Bill Batziakas

Making Specific Meaning Through Flexible Language Use in ELF Conversations

Abstract:

This paper looks at the naturally occurring discourse of the meetings of an international student society at the University of London, with the aim to discuss instances of flexible language use and their pragmatic significance while they were using English as a common language. In particular, it looks at how the students were using language flexibly, that is, how they were making use of the entire gamut of their available linguistic resources by drawing extensively from them, and how they were thus achieving various communicative objectives. Speakers' flexible language use whereby they draw linguistic elements from various linguistic resources which they have available has come to be known under various terms, such as 'code-switching', 'code-mixing', and so on, and this chapter starts with a discussion of the most widely used of them. It also explains why the term 'flexible language use' was used instead of another one. Then, it moves on to the flexible language use of the students in the investigated meetings. In doing so, what is yielded is that the students were thus achieving the pragmatic function 'making specific meaning', which appears in the title of this paper, and which is broken down into the sub-functions 'filling in a lexical gap' and 'using a more precise word'.

Introduction

Previous research (e.g. Gumperz, 1982; Baynham, 1993; Li and Zhu, 2010) has shown that speakers may make use of a wide range of linguistic elements which they draw from their available languages or language varieties or dialects. One of the first terms which was used to describe this phenomenon is *code-switching*. *Code-switching* occurs in a conversation which primarily takes place in a single one language or language variety or dialect, but at times speakers depart from these and use other ones (e.g. Auer, 1995, 2002). For example, in a conversation taking place in English, speakers may depart from English, draw some words or phrases

or expressions from their mother tongues, and then use them back in the conversation which they were holding in English. While the term *code-switching* refers to speakers' sparse shift from one 'dominant' linguistic code to another one, and then again back to the 'dominant' one, as it was mentioned above, there are various interrelated terms. For example, the term *code-mixing* suggests speakers' drawing from their linguistic resources in such an extensive way that a new hybrid linguistic code is brought about. In other words, code-mixing is similar to the creation of pidgins, with the difference that pidgins are created by speakers who do not share a common language, whereas code-mixing may occur in settings where speakers may share one or more languages (*ibid.*). In a similar vein, the term *code-fusion* has to do with such a systematic and extensive mixture of two or more linguistic codes in the course of a single conversation that the fused lect which is formed is almost fully grammaticalised (*ibid.*).

The above terms are mainly used to show alterations between linguistic items at the lexical level and usually only in oral interactions. On the contrary, Canagarajah (2011), focusing on English, uses the term *code meshing* to refer to the practice of combining local, colloquial, vernacular, and international varieties of English, in everyday conversations and even in formal assignments of students, as through this practice some kind of linguistic resistance against the spread of English can be signalled, as he argues. In addition, the term *crossing* is used to describe speakers' use of linguistic items which are used by other group of speakers in order to signal some kind of affiliation with this other group of speakers (Rampton, 1995). For example, white teenagers in urban settings may use African-American English speech markers in order to show some kind of affiliation with the hip-hop culture which is associated with African-American groups. Another related term, which mainly focuses on school settings, is *translanguaging* (e.g. Creese and Blackledge, 2010; Lin, 2006). Looking at countries with significant amounts of bilingual populations and considering the rising number of bilingual school students, *translanguaging* has been put forward to describe these bilingual pupils' practice of using different linguistic features from their known languages in order to maximise their communicative potential. Proponents of *translanguaging* lament language education which aims at the development of languages as compartmentalised linguistic systems, and argue for the legitimisation of pupils' practice to access different linguistic features from their available repertoires.

