful and evidence-based change assessment and "with their well-established know-how, can make an important contribution to this hugely challenging task ([4], (p.8). McNamara [23] thus echoes that, "we are at a moment of very significant change, the sort of change that only comes along once in a generation or longer – the challenge that is emerging in our developing understanding of what is involved in ELF communication" (p. 507).

To see the urgency of ELF assessment, below is provided the sample of the conversations from the classroom to prove how the current rubric for oral production of English is no longer applicable but conflict the production of ELF.

III. A CASE STUDY IN LOCAL INSTITUTION

The local university discussed here is one of private universities Indonesia which has several faculties. The paper focuses in the faculty of nursing which aims to produce the nurses who are ready to work in an international context. Within this faculty the students are exposed to three types of English subjects within different semesters; General English, English for Nursing, and Academic English.

The excerpt provided below is from the final video project of the students. The students were asked to role play a conversation to their fellow medical staff they meet in the hospital.

A. Conversation 1

Ajinem : Hello! Good morning!
Youse : Good morning.

¹The names are pseudonyms.

Ajinem : Hi my name is Ajinem, and I am a new nurse in this hospital here, *and who.... and what's your name?*

Youse : My name is Youse. It's very nice to meet you

Ajinem : Nice to meet you too

Youse : Yeah.

Ajinem : And how long *have you be.... have you been working in a hospital?*

Youse : About 15 years

Ajinem : *Oh, it is very long*

Youse : Yeah, where do you come from?

Ajinem : I am from Bali. How about you?

Youse : *I am come from Makassar.* Which hospital did you work for before?

Ajinem : Last time *I worked (pronounced 'workit')* at Bethesda hospital
 Youse : How long did you work there?
 Ajinem : Ah, about two years
 Youse : Oh okay, I hope we can work together
 Ajinem : Of cour (of course), I hope you citch me, you can teach me
 Youse : Sure, now I have go to now. See you later. Have a nice day!
 Ajinem : You too.

B. Conversation 2

Ria : Good morning Miss Ari
 Ari : Ehh, long time no see you. How are you?
 Ria : I am fine thanks and you?
 Ari : I am fine too! Thanks!
 Ria : Where are you going Mrs Ria?
 Ari : I am going to X hospital
 (Another student came opening the door)
 Ari : Hi (to newly coming student)
 This is Rahmi
 Rahmi : Hi Miss Ria. My name is Rahmi. You can call me Rahmi
 Ria : My name is Ria. You can me Ria. Where are you from Rahmi?
 Rahmi : I am come from Semarang and I am a new nurse in X hospital. How long have been working for X hospital?
 Ria : I am working at X hospital 14 years old.
 Rahmi : Wow! (to Ari) and you Miss Ari?
 Ari : I am working at X hospital ehm 15 years old.
 Rahmi : Wow, nice to meet you Miss Ria
 Ria : Nice to meet you too Miss Rahmi
 Ari : Let's go to X hospital
 All : Okay

C. Conversation 3

Cindy : Hi!
 Riska : Hi! good morning
 Cindy : Hey, I never looking at you before? Are you new in here?
 Riska : I am new in here
 Cindy : Oh, what's your name?
 Riska : Hi! my name is Riska (shake hands) you can call me Icha. What about you? What's your name?
 Cindy : My name is Cindy Claudia. You can call me Cindy. Where do you from?
 Riska : I am come from Bekasi. What about you? Where you are come from?
 Cindy : I am from Central Borneo
 Riska : Wah, that's a wonderful place
 Cindy : (Laugh) Woee
 Riska : And how long you work in here Cindy?
 Cindy : I am long in here five years, and you?
 Riska : Hmm (confused) I am new in here; I tell you before.
 Both laugh
 Cindy : Oh yeah,
 Riska : Before, I work here, I am work in
 Cindy : Before you work in
 Riska : Bekasi
 Cindy : Bekasi?

