Univerzita Karlova v Praze

Filozofická fakulta

Ústav světových dějin

Erasmus Mundus Master TEMA

Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest)

Diplomová práce

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Angličtina jako lingua franca a jazyková identita mluvčích: měnící se pohled na status nerodilého mluvčího v kontextu Erasmus komunity

Linguistic Identity in the English as a Lingua Franca Communication: Changing Perceptions of English Non-nativeness in the Context of an Erasmus Community of Practice

Prague, 2018

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Acknowledgements

Acknowledgments I would like to thank most sincerely to both my supervisors, Dr. habil. Sonkoly Gábor, CSc. and Mgr. Jiří Janáč, PhD., for all their patience, helpful comments and insights, and, in particular, for their kind, encouraging and always optimistic approach. I would also like to thank all the participants who willingly dedicated their time and effort to the interview recording.

Declaration of Authorship

Declaration of Authorship I declare that the following MA thesis is my own work for which I used only the sources and literature mentioned, and that this thesis has not been used in the course of other university studies or in order to acquire the same or another type of diploma.

In Prague, August 6, 2018 …….

Aneta Klánová

Abstract

The standard ideology, embedded in discourses of traditional language teaching, has been found to have an influence on non-native speakers' linguistic identities. It manifests itself in their preoccupation with grammatical correctness and accent, and consequently in shaping negative self-perceptions, by focusing on the lacks in proficiency relative to the native speaker model. Some of the recent studies, however, reported contrasting findings. They reveal a weakening of this influence, which stems mainly from the current role of English as a global lingua franca. The ultimate goal of this study is to explore the English non-native students' perceptions of their English, as it served as a main shared resource for socializing within their community, in order to find whether and how this decentralization, combined with the "real life" use of English within an informal environment of an Erasmus community of practice, might impact their linguistic identities. The theoretical part of this study consists of three sections. Firstly, it provides a description of the concept of English as a lingua franca and its development. The second part explicates the relation between ELF and linguistic identity whereas the third part introduces the community of practice approach, which has been employed both as a conceptual and analytical tool. In addition, a brief overview of previous research is presented. The material for the empirical analysis consists of two types of data, i.e. qualitative interviews complemented by fieldnotes from participant observations. The findings are marked by significant ambivalence. On the one hand, the students underwent a positive change in terms of increased linguistic confidence as a result of their experience. At the same time, however, some of their discourses revealed that they also hold some negative attitudes towards non-native English, particularly with regard to accents.

Keywords: English as a Lingua Franca, linguistic identity, community of practice, non-native speaker, standard language ideology, Erasmus mobility

Abstrakt

Standardní jazyková ideologie, která je zakořeněná v diskurzech tradiční výuky cizích jazyků, může mít negativní vliv na lingvistickou identitu u nerodilých mluvčích angličtiny. Ten se projevuje věnováním přehnané pozornosti jak správné výslovnosti, tak gramatické korektnosti, dále také upínáním pozornosti směrem k nedostatkům a srovnávání s ideálem rodilého mluvčího. To má za následek utváření negativního lingvistického sebepojetí v angličtině. Nedávné studie nicméně poukazují k opačným zjištěním. Ukazuje se, že oslabování ideologického vlivu vychází především ze současné role angličtiny jako globální linguy franky. Hlavním cílem této práce tedy je prozkoumat pohledy mladých nerodilých mluvčích, studentů participujících v programu Erasmus, na jejich angličtinu a její užívání jako hlavní jazykový zdroj pro socializaci v rámci jejich komunity. Na základě toho lze poté zjistit, zda tato decentralizace v kombinaci s praktickým užíváním angličtiny ve značně neformálním prostředí studentské skupiny může mít nějaký vliv na formování jazykové identity mluvčích.
Teoretická část práce se skládá ze tří hlavních sekcí. První sekce je vysvětluje koncept angličtiny užívané jako lingua franca (ELF) a jeho vývoj. V druhé části se odkrývá vztah mezi ELF a tématem identity, zatímco třetí část představuje Wengerův přístup praktické komunity, který tato práce užívá nejen jako koncepční, ale také jako analytický instrument. Prezentován je také přehled dosavadního výzkumu v této oblasti. Empirická část práce je založena na analýze kvalitativních rozhovorů se sedmi mluvčími a doplněna je materiálem pocházejícím z terénních observací. Výsledky studie jsou značně ambivalentní. Zatímco ve srovnání se začátkem jejich pobytu studenti popisují svou jazykovou identitu v užívání angličtiny jako výrazně uvolněnější a sebevědomější, objevily se také diskurzy, které odkrývají negativní postoje k angličtinám nepocházejících od rodilých mluvčích, a to zejména ve vztahu k přízvuku.

Klíčová slova: angličtina jako lingua franca, jazyková identita, praktická komunita, nerodilý mluvčí, standardní jazyková ideologie, Erasmus mobilita

Table of contents

List of Abbreviations

CoP	Community of practice
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELF	English as a lingua franca
ELT	English language teaching
EMI	English as a medium of instruction
GT	Grounded theory
L1	First language, native language
L2	Second language, foreign language
NS	Native speaker
NNS	Non-native speaker
RP	Received pronunciation

1 Introduction

This master's thesis is a sociolinguistic study of L2 speakers' attitudes towards and beliefs about English as a lingua franca in the context of student mobility and employs the community of practice approach as a both conceptual and analytical tool for this purpose.

The study consists of two parts, the theoretical framework and the empirical research. The former describes the concept of English as a lingua franca, its origins, development, function, current understanding, its institutionalization and implications for the future. ELF is a way of referring to communication in English between speakers who have different first languages. The difference of English as a lingua franca as opposed to the traditional conception of English resides in the altered perception of the norm-giving authority. ELF "is no longer founded on the linguistic and sociocultural norms of native English speakers and their respective countries and cultures" (Gnutzmann, 2000; cited in Hülmbauer, Böhringer, and Seidlhofer, 2008, p. 27). ELF users are not conforming to the given norms, they are inventing their own instead. In other words, when we talk about ELF, we refer to a change in the conventional thinking about the use of English as a tool for intercultural communication and it is a much broader change than simply a linguistic one.

The gained independence of the native speaker model may also impact the speakers' linguistic identities. The conventional English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching is based on the Standard Language Ideology and, undoubtedly, it serves as purposeful and an effective tool for the speakers who want to learn English as a foreign language. On the other hand, standard language ideology claims that any kind of English which deviates from the Specific codified varieties of NSE - British, American, etc. - is incorrect and deficient, which can give rise to some undesirable implications. The SLI influence might in a sense account for the fact that non-native speakers were found to be referred to in negative terms, highlighting their deficiencies in relation to the native speaker model. Similarly, the non-native speakers' perceptions of themselves tended to "focus on inadequacies and shortcomings in proficiency, which means the emerging linguistic identities were rather negative" (Virkkula and Nikula, 2010, p. 17). However, it is believed that the move away from the native speaker model and the environment which reiterates it "offers non-native speakers significant advantages, not only in terms of language appropriation but also for identity negotiation" (Pölzl and Seidlhofer 2006;

cited in Virkkula and Nikula, 2010, p. 17). As speakers start to actively negotiate and adjust English to their own purposes and make the communication work effectively for them rather than for the absent native speakers, more positive perceptions of themselves can emerge as a result.

The community of practice (CoP) framework, employed for this research, seems to be an ideal instrument for the investigation of this topic as it enables the examination of ELF speakers; firstly, because these formations are not easily conceptualized otherwise, and secondly, because it allows us to examine them as they participate in shared social and linguistic practices on a regular basis and over an extended period of time, which are the likely preconditions for a change in behaviour to occur (Pekarek Doehler and Wagner, 2010; cited in Kalocsai, 2013, p. 33). More importantly, this approach seems to have the potential "to explicate the processes of identity formation, or in the case of this study, of identity transformation among ELF users" (ibid., p. 33). The type of communities which can be labelled as a CoP can be found, for example, in the environment of study abroad communities. Such is also the case of this study. The methodological part will introduce the participants, i.e. Erasmus students studying for one or two semesters at the Charles University in Prague and regularly engaging in social activities with other mobility students. In order to gain more in-depth insights into the participants' perceptions, a group of 7 students was chosen to be interviewed in person and observed as a group while they were interacting during their social gatherings. The data for this study were gathered with the help of two methods: a qualitative interview and participant observation in the fieldwork. Firstly, the study will examine the local linguistic means created and utilized by the Prague Erasmus community, i.e. the salient features of their shared ELF repertoire, as well as what it reveals about speakers' priorities in communication. Secondly, we will attempt to gain an understanding of the students' perceptions on their status as non-native speakers of English, reveal possible ambivalence, and to find out whether and how these perceptions changed during their study abroad experience as well as how such changes are possibly interpreted.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 English as a lingua franca

While English as a lingua franca (ELF) is relatively new as a field of research, the existence and use of ELF as well as other lingua francas has been of vital importance for many centuries. (Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey, 2011, p. 281). Before we focus on defining the notion of English as a lingua franca and how it has evolved into its current conception, let us, therefore, briefly introduce the term lingua franca in its general sense.

A lingua franca has also been called a bridge language. As the term implies it is a language which is "widely used for communication among individuals or a group of people who speak different native languages" (Alley-Young, 2015). Any language which is used as a lingua franca has spread beyond the original context of use, i.e. beyond the circle of its native community, and has been simplified on the way. Examples of lingua franca have evolved in various domains throughout centuries. The original purpose for its use was probably business-related, "to facilitate communication by Mediterranean travellers and traders," later its usage spread so as to serve as a language for science, education, religion, diplomacy, government and administration (Alley-Young, 2015).

The oldest and best-known examples of languages which served the lingua franca function come from the ancient times. Greek and Latin played such an important role in the Roman Empire. However, they were not yet given the label "lingua franca." The first language which was explicitly referred to under this term had been developing around the east Mediterranean Sea from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century (Knapp & Meierkord, 2002; cited in Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey, 2011, p. 282). "It was a pidgin language that is likely to have been based initially on certain Italian dialects and also to have included elements of Arabic, French, Greek, Persian, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish" (ibid., p. 282). This example illustrates that lingua franca is a linguistic hybrid, which Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) believe was the characteristic feature of all lingua francas from their earliest history (ibid., p. 282).

Later, since the seventeenth century up until the end of the first world war, French emerged and dominated as the major lingua franca in the matters of diplomacy and international relations. In the meantime, English started to be used as a lingua franca in the territories colonized by the British Empire. i.e. the countries of the outer circle (Kachru, 1985, 1992, see the Fig. 1 below). The appearance of ELF can therefore be dated as far back as to the late sixteenth century. The modern conception of ELF is yet very different, both in functional and geographical terms.

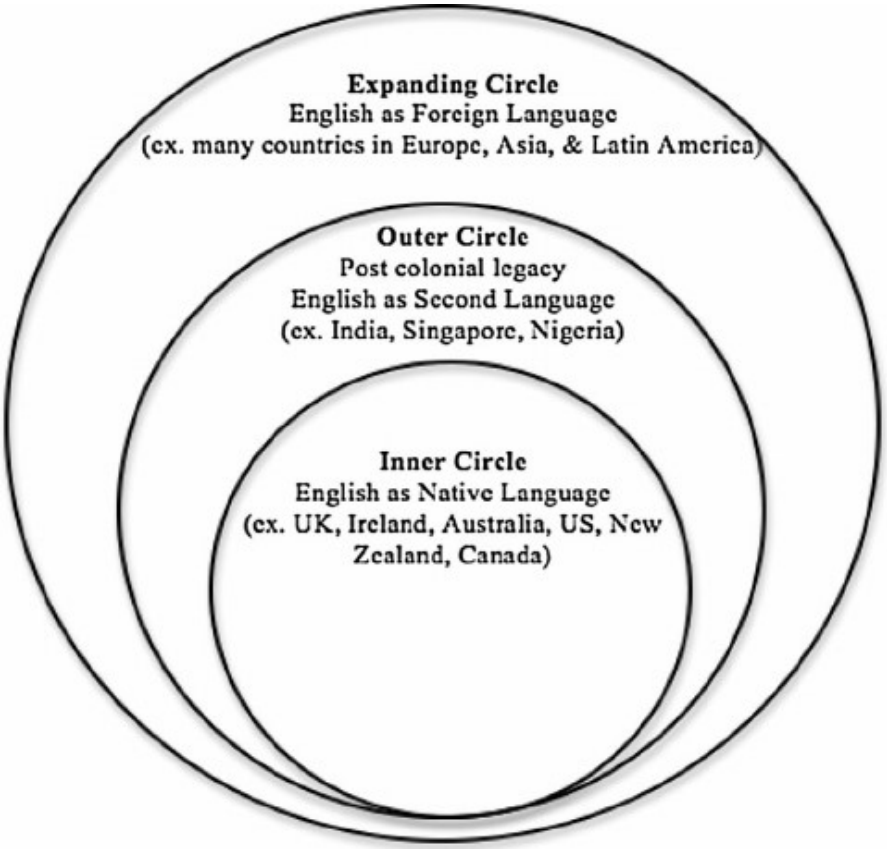

Figure 1: Kachru's (1985, 1992) paradigm of World Englishes.

To clarify why, among other instances of languages used as lingua franca, the case of English is peculiar, let us refer to Durham (2014). The author draws the contrast with not only French or Latin but also with other lingua francas which are currently used, apart from English, in specific countries. She provides the examples of Swahili and Hausa, which both play an important role as lingua francas these days. The former is used in the context of East Africa while the latter in Niger and Nigeria (p. 3). Both languages are, however, used in a specific territory and thus by a limited number of

speakers. English, by contrast, is used across the world in various domains and as such has gained the label of "global lingua franca", which no language ever did before (ibid.). According to Durham (2014), "English is the most widely spoken language on the planet. This spread was not achieved purely through colonialization or territorial expansion but rather through increased globalization and the export of British and American culture, literature, music and technology" (p. 2). In addition, the level of proficiency of its speakers is unusually high, relative to the average language competence in former lingua francas (ibid.). When a language served primarily as a means of communication in trade or diplomacy, it was perhaps not always necessary to have the language skills developed so well. To summarize Durham's discussion, there are three factors giving English its unique status: the extent of its use, the high proportion of people using it, and their high proficiency in the language.

2.1.1 Spread of English and World Englishes

The recognition of the specific role which English would play in the future started to appear in the 1960s. As the number of varieties of English was rapidly growing, it was becoming increasingly obvious that the former status of the language will need reconceptualization. Among the first scholars who addressed the idea were Halliday et al. (1964). They pointed out that the emerging varieties of English take diverse routes and should no longer be understood as the British or American property. This opened the question of "who possesses English now?" While some researchers, such as Quirk, advocated the view that there is only one model, i.e. the Standard English, from which the local varieties should evolve, a more liberal approach was pioneered by Braj Kachru. He brought a new outlook on the post-colonial use of English varieties, coined as World Englishes (1985). His work meant a great contribution to the field of sociolinguistics, which explains why it has been frequently referred to by many scholars up until the present day despite the fact that some aspects of his work are seen as conflicting.

How the use of English spread beyond its original community was captured in his World Englishes paradigm, which has already been introduced earlier (see fig. 1 above). It also illustrates how new varieties of English are developing. According to Kachru's

paradigm (1985), the speakers of English are categorized into three "circles." The speakers of English as a native language, coming from, for example the UK, the USA, Canada etc., are labelled as the "Inner circle" speakers and it is the Inner circle and its speakers who provide the language norms. In Kachru's words, they represent the "norm-giving" countries (p. 356).

The second group is called the Outer circle and is described as the "norm-developing" group (ibid.). It includes countries where English is not the native language but may be the second language, may serve as an official language or may have some other function which is given historically. It means that English in the outer circle societies is a non-native variety which, however, underwent some form of institutionalization.

The third group, named the Expanding Circle, refers to the countries where the use of English has none of the abovementioned functions. In these territories, there is no historical reason for its use. That is why the circle is described as "norm-dependent" (ibid.). Yet, English is frequently taught as a foreign language here or, from our current perspective, it is used as a lingua franca. It is this group which includes the largest number of English speakers. Since this paradigm is still in use, it is important to point out that since the time Kachru created this paradigm, the number of speakers in the expanding circle has further increased. It is rather difficult to find the exact numbers but the estimations, used by Jenkins in 2008, says that nearly eighty percent of all speakers of English are, currently, non-native speakers and the largest part of this number comes from the expanding circle (Braine 2006; cited in Jenkins, 2008, p. 3).

While a breakthrough contribution, Kachru's conception of World Englishes (WEs) has been also criticized for a number of reasons. Kachru (1985) himself addressed the most burning one when he admitted that the classification of speakers into the three circles is too narrow because in practice, the groups mingle and overlap their neat boxes. In the same vein, the external criticism (see Saraceni, 2010 for more information) focused on the fact that Kachru based his classification on historical-geographical criteria, which is seen as simplistic and potentially misleading. Instead, Graddol (2006) later proposed a different basis for classification in his revised version of Kachru' s paradigm (see fig. 2 below). He suggests that language proficiency is more suitable for categorizing speakers of English than their cultural affiliation or ethnicity (Harmer, 2007, p. 18).

As a consequence, there are no traces of distinction between native and non-native speakers of English to be found in the revised paradigm. Graddol (2006) justifies it, again, by explaining that "the distinctions between 'native speaker', 'second-language speaker', and 'foreign-language user' have become blurred" (p. 110). It means that in the new centre of attention there stand native together with non-native speakers, who are both proficient in English. Similarly, both kinds of speakers can be placed into the same category on the basis of a lower or poor English language proficiency.

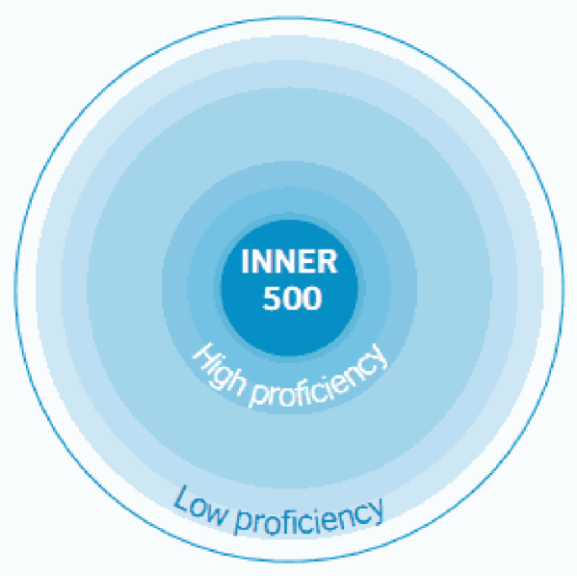

Figure 2: Graddol's revision of Kachru's circle of Englishes (2006, p. 110).

While Graddol's paradigm seems to be a much more fitting scheme for the use of English as a lingua franca as the current phenomenon, Kachru's post-colonial paradigm is useful in bringing about the notion of World's Englishes and their relations; firstly, in terms of the ideologies surrounding English that may exist in certain geographical regions, and secondly, because the developments of the outer circle varieties of English may serve as a key model for the development of ELF.

Originally, the term Word Englishes used to relate strictly to the newly emerging Englishes in the former colonial countries. However, later its meaning was extended so that nowadays, it serves as a neutral, umbrella term for all types of Englishes, including ELF. It is convenient to use two of McArthur's definitions for specification. He claims that the term WEs means "the English language in all its varieties as it is spoken and

written all over the world…standard and non-standard, mother-tongue and other tongue, dialect, pidgin, creole, lingua franca, and ―Anglo-hybrids as Hindlish and Spanglish" (McArthur 2004; cited in Quinn Novotná, 2010, pp. 25-26).

The original paradigm, created by Kachru, placed the inner circle Englishes into the centre of attention, but ascribed certain linguistic autonomy to the outer circle varieties in order to establish their own norms. Consequently, they could, over time, develop into varieties as independent as those in the inner circle, such as Australian English. Up to this point Kachru's conception is still legitimate. It is the role of the expanding circle varieties which currently challenges the validity of the paradigm. While Kachru considered these varieties as fully dependent on the others, the new conception of World Englishes assigns the expanding circle varieties the same linguistic autonomy as the outer circle receives. In other words, it places, for example, German English or Chinese English on the same level as Indian English. With the same logic, ELF, being considered as a part of World Englishes, can be seen as the international English with a potential to become a legitimate variety in the future. At least, it is in line with "presentation of ELF as a language in its own right rather than a deviant or erroneous version of native English" (Seidlhofer, 2011; cited in Jenkins, 2012, p. 488).

To proceed a large step further, Shaw (2003) theorizes that the process in which ELF will be gaining independence will be happening on two levels. "One in which features of different varieties are mixed to create a norm and thus something like a uniform international ELF which embraces specific features of all the non-native varieties of English as its norms can arise. On the other level, the regional expanding circle Englishes develop, these would have unique features due to their own substrates, etc., like the outer-circle varieties" (cited in Jenkins, 2007, pp. 5-6). In other words, the local differences within this international variety would crystalize, resulting in an emergence of sub-types of ELF, such as European ELF, Asian ELF etc. It is possible that these processes will be happening simultaneously or that they will freeze at some point in the course of their development. In the same vein, which process should precede which is, of course, a question for which the answer can only be found in the future.

In summary, this subchapter aimed to clarify how the notion of WEs appeared and how it evolved, as it enables us not only to understand the propositions on the position of ELF when they claim that ELF should be understood as a part of the World Englishes

paradigm and not a part of the Modern Foreign Languages paradigm, but it also accounts for the implications on the future development of ELF.

2.1.2 Defining ELF and related terminology

The phenomenon of English used as a lingua franca means of communication has been passionately debated for many decades in relation to geographical contexts such as Asian or European setting. On the other hand, certain regions and countries appear to be largely left out of the debate. Similarly, ELF has been discussed in relation to various fields of study. It was particularly the field of applied linguistics and English language teaching (ELT) where the new ideas and viewpoints on ELF have been coming from. Despite the significant attention ELF received in discussions, the empirical research was lacking behind for a long time and it is still a matter of a very recent past that ELF has been facing a significant research interest *(*Mauranen & Ranta, 2009, p. 2).

ELF builds on findings from ENL (English as a native language) as well as EFL (English as a foreign language) research. Seidlhofer (2001), however, emphasizes that it serves as a complement for both ENL and EFL research and is not meant to replace either (p. 145). The use of English as a lingua franca started to gain acceptance as a fully-fledged branch of research only during the last two decades.

Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) believe that the first scholars to identify ELF in its modern sense were Hullen and Knapp during the 1980s (p. 282). Since that time many attempts followed to word a universal definition but attitudes towards the phenomenon have varied, which is nicely reflected in the numerous terminology. There are terms such as English as an international language, English as a global language or English as a world language. To a great confusion of not only lay people but also linguists themselves, all of the terms can sometimes still be encountered in literature, although they seem to be rather outdated. According to Seidlhofer (2004) they have gradually been replaced in favour of the main term English as a lingua franca (p. 210).