Similarly, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (*CEFR*) argues in favour of the term *plurilingualism* (e.g. Council of Europe, 2000). *Plurilingualism* aims at moving beyond multilingualism

as the presence of many languages in a society, as in the case of French, Dutch and German in Belgium, and it emphasises the fact that people develop knowledge and skills in more than one language at the same time. For example, their linguistic repertoire may expand from the language or languages of their home to the languages of their school or social environment, and then to the languages of other people with whom they communicate. In doing so, speakers cannot keep languages in separate mental compartments. Instead, they build up a communicative competence in which all language knowledge and experience interrelate, interact, and contribute (*ibid.*). For example, speakers may alter from one language or language variety or dialect to another and draw lexis and other elements in order to communicate effectively with their interlocutors. In turn, their interlocutors may recognise these 'foreign' lexis and elements thanks to the word roots which are common with the languages that they know.

In the linguistic practices which the above terms refer to, there is a common denominator. All of them show that, when speakers from different linguacultural backgrounds interact, they may depart from English and they may draw linguistic items from their mother tongues or from the other languages or language varieties or dialects which they have learned later in their lives or which they know that they are used by their interlocutors. This takes place even if they have limited knowledge and experience of them. Subsequently, they may use these items in their English conversations. In other words, the terms above refer to practices which show that linguistic codes are not decompartmentalised from one another, but instead language users can make use of more than one of them in the course of a single interaction. What this means is that language use is quintessentially flexible in nature. It is for these reasons that, for the purposes of a term to be used in the rest of this chapter, *flexible language use* will be adopted here. It should also be noted that *flexible language use* does not have to do with school settings only, and in that sense it is not the same as *translanguaging*, although they share a lot in common, as shown above.

As outlined above, *flexible language use* and the way it sees the speakers' practice of drawing linguistic elements from all their linguistic repertoires differs fundamentally from the way which many EFL researchers see the same practice. In EFL research, this is lamented as evidence of speakers' gaps of linguistic knowledge, because of which they have to resort to another linguistic code, most commonly their mother tongue, in order to make up for their linguistic 'deficiency' (see e.g. MacSwan, 1999). Instead, the perspective on *flexible language use* taken here is more in line with ELF

research. For example, as Jenkins (2011) explains, speakers of English who switch between the languages that they know are not failed native English speakers and they do not do have any linguistic 'deficiency' for which they have to compensate. Instead, they are skilled communicators who make full use of all their available linguistic resources in order to enhance their communicative potential and to achieve their communicative objectives. In doing so, their *flexible language use* and therein the strategic use of all their linguistic resources is a manifestation of their communicative competence.

Thus understood, *flexible language use* in interactions between speakers from different linguacultural backgrounds has been found to contribute to a variety of pragmatic functions which speakers set out to fulfil in their communicative encounters. For example, it has been found to help speakers address particular interlocutors. This was noted when interlocutors were departing from the language which was being used until a particular point, and they used the language of the particular interlocutor whom they wanted to address (Klimpfinger, 2007). Also, through lexis drawn from their mother tongues, speakers have found to project their linguacultural identities, for example, by using this lexis to highlight their association with a particular mother tongue and thus with a particular ethnic group too (Pölzl, 2003). In addition, this innovative use of language have included speakers' strategic moves to exploit redundancy and to enhance prominence in their utterances (Cogo, 2007, 2012; Cogo and Dewey, 2006, 2012; Dewey, 2007, 2011), to increase clarity (e.g. Pitzl *et al.*, 2008; Ranta, 2006), or to increase the semantic transparency of their arguments (Seidlhofer, 2009). On the interpersonal level of interactions, through flexible language use, speakers have been found to establish rapport with their interlocutors too (Kordon, 2006), or express solidarity with them especially in cases when they use a lexical item which they draw from their interlocutors' languages (Cogo, 2007). Likewise, this way, speakers have created a feeling of shared satisfaction with their interlocutors (Hülmbauer, 2007, 2009), or just added humour to their conversations (Pitzl, 2009).