Riska : Yeah
 Cindy : How long you work in Bekasi?
 Riska : Hmm, just for 2 years and I come here.
 Cindy : Okay
 Riska : Okay. Let's we work together Cindy.
 Cindy : Okay, nice to meet you Riska.

From the three conversations above, at least four themes appear from the analysis such as grammar error, pronunciation, solidarity, and code-switching. First, in the grammar error, the students appear to make grammar mistakes around the usage of to be and verb, such as in the sentences "Where you are come from?" and "Where do you from?" and the answers 'I am come from Makassar' and 'I am come from Bekasi.' Some sentences appear to be structurally wrong. The students also appear to notice that some sentences are not correct that they self-repair themselves. This can be found in the sentence, 'and who..., and what's your name?' The student is aware about the rule of asking the name in English not using 'who' but what.' The same correction is done on the other sentences like 'have you be..., have you been working in a hospital?' and 'I hope you citch me, you can teach me.' Besides, the grammar errors are also found in the sense that the students add unnecessary details to the sentences. In the sentences, 'I am working at X hospital 14 years old' and 'ehm ...15 years old'. 'Old' is usually used to indicate someone's age. So, here it makes no meaning as what the students discuss is not the age but the length they work in the hospital. Another addition can be seen in the sentence 'Let's we work together Cindy.' In this sentence, it could be seen Riska uses double pronouns; one that is contracted in the 'let's' as 'let us' and 'we' which would be standardly correct if she only says, 'let's work together, Cindy!' The addition is also seen in the sentence 'I am new in here' in conversation three. This happens because Bahasa Indonesian's preposition of 'di'(in) for place is transferred to English which is not necessarily needed for 'here' and 'there' in English. The students are not bothered in using the past form or the present form to say something that has been said before. In the case of Riska and Cindy, Cindy forgets that Riska is a new nurse, therefore Riska reminds her again by saying, 'I tell you before' in which she should have said, 'I told you before.'

The second theme appears is the pronunciation error, Ajinem in conversation 1, tries to use the second verb form of 'work' as she realises that she is asked about her past job. Therefore, she pronounces it as 'workit' uttering the 'ed' form as 'it.' Another pronunciation error found is in the 'o'f cour' which is not completely uttered but clearly accepted by Youse.

The third theme is the cultural interference in promoting the solidarity. In conversation 1, the meaning in Ajinem's expression of 'Oh, it is very long', is transferred from Bahasa Indonesia. This is said when someone is expressing their understanding that something has taken a long time. However, in the sense of SE, the sentence makes a different meaning. Someone may infer that the 'long' word there explain a thing which is physically long. Therefore, she should have responded by saying 'you have been working for quite some time'. The same is found in the sentence, 'I never looking at you before?' which is also a cultural translation of saying 'I have never seen you before' in English. Although it is also ungrammatically correct, the student genuinely receives the message delivered within the sentence. The solidarity is also shown on how the address term is promoted during the

exchanges in the conversation 2. Ari and Ria address each other as ‘Mrs, and Miss.’ In Bahasa Indonesia, it is vital to address someone using the right address term and the failure to address people correctly will be considered as disrespectful [31] ‘Mrs’ accounts for those who have got married and ‘Miss’ to those who haven’t but both locally just mean ‘Ibu’ in formal situation. While in the case of Rahmi, she is addressed by Ari casually in the sentence ‘This is Rahmi’ implying that they have close relationship and that Rahmi is much younger than her. The contrast of this relationship can be seen on how Ria is saying ‘Nice to meet you too Miss Rahmi.’ Ria has just known Rahmi at that very moment and she is aware that Rahmi is much younger than her leading her to address her as ‘Miss’.