So far, the most fitting definition of the phenomenon was presented by Jenkins (2008), who concludes that "ELF is a way of referring to communication in English between speakers who have different first languages. ELF interaction can include native English speakers, but in most cases, it is a contact language between people who share neither a common native tongue nor a common national culture, and for whom English is an *additional* language" (p. 5). The definition explains that ELF is in majority spoken among people who are non- native speakers of English, but admits that a native speaker can also be present in the interaction and use ELF. The fact that it is an additional language implies, however, that native speakers are also required to adjust the way they normally understand and produce English when they wish to be more effective in their ELF interactions (Jenkins, 2012, p. 487). The presence or absence of an English native speaker is, especially in the earlier definitions of ELF, a serious point of disagreement. While some researchers, such as Seidlhofer (2005), used rather ambiguous definitions in which they avoided directly addressing the role of native speakers, others, such as House (1999), are explicit about the issue. In her description of what ELF interactions are, she states that these are "interactions between members of two or more different linguacultures in English, for none of whom English is the mother tongue" (p. 74). It means that for House, the native speakers of English cannot be speakers of ELF. Although this view seems to be held less and less frequently, it still has supporters among scholars.

It is appropriate to announce at this point what is the stance adopted in this thesis. Whenever the term English as a lingua franca is used in this work, it always refers to the definition given by Jenkins, according to which native speakers of English can form a minority of participants in the interactions.

2.1.3 ELF- specific features

A characteristic feature of ELF, which implicitly emerges from its definitions, is that as an additional language for everyone it cannot have any native speakers. This may lead to a huge misconception that ELF is some underdeveloped form of a pidgin language. Although some English Language Teaching (ELT) books describe it as a simplified and reduced version of Standard English (see chapter comparing ELF with EFL for a discussion of details), research findings prove quite the contrary. ELF is a rich variety,

as a result of its creative use by its speakers, who can all draw on their L1 (first language) as another linguistic resource (Jenkins, 2012). House (2010) claims that rather than seeing ELF as a reduced form, it should be understood as a process of successful communication which was achieved not only by mutual tolerance but also by specific accommodation strategies. Mauranen (2006) mentions, for example, various clarifications and repair strategies. There are solid data to prove that ELF speakers have their ways to ensure that their communication attempts do not fail and they use these strategies systematically (see, for example, Jenkins, 2004). The form of ELF is, therefore, being negotiated by the particular speaker and formed by the requirements of the particular interaction. Adaptability seems to be another key feature of ELF (see more typical ELF features in the table 1 below). However, there are limits beyond which the speaker cannot go, otherwise the language becomes so diverse that it is no longer comprehensible. It is, therefore, not true – though claimed by some critics – that ELF communication is simply a case of 'anything goes'. (Jenkins, 2006, p. 141). English as a lingua franca sets as its main goal to achieve successful communication, and the same applies to the kind of English which the majority of speakers learnt as a foreign language (EFL). The ways of achieving the goal are, nevertheless, quite different; and since ELF is a much younger phenomenon, its strategies are often misunderstood and considered to be errors from the perspective of EFL teaching and students who adopted this mindset (ibid.). This will be further discussed in one of the following subchapters.

TRADITIONAL SLA PARADIGM KEY TERMS:	NEW/ (POST)-MODERN SLA PARADIGM[124] KEY TERMS:
form	practice-based
interlanguage, learner language	versatility
grammar / structure	agility
monolingual	adaptive
single foreign language	intersubjectivity
homogeneity	pragmatics
uniformity	alignment
purity	interaction / communication strategies
exclusivity (RP)	negotiation practices
domination	emergent
information	linguistic diversity / plurality
rules	language contact
knowledge	hybridity
cognitive schemata	variability
	creativity
	heterogeneity
	repertoire of codes
	language awareness
	processual
	situational
	multilingual competence (MC)

Table 1: Lists the key terms associated with the traditional approach towards second language acquisition, in order to provide contrast with the new approach, of which ELF is a representative (Quinn-Novotná, 2010, p. 74.).

There are two more arguments why ELF should not be considered a case of "linguistic anarchy" as Jenkins (2006) calls it. Firstly, the extent of usage of English as a lingua franca is so wide that any under-developed variety of a language could not cover it. ELF is used, for example, in business or academia, which are both powerful domains and, especially the latter one, require a sophisticated use of language (Seildhofer, 2001, p. 146). The second argument is that there are levels of proficiency. The non-proficient ELF speaker is a perfectly real phenomenon (ibid., p. 141). The assessment of the opposing extreme, i.e. a proficient ELF speaker, is a fairly complex task because unlike EFL, ELF does not set the English native speaker as the yardstick. The level of native-like proficiency thus cannot be reached, there is only an ELF expert level. As mentioned earlier, the assessment of ELF competence is the effectivity in communication, which,

however, can vary in speakers depending on the situation as well as the domain of use. It should be pointed out that while existing, this phenomenon is rather under-studied in ELF circles.

2.1.4 Conceptualizing ELF

It may seem that the phenomenon of ELF appeared on the world stage out of the blue. There was English and now there is ELF in its place. There is no nation behind it, to which languages are traditionally linked. There are no native speakers who set what is the standard in the language, which by extension means there is no prestige variety which to adhere to. This fact only adds to the sense of vagueness and uncertainty which ELF generally tends to invoke, since it is a well-known fact in sociolinguistics that the existence of a prestigious linguistic form has important psychological implications for users of any language. It is because the prestigious variety represents a certain authority to which speakers can seek affiliation, its usage helps to affirm positions in the social hierarchy and this, in turn, generates feelings of safety and certainty for those who use it. ELF is failing to guarantee this. It can only be seen as a minor reason, however, why the phenomenon raises doubts and provokes distrust in both general public as well as professionals. In fact, some of the titles of ELF-related articles nicely reflect these ambiguous attitudes: *Global English: Desired and Dreaded* by Hüllen (2003) *Lingua Franca: Chimera or Reality?* Publications Office of the European Union (2010), Grazzi (2009)_*Which English? Whose English?*, Phillipson, (2008) *Lingua franca or lingua frankensteinia? English in European integration and globalisation,* Jenkins (2009) *(Un)pleasant? (In)correct? (Un)intelligible? ELF Speakers' Perceptions of Their Accents.*

Nor do the key words which are usually used to define ELF help to bring much clarity to what the concept stands for. It is often associated with features such as*: variability, adaptability, hybridity, versatility, linguistic plurality*. These are all rather broad and unclear terms, and thus it can be difficult for the public to give the conception a concrete shape in their minds.

It is also caused by generally low awareness about ELF and various misconceptions which arise from these circumstances that the notion is approached rather reluctantly.

Many people do not realize that the case is easier than it seems, in fact, they may be encountering and using ELF without even being aware of it. Jenkins (e.g. 2000, 2007) rightly pointed out that "the use of English as a lingua franca has become the fastest-growing and at the same time the least recognised function of English in the world" (cited in Mauranen & Ranta 2009, p. 2). When we talk about ELF, we talk about the same English which the majority of non-native speakers today use in casual intercultural interactions (see Hülmbauer et al., 2008), i.e. at work when emailing or meeting international colleagues, in academia when writing articles for an international conference, during control procedures at the airports, when checking into a hotel, or giving advice to foreign tourists. The difference of English as a lingua franca as opposed to the traditional conception of English lies in the altered perception on the norm-giving authority. Hülmbauer et al. (2008) explain that **"**ELF is emphatically *not* the English as a property of its native speakers, but is democratized and universalized in the 'exolingual' process of being appropriated for international use" (p. 27.). They also add a complementing point, which otherwise remains rather implicit, made by Gnutzmann (2000) that English in ELF "is no longer founded on the linguistic and sociocultural norms of native English speakers and their respective countries and cultures" (cited in Hülmbauer et al., 2008, p. 27). The fact that ELF users are not conforming to the given norms and instead are inventing their own is seen as an underlying principle of ELF effectiveness (ibid. p. 28). In other words, when we talk about ELF, we refer to a change in the conventional thinking about using English as a tool for intercultural communication. A term used, for example, by Dewey (2009), "paradigm shift", is considered the most appropriate label for the phenomenon described.

2.1.5 The institutionalization of ELF

It is assumed that this paradigm shift is currently occurring, to a greater or lesser extent, all over the world – despite the fact that, as we have pointed out, there are neither native speakers of ELF nor any nation with its institutions, most importantly language academies which could cultivate and promote ELF. It was pointed out by Widdowson (2003) that "the very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it" (p. 43). It therefore follows that the ELF movement is a

transnational initiative. Specifically, it is the merit of a great number of applied linguists, language teachers and other scholars from various countries who took over the task to examine ELF and raise awareness about it. The important ELF research centres can be found in Helsinki, Vienna, Southhampton, Hong Kong etc. There is a high concentration of professional researchers collecting data, compiling corpora, publishing articles and organizing conferences, thus it can be said that the awareness of ELF is being spread worldwide mostly from there.

The intention of ELF researchers is neither to promote a greater use of English in the world nor to introduce or impose a new set of norms and rules for English used in international settings, but rather "to describe and understand this 'emergent' phenomenon which has become so prominent in this globalized world" (Hülmbauer et al., 2008, pp. 33-34). It is further explained that ELF is "seen in terms of a process rather than a product, it rather raises awareness of intercultural phenomena in communication and the importance of strategies like linguistic accommodation and negotiation of meaning thereby, again, giving more prominence to how mutual understanding is achieved than to an enforced convergence on standards" (ibid. p. 33). While ELF researchers keep explaining very explicitly that prescription of certain language norms is entirely unrelated to their goals (see also Jenkins 2007), there are critical voices claiming right the opposite, accusing the ELF movement of being developed as a device to maintain Center dominance (Holliday, 2005, p. 9).[1] Specifically, the critics claim that providing a model of English which differs from Standard English and which is by some seen as carrying around a certain stigma, will keep its users in a limited position, never being able to compete with the native speakers (Kubota, 2006, p. 607).

Moving away from theories which are lacking scientific proofs, let us consider to what extent the efforts of ELF promoters have been fruitful so far. In other words, how well is ELF incorporated as an alternative to the traditional SLA framework and its way of thinking. In order to explore systematically what processes ELF has already undergone in terms of its institutionalization, what criteria are to be fulfilled and to pinpoint what poses obstacles on the way for ELF to become established as a legitimate variety, we

[1] The Center vs. Periphery dichotomy should be understood is a part of the post-colonial discourse.

decided to follow the example of Jenkins (2007) and adopt Bamgbose's (1998) five factors which determine whether an innovation has the status of a norm.

The factors are as follows:

1) **Demographic**, in other words, how many and which speakers use the innovation?
2) **Geographical** i.e. how widespread is it?
3) **Codification**, in the sense of appearing in written form in grammars, dictionaries and the like.
4) **Authoritative**, meaning that it needs to be sanctioned by examination bodies, teachers, publishing houses and so on.
5) **Acceptability**, which is considered as "the ultimate test of an innovation."
(cited in Jenkins, 2007, p. 15).

In the following subchapters, ELF will be discussed in relation to each of the above factors.

2.1.5.1 Demographic and geographic factors

Let us start with the first two criteria. Concerning the demographic factors, ELF, as any other sociolinguistic change, is associated with young speakers and is believed to be used by both a great number of speakers and in geographically wide contexts, which was already hinted to several times in the text. Hülmbauer et al. (2008), for example, claim that "in terms of frequency and scope of use, it is undoubtedly the currently most prevalent language for intercultural communication" (p. 26). To provide a more specific (but still very broad) picture, the estimated number of all non-native speakers in the Expanding circle, when categorized according to Kachru's paradigm, was 750 million in 1997 when Graddol wrote his article *The Future of English*? (see fig. 3 below for a comparison of all the circles). It is assumed that the number would have increased since that time; according to the available estimates, there are between 100 million and 1 billion speakers **(**Quinn-Novotná, 2010, p. 22).

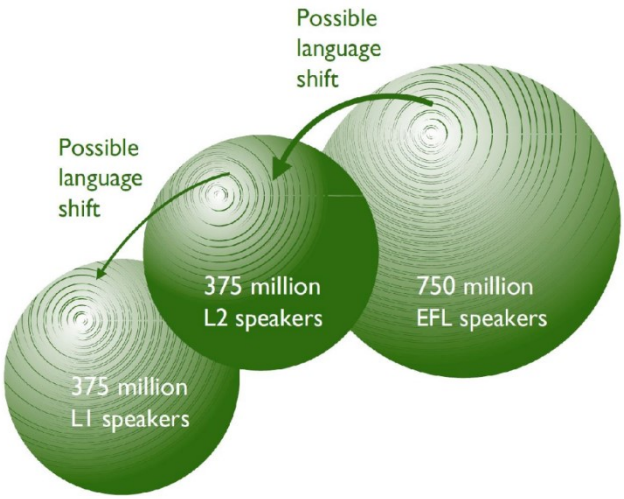

Figure 3: Graddol's three circles of English (1997) show the estimated numbers of English speakers in the Inner, Outer and Expanding circle (p. 10).

Since ELF is a young branch of research, the tools for its investigations are only being invented these days. It is therefore not surprising that to find data showing precisely how many of the EFL speakers use ELF is not an easy task. It is assumed that ELF is very frequently used in Europe and Asia as there are specific ELF corpora capturing the peculiarities of English in these contexts, but it is presumable that ELF appears within multilingual communication settings all over the world. In terms of domain use, ELF is not restricted to informal settings, which is sometimes wrongly assumed (see the figure 4 below for information on how ELF is represented in various domains). It is to be commonly found in areas such as European legal institutions, or academia. Although when publishing articles for international journals, researchers tend to be implicitly sanctioned by authorities when they fail to adhere to the norms of Standard English (see e.g. Perez-Llantada, 2009).

Domain	Number of Speech Events	Wordcount	Percent of Words
educational	35	260,935	25.51
leisure	26	101,218	9.89
professional business	23	203,407	19.88
professional organizational	41	354,545	34.66
professional research and science	26	102,938	10.06

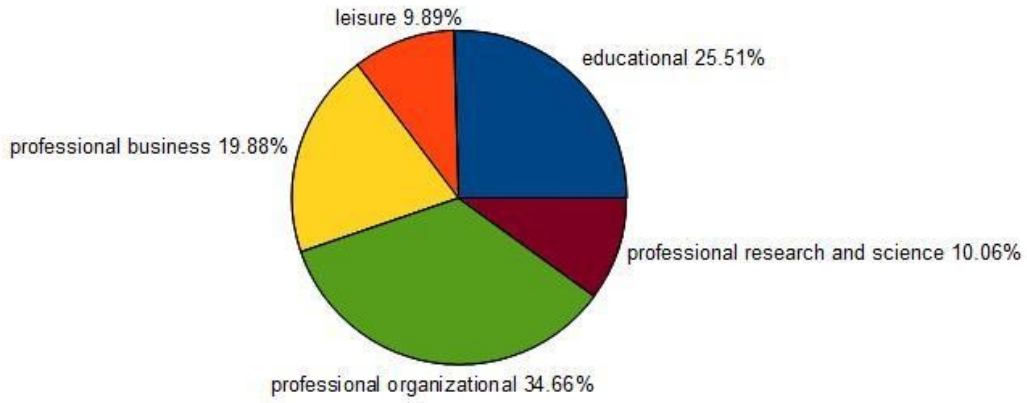

Figure 4: use of ELF in various domains (VOICE website, 2017).

2.1.5.2 Codification

On the way towards the acknowledgment of ELF as legitimate as opposed to an erroneous variety of English, Seidlhofer (2010) points out that it was crucial to recognize the need for compiling descriptive materials about ELF "rather than to rely on some impressionistic judgments" (p. 154). In fact, codification is a crucial precondition for any language variety to gain a wider acceptance. Without a solid empirical description, there is a little chance for any variety to ever become institutionalized. In terms of ELF, large-scale codification processes were launched with the emergence of a corpora- compiling project in 2005. Let us explore the project itself, similar projects emerging later, as well as the development of ELF-oriented events and materials, such as conferences, journals and books.

The name VOICE stands for*:* Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English. The reason why Oxford is included in the title is that Oxford University Press financially

supported the project in its initial stages. Later, the Austrian Science Fund FWF granted the major financial contributions to the project (VOICE website). “VOICE is the first professionally-compiled corpus of English as a lingua franca” (Seidlhofer 2010, p. 154). It was an initiative of Barbara Seidlhofer and as she herself explains, “the purpose of the VOICE project is to lend a voice to English as a Lingua Franca“ (Seidlhofer 2010, p. 154).

The corpus comprises ELF interactions extracted from various settings. The interactions take place primarily between speakers with different L1s but sometimes, although marginally, there are native speakers involved. It is because the data are authentic, taken from real life situations. It is important to point out that VOICE focuses on EFL communication predominantly in the European context.

In the Asian context, we can find similar developments. To name the major one, there is the ACE project: Asian Corpus of English, which was established in 2009. The project leader is a prolific advocate of ELF, Andy Kirkpatrick.

Moving back to the European environment, another ELF database, similarly extended as VOICE, has been compiled in Helsinki. In 2008, a one-million-word corpus of Lingua Franca English has been collected under the auspices of the ELFA research project, where Anna Mauranen is the director. The ELFA is a label for Lingua Franca in Academic Settings. There are two major points of difference between the two projects. While the VOICE corpus concentrates on the general use of English as a lingua franca in a number of different settings, ELFA narrows down its focus towards the use of ELF exclusively in academia. Both VOICE and ELFA corpora focus primarily on spoken data, because linguistic changes become most quickly evident in the spoken form of a language (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 223). The ELFA corpus, however, gathers written material as well, thus collecting support for Seidlhofer’s claim that a written ELF variety is also evolving (ibid.).

The establishment of VOICE and ELFA corpora have marked important points in the development of the ELF field of study. They both can be easily accessed online and without any charges. Their goal has been to raise general awareness about ELF and since the databases serve as resource platforms, they have been stimulating further research and collaboration among researchers.

The first international conference of English as a Lingua Franca was organized in 2008. It took place in Helsinki and it brought together various directions of research on ELF (Mauranen & Ranta, 2009, p. 2). "The conference papers spanned theoretical analyses, empirical studies, pedagogical questions and ideological issues around ELF, and delved into local and regional situations of using ELF in different institutional and educational settings in a variety of countries" (ibid.). Since 2008, the conference meetings are held every year in different cities, such as Helsinki, Beijing, Athens, Rome etc.

Based on the conference input, a series of ELF books entitled *Developments in English as a Lingua Franca* appeared, as well as the Journal of English as a Lingua Franca (JELF), which began to be published regularly. An important and fairly new publication by Seidlhofer (2011) *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca* is a significant contribution to the conceptualization of the phenomenon. In terms of books for language teachers devoted to the ELF approach, Walker's (2010) handbook on teaching ELF-oriented pronunciation is one of the very few existing examples (cited in Jenkins, 2012, p. 493). The insufficient number of textbooks which could be used in ELT classes is certainly a limitation.

However, some notable attempts to describe the variety of English as a lingua franca were made by Jennifer Jenkins in her books *Lingua Franca Core* (2000, 2007). To provide a contrast with the Standard English, Jenkins identified core grammar and pronunciation features of ELF. Based on extensive empirical research into what makes ELF unintelligible, and thus may be a cause of communication breakdown, she proposes specific linguistic features for ELF. Jenkins focuses on phonetics and only general trends in the language use rather than giving a thorough description of ELF on all linguistic levels. While her work has been criticized, it is considered an "eye-opening contribution" by others (Mauranen & Ranta, 2009, p. 2). A good example is the field of English language teaching, for which the description of ELF core, potentially, provides alternative teaching models.

The ELF-oriented language teaching or at least ELF-conscious traditional English language teaching is, however, far from reality. Seidlhofer (2004) explains the reasons; "while in a traditional foreign language teaching framework it has been possible to rely on fairly clear and stable norms and goals, these certainties have been called into question by the recognition of the global lingua franca role English has to serve" (pp. 227-228).

The EFL approach to communication is understood in terms of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, but Cogo (2012) explains that language teaching can be understood as a much "wider process involving a whole range of communication skills, knowledge, and attitudes such as communication strategies, pragmatic competence, and language and cultural awareness" (p. 104). In fact, she even argues that many researchers, including non-ELF ones, would welcome alternative ways to approach language teaching (ibid.). However, it is not yet clear what such a new approach means *in practice*, so there remains a lot to discuss (Jenkins, 2012, pp. 7-8). Seidlhofer (2004), observing the current state of things, points out that "the teaching of English is going through a truly postmodern phase in which old forms and assumptions are being questioned while no new orthodoxy can be offered in their place" (p. 228).

The traditional English language teaching and ELF oriented teaching have conflicting interests, and thus it is debatable whether the former would be interested in incorporating some ELF-conscious perspective into its teaching. However, such a question is a specific pedagogical issue and ELF pedagogy is beyond the scope of this thesis, so we will not go into further detail.

In summary, the field of English as a lingua franca currently constitutes a flourishing body of research and seems to be quickly growing in scope. While the essential steps to codify ELF have already been carried out by the establishment of the corpora, further codification, especially in the form of teaching materials, is lacking. As Quinn- Novotná (2010) points out**:** "We are still far from what we may call ELF informed textbooks and other teaching materials" (p. 94). She also touches upon a point which is one of many causes of disagreement among ELF scholars when she adds that "it remains disputable if it is even recommended for ELF to take such a direction. Codification brings with it the danger of 'imposition' of rules, which goes against the inherently changeable and volatile nature of ELF" (ibid).

2.1.5.3 Authoritative factor

What was mentioned about the absence of ELF- oriented textbooks directly relates to the content of this section. The insufficient number of English language teaching (ELT) materials with ELF approach means that it cannot be put fully into practice, i.e., to be taught in class as an EFL alternative. Since the traditional ELT is the only perspective

established and available, it is understandable that the authorities, such as examination boards, publishing houses, language teachers etc., sanction the usage of deviating norms, which are characteristic of ELF.

As mentioned previously, there are discussions of this sanctioning in relation to academic publishing (see, for example: Kuteeva & Mauranen, 2014 or Muresan & Pérez-Llantada, 2014). While ELF is used in this domain, and the ELFA corpus is an excellent proof of it, it does not mean that there are no restrictions on language use; they are only less explicit. There is pressure on the researchers; first, to publish in English rather than any other language if they want to have their studies recognized beyond the national boundaries. More importantly, there is a strong recommendation to adhere to its standard varieties. It is an unwritten rule that renowned international journals with high ranking choose to publish articles which conform to these expectations.