This paper aims at building on the research of *flexible language use*, as this was outlined and discussed above, and in particular on the pragmatic functions which have been found to be achieved in ELF-mediated interactions, which were also discussed above. Thus, what follows is some brief clarifications about the data examples of this chapter. These are followed by the data analysis from the meetings of the international students. As it is shown, the students' *flexible language use* was found to contribute to the achievement of the pragmatic functions 'filling in a lexical gap' and

'using a more precise word'. To further support my arguments in this data analysis, I also report some comments which the students made during our post-event discussions which we did and during which they looked at their own interactions.

The instances of flexible language use which are looked at here include alterations between the linguistic resources which the students had available, such as Standard English, other English varieties and dialects, their mother tongues, other languages which they knew well, or even elements from the languages of their interlocutors. Also, these examples are not grouped according to the grammatical category to which the drawn word or phrase or expression belong, for example, according to whether these are nouns or verbs. Instead, as the aim is to discern the pragmatic functions which are achieved each time through students' flexible language use, these discerned pragmatic functions are first named and then illustrated through the extracts which are analysed. It should be also noted that the meaning of the words and phrases or expressions below and also the additional information about them were provided to me by the students themselves in our post-event discussions, or by other friends or colleagues of mine who were speakers of these languages. Or sometimes I myself was finding out more about them searching online. In each case, I specify the source of my information. This layout will be followed in the subsequent analytical chapters as well.

1. Filling in a lexical gap

As it was mentioned above, the overarching pragmatic function which was achieved through students' *flexible language use* was 'making specific meaning'. In particular, this pragmatic function was found to be further broken down into two sub-functions, 'filling in a lexical gap' and 'using a more precise word'. Both of them are illustrated below through the analysis of one extract each.

1.1 Diaosi

(Mandarin Chinese hanzi: '吊丝'; English approximate translation: 'average person', 'commoner' / Participants: Arvin[1] - L1 Mauritian Creole, Breno - L1 Portuguese, Eshal - L1 Urdu, Jose - L1 Spanish, Linlin - L1 Mandarin Chinese.)

The following interaction of the students took place in the second meeting of their society, during a discussion about who would represent their society to each college. Linlin, sharing her opinion about the characteristics of the ideal officer for her college, draws from her mother tongue, Mandarin Chinese, and she emphasises the fact that that she would not like her college's officer to be a *diaosi*. As she explained in our post-event discussion, and as I also confirmed with the help of other speakers of Mandarin Chinese, *diaosi* is a person who is average in social skills and who cannot be expected to do anything worthwhile in his life. It is nowadays also used extensively on online forums and social media among youngsters in Mainland China.

1	Linlin	and you know why? (.)
2		because sometimes in all these induction days and freshers fayres
3		i see people who approach you and talk to you
4		and they're they're bad with what they're doing=
5	Eshal	=yeah you're right=
6	Linlin	=so i wouldn't like someone who can't
7		you know
8		who can't do this or do that
9		(1.2)
10	Arvin	[yeah]
11	Marat	[true]=
12	Linlin	=so I wouldn't like someone who is who is (.)
13		ah in china we say ah @@ **diaosi**
14		(.)
15	Breno	hm?
16	Jose	what?
17	Linlin	oh i mean you know **diaosi** (1.4)
18		ah ah in english i think perhaps
19		if there is this word=
20	Arvin	=so what's this word? what do you mean?
21	Linlin	**diaosi** (.) someone who is average and normal (1.3)

22		who can't do anything can't manage anything (.)
23		like good for nothing (.)
24	Arvin	is he someone loser then?=
25	Linlin	=a loser? **diaosi** is not a loser it's not a loser definitely not
26	Jose	is he in spanish we say @@ perdedor?
27		like someone who can't manage things and people
28		(.)
29	Linlin	i don't know this word this language i mean
30		but nuh it's not what you said (0.2)
31		you know it's just diaosi
32		**<u>diaosi</u>** and nothing else
33		(0.3)
34	Arvin	ok↑ i get you↑
35		no **diaosi** will be selected
36		and do we all agree no **diaosi** will ever represent the society?=
37	Breno	=[ok]
38	Jose	[yes]=
39	Linlin	=thanks↑
40		yeah it's better this way no=
41	Arvin	=no diaoshi
42	Linlin	thanks↑