The last theme is code-switching which apparently promotes solidarity as well. In conversation 2, Ari who is surprised to see Ria says, ‘Ehh, long time no see you.’ ‘Ehh’ is an Indonesian interjection of expressing surprise when one does not expect to meet someone or something or if one just remembers or forgets something. The code switching is also found in the Cindy’s expression of ‘Woee’ when Riska tells her that Central Borneo is a great place. In Bahasa Indonesia, this expression means that, ‘you’re just trying to be nice’ for one knows that the sentence uttered is not truly meant to be. To assess this task, the faculty design the rubric which assess them based on their fluency, pronunciation and accent, vocabulary, grammar, and details. The rubric more or less is described in the table below.

TABLE I. DESCRIPTION THE SPEAKING RUBRIC USED FOR SPEAKING

	Fluency	Pronunciation	Vocabulary	Grammar
A	Fluent speech; few to no hesitations; no attempts to search for words; volume is excellent.	Pronunciation is excellent	Excellent control of language features; a wide range of well-chosen vocabulary	Accuracy & variety of grammatical structures
Retake	Speech is very little or none, using a lot of Indonesian language.	Pronunciation is hard to understand; Many words are mispronounced and cause a lot of difficulty to understand	Weak language control; vocabulary that is used does not match the task	Frequent grammatical errors even in simple structures; meaning is obscured.

Against this rubric, the students in the conversations above may be scored in the range of A1 to A2 since their sentences are frequently error in grammar, pronunciation is lacking, and no native accent found. Their sentences are also repeated, simple and through a lot of rephrasing and self-repairs. However, if we see through the conversation analysis, we could see that the conversations proceed well, and the goal of the communication is achieved. All sentences make complete meaning to the speakers and are understood by the speakers proven by how they answer the questions the right way of how they should be answered. The turn-takings lead the students to reach the goal of the conversation. Though there are notably many grammatical errors, pronunciation errors, and code-switching in the conversation, the intelligibility speaks louder. The inconsistency of the grammar, the pronunciation, and the accent do not seem to make meaningful distraction to the conversation. The meaning is negotiated and socially

constructed because they simply ignore SE language form [25].

Therefore, this data reminds us that there is an urgent call for the design of the ELF model assessment which would not only focus on the form, the accent, the pronunciation and even the pragmatic norms of the SE but the ability to shuttle, negotiate, use ELF pragmatics, accommodate their listener, and ignore and repair the meaning making in the communication [8].

IV. IMPLICATION FOR THE FUTURE MODEL ASSESSMENT

As many researches in ELF [16], [32], [33] have started to incorporate the ELF teaching in the classroom by raising the students awareness and introducing the students to ELF as an effort to make them as the resourceful speakers, a lot of research also have called for the model assessment which would properly assess ELF [21]–[26].

Given the above conversations as the representativeness of what an ELF conversation looks like, the scholars are encouraged to think about what model assessment should be designed. This assessment needs to understand that its purpose and its contexts are different from the tests administered against the skills of the native speakers [26]. The language testing for ELF needs to be grounded in an understanding that the focus should be changed from merely the form but how the goal of the communication is successfully achieved [25]. Newbold [26] explicitly says that the ELF assessment would need to be grounded in the pragmatics of ELF interaction, and it would need to identify features of successful communication, and to allow for formal variation in a qualitatively different way from rating scales currently used in institutionalized testing. It would need to be user-centred and norm-defocused (p. 220).

The debates about how the assessment should be designed is still on the discussion. Newbold [26] reminds that the adoption of the new assessment criteria may mean abandoning the existing SE assessment which marks why this work is not easy and it needs a long consideration. He proposes that may be the assessment may be started from changing the traditional notion of being proficient into a more ELF informed. These changes could include the shifts from accuracy to appropriateness, fluency to flexibility, and lexical range into lexical transparency. This way, the assessment will not strictly stick into the grammar, accent and the vocabularies range of the native speakers. Canagarajah [34] in his colloquial talk for American Association for Applied Linguistics humbly offers that the starting point of facilitating ELF assessment should include “willingness to negotiate meanings; treating diversity as the norm; and adopting a functional orientation to communication.”