Seidlhofer (2004) appeals for alternative standards, pointing out that there is a 'conceptual gap' in ELT "in the place where ELF should be established in people's minds, alongside the notions of English as a native language" (p. 212). In the process of filling the gap in, the crucial role will be played by those who set the standards for language testing, i.e. the standpoint of international examination boards such as ESOL, TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC etc., whether they decide to take the changing role of English into account and incorporate some innovations into the established teaching paradigms or, alternatively, whether they allow an ELF-conscious alternative to traditional language teaching to arise.

Currently, according to Jenkins, "there is little evidence that the examination boards, are taking account of ELF or are engaging in debates with ELF researchers" (2012, p. 493). Of course, the situation is a complex interplay of many factors and on the other hand, the conservation of standard varieties is in the interest of multiple actors and the stance of the mentioned authorities is not only understandable but also legitimate.

2.1.5.4 Acceptance

Drawing from personal experience, the lay public often does not have a correct or clear idea of what the phenomenon of ELF actually embodies, which may account for the ambiguous attitude generally held towards it. Once they hear a proper explanation of

what ELF is, and that it is not some invented artificial language or an extremely simplified version of English, their response tends to be quite positive. It comes down to recognizing the advantages of ELF and the understanding that "ELF is not bad or *deficient* English – it is just *different in form* from the native speaker English and serves *different functions"* but **"**does not in principle lack the potential to be effective for all the communicative purposes it is appropriated for" (Hülmbauer, et al., 2008, p. 32).

The acceptance or rejection of ELF by non-native speakers of English is key for the course of the development which ELF will take in the future. Generally, studies show that particularly older population has rather uncertain attitudes towards ELF, (see Jenkins 2007; cited in Jenkins, Cogo, Dewey, 2011, p. 307). On the other hand, according to Jenkins (2012) young people are increasingly receptive towards ELF (p. 493). There also seems to be a concern among young NNs about the inconsistency between English they are taught at language classes and the English they actually use during their intercultural interactions (Ranta 2010; cited in Jenkins, 2012, p. 493).
Further, ELF-aware young speakers (studies have been conducted on university students who are roughly in their twenties) tend to be generally more open to the idea of ELF. For example, Kalocsai (2009) found that the attitudes of Erasmus students in Hungary towards their English were surprisingly relaxed, untroubled by the fact that they are not following the native ideal (cited in Jenkins et al., 2011, p. 307). There are two more European studies with similar target groups and similar findings: Ranta (2010) in Finland, and Erling (2007) in Germany (ibid.). Based on these and other findings, Seidlhofer (2010) raises an interesting hypothesis, specifically, she mentions "the possibility that because today's youth have grown up in an increasingly globalized world, the issue of linguistic standardization linked to native norms may be resolved when young people such as these, with their more relaxed and flexible attitude towards the use of linguistic repertoires, reach an age at which they may become involved in language policy formulation" (cited in Jenkins et al., 2011, p. 307). In any case, the fact that speakers are starting to notice that there is space, and perhaps even a need, for some alternative to the native-like, be it International English, ELF or anything else, is a good basis for ELF to thrive.

Having applied all Bambose's factors, it can be concluded that ELF, in the current state, is far from being considered a legitimate linguistic code and even further from being considered a language variety. There is a lot of work to be done as ELF is seemingly not

considered advantageous by the main linguistic authorities. The greater awareness of ELF and its benefits might help in gaining acknowledgement. In this respect, the lack of codified materials is currently the major obstacle to it. Since the factors are mutually dependent, that is, if one factor changes, it triggers changes in other areas, the codification is an essential step to start with. Further, the wider acceptance of ELF is important. According to the presented findings, the current generation of young non-native English speakers will be key in determining the course and extent of ELF's development. In the next chapter, let us consider what implications there are for the future of ELF.

2.1.6 Future implications for ELF

Scholars generally agree that a change in approaching English will be inevitable in the future. It is evident, for example, from a comment by David Crystal (2004), currently the most renowned expert on the English language and its development, who claims that "it may not be many years before an international standard will be the starting-point, with British, American and other varieties all seen as optional localizations" (p. 40). What scholars do not seem to share is the view on how this change will be approached, i.e. what form the English for international communication should assume and to what extent it should be dependent on the standard varieties.

One indication of the need for an international standard of English can be seen in the emergence of the so called "native speaker problem," a term which was coined by Graddol (2006). The problem itself is certainly not a new matter, but as the last two decades have been particularly open to debates about the use of English in the world, this issue gained a label and started to receive more attention. It refers to the fact that specific codified varieties of English can be less intelligible to a non-native speaker's ear than other non-native varieties (Mufwene; cited in Jenkins, 2007, p. 16). Thus, it can be communication with a native speaker, rather than another non-native speaker, which causes its breakdown. Jenkins was collecting evidence to show that what may seem as a minor thing can be a real issue, and one of her findings is the following quotation from newspapers: "Korean Airlines reportedly chose a French supplier for its flight simulators because its 'offshore' international English was more comprehensible

and clearer than that of the UK competitor" (*Observer* Business Supplement, July 2005; cited in Jenkins, 2008, p. 42). It is logical to assume that the situation described in the extract is likely to be happening more and more often in the future. To go even further with these implications, the unequal linguistic situation between native and non-native speakers may turn around entirely. While the non-native speakers may have felt disadvantaged in relation to their native partners when participating in intercultural communication, in the future it may be the native speaker who feels out of place when he finds himself in the company of non-native speakers simply because ELF diverges from the ENL norms. According to Jenkins, the skills for an effective intercultural communication should be *gained* by both non-native and native speakers (2012, p. 487).

There is another implication that ELF is evolving in its own direction. Lowenberg (2002) in his article examines the nature of processes which generate ELF innovation and he discovers that these changes share many similarities with the contact and change occurring in both the inner and outer varieties of English. He arrives at the conclusion that it is only a matter of time when these language changes will actually have to be acknowledged in the same way as it is in the remaining circles (cited in Jenkins, 2007, p. 17). However, whether the acknowledgment will happen in the same way is questionable.

There are essentially two scenarios in discussions about ELF in relation to the process of gaining independence. In the first one, its acknowledgement as an equal means of intercultural communication is suggested, which in itself would be a significant step. To go an immense step further, the second scenario considers that ELF becomes an entirely separate variety of English. There are many obstacles to the latter scenario and it would be a long run development which is hard to imagine at present. Focusing thus on the former and more likely scenario, ELF as an equal means of communication would be used as a non-stigmatized means of communication, occupying an equal position among ENL and EFL and functioning simply as an alternative option for those speakers who find EFL more suitable for their communicative purposes then EFL (Cogo, 2012, p. 104). This scenario is perhaps an ideal one. Scholars seem to be rather sceptical towards the idea of ELF reaching the utmost level of linguistic autonomy. Jenkins (2012) is conscious of the fact that it would be problematic to treat ELF as a fully autonomous variety because English speakers "negotiate and accommodate their English in situ", which does not allow for the conceptualization of ELF as a variety in the traditional

sense of the word (p. 490). Cogo further explains that the traditional understanding of variety is associated with stability based on the fact that a particular language type is used by a particular homogeneous speech community, in a particular geographical area and as such the variety forms a fixed entity, which can serve as a point of reference for identification with the group (2012, p. 98). These established connections between language variety and speech community are what makes English as a lingua franca an unusual and, in this respect, problematic case, because it does not correspond to these parameters (ibid.). All the three parameters – the community, the area of use and the linguistic means – are very diverse and changing dynamically in ELF communication. "ELF researchers have so far used, for example, the 'community of practice'(cf. Seidlhofer 2007) as a more viable concept for describing the ELF groups" (Cogo, 2012, pp. 98-99).

2.1.7 Misinterpreting ELF

ELF as a notion started to circulate among the lay public only recently, which probably accounts for the lack of information available about what the phenomenon actually embodies. Unfortunately, such an environment is an excellent precondition for misinterpretations to arise and, in fact, a number of incorrect assumptions about ELF is circulating in discussions among not only lay public but also among linguistic professionals. Let us, therefore, address the most frequent misinterpretations, as Seidlhofer (2006) identified them in her paper *English as a lingua franca in the expanding circle: What it isn't*, and see how they can be refuted.

Seidlhofer (2006) mentions five points:

"Misconception 1: ELF research ignores the polymorphous nature of the English language worldwide

Misconception 2: ELF work denies tolerance for diversity and appropriacy of use in specific sociolinguistic contexts

Misconception 3: ELF description aims at the accurate application of a set of prescribed rules

Misconception 4: ELF researchers are suggesting that there should be one monolithic variety

Misconception 5: ELF researchers suggest that ELF should be taught to all L2 non-native speakers“ (p. 40).

Numbers one and two are very paradoxical misconceptions because ELF research is, in fact, trying to capture non-native Englishes as rich and flexible languages. Seidlhofer argues that researchers are actually “contributing to the diversity of Englishes rather than ignoring it” (cited in Jenkins, 2007, p. 20).

Number three and four are interconnected. As Seidlhofer (2001) points out, “ELF research is by its nature descriptive” not prescriptive and the prescription of certain rules is something that ELF researchers question (cited in Jenkins, 2007, p. 20). Once this point is clarified, it would make little sense to think that ELF intends to be one monolithic variety.

Number five was already mentioned elsewhere in the text but we will summarize it again. It is, for some reason, a frequently held opinion, despite the constant reassurance from ELF researchers that English as a lingua franca is meant to be an option, an alternative available to speakers who find this means more appropriate, useful or comfortable in their own contexts, for their own communicative purposes than EFL. ELF researchers are critical of the fact that there is an absolute lack of choice for NNs in this respect.

In summary of this chapter, we have tried to present the general misinterpretations of ELF which can be frequently encountered. We included them in the text not only to refute them but also, in general, as ELF is a difficult phenomenon to conceptualize, we believe that demonstrating what ELF is not and which associations should not be made with it can help clarify what ELF is.

2.1.8 ELF versus EFL

The traditional idea is that English as a lingua franca is “a non-native speaker constituency which should pursue knowledge of the language as if it were a foreign language” (Modiano, 2009, pp. 61-62). It means that the communication should be targeted at the native speakers. English language teaching was based and designed on

this assumption and this orientation towards the native speaker is still a persisting view in the field. However, it appears to be rather obsolete, in the sense that, for the current use of English, this is no longer a fitting conception. English is used in multicultural settings where native speakers often constitute a minority. Jenkins (2006) points out that "it would make little sense to stick with the native speaker rules where they cannot be shown empirically to improve communication and where, by contrast, they are even being shown to have the opposite effect" (p. 140). Taking that into account, the modern idea of English as a lingua franca is to accept and develop the language in its diversity, "as opposed to viewing English as a prescriptive entity defined by idealized inner-circle speakers" (Modiano, 2009, pp. 61-62).

The discrepancy between the traditional view and the modern linguistic reality caught primarily the attention of the people who teach and learn the language norms. For example, frequently cited Jennifer Jenkins, a former English language teacher, noticed that her students were using their own versions of English both in the classes and outside and their communication was effective – despite the fact, that the same versions were classified as learner's errors by the ELT textbooks (Jenkins, 2012, p. 488). It is therefore the teaching paradigm which promotes teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) that is being called into question. Instead, there are propositions for establishing a new teaching paradigm which takes the abovementioned changes into account. To understand the ideology of ELF movement more clearly, let us compare how English taught as a lingua franca (EFL) differs from English taught as the foreign language (EFL).

The similarity of the two abbreviations may lead to confusions. However, the concepts they stand for show many points of difference. According to Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey (2011) "ELF is part of the Global Englishes paradigm, according to which most speakers of English are non-native speakers and all English varieties, native or non-native, are accepted in their own right rather than evaluated against a NSE (native speaker of English) benchmark. By contrast, EFL is part of the modern (foreign) languages paradigm, according to which most interaction involving non-native speakers is with native speakers of the language, and non-native speakers' goal is to approximate the native variety as closely as possible" (pp. 283-284). In other words, the crucial question is who sets the norms. ELF, unlike EFL, does not look up to native speakers as

to the norm-giving authority, but is rather independent, limited only by its own intelligibility.

It arises that the two concepts must part in the view on what is taken for an error. Since EFL aims to conform to the native speaker standard variety, anything that deviates from this standard is considered incorrect and better to be avoided (Jenkins, 2006, p. 140). This does not concern only linguistic differences; the same logic can be applied to any pragmatic and sociocultural differences in the production of the language (ibid.). From the ELF perspective, these "deviations" can be seen as different variants (ibid.). Some of them can be perfectly acceptable as long as they do not cause communication breakdown. In case that they do, for example because of inadequate pronunciation skills, they should be labelled as errors too (Majanen, 2008, p. 11).

Diversity is, however, seen as a natural phenomenon in ELF communication and is even encouraged. A good example is the use of code-switching (i.e. when a speaker switches between more than two languages in a single interaction; very often he draws on his own L1 (first language) vocabulary or on the L1 of his communicative partner, but any other linguistic resource can be used), which is a very characteristic feature of ELF conversations. From the ELF viewpoint, code-switching is used primarily to show the speakers' own identity, to promote solidarity with other speakers, and engage in creative acts (Jenkins, 2006, p. 140). The intrusion of culture-specific features which the ELF speakers use is therefore seen as an enrichment of the language and, potentially, as emerging ELF features, as opposed to a deficit in knowledge, which is precisely what EFL claims. How the two perspectives clash is also reflected in the choice of terminology which refers to the idiosyncratic L2 use of English. While ELF advocates tend to use the term "positive transference," the prescriptivists prefer to talk about "negative interference" (Modiano, 2009, p. 63).

What further distinguishes the two concepts is what status they ascribe to the non-native users of the language. EFL labels them as *learners* of English. It is a standard denomination for users of any other foreign language; the problem, however, arises when one thinks about its implications. To be a language learner presupposes a never-ending process of learning. Even when the level of proficiency is achieved, the user still remains a learner – a native-like learner. However, the majority of learners does not achieve such a high level of language competence. Complete proficiency is a rather rare phenomenon. The status of a learner may, therefore, carry negative connotations. It may imply that the learner is a "failed native speaker" as Jenkins, et al. (2011) argue.

This view is reiterated by the discourses used in the field of SLA (Second language acquisition), which show the adoption of a second language as "a never-ending elusive quest for NS (native speaker) competence" (Pavlenko, 2003, p. 259). In order to avoid the kind of criticism which the "learner label" raises, ELF refers to all its users as *speakers* of English, which suggests equality among all users of the language.

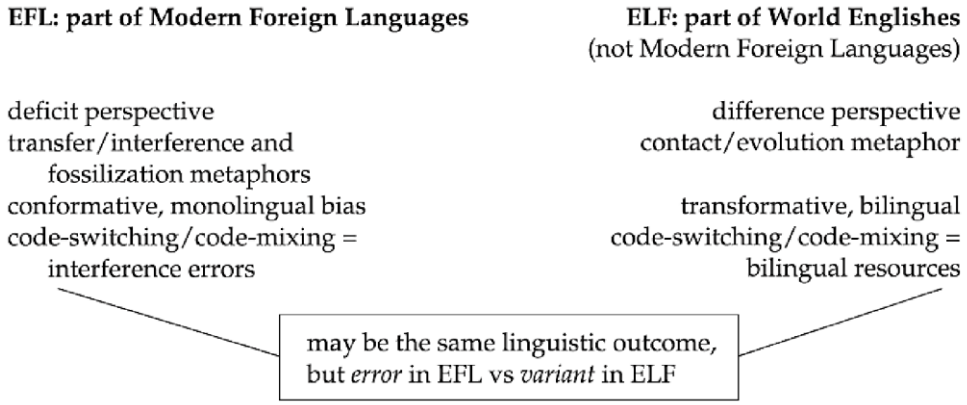

Figure 5: contrasting views on EFL and ELF (Jenkins, 2006, p. 140).

Majanen (2008) mentions an important issue when she points out that "the distinction between learner English and ELF also relates to the identities of English speakers" (p. 7). She explains that "most ELF users have been English learners first. Nonetheless, at some point, non-native English speakers may want to dissociate themselves from the identity of an eternal learner, and associate themselves with a more convenient identity of an ELF user, corresponding better to their actual contexts and purposes of language use" (ibid.). In the new understanding of English as a lingua franca, identity becomes a very important issue, and since it will be the central focus of this thesis, let us examine it in much greater detail in the following chapters.

In summary, the prescriptive view on English, as introduced by the concept of EFL, is traditionally established and despite its limitations, it is still dominating the pedagogic models used in ELT. ELF emerged as one of the concepts which are trying to challenge EFL and to provide an alternative. Its promoters "claim that the research which has produced this idea is doing no more than describing an existing linguistic phenomenon" (Seidlhofer, 2006, p. 45). What the ELF movement highlights is that there could be a variant of English more suitable for the purposes of interactions among non-native

speakers of English (Holliday, 2009, pp. 22-23), even though it might not be of any importance for those who wish to communicate primarily with native speakers. ELF asks for certain liberation from the native speaker norms and for the linguistic rights of its speakers to develop a kind of English in their own right.

2.1.9 Linguistic features of ELF

This chapter will present different levels of linguistic features which have been identified as characteristic of ELF, i.e. phonetic and morpho-syntactic features as well as various pragmatic strategies which are of crucial importance in ELF communication. However, before ELF is finally introduced as something more "tangible", it will be useful to have a look at previous attempts to design a language for international use and compare the approaches adopted towards the task with the approach adopted for the treatment of ELF. Only then will it become clear how the ELF features, presented later in this chapter, were arrived at. While previous attempts aimed at prescribing a set of norms, ELF describes the already existing ones. It means that the linguistic features described below are not the creation of linguists who decided to invent and spread them as ELF features via their articles, but rather tendencies regularly occurring in the language which the scholars merely identified and described. Keeping this comparison in mind, ELF will crystalize as phenomenon differing in a fundamental way from all the previous approaches towards an international language standard.

2.1.9.1 Esperanto and simplified Englishes

Esperanto can be considered perhaps the best known and the most remarkable example of a language meant to serve as an instrument for intercultural communication. Esperanto is an artificially created language which emerged around the 1890s. The Polish philologist Ludwig Lazarus Zamenhof brought about the idea and designed the characteristics of the language. The underlying motivation for the construction of Esperanto was similar, in essence, to that of various kinds of international English as well as ELF, i.e. to invent a common means of international communication which would serve several purposes, it would enable people with different linguistic

backgrounds to understand each other, it would be easy to acquire and it would minimize those inequalities among speakers which arise on linguistic grounds. In other words, a language which would help dissolve the English hegemony by placing the speakers in mutually equal positions.

The point where Esperanto and ELF diverge is in the way they emerged. The appearance of Esperanto was a top-down process. It means that there was a need for an international language, which was non-existent at the time, and as a result, scholars with Zamenhof in charge decided to fill in this gap by designing a full set of language forms, rules and norms, which could then be adopted by speakers all over the world through language courses. Esperanto gained validation by many international bodies, including UNESCO, and thus received the official acknowledgement of authorities. However, it seems to be lacking wide acceptance from the general public, which is a crucial precondition for a language to become popular. Nowadays, Esperanto is still in use and there are entire Esperanto communities to be found, but it failed to develop in the originally intended direction. The number of its speakers is much lower than was expected and, in general, the language is rather treated with suspicion. The problem may lie not particularly in Esperanto but perhaps in its nature as a top-down language model, as it seems near to impossible to spread worldwide language norms "from above."

Applying the top-down model, but moving away from the idea that a wholly artificial language can be successfully adopted on a large scale, later approaches decided to design a new language on the basis of an already existing one, English being the obvious choice. As a result, a number of international varieties of English emerged, to name the most notable examples: Basic English, Easy English and Globish. The idea behind these languages is primarily to make the use of English easier by cutting off the richness of the language which is unnecessary for certain types of intercultural communication. It means that it is typically restricted in forms, and thus in the domain of use. These languages are designed for communication which has a clear target, for example, to get some business agreement done. Such Englishes are necessarily quite austere, which explains why they are commonly referred to by the umbrella term Simplified Englishes. They cannot serve all the functions which the native languages can; most importantly, it is difficult to use such a language for identification. In other words, the capacity to express speakers' identity through such a language is limited.

Thus, while these can be successfully utilized for certain communicative purposes, it is not surprising that they did not become popular enough to gain wider significance.

In juxtaposition with the previous attempts to invent an international means of communication, ELF constitutes a completely novel approach because its emergence is a bottom-up process. In other words, ELF started to appear long before it has been conceptualized. At first, English expanded massively and became a lingua franca due to the Anglo-American dominance in political, economic and military matters. In the process, lingua franca users appropriate the language for their communicative purposes. As a consequence, English started to diverge from its starting point, i.e. the native variety, to such an extent that there arose the need to label this existing phenomenon and to exercise control over it. In doing so, the idea of ELF has been conceptualized. Instead of prescribing norms ”from above,“ as Esperanto and simplified Englishes, ELF examines what already exists in the language, i.e. those features which have established themselves and proved to be useful in practice for its users. Often, speakers employ these features without realizing two things. First, they use them in a systematic manner and second, many other speakers use them too. By describing and raising awareness of the existence of these features, the features in time may become accepted as characteristics of the language without being stigmatized.

It is also worth considering other circumstances, such as the time period in which this need for an equal international means of communication actually started to be felt. While the idea was circulating among linguists and other scholars throughout the whole twentieth century, it became urgent only after the end of the Cold War. It thus corresponds with the re-establishment of global power centres. In the modern order, the economic power is no longer exclusively in the hands of Anglo-American societies, but is dispersed and concentrated in a number of smaller centres. Therefore, the fact that the ELF problem emerged in a time when no single state can any longer claim world supremacy only reinforces the claim that the use of language is crucially tied to the economic and military power of its communities, the point which David Crystal (2012) addressed in his book English as a Global Language. Bearing this observation in mind, it will be interesting to watch how the rise of Asian economic power will impact the use of ELF.

2.1.9.2 Phonetic characteristics and lexico-grammatical variability

All the efforts to establish ELF need to take the specific nature of ELF, i.e. its bottom-up development, into account. That is why Jenkins, when seeking for the internationally- intelligible pronunciation, did not aim to invent another top-down pronunciation model; as mentioned, the previous attempts met little success. Rather, she decided to analyse what pronunciation features ELF speakers tend to use in order to find out those features of RP which "were necessary for intelligibility in ELF communication" those "which were unnecessary or even damaging to intelligibility" as well as "which intelligibility problems could be traced directly back to pronunciation" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 12). This approach helped her find out which RP features need to be preserved in ELF and which can become optional variants. The former category she named core features and the latter non-core features.

The idea was to highlight the fact that some forms are adhered to only for the sake of being correct in respect to NS norms. In terms of comprehensibility the communication will not benefit from their use. Jenkins, therefore, proposes to think about these non-core areas as spaces where the first-language regional accents can be retained without being sanctioned as errors nor being socially stigmatized (2009, p. 13). Out of all the linguistic features of ELF, however, the use of non-native pronunciation is most likely to cause controversial reactions. RP, due to its social prestige, dominates the pronunciation field and seems to be the unshakable standard. It might partly account for the controversial reactions Jenkins received on her proposals.