After the exchange of some general thoughts on student societies in general, Linlin (line 13) begins her turn with the interjection «ah», the adverbial «in china», the verb phrase «we say», followed by «ah» again, and a double laughter, which may suggest that what she is about to say is probably not going to be immediately understood by her interlocutors, and therefore they should pay more attention to it. She then uses *diaosi*, and an a-priori clarification of its meaning begins. It is important to note here that, when Breno (line 15) and Jose (line 16) ask Linlin to explain *diaosi*, Linlin's reply (line 17) starts with the interjection «oh», which is followed by the discourse markers «I mean» and «you know, which in turn are followed by a pause of 1.4 seconds, the longest one in this extract». In addition, Linlin (line

18) continues with the filler «ah» uttered twice, followed by the hedges «i think» and «perhaps», which could also be argued to suggest some uncertainty. However, it seems that Linlin does not use *diaosi* because she does not know or she cannot recall the equivalent Standard English term. That is why she wonders «if there is this word [in Standard English]» (line 19). In that sense, it can be argued that she does not exhibit any kind of linguistic deficiency. In the same vein, she rejects Arvin's attempt to translate *diaosi* as «loser» in English (line 24), and likewise she does not seem satisfied with Jose's attempt to translate *dioasi* in his mother tongue Spanish as «perdedor» (lines 26-27), which also means «loser». For Linlin, these seem to be enough to make her discontinue her attempts to try to translate *diaosi* any further, and to conclude by emphasising that all that she wanted to say is *just «diaosi»* (line 31) and «*diaosi* and nothing else» (line 32). This provides further support to the argument above that Linlin's reason of drawing *diaosi* from her mother tongue was not any lack of knowledge in English.

After Linlin's last pause of 0.3 seconds (line 33), Arvin takes the floor to speak for the first time in this extract. His views hold special weight, not only because he has not spoken until this moment, but also because he is the president of the society. The fact that he chooses to engage with *diaosi* is in itself important, in as far as it shows the important which he places on this word that he has not heard before. Despite this new experience, his «ok» and «i get you» both in an enthusiastic rising tone (line 34) indicate that he is satisfied with the meaning of *diaosi*, as it has been discussed by Linlin and the rest of the students so far, and that he does not need any other explanation or clarification. He even accommodates to Linlin and uses *diaosi* twice himself too, when he ends the conversation by promising that «no *diaosi* will be selected» (line 35), and when with his rhetorical question he invites everyone to agree that «no *diaosi* will ever represent the society» (line 36). Likewise, Breno with his «ok» (line 37) and Jose with his «yes» (line 38) also indicate their agreement with Arvin and by extension with the meaning and use of *diaosi* in their conversation. Breno and Jose's «ok» and «yes» do not only show their agreement with Arvin's point, but their acceptance of her *diaosi* too, as it was mentioned above, and this is something which Linlin seems to realise. Thus, her thanks in a rising terminal intonation (line 39 and 42) could be interpreted as a signal of her need to thank them as well. As the analysis of this extract shows, Linlin drew *diaosi* from her mother tongue and used it in her English conversation with her interlocutors, not motivated by any linguistic deficiency but because this is the very word which she believed that would be able to express what she wanted to say. In this way, she managed to express her

thought the way that she wanted, which she could not have done using Standard English only. That is why it is argued here that, in so doing, she achieved to fulfil the pragmatic function 'making specific meaning' and the sub-function 'filling in a lexical gap'.

Further to my arguments regarding the pragmatic significance of the students' *flexible language* use in this extract, as achieving their communicative needs by means of 'making specific meaning' and in particular in 'filling in a lexical gap', it is interesting to see what Linlin had to say for that matter. The extract below is taken from the follow-up discussion which I had with her and in which she saw the transcriptions of the respective linguistic interactions and she also heard the audio-files, and she provided her comments.