Therefore, this paper also humbly suggests that firstly what needs to be raised among the language educators is the ELF awareness. As of today, what the local language educators mostly focus is producing the proficiency of the native speakers on the students. That is why books, materials, and the teaching strategies are designed to meet SE. However, this is no longer relevant to the students’ future needs. The stiff and fossilised forms of SE may be needed if the students are leaving for the English-speaking countries but not necessarily needed if what they will find is the international communities. Therefore, along with introducing ELF into the

classroom and raising the students' awareness, the teachers also need to be more flexible in scoring their students' oral performance and being very careful at making sure that students, in the midst of the communication, are continuously negotiating the meaning and thus reaching the goal of the communication successfully.

After considering from Harding [8], Canagarajah [34], Chopin [25] and Newbold [26], this paper proposes the guideline model of the assessment for oral production as temporary guideline for local language educators as follow:

First, focus on the negotiation and meaning making. A lot of times, more than focusing on the successful communication, the language educator focuses on checking whether the sentences production is grammatically correct and standardly pronounced with any SE accent. Through this proposal, this paper sees that the emphasis should be put more on how the students use the communicative strategies to get their message across and to understand the message being delivered to them. This could be seen in how they clarify, accommodate, and confirm the sentences. Further, if their interlocutor is in difficulty pronouncing a word or even seemingly murmuring, how the students grasp the meaning can be also observed. Then, the things like inferences, context clues, word recognition may be taken into account in assessing them.

Second, focus on how the students deal with different phonological differences. As the students are prepared to meet the diverse communities with the different dialects and cultural backgrounds. Their ability to shuttle in the different situation with wide range of phonological differences need to be considered in the assessment. If their interlocutors are in difficulty to understand what the students are saying, language educators need to observe whether they will be so flexible to pronounce their sentence in a more understandable or to a more familiar way, so their interlocutor can get what they mean.

Third, focus on ELF pragmatics rather than SE pragmatic norms. Many times, the students are incorporating the local values into their conversation. As the language educators also share the same language with the students, they usually notice this and often times discredit the students for combining or culturally translating Bahasa Indonesia into English. If the students are doing this, the language educators should be focusing on the flow of the conversation; whether the students are able to handle the rest of the conversation until the reach the goal of the conversation (see strategies in ELF communication in [35]).

Fourth, focus on the achieved-goal and the fluidity of the whole conversation. The whole idea about ELF is the intelligibility and the successful communication. Therefore, the main focus in assessing the students' oral production of ELF should be emphasised on the smoothness of the conversation where the students do not show meaningful hesitation when producing the speech because they are thinking whether they make mistake on grammar or not.

V. CONCLUSION

The pervasiveness of ELF has forced the language educators to be more flexible about the Englishes that should be taught at the class. Through the long history and debates, after a while, a move to introduce ELF into the classroom has

been started. The classrooms are now starting to shift their focus from gaining the native speakers' proficiency to prepare students to become the resourceful speakers who are ready to shuttle their Englishes in different situations and contexts.

As ELF is now introduced at classrooms and the students' awareness are raised, the call for a valid assessment has also been raised. This is because assessing ELF with SE standard may be ill-equipped and not valid. Therefore, the proposals of paying attention to the context and the ability have been mentioned to be considered in designing the assessment.

The paper also analyses conversations in an ELF situation and scrutinises that if using the rubric designed against the ability of the native speakers the conversation may be scored only 1 or 2 out of 5. However, looking at the fluidity in the turn taking and the negotiation and repair made by the students during the conversations, the conversations are intelligible, and the communication goal is achieved.

Therefore, the paper suggests that the language educators need to raise their awareness about assessing the students based on the context and the situation. They need to be aware that their students are going face the diverse the international community thus in need of preparing them accordingly. Finally, this paper suggests that what the language educators could use as a temporary guideline. They are focusing on how student do the negotiation and meaning making, deal with different phonological differences, use ELF pragmatics rather than SE's, and focus on the goal and the fluidity of the whole conversation.

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