Similarly, linguistic forms used in ELF are immensely variable, depending on many variables, such as the individual participants, their linguistic backgrounds, the place where the communication is taking place or what its purpose is. Nevertheless, certain tendencies which give ELF a concrete shape have been identified. In EFL classrooms, these forms are immediately spotted as typical learners' errors and patiently corrected by language teachers. Seidlhofer (2004) summarized those of the forms which ELF speakers tend to use, often despite being aware of their incorrectness within the framework of Standard English, but which did not prove to have any negative impacts on the quality of communication (p. 220).

The point of ELF researchers is to raise the awareness that spending too much effort on sticking with these norms or aspiring to achieve a native-like accent in order to improve

intercultural communication may not bring the desirable result (Seildhofer, 2004, p. 220). The logical conclusion, therefore, is that learners of English should focus on gaining those skills which are likely to have such an impact and which are more easily attainable. Seidlhofer, for example, believes that "abandoning unrealistic notions of achieving perfect communication through 'native-like' proficiency in English would free up resources for focusing on capabilities that are likely to be crucial in ELF talk" (2004, p. 224). As these capabilities, ELF particularly promotes "the importance of strategies like linguistic accommodation and negotiation of meaning thereby, again, giving more prominence to how mutual understanding is achieved than to an enforced convergence on standards" (Hülmbauer et al., 2008, pp. 32-33). The following subchapter will briefly introduce some of the mentioned strategies.

2.1.9.3 Pragmatic strategies

Despite general expectations, ELF interactions rarely fail and misunderstandings do not occur frequently either (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 218). The key role in the high level of effectivity is played by the pragmatic strategies which the speakers learn to employ. On the other hand, Mortensen (2013) highlights that while the communicative strategies are common in the lingua franca contexts, they are not unique or special to such interactions (p. 34). Below, an overview of four pragmatic strategies frequently observed in ELF, i.e. accommodation, indirect word search, cooperative utterance building and code-switching, will be presented.

2.1.9.3.1 Accomodation

If we adopted the EFL perspective, then accommodation could be explained as tolerantly accepting each other's mistakes. In relation to the whole communicative act, some minor communicative problems are considered insignificant and are simply ignored. Attention is focused on the overall conveying of the message. Such strategy is labelled as "let it pass principle", coined by Firth (1996). It means that when a speaker does not understand a word or a phrase, he may decide not to point it out for the sake of keeping the conversation going and he waits whether, as the conversation further unfolds, the piece of information will become clearer, whether it will prove redundant, or whether it will turn out to be of crucial importance. Only then, when there is the danger that the conversation may fail, the speaker interrupts the talk in order to ask the

communicative partner for clarification (Firth, 1996, p. 243). It should be made clear again that the "let it pass principle" cannot be taken as specifically linked with ELF but appears in other interactions too as it is "a method of interpretation which human beings use to make sense of the world in creating a common-sense knowledge of reality." (Forsyth, 1979; cited in Mortensen, 2013, p. 35). Mortensen (2013) thus stresses that, in general, "speakers in lingua franca encounters draw on strategies they have experience of using in other settings, and adapt them to meet the demands of the new context" (p. 35).

Hülmbauer (2009) focused on a strategy named accommodative dovetailing, "according to which one interlocutor knowingly repeats the 'incorrect' form another has uttered, and the first speaker repeats it again. While this makes for effective and sometimes humourous lingua franca communication, by to traditional ELT it would be seen as a lack of competence on the first speaker´s part and its reinforcement by the second" (cited in Jenkins, 2012, p. 490).

2.1.9.3.2 Indirect word-search

The moment when a speaker is missing a word in order to complete his utterance can be signalled explicitly by asking, or it can be signalled indirectly, in which case the conversation may remain relatively fluent. When the speaker halts, makes a long pause or produces hesitation markers, such as "uh" or "eh", it reveals to his communicative partners that there is a struggle with producing the rest of the utterance and the speaker may be in need of assistance (Kalocsai, 2013, p. 243). As other interactional strategies utilized in ELF communications, it was found that indirect word search helps to build rapport among participants (e.g. Kalocsai, 2013).

2.1.9.3.3 Cooperative utterance building

As its name implies, it is an act of producing an utterance together with other communicative partner/s, i.e. assisting the speaker by supplying him with a word, phrase etc. both to help the speaker out in a moment of word search, when s/he is looking for a particular word to complete his utterance or even when there is no hint of a problematic moment, simply to let the speaker know that her/his interlocutors are involved and invested in the conversation (ibid., pp. 43-47). Usually, this happens in the

"guess the end" form when "the second speaker picks up the first speaker's thread, and supplies the end of their utterance, which the first speaker then accepts and incorporates into the original utterance" (Tannen, 1984; cited in Kalocsai, 2013, p. 46). This interactional strategy is remarkable for its social nature, as the cooperation helps to strengthen bonds among the speakers. It was reported that it contributes towards a positive atmosphere, displays friendliness and establishes positive interpersonal relations" (Kordon, 2006; cited in ibid., p. 47).

2.1.9.3.4 Code-switching

Code-switching is primarily understood as an abrupt switch into another language. ELF communicative situations create a platform for experimenting with multilingual resources, i.e. speakers can switch into their L1, into the L1 of their communicative partners or simply into any other language (apart from English) which they share as a non-native language. According to a research conducted by Klimpfinger (2009), code-switching can serve various functions, among the most frequent ones belong 1) specifying an addressee 2) introducing another idea 3) signalling culture 4) appealing for assistance (cited in Jenkins, 2012, p. 489). In ELF, code-switching primarily helps to "signal solidarity towards an interlocutor" as well as to express speaker's cultural identity (ibid.). Since ELF allows for hybridization – mixing of multicultural resources, new meanings and identities which transcend the existing ones are being born (Baker 2009, cited in Jenkins 2012, p. 490). Further, Kalocsai (2013) reported how routine-like code-switching can serve as an important source of humour and thus help to build identification with a social group in the context of a students' community of practice.

2.2 ELF and Identity

The relationship between our language and ourselves, or our identity is a topic which ELF studies were avoiding in the initial stages of the field's development. Some researchers were convinced that ELF is identity-neutral, merely a tool enabling the exchange of information (see, for example, House, 2003). However, driven by an assumption that any language conveys culture, fairly recent studies refuted the theory and opened up space for new explorations (see e.g. Jenkins, 2007, Cogo, 2010; Kalocsai, 2009, 2013; Gu, Patkin and Kirkpatrick, 2014, Sung, 2016).

The main interest was sparked in the cultural identification of ELF speakers. The traditionally used one language - one culture theory, "which drew from 18th century nation-state ideologies," and which claims that a national language serves as a vehicle for a cultural expression of the nation, is not working for the lingua franca phenomenon (Borghetti and Beaven, 2015, p. 223). ELF is global, always involves at least two different cultures and lacks its own native culture. Therefore, it is unclear what culture is being or can be expressed through ELF. The findings available suggest several options: firstly, despite being dislocated from their original cultural contexts, some speakers try to project their primary cultural identities in and through ELF. Secondly, hybrid cultural identities can be invented by blending a number of different cultural groups of the participating interlocutors, and thirdly, new cultures can arise, the so called "third space" (Duff, 2007). As the term implies, the speakers tend to create something of a middle culture. It happens when non-native speakers feel distanced enough from both their own original culture as well as the target culture, in the ELF context it means the English native speaker culture. Similarly, Sung (2014) examined what identity options ELF communication contexts offer to their participants. He focuses on the topic from the global studies point of view, emphasizing the essential link between globalization and the existence of ELF. He arrived at a somewhat similar conclusion. Using his own terminology: L2 speakers of English were reported to construct "local," "global" or more interestingly, "glocal" i.e. hybrid identities in ELF contexts (p. 43). Global studies also focus on the power relations hidden behind languages and their impact on ELF speaker identities. Juergensmeyer and Anheier (2012) claim that languages and their "varieties cannot be understood apart from the more complex web of ideologies that positions them within a global space of power"

and explain that particularly in the case of English, being the global language, "its emergence is closely tied to the history of colonialism," and the ideological implications which the language carries along are inseparable from it" (pp. 1080-1084). To add another level to the power relations hierarchy of languages, also other languages, for example, German ELF speakers are feeling more confident and powerful using English than speakers of ELF with different linguistic background.

Language, culture and identity are extremely broad topics and while there are strong ties among them which are extremely interesting to untangle, it is also a very complex task to do so. Instead of concentrating on identity in its broad sense, this work will limit its focus on the linguistic identification of ELF speakers. For this purpose, we will employ the concept of linguistic identity. Let us, firstly, clarify how this concept is understood and used throughout the work. Further, it will be discussed what the linguistic identity of an L2 learner of English stands for, which influences have been shaping the linguistic identity of NNS as well as what possible effect a greater acknowledgment of ELF can have on the speakers' identities.

2.2.1 Linguistic identity of non-native speakers of English

According to Norton (2000), identity refers to "how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future" (cited in Sung, 2016, p. 303). "When individuals speak a language, including an L2, they are also negotiating and reorganizing their sense of self in relation to the rest of the world" (Norton, 2000, ibid.). Thus, linguistic identities may refer "to the varying ways in which we come to understand the relationship between the language we use and ourselves…how we position ourselves in social context through language" (Juergensmeyer and Anheier, 2012, pp. 1080-1084). The language is also mediating the sense of belonging to a community (ibid.).

This study focuses on the examination of the linguistic identity of a non-native (NNS) speaker of English, or in other words, a second language (L2) learner of English. The interest in this investigation was sparked by the conviction that the increasing awareness of the ELF perspective seems to be changing/redefining the nature of the traditional NNS linguistic identity. Let us firstly examine the role of standard language ideology,

how it defines a non-native speaker, as well as what are its implications for identity formation. Secondly, we will discuss why ELF breaks with SLI discourses and how diverting from the environment which reiterates it opens space for the negotiation of new identities.

At this point, it is appropriate to clarify the theoretical assumption concerning the concept of identity which this study adopts. As it is the case in ELF studies of a similar orientation, identity as a whole as well as its component – linguistic identity is not understood as a stable, fixed entity; rather, it is seen from the poststructuralist perspective, i.e. identity is fluid, multiple and negotiable (Hall, 1996). Identity evolves in response to many circumstances and variables and is in constant flux.

2.2.2 The influence of the standard language ideology

In its simplest terms, the standard language ideology promotes learning any foreign language in a way to communicate most effectively with native speakers of that language. It is, therefore, preoccupied with correctness and adhering to all the linguistic means the native speaker would prefer. Lippi-Green expresses strong criticism of it. According to her interpretation, standard language ideology, regardless of what particular language, variety or an accent one has in mind, is a "bias toward an abstract, idealized homogeneous language" imposed and promoted by various institutions, i.e. schools, the media, the courts (Lippi-Green, 2004, p. 289). In the case of English, "standard language ideology claims that all speakers of English, independently of their sociocultural contexts, are expected to refer to NS norms, and, consequently, new varieties of English (for instance, Indian English, Ghanian English, Singaporean English, etc.) are seen as deviations from the norm" (Jenkins, 2007; cited in Cogo, 2010, p. 299). The ideology is completely meaningful if one aims at learning the language aiming to communicate with native speakers and join the NS community. This is, however, not the goal for the majority of ELF speakers. In case of English with its diverse range of varieties and accents, such a theory seems not only outdated and rigid but, most importantly, can even have a negative impact on speakers' identities.

The discourses which underpin standard language ideology as well as their ideological evaluations were already described in the chapter about English as a Foreign Language

(EFL), i.e. the conventional language teaching paradigm. Let us now, therefore, only briefly recapitulate some of them and then focus on what impacts these have on the formation of attitudes and linguistic identities of speakers.

The native speaker ideology discourses are based on proficiency versus deficiency comparisons. The native speaker, according to Davies (2003), is "a monolingual speaker who has learnt their mother tongue in childhood and has developed an innate competence in it" (cited in Kalocsai, 2013, p. 24). The non-native speaker "lacks" this innate competence, and is thus supposed to look outside for a compensation and follow the ways that the NS would take, as the NS is expected to have the right "intuitions of grammatical accuracy and their sense of proper language" (Kalocsai, 2013, p. 24). As such, NNS are followers of the native speakers, but their efforts to reach their goal and to become like the NS is predetermined to fail (Cook 2005, p. 3; cited in Kalocsai, 2013, p. 24). The almost "unmistakable" intuition of the NS as well as the assumption that the NS English is the only right learning model and, in fact, the only available alternative, are the two major point which invoke criticism of this ideology (ibid.).

Many non-native learners of English encounter the standard language ideology during the acquisitional process provided that most of them have undergone the traditional institutional education, i.e. school, language courses, etc. As Jenkins points out, the native speaker ideology "pervades much of the English language teaching material available in Expanding Circle countries, seems to be exerting an influence on Expanding Circle English teachers and their learners" (2009a, p. 203). Jenkins explored this influence on the speakers' attitudes and the formation of their linguistic identities in her publication: *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and identity* (2007). She admits that "it is not possible to make direct causal links between such attitudes and ELF speakers' identities" (ibid.). However, in a series of her studies, she revealed that the ideological implications have an influence on shaping speakers' attitudes towards non-standard varieties, including ELF, reporting that speakers reveal mixed, complex attitudes and ambivalence towards non-native varieties (cited in Cogo, 2010, p. 299). Cogo (2010) comments on Jenkins' findings and concludes that the criterion of correctness was identified as the most important in the participants' judgements and the nature of their responses was prescriptive. A direct link with prevailing standard NS English ideology is self-evident, especially among linguistics professionals (ibid.). Further, a link to the standard language ideology was revealed in relation to preferred

accents in English as “the NS accent was preferred over any other by the participants in the study“ (Jenkins, 2007).
According to Hülmbauer, the deficiency perspective ingrained in discourses of language teaching causes the NNSs to perceive themselves as “second-rate language users” and other studies on perceptions of non-native speakerism confirm this finding (2009, p. 343). Virkkula and Nikula, in their study (2010) on ELF identity construction of Finnish students working in Germany, discuss the essential role played by education in the formation of identity and relations of power, as they are revealing that their participants “draw both explicitly and implicitly on discourses of education by highlighting their shortcomings and inadequacies” and thus pointing out how “deeply ingrained issues of deficiency are in discourses of education” (p. 17).

Another study conducted by Sung (2016) among Hong Kong university students concentrated on difficulties involved in the students' identity formation in the context of ELF communication when native speakers are present and pointed out that students perceived themselves in an inferior position in relation to NS due to the unequal power relations between these two groups (p. 301). Further findings of this study include a phenomenon which Jenkins (2007) labelled as “linguistic schizophrenia” or linguistically schizophrenic identities (p. 214). Leaving aside how misleading this commonly-used metaphor is from the medical point of view, it refers to the fact that speakers’ perceptions on their identities in ELF interactions are often ambivalent and contradictory (Sung, 2016, p. 301). A possible interpretation of this phenomenon is, on the one hand, the influence of the theory of native speaker ideology which speakers acquired through learning English institutionally and, on the other hand, the practical linguistic experience which can relativize the importance of the correctness criterion, i.e. the “mistakes” can be proved to be not only harmless to the communicative effectivity but in some cases to be even helping communication to flow more smoothly.
The instances of linguistically schizophrenic identities of ELF speakers can be found in many studies. A study conducted by Borghetti an Beaven (2017), for example, found out that ELF speakers have conflicting views on their language learning and use. The participants are aware that native speakers “provide instances of ‘correct’ language”, nevertheless they admit that interaction with non-native speakers makes them “feel more relaxed and self-confident” and thus creates better conditions for further learning and language practice (p. 236). The study therefore witnesses participants’ “struggle to

make sense of language experiences and learning, constrained as they are between two potentially contradictory stances: on the one hand, their beliefs about the primacy of the NS, and on the other their personal attitudes as language users which make them value NNS-NNS interaction" (ibid.).

2.2.3 Changing perceptions on non-nativeness

As Adolphs (2005) believes, "the native-like competence tends to diminish in value as soon as communication via English is put to a real-life test" (cited in Hülmbauer, 2009, p. 342). The linguistic schizophrenia phenomenon has thus a further and important implication because it proves that things might be changing slowly. It shows that speakers are increasingly more aware of the importance of not only correctness but also effectivity in communication and they are starting to consider which of these factors is more valuable for their own needs and purposes. Particularly, when speakers are able to experience the "real-life test" for a longer period of time, then this realization of what is important for them in communication often becomes clearer. In particular, as Pekarek Doehler and Wagner (2010) claim, "ELF speakers who meet repeatedly and are engaged in an ELF practice for an extended period of time likely undergo a change in behaviour" (cited in Kalocsai, 2013, p. 33). Virkkula and Nikula (2010) documented this change in their study: "while at the beginning of their study abroad experience students were typical "mistake stigmatizers," their experience "gave rise to more favourable perceptions of themselves as foreign language users who manage to get by despite shortcomings in proficiency." (p. 17). Moreover, "divergence from native speaker norms was often seen as an assertion of one's identity rather than a problem" (ibid.).

This assumption is, in fact, supported by several studies. For example, Hülmbauer (2009), who collected authentic ELF interactions to investigate whether speakers prefer correctness or effectiveness in ELF communication, found that regardless of what is traditionally considered the "good/correct/proper English" they prefer their own forms which are likely to make their interaction successful. More importantly, she implies that the results of her study are a result of "the paradigm change currently under way" and she hopes that eventually speakers will arrive at a point where they can embrace their

own creative linguistic potential without having perceived themselves as second-rate language users (p. 343).

Bearing in mind all that has been written about ELF and its discourses and goals, it is only logical that ELF communicative contexts could be seen as spaces where new identities of non-native speakers of English can be negotiated. In a context where NNSs no longer see the NS norms as the sole target, the power relations are shifting and, as a result, new, more favourable ways of perceiving the role and status of ELF users are emerging (Gu, Patkin & Kirkpatrick, 2014, p. 133). The interest in this evolving change is what motivated this research, particular inspiration was drawn from the studies conducted by Kalocsai (2009, 2013) in a European educational setting and who reported that young ELF speakers' identities were relaxed, untroubled and their identity as a competent multilingual speaker was even characterised by a pride of their creative use of the language and construction as well as a display of the community's own specific identity through the language. Other studies show that speakers start to favour their foreign accents as something unique to ELF and desirable (e.g. Cogo, 2010). Further, it was pointed out that particularly young ELF speakers are "more receptive towards ELF's emphasis on difference rather than deficiency, and its use and negotiation of speakers' shared repertoire and are even starting to look down on native speakers of English" due to their linguistic non-adaptability and prevalent monolingualism (Cogo, 2010, p. 309). Extreme as it is, this finding turns the native speaker ideology upside down. Taking a slightly more moderate view, it can be said that an alternative to this ideology is being born here and to provide such an alternative is partly what motivated ELF research in the first place (ibid., p. 308). It was already mentioned in this work that young speakers are generally more open to linguistic innovations. Therefore, ELF studies, including the current research, are mostly interested in speakers in their 20s - 30s since this sample, potentially, should be the first one to respond to the changing socio-linguistic circumstances.

2.3 Conceptualizing ELF Formations

How to approach ELF in terms of its speakers and their communities is increasingly becoming a topic of debates among ELF scholars. The approaches traditionally used in sociolinguistic research often seem to fail in capturing the specific complexity of ELF and while there are some promising new approaches, it still remains to be more of a trial-and-error kind of situation. The search for a suitable concept of ELF formations and subsequently an adequate tool for their examination thus seems to be one of the major challenges in this domain's future. At the end of this chapter one possible alternative will be suggested and later tested in the empirical part of this work.

First, let us clarify why the classical approaches do not seem to be applicable to ELF. As an example, the notion of "speech community" and the complementary notion of "language variety", which are typically employed for the examination of linguistic communities, assume several characteristics which ELF communities do not fulfil. The discrepancy can be spotted in several points. A speech community describes a monolingual, rather local and non-mobile type of a social grouping and assumes internal homogeneity (Mauranen, 2018, p. 10). Such a community is thus determined by a geographical location and by the use of a certain language variety which is understood as a set of given norms, not allowing for variation or difference (Kalocsai, 2013, p. 22). ELF groupings, in contrast, are often multilingual, dislocated, temporary and by definition heterogeneous (ibid., pp. 22-23). The community may involve multilingual or at least bilingual speakers with various linguistic backgrounds and from various parts of the world who are often drawing on their own specific linguistic resources and incorporate them into their communication. The linguistic diversity and variation in ELF is thus unavoidable and, in fact, it is one of its key features. Further, an ELF community does not have to be based strictly on physical proximity between speakers; ELF speakers are often scattered around the globe, especially in the time of massive use of digital means of communication (Mauranen, 2018, p. 10). It cannot even be said that ELF speakers are using a variety in the traditional sense of the term since "they do not fully comply with any set of given external norms but negotiate their own norms of speaking "online" in the dynamic process of learning appropriateness and efficiency"; ELF is, therefore, "ad hoc, fluid and flexible" (Kalocsai, 2013, pp. 22-23, 52). Kalocsai

arrives to the crucial conclusion that ELF, in the current understanding, should be approached as "based on the function it performs in the communities, rather than on the form that it takes" (Kaur 2008; cited in ibid., p. 52).

Jenkins (2015) also points out the characteristic ephemeral nature of some ELF communication events, which further complicates labelling the grouping of its users. She suggests that "for the depiction of the temporary meeting and mixing of people from diverse backgrounds," Pratt's (1991) notion of "contact zones" could be more useful than "community" (cited in Mauranen, 2018, p. 11). Mauranen, however, argues that the duration and stability of ELF groups varies. While there are formations lasting only for one encounter, for example an interview, to which the notion of community, to capture the speakers involved, does not seem applicable, there are also formation types, such as university courses or conferences, which are characterized by a certain degree of regularity and the notion of community thus seems to be more suitable for them (ibid., pp. 11, 20). The third type of ELF events listed by Mauranen is the type happening under the auspices of international organizations, such as the EU, for which stability and permanence is one of the defining features, and the notion of community is a perfectly adequate description of its members (ibid.).

From a general perspective, the groupings and communities where ELF is found can be described as social networks with varying intensity of interaction among members and varying strength of mutual ties (Granovetter, 1973, Milroy and Milroy, 1985, Milroy, 2002; cited in ibid., p. 11). It follows that the formations of speakers where ELF is used are too diverse for a single label to encompass them all. Application of diverse approaches will therefore be necessary with respect to the particular setting.