> «Sometimes in English you just know a word or an expression and you say it. But sometimes you don't know or you don't remember. And then what do you do? I mean you can do a lot of things, explain it with other words, find something similar and many more […]. But sometimes I have a thought in my mind and I have a word for this thought from my mother language. And I want to express this and only this thought, but in English there is not any word for this thought […]. If I say another word, ok, fine, but then I don't express my thought […]. So, yeah, *diaosi*, because it was just this and nothing else, and even the closest English words were very different from what I wanted to say […]. I didn't expect that the other person knew Chinese, but I was sure that we could communicate, he would ask me and I would tell him. This is better than not expressing exactly your thought or not speaking at all.»

In her comments, Linlin seems to be very conscious of her linguistic choices and what she achieved through them. In particular, with her comments about *diaosi* such as «because it was just this and nothing else, and even the closest English words were very different from what I wanted to say», it could be said that she seems to corroborate my analysis of this instance of *flexible language use* of hers as achieving the pragmatic function of 'making specific meaning' through 'filling in a lexical gap'.

2. Using a more precise word

As discussed above, the overarching pragmatic function 'making specific meaning' was found to be further broken down to two sub-functions, 'filling in a lexical gap' and 'using a more precise word'. The former was

illustrated in the previous section, and an example for that matter were provided. This section is about the latter one. Their difference is slight but an important one. In the case of 'filling in a lexical gap', the students were found to draw lexis whose meaning could not be made at all using lexis only from Standard English. On the other hand, 'using a more accurate word' suggests that the meaning which was made could have been made or at least could have been almost made using lexis from Standard English too. However, drawing lexis from their available linguistic repertoires, the meaning which was made was more accurate and exact.

2.1 Kefi[2]

(Greek: 'Κέφι'; English approximate meaning: 'high spirits', 'good mood', 'joy' / Participants: Arvin - L1 Mauritian Creole, Jose - L1 Spanish, Leonidas - L1 Greek, Sener - L1 Turkish.)

The extract below is taken from the third meeting of the society. The students just acknowledged the difficulty of organising events which will be so attractive that their members will be willing not only to attend them but also to pay for them. Leonidas, then, shares his view that in order for this to happen the members of their society should know that in these events they will have an exceptionally good time. To describe exactly what he means, he uses *kefi*, drawn for his Greek mother tongue.

1	Leonidas	i mean, we can persuade them to pay in our events (.)
2		you know, everyone should be entertained and enjoyed, right?=
3	Sener	=[right]
4	Arvin	[yes]
5	Leonidas	and not only everyone else
6		but even ourselves should be ok too, obviously=
7	Jose	=obviously, yeah
8	Leonidas	and in my mind the only way to achieve this
9		is when whatever we say or do or organise
10		is done in a way that can make everyone have (2.6)
11		eeer (2.4)

12		i'll tell which word we have in greece used exactly for this case (3.8)
13		which could be a key-word for everyone in our events (3.4)
14		**kefi** is the word (.)
15		in english it is eeer (2.2)
16		[takes out his smartphone and tries to look that word up*]
17	Arvin	ok↑ (.)
18		but seriously it's fine you don't have to do that=
19	Leonidas	=eeeh give me one second please because
20		because this greek word in english (.) it means (1.6)
21		found it (.)
22		it says it's like high spirits or good mood or joy in english [*](1.3)
23		yeah these english words aren't bad to describe the events
24		but they they go round and round in what is needed here
25		but seriously man
26		that greek word is exactly what is needed in these events
27		not round and round but accurate and exact=
28	Jose	=[@@@]
29	Sener	[@@@]@
30	Arvin	[i see→] (2.0)
31		and is **kefi** a noun or a verb or something else
32		like you're saying i'm **kef**ying (.) or i'm **kefi**ful (.) or i **kefi** something?
33		like I'm having a good time (.) or i'm delightful (.) or i like something?
34	Leonidas	@@@@@ no no no my fault i didn't explain everything (.)
35		it's like i do something with **kefi** (.) or i have **kefi** (.) or i am in **kefi**
36	Jose	like i'm in love perhaps?
37	Leonidas	@@@ yeah @@ well
38		**kefi** (.) the most appropriate for our events
39	Sener	it sounds good to me, i mean=
40	Jose	=you mean it sounds good the word or the idea?
41	Sener	both, i mean