In looking for the right approaches to the ELF field of research, one of the future directions could be the orientation towards its social dimension (Kalocsai, 2009, p. 28). Increasingly, the researchers emphasize "the need to look beyond the linguistic details of the learners' competence or production" and to take up the social rather than the purely linguistic perspective in the ELF explorations (Duff, 2008; cited in Kalocsai, 2009, p. 28). This trend is based on "the assumption that language learning and use and development are inseparable from its social, cultural and historical contexts" (Norton & Toohey 2001; cited in ibid.). The recognition of this finding and the subsequent reorientation in terms of both theory and methodology is also going to shed light on other issues emerging in the ELF context, such as "the learners' identities, affiliation,

desires, goals, and resources as well as the acceptance, rejection and ambivalence towards the target community (e.g. Norton 2000, Toohey 2000)" (cited in Kalocsai, 2009, p. 28).

One of the available models which take the social perspective into consideration is Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of community of practice (CoP), which has been introduced into the ELF field only recently. As Ehrenreich (2018) points out, it was House (2003) who first noticed this notion could also be applicable to ELF research (p. 37). The concept stands for a type of community smaller than that of the speech communities (Kalocsai, 2013, p. 28). In the simplest terms, a community of practice is "an aggregate of people coming together around a particular enterprise", as defined by Eckert (2000; cited in Mauranen, 2018, p. 12).

The role of the language also differs from that in a speech community, as for a CoP the language itself is usually not a sufficient means to tie the community together. There is another dimension, i.e. the specific shared enterprise, which takes on this role. It is an additional value which at the same time restricts which community can gain a label of a community of practice. The CoP is a more narrowed down notion than that of the speech community. A detailed discussion of the notion is provided in the following chapter. "The merits of the notion "community of practice" can be seen in that it allows the examination of linguistically heterogeneous, temporary, and often dislocated communities, which cannot be associated with a linguistic variety in any traditional sense of the term" (Kalocsai, 2013, p. 27). While Ehrenreich (2009) asserts that communities where ELF is found often share similarities with CoPs, she warns that to think of all the ELF speakers as forming a single community of practice is highly problematic since the concept is not sufficiently broad. Neither can the CoP be seen as suitable for a conceptualization "of all the specific social realities of multilingual ELF speakers globally" (cited in Ehrenreich, 2018, p. 37). For specific ELF communities with narrowed down and meaningful joint enterprise, however, a CoP can be successfully used both as their conceptualization label as well as an analytical tool in empirical research. As evidence of the last point, Ehrenreich (2009) lists studies which pioneered this approach (the overview is provided in the next chapter). Since the finding appeared only recently, ELF studies pioneering the community of practice approach are still scarce. The few existing ones, nevertheless, reveal that it can be employed as a fruitful tool in opening new perspectives in the field.

2.3.1 Communities of practice

Let us outline the content of this chapter, which will discuss the notion of community of practice in detail. Firstly, we will briefly explain the evolution of the notion itself, how it was originally interpreted and later reinterpreted by different researchers, or in other words, how CoP made its way into different disciplines, ultimately including the domain of ELF. The definition will be analyzed thoroughly by elaborating the three key CoP dimensions which determine whether a community embodies a genuine community of practice, as opposed to other "non-practice based community" or "non-community forming types of practices" (Ehrenreich, 2018, p. 39). Furthermore, the applicability of this approach to ELF studies as well as the potential benefits it offers will be investigated. The chapter will close with an overview of ELF literature which has utilized the community of practice model so far.

2.3.1.1 Evolution of the notion

The concept of community of practice was coined by Lave and Wenger (1991, pp. 97-98) and emerged, originally, to describe the type of apprenticeship learning in tailoring. It was noticed that "the learning of tailoring was more than the learning of a set of isolated or abstracted tailoring skills….it was tied to the interactional and other social contexts within which the apprentices engaged with each other and their masters" (Kalocsai, 2013, p. 13).

Later, on a more general level, community of practice became an underlying notion of the social theory of situated learning, which Wenger developed in order to increase the potential applicability of the concept as an instrument for analysis (cited in Ehrenreich 2018, pp. 37-39). According to Wenger, a CoP "is a social group which is created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise" (Wenger, 1998, p. 45). However, the definition is not specific enough, which is the fact that social scientists used to their own advantage. There is enough space left for various interpretations and modifications so that it can be fitting for their particular needs. As a result, Eckert and McConell-Ginet (1992), in search for a tool suitable for investigating the domain of language and

gender, elaborated a more specific definition. It is also probably the most frequently cited definition of a CoP whatsoever:

A community of practice is an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor. As a social construct, a community of practice is different from the traditional community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages (cited in Ehrenreich, 2018, p. 38).

Becoming a member requires learning; and learning for Wenger (1998), in his later elaboration of the term, means "social participation" (p. 4). Participation, as he defines it, is both "a kind of action and a form of belonging" (ibid., p. 6). In other words, what he is trying to highlight is that social learning in CoPs is a lot less active and also a less conscious process than one would probably tend to think. Although this type of learning is, paradoxically, an extremely effective one in that it transforms the participants personally (ibid., p. 4).

As Ehrenreich (2018) shows, other researchers "tried to translate the idea of social learning into a sociolinguistic perspective" (pp. 38-39). For example, Holmes and Meyerhoff (1999) have done so by pointing out that becoming a member in a CoP requires an amount of learning about how to fit in and it "inevitably involves the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence" (cited in Ehrenreich, 2018, pp. 38-39). In this respect, what Mauranen (2018) mentions about developing norms in communities of practice involves the linguistic aspect as well. She explains that a CoP is a "real community which is based on members' direct interaction with one another, these communities consist of people who know each other. Such comparatively focused communities are likely to develop conventions and norms on their own as members accommodate to each other and converge towards group norm" (cf. Hynninen 2016; cited in Mauranen, 2018, p. 12). The emergence of new norms and sticking with them despite the availability of external, more widely used or even more prestigious norms, is in accordance with the ELF paradigmatic approach.

In conclusion, the notion of a community of practice has spread and made an impact in many other fields. While organizational and business studies use it as a knowledge management tool, education and sociolinguistics finds it as a useful tool for analyses (Ehrenreich, 2018, p. 37).

2.3.1.2 Components of Community of Practice

Wenger (1998) paid particular attention to making his readers realize that being a member of community of practice is not a foreign experience to us. He points out that CoPs are all around in our life. In fact, we are part of CoPs and sometimes we can be simultaneously members of several of them. Communities of practice can be found "at home, at work, at school, in our hobbies" (Wenger 1998; cited in Ehrenreich, 2018, p. 39). Community of practice is an entity which in most cases exists without being labelled as such explicitly. Therefore, sometimes it may be only when the CoP analytical framework is applied to a particular community for the sake of research that it becomes obvious. On the other hand, the decision whether a community is a real CoP needs to undergo careful consideration. As Ehrenreich warns: "the concept of community of practice is not simply a synonym for externally defined groups or configurations of people (i.e. classroom, a team, or a unit). A community of practice only evolves as a result of the relationships its members establish through their mutual engagement" (Ehrenreich, 2018, p. 40). It emerges that a CoP is defined internally. Let us now focus in more detail on the determining criteria. Wenger (2018) identifies three of them and refers to them as "dimensions": mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire.

2.3.1.2.1 Mutual engagement

Out of the three, this dimension is the one most easily fulfilled. When it comes to imagining a prototypical community of practice, the workplace is probably the winning setting in which such a phenomenon could occur. Work groups are predetermined to become CoPs because some level of mutual engagement must automatically be happening in order to make a work group function, in other words, to keep the community together, because coherence is what defines such a community. The term "mutual engagement" refers to various interactions in which the members of a community of practice take part. "For a family, it can be having dinner together, taking trips on weekend, or cleaning the house on Saturdays" (Wenger, 1998, p. 75). At its simplest, it means that members gather to do things together, which, subsequently, gains

some shared meaning and becomes their practice. Such interactions take place typically in face-to face encounters as opposed to encounters which are mediated by electronic communication, in which the means of engagement are considerably limited (Ehrenreich, 2018, p. 39-40). Online communication often complements the real interactions though, and thus helps to construct a CoP (ibid.). The question arising then is, how much face to face contact exactly is needed for a community to establish ties strong enough to sustain itself (ibid., p. 40). It is not to say that a CoP cannot exist without personal contact; the point is that during face to face interactions it is easier to create rich and more complex ties, which are crucial for a CoP to emerge and to be sustained. Nevertheless, considering the increasing amount of time people currently spend on online activities, it seems justified to assume that CoPs can exist based solely on online interaction.

Another point to mention is that the interactions must fulfil two criteria, i.e. to be regular and fairly intense. As Wenger explains, "establishing such a group requires considerable investment on the part of its members" (1998, p. 74). The investment is understood here as time and engagement. Not only is it time-consuming to be involved in "what matters" for the group but also certain effort is required to be an active participant as opposed to just being a passive observer (ibid.). Moreover, the interactions must be regularly renewed or updated. Let us illustrate this point by Wenger's example. He points out that each member of a community of practice should know and be able to understand the latest joke or the latest gossip which circulates in the group (ibid., p. 75). If the mutual interactions are not regular it is easy to lack behind in this knowledge, and thus threaten the coherence of the group.

Regular interactions, doing things together, result in the development of a network of personal relations. Members discover how to engage in the community, establish "who is who, who is good at what, and who knows what" as well as define identities (ibid., p. 95). Wenger highlights a common misinterpretation of the nature of relationships in CoPs. He explains that relationships among members of a community of practice are often not ideal, they are assumed to be amicable, supportive and harmonious. In fact, there are very different kinds of connections evolving. "The resulting relations reflect the full complexity of doing things together" (ibid., p. 77). It means that disagreement or competition among members are natural phenomena. In fact, they are taken as just as valuable proof of participation as supportive behaviour. Some researchers are even

convinced that: “as a form of participation, rebellion often reveals a greater commitment than does passive conformity” (ibid.).

2.3.1.2.2 Joint enterprise

The community of practice model has been applied to a countless number of studies since it was introduced. It has been, however, pointed out by academics that it was not the luckiest choice in all the cases. In other words, CoP has been overused as a thinking tool and some of the community studies which use it for their analysis simply do not constitute a genuine community of practice. The trouble which most of such studies share resides in their understanding of the second criterion. Indeed, joint enterprise may not be easily identified or clear enough, or in some cases, the community simply lacks any. However, joint enterprise is essential for a community of practice. As Wenger nicely illustrates when he states that “enterprise is like a rhythm to music”, it is a constitutive element which assigns sense to actions (Wenger, 1998, p. 82). Now, let us explain in more detail what joint enterprise is and why to pin it down can be a difficult task for a researcher.

The joint enterprise is the members’ shared goal and the practice involved in achieving it (Langman, 2003; cited in Kalocsai, 2013, p. 13). As Ehrenreich (2018) explains, that joint enterprise is usually clearly identifiable in goal-oriented communities, such as business companies. Such groupings have an explicitly defined goal, i.e. earning money. Yet, that is not to say that earning money itself is the joint enterprise of the community because joint enterprise of a group cannot be defined solely by external force (Wenger, 1998, p. 77). What actually constitutes the joint enterprise is the negotiated response of members to the achieving of the goal or to what is understood to be their situation (ibid., p. 78). It is the practice developed and sustained by members as a reaction to achieving their goal (ibid., p. 77). In Ehrenreich’s words “a negotiated joint enterprise is never a reflection of an official or external goal, but is transformed by the participants themselves in and through their practices to suit their own purposes as much as it is possible in a given setting” (Ehrenreich, 2018, p. 41). The definition also hints to one of the key characteristics, i.e. that joint enterprise does not exist instantly once the goal is stated but develops in time. In the course of time, as joint enterprise is being negotiated, another by-product emerges among the engaged members, i.e. relationships of mutual accountability. Wenger (1998) elaborates on it:

The relations of accountability include what matters and what does not, what is important and why is it important, what to do and not to do, what to pay attention to and what to ignore, what to talk about and what to leave unsaid, what to justify and what to take for granted, what to display and what to withhold, when actions and artifacts are good enough and when they need improvement or refinement (p. 81).

There is usually a clear answer to what is a joint enterprise in communities which are goal-oriented, as was already pointed out above. It may pose problems in cases where language plays a significant role, unless one thinks about communities of practice whose members are linguists, translatologists etc. There can be a difficulty to pin it down when language overlaps in two dimensions, namely in cases in which it is not clear whether language is the joint enterprise or the shared repertoire, or both. Some ELF based communities actually belong to this borderline category and these will be discussed in more detail in the ELF section below.

2.3.1.2.3 Shared repertoire

The third characteristic feature of a community of practice is the emergence of a repertoire of shared resources which is utilized for negotiating meaning among its members (ibid., p. 82). It evolves in time and is constantly developed in the process of members' mutual engagement and the pursuit of joint enterprise. It is a product as well as a tool which helps to maintain the community intact. To specify what is meant by the shared repertoire, let us list the individual components as Wenger (1998) understood them:

the repertoire of a community of practice includes routines, words, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice (p. 83).

Members usually develop, for example, their own vocabulary (but it can also be actions, routines etc.), which is tied to their pursuit of the community's goal. Taken outside of the community, the specific vocabulary might carry different meanings. In extreme cases, some components are negotiated by a particular community to such an extent that by gaining a distinct meaning they cease to carry the general meaning and, consequently, might not make any sense to another community.

There are two important points that emerge from the definition given by Wenger. The first one says that components of the repertoire are very heterogeneous, they can be not only linguistic, i.e. words, phrases, but also non-linguistic, i.e. gestures, ways of doing things (ibid., p. 83). "Diverse as they may seem to outsiders, they are not random, but are unified by and a reflection of the members' joint enterprise" (Ehrenreich p. 43).
The second important point is that the adoption and negotiation of the shared repertoire inevitably requires a great deal of learning. All the members are constantly learning not only to produce the kind of repertoire which would be acceptable for the community, but they also have to learn what is produced by other members so that it can be built upon. That is why Wenger also notes that "repertoire reflects history of mutual engagement" (p. 83). The negotiation of a particular meaning can always be traced back. It can also serve as a reference point for re-definition.
While shared repertoire has a history of interpretation, it is not limiting for the emergence of new meanings (ibid., p.83). The shared repertoire is in constant flux. The meanings are being constantly renewed, renegotiated or extended. This fact becomes clear when one focuses on the role of newcomers to a community. Through the learning from the experienced members, they adopt the practices of the group and become integrated. Thus, the incomers to the community learn what has already been negotiated, but at the same time influence and renegotiate it by their own involvement. Inevitably, and particularly in the process of integration of new members, misunderstandings and misinterpretations arise. However, Wenger (1998) in no way suggests that the meanings should be agreed on in the literal sense. In fact, misunderstandings and misinterpretations are not seen as real problems to solve, but rather as occasions for further engagement within the community and, importantly, for the production of new meanings (p. 84).

2.3.2 Utility of the community of practice notion for the ELF research

Lingua francas have evolved as languages used primarily to enable trade, diplomacy etc., in other words, to enable goal-oriented communication. "In today's globalized world, (wide range of) purpose-oriented endeavours increasingly bring together people from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds who use and develop, among other resources, English as a lingua franca as part of their communicative repertoire" (Ehrenreich, 2018,

p. 37). This is to say that there is a high chance that the contexts where ELF is used have the dimension of the shared goal inherently involved in them. Other characteristics that make ELF formations suitable for application to a CoP is that they are comprised of people who are very diverse. As mentioned earlier, ELF groupings are inherently heterogeneous in nature and this is a quality which Wenger identifies as an essential ingredient for any community of practice to be constituted (Wenger, 1998, p. 75). As he explains, similarities make the mutual engagement possible but differences are crucial to drive the community, to make it dynamic and productive. In this respect too, ELF communities may be predetermined in a certain way to form communities of practice. However, this is not to say that every such ELF community is automatically a CoP. In fact, Ehrenreich (2018) pointed out that during the early application of the CoP to ELF, this assumption caused considerable confusion (p. 42). She further explains that it was supposed that the linguistic dimension (ELF) plays a major role in constructing the joint enterprise of the community, whereas insufficient attention was paid to the content dimension (ibid.). Such assumption can be valid in cases where ELF research is set in environments such as English language teaching, where the focus on the language is the goal in the community (ibid.). In most other cases, however, language is rather a part of the shared repertoire. Thus, the CoP perspective can both enrich ELF research with new findings as well as enable a re-examination of those already existing claims. As Ehrenreich (2018) pointed out, some generalizations about ELF have been made based on theoretical assumptions which "may turn out to be somewhat premature and empirically not always fully justified" (p. 46).

The concept of community of practice brings about a significant innovative value, thus once the mentioned methodological traps are clarified, it can become highly beneficial for ELF-oriented research. In fact, there has already been a demand for such a "qualitative turn" (Ehrenreich, 2009; cited in Ehrenreich, 2018, p. 45). Kalocsai (2009) explains that it is because firstly, the CoP approach offers more subtle insights into the language as distinguished in terms of its contextual use and secondly, it "shifts attention away from the close analysis of language forms and functions to a much broader analysis of communities within which speakers, to varying degrees, participate" (p. 26). The approach reveals the language in its social context, which is "an aspect previously neglected in ELF research" and makes "the social visible in ELF" (ibid.).

Further, Kalocsai (2009, 2013) and Ehrenreich (2018) have advocated that CoP has capacities as a potential educational model which could be utilized for ELF. Community

of practice means, firstly, to learn by social participation and even outside of the classroom, i.e. to learn informally. Secondly, it suggests that learning is a collective action. Kalocsai (2009) pointed out that despite the fact that "it challenges the dominant view of second language learning as an individual cognitive process," which is the reason why there is still a debate concerning its place in SLA research, this "social approach to learning" is an innovative and expanding trend (p. 26). The informal environment for learning as well as the learning through social participation can have a positive impact on language appropriation and ELF speaker identities (Pölzl and Seidlhofer 2006; cited in Virkkula and Nikula 2010, p. 17). Speakers not only learn both linguistically and socially but they also construct identities in relation to emerging community (Kalocsai, 2009, p. 26). Some scholars argue for the relevance of a CoP approach, specifically in ELF: "in current ELF research, the concept of "learning" is taken to imply learners aiming at NS norms and it typically evokes negative reactions," and she suggests that "the notion of learning can be reclaimed, reinterpreted positively using a community of practice model which frames learning on grounds that have until now not been (properly) explored in the area of ELF research" (Kalocsai, 2009, p. 29).

The community of practice approach can help gain insights which would be very difficult or even impossible to obtain by other research methods. As an illustration, let us use an example drawn from the identity-related domain of ELF because it is related to the topic which this thesis will analyze. The community of practice-based research into ELF uncovers an overlap in how members become confident users of ELF over time and thanks to the mutual engagement while pursuing their joint enterprise (Ehrenreich, 2009, 2010; Kankaanranta and Planken, 2010; Räisänen, 2013; Kalocsai, 2013; cited in Ehrenreich, 2018, p. 47). "They seem to follow a shared "trajectory, in that they start out from an EFL (English as a foreign language) learner identity with a deeply ingrained deficiency orientation" (Räisänen, 2013). Gradually, however, through a process of secondary socialization, they grow into competent and confident users of their respective shared repertoires" (cited in ibid.).

Community of practice-oriented explorations enable us to understand in more detail why and how this transformation occurs (while at the same time making it possible to happen; the transformation might not occur if the members did not form such community). Ehrenreich concludes by confirming Wenger's claim that the CoP type of learning is actually the "most personally transformative" and it can have an impact far

beyond the community of practice in which it originated (Wenger 1998; cited in Ehrenreich, 2018, p. 47).

2.3.3 CoP-based studies of ELF communities

The earliest ELF studies which employed CoPs were centered around international business companies. Ehrenreich (2009, 2010, 2011) for example focused on how English functions as a lingua franca in CoPs set in multinational business corporations in Germany. While Alharbi's dissertation thesis (2015) was driven by similar research interests, he decided to investigate the area of the Middle East. His study reveals how English works as a lingua franca in a health insurance company in Saudi Arabia; the main focus is, however, centered around the specific communicative strategies which emerged as salient for an intercultural communication in this environment. Further, Cogo (2016) focused on how the members of CoP in a multinational banking corporation approach and adapt to business communication in ELF. Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2018) examined how business professionals' and business school students' CoPs interpret the notion of business knowledge and how this knowledge helps to create ties among members of business CoPs.

The CoP-approached ELF explorations seem to be fitting for the domain of business. Ehrenreich's (2018) debate demonstrates that this is the case particularly due to clearly identifiable dimensions of practice which underlie the concept of CoP. One of the problems of using the CoPs framework (not only in ELF research) is that not all of the dimensions are always clear or even existing. As mentioned by Ehrenreich, "communicating via ELF with no further defined shared goal falls into the category of vacant enterprise" (p. 42). This is an obvious limitation in the applicability of the CoP approach. Business, however, is a setting where language is primarily a tool, rather than a goal. In business CoPs "the language is inevitably linked to business matters in that it serves the purpose of doing business, just like any other language or a semiotic tool" (Ehrenreich, 2018, p. 43).

The second domain of ELF research where CoPs were successfully introduced is the field of higher education. Smith (2010) used community of practice to examine classroom discourse of international student groups in European educational programmes in which English is a medium of instruction. A more relevant study in relation to this thesis is, however, one conducted by Kalocsai (2013), who investigated CoPs of Erasmus exchange students. She set her research into the Central European context – at the University of Szeged in Hungary and at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. She examined the social and linguistic practices in connection to the

use of ELF and their role in the building of Erasmus community. Kalocsai's study is not only a probe into the previously under-explored area of the role of ELF in international student communities but it is literally the only one of its kind. While Smith's study is focusing on ELF in the formal environment of a classroom, Kalocsai examines ELF in socializing activities outside of school, i.e. partying, travelling etc., and thus introduces findings and new insights into several areas: ELF, L2 socializing, L2 identity as well as creation of a "third space" research.

2.4 Research questions

The empirical part of this work is composed of a sociolinguistic study of L2 speakers' attitudes towards and beliefs about English as a lingua franca in the context of student mobility and employs the community of practice approach as both a conceptual and analytical tool for this purpose.

Firstly, the study will investigate the local linguistic means created and utilized by the Prague Erasmus community, i.e. the salient features of their shared ELF repertoire. Secondly, we will attempt to explore how the students perceive their status as non-native speakers of English, we will attempt to look for possible ambivalence, and to find out whether and how these perceptions changed during their study abroad experience. In addition, we will examine how such changes can be interpreted. In order to examine the areas of interest as described above in a systematic way, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the salient features of the linguistic repertoire jointly negotiated by the local Erasmus community?

2. What do the linguistic practices tell us about the ELF speakers' priorities in communication?

3. Does the influence of the standard language ideology manifest itself in the students' descriptions of their linguistic identity?