42		this is exactly what we need for the events
43		and the word is (.) specific and definite=
44	Jose	=and i can say **kefi** with **kefi** (.)
45		and also i want our society to organise events with **kefi** too=
46	Leonidas	=@@@ thank you really very much, guys

Leonidas' tag tail question whether in these events «everyone should be entertained and enjoyed, right?» (line 2) is latched by Sener's «right» (line 3) and Arvin's overlapping «yes» (line 4), who thus show their agreement and their overall interest in the conversation. Likewise, Leonidas' sentence-final evidential «obviously» regarding his opinion that they should also enjoy these events themselves (line 6) is also latched by Jose's agreeing «obviously» and «yeah» (line 7). Leonidas then starts discussing what he believes their society members need in order to pay for their events. However, he seems quite unsure about how to best verbalise his thought. Thus, he pauses for 2.6 seconds (line 10), he utters «eeer» which also shows some hesitation, he pauses again for 2.4 seconds (line 11), he explains to everyone that he will let them know about a word which is «used exactly for this case» in Greece, as if he wants to gain some more time, and then there is one more pause of 3.8 seconds (line 12). After that, he highlights the importance of this up-coming word by characterising it a «key-word for everyone in these events in greece» (line 13), and finally he lets them know that this word is «*kefi*» (line 14).

Knowing that *kefi* is a word unknown to his interlocutors, Leonidas continues with trying to explain its meaning. But his hesitation seems to continue here too while he tries to render it in English, hence his hesitative «eeer» and his pause of 2.2 seconds (line 15), and likewise his need to take out his smartphone to look that word up (line 16), something which I had noted down immediately in my notes while I was attending this meeting. Arvin's subsequent «ok» could be taken as some kind of welcoming of Leonidas' decision to use his smartphone in order to be more precise (line 17), but immediately afterwards he seems to change his mind as signalled from the continuation of his sentence with his «but seriously it's fine you don't have to do that» (line 18). Still, Leonidas asks Arvin's permission to give him some more time to complete his search (lines 19-21), and finally he informs everyone that his dictionary renders *kefi* in English as «high spirits or good mood or joy» (line 22). However, he explains that, although «these English words aren't bad to describe the events» (line 23),

«they go round and round in what is needed here» (line 24), «whereas that greek word is exactly what is needed in these events» (line 26), in so far as it is «not round and round but accurate and exact» (line 27).

Kefi also seems to be welcomed in the conversation by the other interlocutors. First, Arvin seems to be interested in knowing more about it, in addition to the fact that Leonidas so far has provided its meaning and highlighted or at least tried to highlight its importance for their events. So, Arvin enquires the grammatical category of *kefi*, and in particular he asks whether it is a *noun* or a *verb* (line 31), and then he accommodates to it and uses it himself very creatively asking whether one can say «i'm *kefyi*ng or i'm *kefi*ful or i *kefi* something» (line 32), in the same way that one says «i'm having a good time or i'm delightful or i like something» (line 33). Leonidas laughs for a while in the beginning at hearing these usages of *kefi*, but acknowledges that this was due to the fact that he did not explain it adequately (line 34). Thus, as he now explains, its actual use is in sentences such as «i do something with *kefi* or i have *kefi* or i am in *kefi*» (line 35). Later on, *kefi* seems to be endorsed even more explicitly by the rest of the interlocutors too. Sener mentions that «it sounds good» to him (line 39), he continues with saying that «this is exactly what we need for the events» (line 42), and after him Jose also latches to add that he «can say *kefi* with *kefi*» (line 44), as well as that he wants their society «to organise events with *kefi*» (line 45). Leonidas seems happy with the positive reception of the word which he drew from the mother tongue and he used in this conversation in English, and thanks his interlocutors profoundly with his «thank you really very much» (line 46).

The above analysis revealed one more example of how specific meaning was made thought drawing lexis from one's linguistic resources, in this case, Leonidas' *kefi* from his mother tongue Greek. However, this was not a case of 'filling in a lexical gap' but of 'using a more precise word'. As it was explained in the beginning of this section, in the case of 'filling in a lexical gap', the meaning made could not have been made at all using lexis only from Standard English. On the other hand, 'using a more accurate word' suggests that the meaning made could have been made up to a point using lexis from Standard English too, but this way the meaning made was much more precise. I would argue here that the Standard English lexis 'high spirits', 'good mood' and 'joy' would be sufficient for Leonidas to express what he wanted, but by drawing *kefi* from his mother tongue he managed to express his thought much more precisely.

3. Discussion

As it was shown, students were drawing lexical items from their mother tongues. Drawing linguistic elements from all the available linguacultural backgrounds is not part of all the terms which were discussed in the introductory section of this chapter. Most notably, code-switching traditionally accounted only for alteration of linguistic material between one's mother tongue and the language in which the conversation was taking place before. In a similar vein, traditionally, this alteration would be seen as motivated by some kind of linguistic deficiency, whereby the speakers had to resort to their mother tongues in order to compensate for this lack of knowledge. However, this was not found to be the case in the analysis of the extracts in this chapter. The cases here suggested that the students were not motivated by any sort of linguistic deficiency, since every time it was found out that they knew the equivalent lexis from Standard English. Instead, as it was argued here, they were strategically opting for these linguistic choices, and they were thus expanding the scope of their communicative competence (see e.g. Leung, 2005, 2014). In particular, in doing so, they were achieving the overall pragmatic function of 'making specific meaning through flexible language use in ELF conversations', and the sub-functions 'filling in a lexical gap' and 'using a more precise word'. This expands our understanding of the pragmatic significance of flexible language use in ELF-mediated conversations, as well as it expands the list of the meaning-making pragmatic functions which have been discerned so far in ELF interactions, as it was discussed in the introductory part of this chapter.

4. Conclusion

This paper set out to look at the natural occurring discourse of the meetings of the international students with the aim to shed some light at their *flexible language use*. In particular, it aimed at discerning the pragmatic functions achieved when students' used language flexibly, that is, when they were using linguistic items drawn from all the linguistic resources which they had available. As it was discussed, in doing so, the students were not motivated by any linguistic 'deficiency', but instead they were found to be achieving the pragmatic function 'making specific meaning', which in turn was divided into two sub-functions, 'filling in a lexical gap' and 'using a more precise word'. 'Filling in a lexical gap' was found

to be represented by Linlin's *diaosi*, and on the other hand Leonidas' *kefi* was found to be a case of 'using a more precise word'.

[1] All the names of the participants are pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.
[2] *Kefi* is provided here Romanised to facilitate its reading, although the Romanisation of Greek words is not something standardised, as it is for example the case with the Mandarin Chinese words and pinyin (see 1.1).

References

Auer, P. 1995, The Pragmatics of Code-switching: A Sequential Approach. In Milroy, L., Muysken, P. (eds.), *One Speaker, Two Languages.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 115-136.

Auer, P. 2002, *Code-switching in Conversation*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Baynham, M. 1993, Code Switching and Mode Switching: Community Interpreters and Mediators of Literacy. In Street, B. (ed.), *Cross-cultural approaches to literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Canagarajah, S. 2011, Codemeshing in academic writing: Identifying teachable strategies in translanguaging. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(3), 401-417.