4. Is there any ambivalence in the students' descriptions of their linguistic identities?

5. Is there a shift in the influence of the standard language ideology? If so, how do the participants explain it?

3 Methodology

This chapter introduces methods applied in the empirical part of the thesis. Initially, the setting in which the study is grounded is described, the sample group of participants as well as their selection procedure is reviewed. Afterwards, the attention shifts towards the data gathering and processing. The two chosen collection methods, interviewing and observing participants in the fieldwork, are presented as well as the way in which the processes of the data collection were carried out. Furthermore, the role of the researcher will be discussed, as it is necessary to realize to what extent the study findings could be biased. The chapter closes with an outline of the Grounded Theory inspired procedures adopted for the data processing and analysis. As common in other qualitative studies, these included listening, transcribing, associating, comparing, categorizing, discovering interrelations, coding, interpreting, building theoretical models and findings presentations.

3.1 Context and participants

Over the past few decades, there has been a significant increase in European student mobility programmes and despite the proclaimed multilingual policy, English is the medium of instruction in a vast majority of them. This in turn provides new contexts for the investigation of ELF use, its users and their communities. In the current study, all of the participants under examination were Erasmus programme students who temporarily studied at the Charles University during the academic year 2017/2018 and formed a community with other mobility students. The term Erasmus community can be understood as the group of all the European students who regularly met at various social events organized by the Charles University International Club IC CUNI; however, in this study, the term will refer to a smaller formation of students within this big community, consisting of approximately fifteen students who became friends, started to spend a lot of time together, discovered some shared values, and in time emerged as a community of practice. Some members were more and some less actively involved. The group comprised a great variety of nationalities, such as Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Estonia, Serbia, Austria, Italy, France, Poland, The Netherlands. However, all of them were non-native speakers of English. Their motivation for the

choice of their mobility destination, according to what emerged from the interviews, was in several cases a sort of linguistic compromise as the students expressed the wish to study in a country where English can be used as the major language during their mobility but at the same time they wished to avoid, for example, the UK, where they would have to use English for communication with native English speakers. The students' ages ranged between 22 – 27 years and most of them were taking undergraduate degrees at the university, only two of them were already graduate students. They were all studying at the Faculty of Arts, so that all of them were humanities students; however, their academic backgrounds varied, among their focuses could be found for example history, philosophy, linguistics or foreign languages.

The participants of the study were collected via email. First, I asked the Erasmus coordinator for help with acquiring access to participants for my research, by distributing my email to all Erasmus students who were currently studying at the Faculty of Arts. She agreed and also recommended for me to attend social events organized for international students by Charles University. In the email I introduced myself, explained the research I am conducting and asked the students to become involved if this sounded interesting to them. The announced participant selection criteria were only three. I clarified that firstly, the participants should be Erasmus students, secondly, they must be non-native speakers of English and thirdly, that the hosting institution they are currently enrolled at is Charles University in Prague. Further, I explained what their participation would involve: for instance, the students being audio-recorded. At the same time, I assured them about the anonymity policy adopted for the research and I further encouraged them to contact me should they have any questions or concerns. Eventually, eleven students reacted positively and sent an email asking for more details. After we exchanged several emails, it emerged, for different reasons, that only seven of the participants were suitable candidates who could become involved in the study. We met personally with each of them and I started with interview recordings. In the meantime, I have established more friendly relation with one of the participants, who consequently started to invite me to join the students for their regular weekend gatherings, which will be described in more detail below. At these events I have met other Erasmus students and since they all seemed to be willing to participate in my research I have decided to only select students who were part of this group to participate in my study. The reason behind this decision was that this group of

students seemed to have formed an ELF community of practice already. Therefore, the recordings I had made with other Erasmus students before were not used for any further analysis.

3.2 Data collection procedure

There are two types of data sources in the present study: first, the already mentioned qualitative interview, the other is the observational data collected during the participants´ observation in the fieldwork. For the qualitative interviews, six key participants were chosen. The original plan was to conduct two interviews with each participant, one at the beginning of their stay, and the other towards the end of their stay, in order to see clearly whether their perceptions have changed over time. However, due to scheduling problems, the plan was changed to only conduct one interview with each participant and instead, to add guiding questions which would help to gain these insights anyway. Eventually, observational data were collected in the course of the winter semester 2017/2018 and the interview data were collected towards the end of it.

3.2.1 Personal interviews

Let us first describe the method of collecting the core source, i.e. interview data. The personal interviews were conducted by myself at the Charles University study room and the language used during the interviews was, of course, English. All the recordings were audio-recorded at their full length. The participants were aware of this fact as I asked their permission both in the inviting email and later personally, before the interview. The time of interviewing differed substantially according to participants' willingness to elaborate on their answers. Some interviews lasted barely thirty minutes, others more than sixty minutes. The interviews took a semi-structured form, roughly following a set of questions. This enabled me to change the order of questions on the spot to suit each interview most meaningfully. In this way, there was also enough space to add questions when it seemed to bring more clarity into the discussed topic or to gain some previously unconsidered though interesting insights. In contrast, those questions which turned out not to bring much of a new perspective or seemed to become redundant could be left out. The participants were not interrupted even when they

diverged from the topics relevant for the research since the aim was to create a friendly, informal, conversational, non-threatening atmosphere so that the participants did not feel afraid to open up, particularly in discussions of more personal, confidential themes. The primary motivation behind interviewing the students was to examine participants' conception of themselves as non-native speakers of English, whether and how these conceptions show signs of the Standard language ideology influence as well as what effect the study abroad experience had on it. However, since the employed community of practice approach contains an ethnographic aspect, I included more questions concentrating on the culture of their Erasmus community, their values, social habits and routines. Therefore, students were asked to express their views and opinions on a number of different topics, for example, their English language learning process, their motivation, aims and expectations they had about their stay. Further, they were asked to reflect on the linguistic practices used in the group as well as the role and status of other languages. Further, they were asked to elaborate on their views on correctness and effectiveness in the ELF communication, how they perceive the role of native speakers in ELF communications and as a role model. Students were asked to share their feelings about being English language users as well as how they felt linguistically at the beginning of their stay as well as towards its end. Although, it was mentioned that the interview questions were followed freely, and thus differed to some extent with each interview, the full list of prepared guiding questions is available in the appendix 1.

3.2.2 Participant observation in the fieldwork

As pointed out earlier, I became friends with one of the participants and it happened at the time when I started to consider whether I should collect and include observational data in this study. Since this student was at the core of a smaller Erasmus students' community which later became the community of practice of my focus, I decided it would be useful to start attending events which he frequently organized in his apartment as it could give me an access to other potential participants. Having attended several of these gatherings I decided that it was, in fact, the perfect environment for collecting my observational data. As Gundermann (2014) explains:

Participatory observation entails the researcher's active involvement in the case setting and community under investigation. Active involvement ideally means that the

researcher aims to participate in any naturally occurring activity in the field in order to experience these activities first-hand and get a thorough understanding of what is going on there (…) Nonetheless, the researcher needs to critically reflect on his/her role as outsider (p. 72).

Thus, I adopted a peer/researcher role and started to participate in the events. They usually took the form of an international dinner, during which each student was meant to bring some food typical of their country, or prepare a traditional dish on the spot. At other times it was Fridays or Saturdays "pre-drinking" as the students called it, which was simply a social gathering where students were chatting and drinking before they continued to other party places to enjoy the night; often on nights like this, other students who were not regular members of the group were joining in. Sometimes, there were more peaceful gatherings on Sundays when usually less people met, almost exclusively the key members of the community. The last type of events was the ideal environment for my observations because it was easier for me to observe, follow what is being said and make notes about it.

At the beginning, my intention was to fully record these gatherings, so I asked the students if they would mind being recorded during their conversations. Usually no one objected, so I recorded two nights with the recorder placed slightly hidden on the table so that the students felt relaxed and did not think too much about the content and form of their conversations. Later I realized that recording these events does not make much sense due to the background noise, because usually many voices overlapped on the record and it was rather confusing to "entangle" and follow one thread of conversation. I thus decided to simply rely on my observational activity and fieldnotes making. I usually sat down next to one group and listened carefully to their conversation while simultaneously making notes whenever some interesting phenomenon occurred. All the fieldnotes were always documented simultaneously with the observation. For the sake of making the unnatural situation as natural as the circumstances allowed me to, I did not explain to my participants what exactly I was looking for in the conversations, I only announced that I was interested in how international students communicate together in English. During the conversations, when I was in the researcher role, I tried to divert attention away from myself, but often the students, out of politeness, attempted to include me into the conversation, asking me my opinion or inviting me to the conversation in another verbal or non-verbal way.

During the fieldwork I was particularly focusing on the linguistic repertoire which was salient in this group, what language routines they had, how they included other languages as well as the local one. I also observed how they employed the accommodative strategies which are so characteristic of ELF communication. However, I realized that due to the observational activity, more than these insights are being gained; I was gaining a more coherent picture of what was going on in the community and its dynamics which, I believe, helped me in understanding and interpreting the students' emic, i.e. internal views collected through the interviews.

In general, by combining these two types of qualitative data sources (i.e. the interview and the observational data) this research is aiming at a slightly ethnographic perspective, which is recommended for this type of in-depth ELF use studies, although its actual integration into research is yet scarce (for examples, see: Ehrenreich (2009), Kalocsai (2009, 2013), Smith (2009, 2010), Breiteneder (2009), Gundermann (2014). "An ethnography requires researchers to collect relevant linguistic data and to analyse them with a consideration of the physical, social/cultural, and linguistic contexts in which language is used" (Duff 2008; cited in Kalocsai 2013, p. 62). The aim of such an approach is then "to describe what participants are concerned with e.g. what their actions, beliefs or discourses are about" (Gundermann, 2014, p. 62). The perspective employed is thus expected to bring about a better understanding and clarity into the questions which this study is investigating.

3.3 The role of the researcher

According to Gundermann (2014), "ethnographic fieldwork is only fruitful if the researcher manages to establish rapport with research participants" (p. 69). As described above, it was the case of this study as well. However, this fact also means that the participants will be at least to some degree familiar with the role and the task of the researcher, as well as with what he or she is paying attention to. In the case of this study, participants were aware of my interest in the way they speak English. Let us therefore suppose that they were more attentive to the form of their speech as well as the content of their speech when languages were concerned. While two of the participants were foreign language students, none of them was familiar with the concept of English as a lingua franca at the time of the interview, which should help to ensure a certain

degree of neutrality. For example, Jenkins' research (2013) was criticized for asking the participants to "express their opinions and attitudes towards ELF after Jenkins introduced them to it (cited in Gundermann, 2014, p. 82). Gundermann herself, on the other hand, set her study in the environment of an EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction) programme students, which, as she admits, is biased implicitly at least (ibid.).

However, this research is far from being void of bias, too. When asking the interview questions, the themes addreseed and the notions raised are certainly "misguiding". To give only one example out of many other possible ones: The notion of a native speaker as well as non-native speaker was used many times by the researcher. As Gundermann (2014), warns, using such concepts can be highly dangerous, "since the NS concept is highly controversial and culturally loaded" and can lead to answers which "confirm common stereotypes and/or socially desirable answers" (p. 148).
Further, some of the questions were certainly guiding the participants to adopt a particular way of thinking. One such example was the question: "Do you want to speak English like a native speaker?" This question immediately invites a number of associations connected to social, cultural and linguistic stereotypes. Therefore, we cannot claim that the findings of this study are by any means unbiased. On the contrary, the findings owe a lot to individual interpretations and are highly subjective. On the other hand, it is perhaps a utopian idea that an objective study focused on students' linguistic identities can be produced.

3.4 Data analysis

The data processing in this study was inspired by the Grounded Theory method of analysis. In its pure, ideal form, Grounded Theory (GT) is a research method which avoids any kind of pre-construction in the data collection, processing and interpretation. Instead it is attempting to discover only what is "grounded" in the data itself (Glaser, 2008). Eisenhardt (1989) comments critically on the feasibility of this approach: "theory-building research is begun as close as possible to the ideal of no theory under consideration and no hypotheses to test. Admittedly, it is impossible to achieve this ideal of a clean theoretical slate. Nonetheless, attempting to approach this ideal is

important because preordained theoretical perspectives or propositions may bias and limit the findings" (cited in Gundermann (2014, p. 61). The full version of the GT research design allows the researcher to return to the field to collect instances of the generated theories. This study, however, uses the abbreviated version of the Grounded Theory, which means that the data are already collected in their final scope and the principles of the GT are only followed during the analysis and presentation of results.

The process of the data analysis was as follows: the audio recordings of the interviews were listened and re-listened to many times to by the researcher and when it seemed that the data were interpreted correctly, the variables, i.e. the analytic categories and concepts, were identified and labelled. They were loosely categorized among CoP-related topics, including participants' linguistic identities topics as these categories overlapped. To be more specific, the following list presents the thematic circles which emerged as significant: goals of the stay, Erasmus lifestyle, community bonding, shared linguistic repertoire, communicative priorities, humour in ELF, perceptions on one's own English, non-native speaker status, the native speaker problem, linguistic schizophrenia, omnipresent authority of the native speaker, English deterioration, moments of misunderstandings, gaining confidence in English. Further, the identified phenomena were compared with other instances as well as with relevant literature. In this way, the categories could have been linked together, the interrelations could have been discovered, checking particularly the negative cases. In this way theoretical models were built.

The interviews were partially transcribed orthographically. The reason why their full length was not transcribed is that not all of the collected data had any significance for the topic under examination. In line with the grounded theory principles, at the time when the interviews were conducted the research questions were not yet precisely known; therefore, much information gathered in the interviews later proved to bear no relevance for the orientation of the study in the form in which it crystalized.

Therefore, the relevant comments were transcribed orthographically using conventional transcription system and symbols. It means that all hesitations, repetitions, ungrammatical, non-standard uses etc. which appeared in the utterances were transcribed exactly as they occurred.

Following the example of Gundermann (2014), who decided to avoid assigning the standardized speaker identification, i.e. numerical pseudonyms to her study participants

and instead used real human names (although invented ones for the sake of research ethics), in this study the participants were also assigned fictional names for the representation of their accounts. It is believed that such a step should help to improve the readability of the study and to create a "livelier image" (ibid., p. 74).

Finally, the emerging findings are discussed in the analysis section and accompanied by relevant interview quotes. In line with the qualitative research conventions, both events unique to a single student's mind as well as pattern events are presented. However, the findings are, in majority, an illustration of a prevailing tendency.

4 Results and Discussion

The following chapters discuss the themes and categories which emerged from the collected data as the most salient. Specifically, the case study findings are presented from the emic perspective or, put it more simply, from the internal perspective, as the students themselves perceived it. Their analysis will provide a background for building theories which will, in turn, serve us to answer the research questions.
The following themes will be discussed: students' views on their English, their attitude towards non-standard Englishes as well as their ambivalent attitudes towards their accents, grammar and overall English, language deterioration or thriving.

4.1 Prague Erasmus' community of practice dimensions

The analysis will first focus on the dimensions of the community of practice under investigation in order to justify that the chosen approach is at all applicable to this study. The approach also accounts for the ethnographically flavoured presentation of these results. Firstly, we will focus on the jointly negotiated enterprise; in other words, what goals the local community was trying to achieve together. Secondly, mutual engagement activities which the community adopted in order to reach these goals will be analysed. Thirdly, particular attention will be dedicated to the analysis of the data which relate to the shared resources of local linguistic practices, as in the case of this community, it is the subject of this study, i.e. English as a lingua franca. The other socio-linguistic or non-linguistic parts of the shared repertoire, i.e. members' shared views, beliefs and attitudes, will also be mentioned when relevant.

4.1.1 Students' goals

"To start from zero and build something"

The joint enterprise, as Wenger (1998) explains, stands for the common goals as well as the practice invented and employed by the community to achieve them (p. 95). In order to do so, the students had to be constantly creating the environment which would be

appropriate for achieving these goals, i.e. they had to be constantly creating and re-creating practices which serve as means to reach and sustain the set goals.

The students' goals of their stay in Prague differed in many points. Some of them came to concentrate primarily on the educative part and intellectual or personal development, they were planning to start or compete their thesis writing, to learn a little bit about Czech history, culture and languages, or merge into the selected university courses in depth. Others wished to launch their adult life and become more independent, while others were more keen on enjoying some time for themselves, having fun in general and building friendship with interesting. Some of the students' accounts below demonstrate this.

Excerpt 1

I wanted to learn a bit of Czech, we want to have a time for ourselves to enjoy, rest, to study, to find international friends, experience of meeting so many diverse people, to change my viewpoints. (Acerina, L1: German, interview, December 2017)

All of the students were culturally "hungry", wanted to broaden their cultural horizons beyond what they knew. Therefore, one of the main goals was to meet people from different cultures and possibly change the students´ current perspectives:

Excerpt 2

It's also curiosity, when you meet somebody from a different place, obviously you are more curious how the other person acts, speaks, thinks, it is important for me to discover these new people and how they live their lives. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

One of the results of these explorations was, for example, breaking some stereotypical images:

Excerpt 3

It was lot of cultural shock but in positive way, for example, I had this idea that the person who comes from this place must be like this but of course it was entirely different person and everything was presupposition. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

The third account comes from Rosario, whose goal took on a more complex life perspective:

Excerpt 4

To step out of my bubble, to see my life from a different perspective, what was good, what was bad, what can be improved (..) I was just curious. It's mainly curiosity ((laughs)), to see if there is some other perspective at all. (Rosario, L1: Dutch, interview, December 2017)

A few of the students mentioned that they would like to become more independent, and to get to know if they will be able to take care of themselves without their parents being close enough to help.

Excerpt 5

I want to experience to live somewhere new, to live alone, basically to start from zero and build something (..) to experience how hard it is, these hard tasks to solve you have to do everything by your own and that's the hardest thing you can do." (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

The students, however, realized that it is essential to build around a stable group of friends which would provide them with the environment suitable for the realization of all their goals. The account of Szilárd below demonstrates the process of building a circle of new friends who might help to open new perspectives to him and to teach him something about their cultures. He stood up to his words "to start from zero and build something" as he was the key, or in Wenger's terms (1998) "a core member", who determined what type of people the community will be composed of (pp. 125-126). That is to say, he took on a role of the gatekeeper, as not everyone, in his point of view, was able to enrich others. Here is an explanation of his "selecting procedure":

Excerpt 6

For me the most important thing was the feeling I had when I first met the people, if it was something positive that came on my mind eh (..) something like an aura or I don't know. If it was something negative I like to keep a little distance and not be fast. That was the first thing but after that what decided if the person can be my friend, eh (…) for example, humour or how well we get along together, jokes are very important part of that cause most of the time we are laughing about life about everything. Sometimes (.) yes there were some cryings but still after that laughs came again and just being comfortable that was the most important. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

In order to reach their goal to build a community of interesting people, they were thus restricting access to the community. Ewa also mentions that the grouping of her friends

was not coincidental as it might seem in usual Erasmus groupings, but the members had the potential to enrich her in some way:

Excerpt 7

We became friends (..) we don't stick together because we stay together, I like these people, I like the way they think (..) I want to stay friends with them after. (Ewa, L1: Bulgarian, interview, December 2017)

Excerpt 8

I don't like these people because they like to party, are loud, it's when you speak with the people outside of the party, when they are not trying to be the heart of the party, that you realize the people are worth it. (Ewa, L1: Bulgarian, interview, December 2017)

She described the nature of the members who passed the "selection criteria":

Excerpt 9

They are ready to accept everyone, open-minded (…) humble about other cultures, I can call them "explorers," (..) you are exploring the country you are in but you are also exploring the people around you. (Ewa, L1: Bulgarian, interview, December 2017)

In contrast, she points out that there are other communities or Erasmus sub-groups which her community is aware of but they do not find it appealing to connect with them.

"When you are not at home you cannot be that socially lazy"

The building of a community was related to a few goals. Among the most relevant ones was the search for a sense of belonging. As all the students mentioned, this stemmed from the fact that they found themselves out of their natural context, out of touch with their usual social circles, as well as without their native culture and, most importantly, their native language, which was also a recurring topic of their discussions.

Rosario below is commenting on the need to be active in finding friends and building a community while in Prague. Clearly, his motivation to do so is not merely to have fun and enhance his perspectives on other cultures. The inner urge to feel included, which sometimes drove him out of his comfort zone, is evident from the excerpt:

Excerpt 10

You don't have the certainties you have at home, you cannot expect other people to be your friends, you don't have your family to help you out (…) when you are not at home you cannot be that socially lazy, you have to take more initiative (.) say yes to more invitations even when it's not that exciting at first. (Rosario, L1: Dutch, interview, December 2017)

The sense of belonging the students wished to experience might not be only a short-term issue while studying abroad. In fact, it might be a sort of search for self-understanding and where one belongs on a deeper existential level. This was discussed by Szilárd, who was elaborating on what type of people his friends are. Although he observes that each of them is very different, he finds a common link in the fact that they are in search of belonging here because they did not completely feel included in where they came from:

Excerpt 11

Where they come from (..) they could not really fit in to the community. For example, I come from Hungary (..) but I don't know why (.) I cannot fit into the environment and these people they are also some kind of outsiders. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

The point is reiterated from a different perspective by Ewa, who said that you can try to be what you really want to be here in Prague, not to feel restricted by the context you are living in:

Excerpt 12

We have our cultures in the background and you can be who you want to be here (..) because no one knows you, you can try different things to see how people would react to you (…) present yourself in a different way. (Ewa, L1: Bulgarian, interview, December 2017)

Bonding over shared struggles

An important factor in creating the bonds, holding the community together, was that they are being connected by the same struggles during their stay. Mainly, this concerned struggling with the language, both English and Czech. They connected through feeling uncomfortable in some situations stemming from the fact that they are foreigners in a country whose language they do not understand. Apart from struggling with inconvenient feelings and feelings of insecurity, the students connected through the

feeling of nostalgia regarding their country, home, families, boyfriends and girlfriends etc.

The following excerpt from the interview with Szilárd reveals these points when he gives his opinion on what makes his community coherent:

Excerpt 13

The problem to speak English (…) we all (..) it's too strong term, but we all suffer that we have to speak English otherwise the others won't understand us, so we are forced to do this and because we know the other person is forced to do this, sometimes unpleasant things (..) you can't find words etc. but that's another thing that makes us come together, we stick together because of this thing, it also creates that bond. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

Similarly, Ewa, when asked about what makes the people come together, explains that it is a shared struggle which originates from the fact that they are lacking knowledge of the local language. She humourously points out that because of that they are struggling with hostile cashiers in Billa supermarket where they all go shopping.

The following interview excerpts further demonstrate the mentioned points.

Excerpt 14

Sometimes I feel a little less confident because you are in a difficult environment that you do not know (..) you have to ask people about things, how things work so it takes more effort, but that is part of the challenge. (Rosario, L1: Dutch, interview, December 2017)

Excerpt 15

Sometimes (..) awkward, inconvenient, uncertain moments (…) for example, in the managing of small talks with new people – sometimes you feel uncomfortable (…) maybe not for the other people but just for you (...) but people don't really talk about this from my experience. (Rosario, L1: Dutch, interview, December 2017)

The students were aspiring to make friendship ties which would provide them with support through the "stormy" times, their goal was thus to find someone to share the struggle with, to find the understanding and comfort, support from each other and their community was considered a safe space to soothe their feelings and to recharge.