Cogo, A. 2007, *Intercultural communication in English as a Lingua Franca: A case stud,* PhD thesis, King's College London.

Cogo, A. 2012. ELF and super-diversity: a cause study of ELF multilingual practices from a business context. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, 1(2), 287-313.

Cogo, A. and Dewey, M. 2006, Efficiency in ELF communication: From pragmatic motives to lexico-grammatical innovation. *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 5(2), 59-93.

Cogo, A. and Dewey, M. 2012, *Analysing English as a Lingua Franca: A Corpus-Driven Investigation.* London and New York: Continuum.

Council of Europe 2000, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Creese, A. and Blackledge, A.J. 2010, Translanguaging in the bilingual classroom: A pedagogy for learning and teaching? *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(1), 103-115.

Dewey, M. 2007, English as a Lingua Franca and globalization: An interconnected perspective. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 17(3), 332-354.

Dewey, M. 2011, Accommodative ELF Talk and Teacher Knowledge. In Archibald, A., Cogo, A., Jenkins, J. (eds.), *Latest Trends in ELF Research*, Newcastle-upon-Thyne: Cambridge Scholars, 205-227.

Gumperz, J.J. 1982, *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hülmbauer, C. 2007, "You moved, aren't?" – The relationship between lexicogrammatical correctness and communicative effectiveness in English as a Lingua Franca. *Vienna English Working PaperS*, 16(2), 3-35.

Hülmbauer, C. 2009, "We Don't Take the Right Way. We Just Take the Way That We Think You Will Understand" – The Shifting Relationship

Between Correctness and Effectiveness in ELF. In Mauranen, A. and Ranta, E. (eds.), *English as a Lingua Franca: Studies and Findings.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 323-347.

Jenkins, J. 2011, Accommodating (to) ELF in the international university. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(4), 926-936.

Klimpfinger, T. 2007. 'Mind you sometimes you have to mix' – the role of code-switching in English as a Lingua Franca. *Vienna English Working Papers*, 16(2), 36-61.

Kordon, K. 2006, "You are very good" – Establishing rapport in English as a lingua franca: The case of agreement tokens. *Vienna English Working PaperS*, 15(2),58-82.

Leung, C. 2005, Convivial communication: Recontextualising communicative competence. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 15(2), 119-144.

Leung, C. 2013, The 'social' in English Language Teaching: Abstracted norms versus situated enactments. *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*, 2(2), 283-313.

Li, W. and Zhu, H. 2010, Changing Hierarchies in Chinese Language Education for the British Chinese Learners. In Tsung, L. and Cruickshank, K. (eds.), *Teaching and Learning Chinese in Global Contexts.* London: Continuum, 11-27.

Lin, A.M.Y. 2006, Beyond linguistic purism in language-in-education policy and practice: Exploring bilingual pedagogies in a Hong Kong science classroom. *Language and Education*, 20(4), 287-305.

MacSwan, J. 1999, *A Minimalist Approach to Intrasentential Code-switching*. New York: Garland Publishing.

Pitzl, M-L. 2009, "We Should Not Wake Up Any Dogs": Idiom and Metaphor in ELF. In Mauranen, A. and Ranta, E. (eds.), *English as a Lingua Franca: Studies and findings.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 298-322.

Pitzl, M.-L., Breiteneder, A. and Klimpfinger, T. 2008, A world of words: Processes of lexical innovation in VOICE. *Vienna English Working PaperS*, 17(2), 21-46.

Pölzl, U. 2003, Signalling cultural identity: the use of L1/Ln in ELF. *Vienna English Working PaperS*, 12, 3-23.

Rampton, B. 1995, *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity Among Adolescents.* London and New York: Longman.

Ranta, E. 2006, The attractive progressive – why use the -ing form in English as a Lingua Franca? *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 5(2), 95-116.

Seidlhofer, B. 2009, Accommodation and the idiom principle in English as a lingua franca. *Journal of Intercultural Pragmatics*, 6(2), 195-215.