4.1.2 Prague Erasmus Mutual engagement activities and relations

"It's like a group of sheep… you just go in the same direction together"

The Prague students had to invent social activities which would enable them, in the most suitable way, to reach the goals of their shared enterprise. This also involves the process of negotiation in terms of the social bonds appropriate for these purposes. This section will, therefore, describe the Prague students' regular engagement in mutual activities as well as the nature of relations which arose among the members.

In contrast with the Szeged students of Kalocsai's study (2013), the Prague students were not so keen on being friends with the locals and from the beginning, the focus was thus on finding friendship within the wide group of Erasmus students newly arrived to the town in the same semester. One of the members made this point explicit in her comment:

Excerpt 16

We identify as internationals (..) we don't want to merge into the Czech culture, it's more fun with the Erasmus, because Czechs (…) they have their work and life here, of course (Ewa, L1: Bulgarian, interview, December 2017)

The community under study is thus composed of merely Erasmus students, however, as explained earlier, it consists of only a few selected individuals. In other words, they form only a subgroup within an entire winter semester Erasmus community. Szilárd describes the structure in his view:

Excerpt 17

So the Erasmus community is the big one (…) is the people who came with Erasmus at one place, they're not connected, not related, sometimes they meet but I wouldn't call it a very closely connected community. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

Excerpt 18

It's not organized, you throw a party, invite them, you sort of hang out more, and basically build up a circle of friends, (…) so yes (.) I would say there are these freestyle communities. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

Within the investigated "freestyle community" the interviewed members are those which met with the others most of the time, i.e. the "core members" who were concerned with the community maintenance, particularly Szilárd who organized parties

and other social activities regularly at his apartment. There were also peripheral members, who participated to a limited degree and were not excessively investing their time and effort into maintaining and developing the relations as they often were simultaneously part of other communities of this kind.

All of the students described the Erasmus lifestyle as very enjoyable and thus the activities associated with Erasmus community compose a list of social events organized in majority by the students themselves. Mostly, they spend time partying, in pubs, travelling, walking, some of them had lectures together, going for breakfasts and dinners, attending movie nights or exceptionally participating at events organized by the Charles University International club.

Below is an account by Szilárd, who participated in most of the events and who describes how he usually spent the time with his community:

Excerpt 19

Going to pubs, drinking coffee, parties, having long and beautiful talks with each other (..) with more people or only with one person at the time (…) playing music,(..) I like to do creative things with them, this makes the bond stronger. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

Here this extract among other things reveals the conscious effort to organize such a type of mutual engagement, which will be the most appropriate to reach Szilárd's goal, i.e. to build a community of friends in Prague.

Another participant, Ewa, who lived in a dorm with other students, shares her point of view on the Erasmus lifestyle but she took on a more critical perspective and even mentioned a feeling of guilt for indulging in such a funny but reckless way of spending time in Prague:

Excerpt 20

I live in a dorm, we're like an international village and it's not a real world, you know where they put the drug addicts ((laughs)) we do everything together, drink, cook, we have fun together but you can see the difference I am here to study (…) yes I like socializing, party but (…) (Ewa, L1: Bulgarian, interview, December 2017)

Excerpt 21

It's reckless, it's very fulfilling but it's not enough, it can give you way more than they (exp. some other members) are taking (..) for many it's just a vacation. (Ewa, L1: Bulgarian, interview, December 2017)

She is trying to explain that her goals are also of a more serious character than some of the other students' as she came to finish her master thesis and to gain intellectually from the courses she signed up for, whereas the goals of the others are short-term and basically ephemeral. She goes on to point out that everyone is aware of the fact that, apart from the goal of making friends with people from diverse cultures, the time in Prague could be spent in a more beneficial way:

Excerpt 21

They (exp. the members) stick with the group to have fun etc. But they feel guilty and it's temporary lifestyle. (Ewa, L1: Bulgarian, interview, December 2017)

Here the typical Erasmus lifestyle frustration appears. It stems from the conflicting goals which students set for their study. While the primary official reason for the entire Erasmus mobility is study-oriented, they set themselves another, more personal goal, i.e. to build friendship. However, because the latter goal originates from, taking on a psychological point of view, needs which are much more urgent, such as not to be alone and not to feel excluded, the initial goal often takes over in favour of the latter. This kind of goal-rethinking appeared to a certain degree in the case of all my participants, its consequences took the form of self-blame and guilt, which also became a frequent topic of their talks. However, parties, travelling and this kind of enjoyable activities seemed to be most appropriate way of engagement in order to build and strengthen friendly ties, which explains why students, despite feeling guilty, found it difficult to withdraw from it.

It resonates with the finding of Kalocsai's study (2013), who also observed that some of her participants, despite their initial plan to focus on progressing with their studies, ended up partying excessively and feeling guilty about it. This led them to reconsider the priorities of their stay, yet many decided to focus rather on building an Erasmus family as they did not want to "get separated from the community of all the other Erasmus students" (p. 81).

Nature of relations within the community

In the excerpt below, Szilárd is talking about what makes his community stick together and mentions not only the reason which was revealed in the earlier section, but his explanation is also indicative of the kind of relations the community has created:

Excerpt 22

The others stick together cause they can rely on each other (..) yes because they came here and they have to start from the zero, they had no friends, they had the university but still (…) it was really important for them to find somebody they can rely on. (…) it happened to me many times that somebody call to me @ I have a problem @ I was like sure come to my house. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

The mutual relations seem to have a tone of intimacy, based on the understanding of the struggles of the others, the students are trying to help each other and I could notice that the students share some feeling of humbleness towards the other.

Acerina also partly uncovers the nature of the relations when commenting on how she would describe the Erasmus people:

Excerpt 23

Very open minded, always do the first step, which is usually my problem (…) very interested in other cultures. (Acerina, L1: German, interview, December 2017)

She mentions again that the students are interested in including others, making the move first, that is they are trying to create a very straightforward, inclusive and friendly environment. Later she comments on why she feels confident with her English within her community but not so much at the university:

Excerpt 24

That's of course because you also know nobody would start to laugh it's not correct so that makes it easier. (Acerina, L1: German, interview, December 2017)

Acerina's other comment reveals other qualities, i.e. the students are aiming to be tolerant, perhaps even lenient and to create relaxed relations.

Fanni, also talking about how she solves her language troubles when engaged in social activities with her community, points out:

Excerpt 25

I like to ask the others who are really good in English for help. (Fanni, L1: German, interview, December 2017)

There were two students in the group who studied languages and it was reflected in the level of their English, which was significantly better than the average and who from time to time received a request for help from other, less advanced students when in need of help in the moment of word search or another language problem. This knowledge of who in the community has got the necessary skills for sorting out a particular problem is one of the characteristic signs of a community of practice (Wenger 1998).

Wenger (1998) also mentions that the process of achieving the goals involves learning of what to do, what is appropriate and what, in contrast, is not (p. 95). In terms of their goal to build friendships and get to know each other once they selected the right people, they have, for example, learnt to only use English when there were different nationalities around. The students agreed unanimously that it is important that everyone has the chance to get involved in the conversation and no one feels excluded. By creating this friendly inclusive atmosphere, the members were trying to build a non-threatening atmosphere in which everyone feels comfortable to meet others and open up, share things about themselves, their life and culture.

Excerpt 26

When we are speaking in a group of the same nationalities (exp. in his CoP) usually like two people adjust to speak just English to give the opportunity to be engaged but most people (exp. meaning outside his CoP) don't do that (..) because it is more convenient to talk with people from your country in your language. (Rosario, L1: Dutch, interview, December 2017)

Similarly, Fanni commented on the importance of switching into English when two nationalities appear in one place, which reveals her concern for maintaining appropriate ways of engagement within the community. It is one of the features Wenger (1998) identifies as a sign of a communities of practice and this confirms what Kalocsai (2013) found out about her Szeged Erasmus community, i.e. the shared focus on keeping the community linguistically accessible to every member at any time. This study, therefore, follows on the previous two studies conducted in a similar setting, i.e. Kalocsai' s comunity and Smit's (2010) international student community, who both "adopted English (used) as a lingua franca as the key shared practice" not, as it might seem, due

to “laziness or the lack of interest in learning other languages” but simply, for the reason to “provide each (potential) member of their community with access to shared practices” (cited in Kalocsai, 2013, p. 134).

However, Fanni at the same time admits that she also spends some time with people of the same nationality because she feels the connection is easier to make and is deeper than with people who come from different countries and do not share her L1. In this way, the finding again confirms what Smith (2010) found about the international student CoP within the EMI programme, i.e. while they used English as a major resource when within the company of the wider CoP, some of the students also tended to stick around in sub-groups on the basis of their L1 background. In the following section we will look into the role and characteristics of the English used by the Prague community.

4.1.3 The shared negotiable resource of socio-linguistic practices

As a product of the members’ engagement in their joint enterprise, the resources of both linguistic and non-linguistic practices emerge (Wenger 1998). It means that the Prague students in the process of pursuing their goals to build a supportive and fun-based circle of international friends developed certain salient practices which they all shared and which helped them to establish the desired type of ties among them. As in other CoPs, these “practices are created out of the resources the individual members bring to the community through innovation and adaptation” (Wenger, 1998, pp. 83, 125). While the non-linguistic practices of student communities like the currently investigated one are certainly an intriguing topic, in this work, the attention will be directed mostly towards the local linguistic practices the students developed, including shared words, phrases, linguistic jokes, routines, and the social meanings they have been ascribed, in order to help the students build a characteristic identity for their community. The presented findings will be discussed in relation to their implications for ELF research. The section closes with a finding that Prague students’ use of English as a lingua franca, in fact, draws on many other languages, and thus supports and spreads multilingualism. In other words, it accomplishes one of the major goals of the Erasmus programme.

Students' multilingual resources

"At some point English gets tiring"

As pointed out in the earlier section, aiming to create a culturally and linguistically diverse environment, the language jointly negotiated for communication within the group was English. Since the members were in majority speakers of L1s other than English, it means that we are referring to an English as a lingua franca use. The local linguistic means had its own specifics and salient features developed by the participants themselves. They seem to be very aware of their role of active agents in the adjustment of English to suit their needs to create social bonds through their language use. The point is being borne out as the participants comment on it:

Excerpt 27

With this group we just use words we created them (…) if you said it to a random person on the street, the person definitely would not understand it (.) because it's for fun. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

Excerpt 28

We use Bulgarian, Italian, Serbian, we use different languages when it sounds better (..) I like using different languages which sounds better, I like mixing, (..) others want to know the meaning, they start to repeat it, it is like sociolect (..) code, it's fun, and we are learning this way– (..) some girl in the dorm learnt some of our words from us, it's not just English, I am learning more Italian, they learn Serbian (…) at some point English gets tiring." (Ewa, L1: Bulgarian, interview, December 2017)

Apart from revealing that their English is used creatively and appropriated to suit the purposes of this group, the following excerpt also uncovers that in the process of composing the shared repertoire, the members are relying on their multilingual resources, and thus confirms earlier ELF findings (Cogo, 2009, Klimpfinger, 2009).

Excerpt 29

We use other languages sometimes, for example, I have some German friends and I tell them some funny phrases and sentences and I do it because it's friendly and I want to show them @ hey I appreciate your culture@ (…) that is the main thing to appreciate someone's culture. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

Excerpt 30

I would use French with French people (..) if I am texting with a German– just for fun. They would appreciate it (…) and maybe to impress them a little bit. (Rosario, L1: Dutch, interview, December 2017)

Excerpt 31

We use cheering in different language and we try to do it in as many languages as we can. we use it because it makes it more personal, it also creates a bond between others because it shows that you're interested– you just want to be friendly. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

It is apparent that the use of other languages besides English, particularly in the form of code-switching, serves as a means of creating a closer relationship by expressing respect to other cultures, and thus its function is for the most part social. The fact that students' linguistic practices were shaped to suit social purposes can be taken as proof that the Prague community had formed a community of practice.

This point is reiterated by many other comments and partly confirms the finding of Kalocsai's study (2009) of the Szeged Erasmus community that the frequent code-switching implies "that in the Erasmus students' local communities of practice ELF co-exists with other languages. The participants are not only motivated to learn further languages, but also seek out for opportunities to develop their multilingualism. They take advantage of the multilingual group they belong to" (p. 41). The Prague students certainly are motivated to extend their linguistic repertoire, however, while some of them explained that they wished to improve their knowledge of some foreign language during their stay, several of them mentioned that code-switching only serves as a source of fun created ad hoc; that is to say, their language learning motivation is superficial, not long-term.

Sarolta below also comments on the languages used in the community and explains that there are certain conversation domains in which code-switching occurs frequently:

Excerpt 32

Macedonian, German, Hungarian– mostly when we talk about food and cuisine, for example, "máslo" < Cz > "tvaroh" < Cz > everybody sees it in the shops, now they know it and understand what it means (…) of French words "dejavous" < Fr> (…) it's more like about fun, when we're joking. (Sarolta, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

At other times, the students were teaching Czech words they came across to the others, such as, "traktor" < Cz > or "langoš" < Cz >. They were also using Serbian to curse sometimes or making use of their multilingual resources in some other way.

Excerpt 33

always use Serbian for cursing, it's got ritualized for "bye" we say "ciaone" or "ciaonis" everyone use this in the community or "spermiere" to save money, "pronto" < It> *when you pick the phone, we started to say "staropronto", like because of Staropramen, we say the sentence in English and then we say "prosím, děkuju, díky, nashledanou"* < Cz > *– basic words, we wanna sound more Czech, we are in Czech we wanna look like we understand"* (Ewa, L1: Bulgarian, interview, December 2017)

Excerpt 34

I really tried to speak in Czech in certain topics, for example, around drinking. When I wanted a beer I tried to do it in Czech or cheers I tried to do it in Czech and that's because I am coming to contact with Czech people but we always speak English usually when it's more than two nationalities or @ German @ when we want to make it strong, when we want to emphasize (..) to say it in a funny way. (Fanni, L1: German, interview, December 2017)

Ewa's and Fanni's comments reveal the occurrence of a phenomenon called "habitat factor", i.e. "type of local accommodation" (Kalocsai, 2013, p. 137). Pölzl and Seidlhofer (2006) explain it is a term which was coined in relation to their finding "that ELF speakers readily adjust their English to the local environment wherever they are" (cited in Kalocsai, 2013, p. 137). It means that since this Erasmus community was located in the Czech Republic, the Czech language could play a privileged role in the linguistic repertoire of the local CoP. It corresponds with Kalocsai's (2013) Szeged community of practice finding, in which frequent codeswitching, particularly into Hungarian, became one of the core features of the local linguistic repertoire.

4.1.3.1.1 Local linguistic rituals

> **"We are inventing new words, it's also very creative thing we do together, it's like playing music"**

The same scenario applied to the Prague's students. Even though only three of the 7 students took learning Czech seriously, i.e. attended classes of Czech language, they all were exposed to Czech in their daily life, and thus all of them learnt some Czech words and phrases. They utilized this knowledge to enrich their ELF with funny linguistic rituals. For example, over the time, the students created a habit to play a sort of game, which started when someone randomly code-switched into Czech. Often another student reacted to the change of language by adding other Czech words, regardless of whether their meaning was related, and the participants started to take turns, during which they

said different words they knew in Czech in a quick sequence, competing with each other to see who would be the last one with a word at hand and also who would bring up a word they considered the most funny. This favourite routine habit was triggered at least once at each evening session I attended and it always resulted in a burst of laughing as the students considered Czech a funny language, particularly because it belongs to a language branch unfamiliar to the native languages of the majority of the participants.

To examine the codeswitching into Czech more closely, it seemed that most popular among the group was codeswitching to Czech which was related to the beer-drinking culture in the Czech Republic, as was obvious already from Ewa's example of creative linguistic routines building, when she mentioned the students use the word "staropronto" when picking up the phone. It is, in fact, a blend of two words, Italian "pronto", which is a synonym to "yes please" (when picking up the phone) and the word "Staropramen", which is the name of a traditional Czech brewery. The students always used the Czech word "pivo" to refer to a beer, this was an automatic switch, and this word was a typical trigger of the funny turn game, one such example was the following exchange:

Excerpt 35

P1: Did you buy different "pivo" today? < Cz >

P2: pivečko < Cz >

P1: Mám pivečko v ledničce < Cz >

P3: My mužem mluvit po česky < Cz >

P2: pivo prosím < Cz >

P2: vodečku < Cz >

P1: Jak se mate? < Cz >

P4: Nerozumim < Cz >

(4 participants: L1: Latvian, Hungarian, French, German, fieldnotes, November 2017)

While Czech had a slightly unique position, the other languages could also be heard during the students' social engagements, as apparent from the comment below:

Excerpt 36

When we say @cheers@ we always try to say it in another language, when we are six people we always try to say– not everybody in their own language but in a different

language (..) yeah it's funny because we always teach each other to say "cheers" in our language and now German friend always say "egészségére" < Hu> and I say "na zdraví" < Cz >and in French (…) and this is always so funny. (Sarolta, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

The analysis of the shared repertoire of the Prague Erasmus community confirms Klimpfinger's claim (2009) that codeswitching is "an integral part of the discourse practices of ELF conversations" (cited in Cogo, 2010, p. 294). More importantly, the codeswitching plays a crucial role in shaping the community' salient humour. The re-occurrence of codeswitched elements in a habitual manner serves as another proof that the Prague group formed a genuine community of practice. The last point becomes even more clear as the students explain how their linguistic repertoire is being extended:

Excerpt 37

With this group we just use words we created them (..) if you said it to a random person on the street, the person definitely would not understand it (…) because it's for fun. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

Excerpt 38

We are inventing new words (…) it's also very creative thing we do together (.) it's like playing music. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

The group, for example, used the word "amazing" in their own way. One of the girls pronounced the word with an accent on the last syllable thus which inspired the others to divide the word in two and assign specific meanings to it so that "ama" meant the best whereas "zing" meant the worst.

4.1.4 The question of a linguistic authority within the CoP

> **"We have fun with our English but you know if there was a native speaker flatmate I think he or she would be so confused"**

The students are creating their linguistic repertoire from the resources that they themselves bring to the community, as proved, for example, by Szilárd's explanation of the group's specific use of "amazing". The process as well as its result help to jointly create a common identity for the group. The process itself, i.e. the "thinking together", is just as important as the result, i.e. the created repertoire, because it is a source of fun,

creates playful atmosphere, generates the friendly bonds and forms the identity which the group desires to adopt. It becomes apparent that in the community, the standard for setting criteria of which linguistic form is acceptable or which, in contrast, is not, is not measured according to native-speaker norms. Thus, the finding supports Kalocsai's refusal of the claim that NS English is "the unquestioned yardstick" (Seidlhofer et al. 2006; cited in Kalocsai, 2013, p. 31). Rather, the norms set by its members are of greater importance within the context of this community of practice as they serve them to achieve the shared goals. The excerpt below reveals that sometimes, students simply followed the way of the group, with no other motivation that to display that they are part of this community.

Excerpt 39

I use some words for something– it doesn't even have any sense– I don't know why I do it (…) what it means(.) but you just use it because it makes you part of the group so ((laughs)) it's like a group of sheep you just go in the same direction with together and doesn't really think about it. It's the same for me. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

A similar finding was made in the Szeged community, where some students "had to learn that in order to express their membership in the emerging Szeged Erasmus Family, the sometimes had to answer some "strange" and by all means useless questions" which were invented by others and emerged as routine practices within the community (ibid., p. 111). Wenger's statement (1998) that while the shared practices form a resource, they are also a restriction in a sense, is thus taking on a concrete shape.

The fact that the students' main priority when communicating was to create humour and to get the message across rather than following some external criteria is being further confirmed by Sarolta's comment on the kind of English which she used with her flatmates:

Excerpt 40

With my flatmates (.) at the beginning we had our own English– they weren't fluent like me at the beginning but we have fun with our English (..) but you know if there was a native speaker flatmate I think he or she would be so confused (..) but we could understand. (Sarolta, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

In the excerpt above, Sarolta is seemingly unbothered by any external criteria of correctness embodied here by the mentioned native speaker of English, not only

because she explicitly states that even though their English is incorrect from the perspective of the norm-provider authority, they simply use it because it is fun, but also because she describes this situation with laughter, which implies that she perceives the situation with ease. This finding confirms the claim made by Ehrenreich (2009), which seems to be of a crucial importance for the English as a lingua franca research: "Within a community of practice, activities, views, beliefs and attitudes are measured in terms of their appropriateness to the enterprise and not in terms of some external criterion" (cited in Kalocsai, p. 94).

On the other hand, the last excerpt opens up a paradoxical issue which emerged from the interviews, i.e. while in the context of their CoP the participants feel safe to be their own norm-providers, they express constant awareness of the existence of the external linguistic authoritites, as if there was an omnipresent native speaker in their minds. At some moments, it seemed that the students were thinking in a way which constantly considers the reaction of the NS authority to their performance. This can be spotted in Sarolta's remark considering the potential presence of a native speakers. Sometimes the students refer to the NS authority in an apologetic tone feeling sorry that they did not stand up to its ideal, at other times they are referring to it in a mocking way, as revealed by Fanni's comment on their way of using English:

Excerpt 41

How we call each other, my friends for example, always says "babes" ((giggles)) to each other and it's something I would never do but it's fun to do it in another language (..) @ use the language in a funny way @to do it in an English-speaking group (.) cause you know, like you would never do it normally, maybe because you know it from movies etc. from English TV or something (…) it's bit sarcastic, yeah we don't mean it in a way the word is used but yeah yeah its sarcastic. (Fanni, L1: German, interview, December 2017)

An important point is being explicated here: the students have created a new additional layer of humour stemming from their English non-nativeness. By acknowledging this role, they are adopting a distance from the native speaker cultural and communicative conventions, using them rather for their own ends, that is to make fun. In doing so, they are significantly stressing the "otherness" of their ELF group identity, which again implies that their use of English comes from a place of power and confidence. Overall, an interesting interplay of attitudes towards the NS authority can be observed in the students' accounts. We will look into this issue more closely in the next section.

In summary, the linguistic repertoire of the Prague group constituted almost exclusively of English as a lingua franca. However, it was characterized by a frequent – both spontaneous as well as routine-like – code-switching into other languages, which reveals that ELF has a multilingual nature, and thus confirms Kalocsai's claim (2013) that "English used as a lingua franca and other languages may co-exist side-by-side in one single community, while each language being treated as an amazing resource" (p. 136). However, in comparison with Gundermann's study (2014) of the EMI classroom community, where students also heavily relied on German as a lingua franca and Spanish, the Prague community employed multilingualism only to a limited extent (pp. 117-118).

Further, the students were adjusting English to their own local needs. The findings suggest that they used English in a creative way in order to create entertainment and develop both linguistic and through this, also social ties among each other which, as a result, helped them to establish the kind of group identity which was unique in comparison to the other Erasmus sub-groups in Prague and to which they felt belonging to. In the process of inventing their own forms and meanings, routines and jokes in English, the students were looking for the correctness criteria within their community of practice rather than outside it, even though a preoccupation with the native speaker point of view was also appearing in the comments. Overall, from the interviews and observations, it seems that the participants´ views on correctness in English are considerably context-sensitive, with their community being considered a safe space to abandon external norms which were inconvenient and put more situation-suitable ones in their place. This finding implies that an orientation towards the context-oriented approach in teaching and using English could be a useful idea.

4.2 Students' descriptions of their linguistic identities

In the second part of the results section, we will present the findings relating to students' linguistic identities, i.e. how the students perceived their English, and in effect, how they felt about themselves as a result of their linguistic performances. Similar to the previous section, the following opinions and perceptions are seen from an emic point of view. Various sub-themes will be discussed, such as the native speaker's linguistic authority, students' views on grammatical correctness, students' changing priorities in communication, gaining linguistic confidence within the Erasmus community as well as "the native speaker problem," which together will help to create a more coherent picture of the development of students' linguistic identities during the one semester of their Prague Erasmus experience. Furthermore, the current findings will be discussed in comparison with previous research and embedded into the wider body of ELF research, particularly on language attitudes and ELF speakers' identities.

4.2.1 Attitudes towards grammar and accent

"Would you like to speak like a native speaker?"

As all the students underwent a traditional English language education, the next point was to investigate whether their language attitudes showed some traces of the standard language ideology influence. It means that it was necessary to investigate to what extent native speakers of English represent the linguistic authority that the students wish to follow and, more importantly, how their response would be justified.

When asked whether they would like to speak like a native speaker, the students' standpoints were both diverse and ambivalent and could be divided into three groups accordingly. The first one responded to the question with enthusiasm, explaining that English sounds "beautiful and soft," the second group took a more practical stance, as they appeared to want to speak like a native speaker but the motivation was oriented towards improvement of their communicative skills, mostly to extending their vocabulary. The third group did not show any interest in getting closer to the NS ideal. The standpoint scale is captured in the students' responses below:

Excerpt 42

Yes, I would like to sound a bit better, it's definitely desirable for me (..) cause when I have my accent I feel like I am clinging to my Germanness. (Fanni, L1: German, interview, December 2017)

Excerpt 43

I really appreciate when somebody has really nice British accent (..) because it sounds really intelligent, elaborated, intellectual. ((Fanni, L1: German, interview, December 2017)

Fanni's comment is a good example of an attitude which might be formed on the basis of the typical SLI discourses, she is expressing her wish to improve the accent not only because it sounds better to her but also because she associated the native speaker accent with intelligence, thus ascribing to it some degree of superiority, not completely justifiable on the conscious level. At the same time, she subtly undermines the status of her L1 accent, i.e. her "germaneness," as she refers to it as to something undesirable.

Similar effort to get rid of the L1 accent as well as a general negative attitude towards foreign accents in English, emerges from William's response:

Excerpt 44

I try to speak as accentless as possible. There is a stereotypical Indian, French or Turkish accent (..) and I would like to avoid that and be on the same level with the native speaker. (William, L1: Turkish, interview, December 2017)

Excerpt 45

It's important to learn the correct way (…) I like to correct people. (William, L1: Turkish, interview, December 2017)

What is particularly interesting is that when he was asked whether he would like to speak like a native speaker, William responded negatively; however, later when he was asked the same in regard to the accent, he explicitly mentioned other accents are something he would like to avoid, implying a certain prejudice against the NNS Englishes. Despite his initial reaction, he pronounces a clear preference for the NS accents. Moreover, when asked about his concern with grammatical correctness, not only does he contradict himself saying that correct grammar is important but he also admits that he likes to correct other people when they do not follow the correct way of speaking. Despite his initial claim, he is clearly trying to keep up with the native speaker ideal.

These types of contradictory statements were revealed in a few cases even with other students and it seems that in the question of the desirable accent and grammar, students express ambivalent attitudes, or in Jenkin's (2007) terms, they are "linguistically schizophrenic." Another example of this phenomenon can be illustrated on the response of Szilárd:

Excerpt 46

I love accents because it tells a lot about the other person (.) especially where they come from almost immediately. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

On the one hand, he appreciates the accents of other people; in his own English, however, he seems to hold a slightly negative attitude towards his own Hungarian accent:

Excerpt 47

I am trying to not follow the typical Hungarian way of speaking because it's over pronouncing every syllable and letter very strongly. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

Excerpt 48

I don't know about my accent (.) how bad is it (..) what is it (.)whatever, I just want to use it in a way everyone can understand me and that is to be kind of neutral. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

Also, the fact that he describes his accent in term of how "bad it is" seems to reveal that he is aware that his accent is somehow deficient. After all, however, he explains he is aiming to speak in a neutral way rather than like a NS. That is to say, the criterion of communicative effectivity seems to win over the traditional correctness. The same practical motivation for aiming at the NS norms can be seen in Alex's comment:

Excerpt 49

Yes, just because I see it as useful and also I see it as useful in the future. I don't particularly mean the way of speaking (.) the accent but just mean vocabulary (.) and the way how comfortable I feel in speaking. (Rosario, L1: Dutch, interview, December 2017)

When asked whether he is concerned with using correct grammar within his community, Szilárd, moreover, explains that to use the correct way of pronunciation is a matter of politeness for him:

Excerpt 50

I care, I don't want to speak in a sloppy way. I want them to understand me (..) and I think it's a politeness towards them. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

In contrast, one student showed no preoccupation with the NS norms whatsoever and seemed to be searching for a linguistic authority elsewhere.

Excerpt 51

Now English is the world language and eh to speak English I think it's more code and not to be a native speaker. (Sarolta, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

Sarolta used the term "code" to differentiate her friends' ELF a few times during the interview. Whatever "code" precisely means in her terms, it communicated that she does not see ELF from the deficiency perspective as a hybrid language; she views it in positive terms, as a phenomenon naturally resulting the students' varying linguistic backgrounds, not measurable by the conventional standards.

The relevance of the NS authority turned out to be a context-sensitive issue, the students marking a clear boundary between the use of English in informal settings, particularly their community, and the university or formal environment. In the latter one, the preference for the NS forms is clear as illustrated through the following excerpts:

Excerpt 52

In academic writing or reading or something official, grammar is number one thing (...) and it's important. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

Excerpt 53

Acerina: Accent needs some self-confidence, I guess (..) I would sound very like German speaking English ((laughs)). I am confident with my English but not that much at the uni. (L1: German, interview, December 2017)

I: but with the Erasmus people it's okay?

Acerina: yes (.) but that's of course because and you also know nobody would start to laugh (..) it's incorrect so that makes it easier but the English maybe would just laugh at me (…) one time in the class, it was something not grammatically correct I realized

after and there was some giggling but I don't think they mean it, it must be pretty funny for them. (L1: German, interview, December 2017)

A similar finding was reported by Gundermann (2014), who found that "the acceptability of non-native English depends on the degree of formality of the interaction," meaning that while in peer interaction the non-standard features are highly acceptable in educational or professional setting it is preferable to adhere to the NS forms (p. 206).

Overall, while the students seem to recognize the role of English as an international language and feel competent to adjust it to their current needs, it must also be pointed out that certain prejudices, particularly concerning the accent are preserved, which precisely corresponds w findings of Matsuda's study (2003).

4.2.2 Students' changing perceptions of their English

The last comment from Acerina also introduces another significant theme which emerged from the interviews, namely the raising of the students' linguistic confidence during the time they spent engaging with their community. From the students' descriptions of the views of their English, in a few cases, they admitted feeling very insecure after their arrival; during their stay, however, they became increasingly more content and relaxed about the way they speak. The comments below demonstrate this transformation:

Excerpt 54

At the beginning I was so afraid if I say something wrong and what would happen if I cannot express my thoughts and sometimes I decided "okay not to tell anything this is the best decision" but now I don't have fear (..) so even if I'm sure I cannot find the really right words I don't care (.) cause I can describe it so I can (.) don't care if my English is not the highest level because it's not the point, the point is to communicate.

Sarolta: so now I am more brave

I: what happened?

Sarolta: I had some good experiences, I was afraid and after I did it.

I: other people helped you?

Sarolta: yes, maybe they didn't know they are helping me when I made my first friends here so when we met and we had some great discussing after I could feel the power, you know, so that I could speak in English (..) not only like to get an ID in the office, about real things. (L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

Sarolta explicates that the cause of the transformation was a by-product of her regular participation in the community of practice, where she learnt over time the ways to participate through ELF. Her focus in ELF shifted from correctness to communicative effectivity. Similarly, other accounts below reveal that the students rethought their communicative priorities in ELF, which resulted in greater ease, confidence, and eventually more successful communication.

As cited earlier, towards the end of the semester in Prague, Acerina felt confident about her English when surrounded by her community. However, her description of the initial feelings at the beginning of her stay reveals a lot of learning and realization preceded it:

Excerpt 55

It was very bad at the beginning (..) because I did not dare to say anything to anyone. When I realized the people don't understand what I am saying– and then I went slow and slower, more quiet– of course that's like the reflex. I think it was embarrassing for me when communication doesn't work for you (..) it's bit disturbing. (Acerina, L1: German, interview, December 2017)

Excerpt 56

When I started to recognize that they understand the way I speak, that is very relaxing. There is nothing more frustrating than when people don't understand you (..) then you start to be like oh sh (..) where did I go wrong? – Then I get calmer. (Acerina, L1: German, interview, December 2017)

Another participant, Ewa, mentions that she feels more confident about her English because she has learnt that she is able to help the others with English, which makes her feel better. However, she also pointed out that while she is content, some of her friends are insecure about their English and are constantly apologizing about their English. Similarly, Rosario stated fear that at the beginning he was afraid he "would stand out in a negative way due to his English level." Generally, it can be observed that prior to their full engagement with their community, students felt a lot of negative emotions as a result of their preoccupation with being able to speak English correctly or intelligibly. Even after, some of their discourses seem to suggest that they are still seeking validation of the native speakers on their linguistic performance in ELF. This point manifests itself in Rosario's comments:

Excerpt 57

Rosario: Sometimes it is more convenient not to be engaged to the talk with native speakers.

I: Is it hard to talk to native speakers?

Rosario: Right now, not really (..) in some cases, topics maybe yes (.) but especially if they acknowledge that you are not a native speaker so that you don't feel uncomfortable, then it's not a problem at all (.) because then I would eventually get there in how I would explain myself. (L1: Dutch, interview, December 2017)

It can be observed that the native speaker is ascribed the right to decide whether the NNs' English will be accepted or not, by which Rosario is making an "implicit bow to the NS authority" (Gundermann 2014, p. 187). In contrast, Szilárd held the opposite view, he revealed his belief that it is the native speaker who should adjust his way of speaking in communication with an English non-native interlocutor. The point is being borne out as he comments on the occurrence of communicative breakdowns:

Excerpt 58

Interestingly, these breakdowns only happened with m American girlfriend, not in my Erasmus community (..) and it was not because of my speaking actually ((laughs)) cause I could not understand her sometimes, but within this community not really. (Szilárd, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

This finding is in direct conflict with Gundermann (2014) who reported that "it is solely the non-native speakers' fault if they do not understand NS well" and that "it is the non-native speakers' duty to 'move forward' and adjust" (p. 187). Our study, in fact, identifies an instance of the "native speaker problem," i.e. in the ELF communicative contexts, such a situation occurs in which the native speaker is put into a disadvantaged position due to his linguistic competence since the NS English seems to be merely "a useful point of departure" in ELF (Smit, 2010, p. 58).

It is becoming obvious as Acerina describes that their English contains foreign expressions and direct translations from other languages, she mentions that "it can be crazy." When asked, however, whether it causes confusion, she replies:

Excerpt 59

"(…) no, for example, some sayings are the same in German but don't exist in English– poor English people didn't know what's going on. (Acerina, L1: German, interview, December 2017)

In a similar way, Sarolta implies exclusion of the NSs English due to a low level of intelligibility while recognizing the NNS English as a more acceptable option instead.

Excerpt 60

Actually (.) I don't know cause British English for me to understand it's impossible for sure. I tried but I cannot– and actually I have another flatmate now– American and it's better, I understand something but it's like pfff (..) and actually my teachers here (..) their English is the best for me because it's close to but it's still I can understand. (Sarolta, L1: Hungarian, interview, January 2018)

While Kalocsai (2013) also revealed the native speaker's intelligibility can prevent them from full participation in the Erasmus student's CoP, Gundermann's participants (2014), in contrast, link the NS accent with the "superior comprehensibility" (p. 187). However, she critically assumes "that perceived ease of comprehension is not related to a speaker's actual linguistic performance, but represents just a surface expression of the underlying attitude that NS are linguistic authorities and as a consequence their English is perceived as easier to understand" (ibid.). Taking into consideration the findings of this and Kalocsai's study, her assumption seems to be plausible.

4.2.3 Non-native English: deterioration discourse

The last point of analysis is going to add to the ambivalence; revealed through students' views on the discussed topics. Despite of the general increase of the students' confidence in English as a result of their ability to successfully communicate, some students' discourses picture their English as deteriorating, as illustrated in the comments below:

Excerpt 60

I don't expect to improve my English– my English is getting worse with these people (..) it's deteriorating. I need to get better not worse. (Ewa, L1: Bulgarian, interview, December 2017)

Excerpt 61

I think it's funny because when we come back everyone will have worse English. (Acerina, L1: German, interview, December 2017)

Gundermann (2014) also found this kind of paradox, terming it "contamination of English" and reporting extreme discourses, such as that non-standard features "pollute"

or “infect” English (p. 152). She links it with a SLI influence due to which students’ attitudes are split and the ELF features, while effective in practice, are perceived as being of an inferior nature. An important point to be mentioned, however, is that her students were EMI students and the lecturers were linguistically biased. Although Gundermann’s interpretation is certainly not fully justifiable, it can be a possible explanation which can be extended to help explain the findings of this study.

5 Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the study by linking them to the research questions. As the findings were not uniform, they rather represent general tendencies which emerged out of the data analysis. The ultimate goal was to examine the interplay between the participation in the Erasmus community of practice and the perceptions on English non-nativeness from an emic point of view, in order to subsequently build a coherent picture of NNS students' linguistic identities in the context of student mobility. The findings will be considered in the context of the wider implications which they present for ELF research. The chapter closes with an evaluation of this study's limitations and proposes some suggestions for further research.

The examination of the Prague Erasmus group through the community of practice framework revealed that the students shared the goal to build a circle of international friends with whom they could have fun, who would help them broaden their cultural horizons and with whom they could share the same experience, including struggles, of both linguistic and non-linguistic nature. In ELF contexts, this sharing of similar situation has been also labelled as "shared non-nativeness" and it refers to the negotiation of mutual understanding despite language and culture-based differences (Hülmbauer, 2009, p. 328). As a result of the negotiation efforts, which took the form of mutual engagement in social gatherings, partying, cooking and trip-making, the students co-created their salient linguistic repertoire. It consisted of "incorrect," non-standard forms as well as of ritualized code-switched elements. These deviations, or what could also be called, specific features, have thus gained social meaning as their use helped the students develop social ties, and thus establish them as a group. Becoming aware of this effect of employing their own forms gave the students the feeling of being legitimate to appropriate English to their own ends. As a consequence, the importance of adhering to the NS norms becomes relative within the informal environment of the student community. A diminishing importance of any kind of external authorities is a typical by-product of a participation in a community of practice, However, in relation to CoPs where English is used, it has major relevance for the course of development of English as a lingua franca. Cogo (2010), observing how "multilingual Europeans are appropriating English and how language contact among them is leading to language change" as well as how attitudes towards ELF are improving, pointed out that seeing the

benefits of English in this role "makes it a strong case for an acknowledgement of ELF in European language policy" (p. 310).

The findings have at least two more wider implications. Firstly, they add up to the studies which refute the assumption that ELF serves "very practical purposes of information transfer rather than featuring strongly in identity construction" (Virkkula & Nikula, 2010, p. 5). Secondly, the fact, that English was chosen as a primary source of communication within the CoP poses a threat to linguistic diversity in Europe, against which Phillipson (1992) is warning against. On the other hand, the kind of ELF negotiated by the Prague group relied largely on students' multilingual resources and code-switching was a significant element in constituting its distinctiveness. Considering the prominence given to the switching into local Czech, the study reports "the type of local accommodation" called "habitat factor" (Kalocsai, 2013, p. 137). ELF, therefore, does not have to stand for English only, it can also be of a multilingual nature, which Phillipson perhaps did not take into consideration, however, it partly undermines the point of his claim.

Concerning the students' communicative priorities, primacy was assigned to effectivity, which means both creating humour in the process of inventing new forms as well as the product, i.e. mutual intelligibility. As Borghetti and Beavan (2017) explain, "a lingua franca is a lingua when used and shaped in context by non-native interlocutors, whatever language variety they use in that moment" (p. 223). Therefore, gaining a certain level of autonomy is not unique to ELF, rather this finding "could be extended to lingua francas in general" (ibid).

The students' perceptions of their own English as well as their discourses on NNS English in general, are marked by significant variety and ambivalence. It should be stressed that to identify direct causal links is far from feasible. However, for the sake of providing an interpretation of the results, and following an example of similar studies, there seems to be a persisting influence of the English NS ideology on students' attitudes. It manifests itself in students' inconsistency regarding their descriptions of correctness; a few participants ascribed stigma to the NNS accents whereas others appreciated their diversity. In terms of grammar, some students expressed a preoccupation with NS English correctness without real justification, despite their

appreciation of the non-standard features in their shared repertoire. For someone the grammar is a matter of politeness towards their communicative partner whereas others assign it only little importance, when at the same time, paradoxically, they are complaining that their English is deteriorating due to the use of non-standard features.

Although exceptions were found in each case, generally, the students linguistic identities seem to be slightly "schizophrenic" (Jenkins, 2007). Let us use Gundermann's distinctional terms (2014), behavioural and attitudinal level, for the demonstration of this mismatch (p. 206). On the behavioural level, the students understand the creation of "their own forms" as an identity establishing process, and thus are seeing non-nativeness in a positive light. Nevertheless, on the attitudinal level, they seem to assign unjustified superiority to the NS English and some of them even seek validation of NSs in order to feel certain about their performance in English. The deficiency perspective discourses on NNS English emerge when students describe the use of ELF in formal settings.

Common ground could be found in the general increase in students' linguistic self-confidence and the emergence of a more positive linguistic self-image as a result of their engagement within the community. Despite of their initial fears of using English incorrectly or lacking language skills, they reported unanimously that over time and due to the safe and encouraging environment around them, they learnt to have more trust in their communicative ability in English.

As Borghetti and Beavan (2017) observe, the relaxing feeling students experience within their CoP can be "consequently encouraging language practice to a greater extent" which has implications for foreign language teaching, "in terms of the need to raise students' awareness of the potentially beneficial effects of interactions with NNSs on their learning" (p. 236). In other words, a suggestion emerges that "mobile students should not "underestimate the importance of their social contacts with non-native speakers while abroad" (ibid., p. 238).

In summary, the central question of this research, i.e. whether students' perceptions of their non-nativeness have changed as a result of their stay, can be answered rather positively, and thereby confirm Kalocsai's (2013) claim that attitudes towards ELF might be slowly changing among the young generation of ELF speakers, resulting in more favourable self-perceptions than reported in other studies (see section on the SLI influence). On the other hand, there are also some contradictory findings revealing that

some of the negative views on non-native English are still persistent, which only points to the complexity of the entire topic.

The community of practice model proved a fruitful tool in uncovering the interplay between the social and the linguistic in ELF and how they crucially shape one another. It can, therefore, be recommended for further employment in ELF research. The major limitation of this study is the subjectivity of interpretation. It is a usual problem of any attitudinal type of study, as the findings represent at least one level of subjective interpretation; the participant's, the researcher's, or both. Another limitation is the relatively small number of participants as well as the limited type of data sources, considering the ethnographic nature of the study. Further research could, therefore, focus on a more extended sample of participants and introduce a greater variety in terms of data collection method. In terms of other suggestions for research, it could be useful to take into consideration the geographical setting of this study. Revealing findings could be gained by drawing a comparison with the situation of Erasmus communities dwelling in different countries, particularly, in Western European countries where the use of ELF has stronger roots.

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Appendix 1: Guiding questions for interview with students

Introduction
Can you tell be bit about yourself?
Tell me about your foreign language learning experience both inside and outside of school.
P**ersonal goals of the Erasmus stay- major goals**
How it feels to be an Erasmus student?
What is the goal of your stay?
What do you expect to gain from this experience?
Erasmus experience and social practices
Is there something like an Erasmus community?
How would you define or describe it?
Do you spend time in the Erasmus community do you want to be a part of it?
What are the activities associated with it?
How would you describe Erasmus life-style?
What makes the community stick together?
ELF linguistic practices
How do you feel about the languages being used here?
What are your goals in linguistic practices on the group level? How would you describe your using English with the other Erasmus students?
Do you mind your English when speaking to other Erasmus students?
What are the things you pay attention to?
What are the things you neglect?
Do you experience difficulties in elf communication?
What makes your communication successful?
What are the things you avoid in English?
Views of correctness
What are your attitudes towards grammar/ accent in the group?
What are your views of correctness in English?
Do you wish to speak English like a native speaker?

Do you have the practice of correcting each other?
Linguistic repertoire
Do you sometimes switch to another language while using English?
When does it happen?
Do you use the local language? When, why?
Do you use your or others L1? when? Why?
How do you perceive your own languages?
Tell me about your own L1 culture?
Do communication breakdowns happen?
If yes, when do they happen, and how do you solve them?
Do you sometimes talk about language in the group?
If so, what are the things that you discuss?
What are typical Erasmus subjects?
Do word-search moments occur? How do you solve them?
Are there expressions or structures which have become part of your routine here?
Do you have something like routine-like utterances, including questions, songs, recurring subjects of talk?
Do you think that ELF speakers here share some common qualities?

Appendix 2: Transcription conventions for interview data

Uh, eh, ehm	sounds of hesitation and response
P	participant
I	interviewer
(.)	short pause
(..)	longer pause
(...)	long pause
(( ))	comments on quality of speech
< >	indicates the language of the code-switched element, e.g., Cz (Czech), Hu (Hngarian)
.	sentence final falling intonation
,	phrase final continuing intonation followed by a short pause
?	yes/no question rising intonation
@word@	marks the beginning and the end of the utterance to which the comment applies
–	abrupt cutoff
(exp.)	explicates what the comment applies to

Adapted from: http://ujc.dialogy.cz/?q=en/node/84 and Kalocsai, 2013, (p. 238).