

RESEARCH

Marie-Louise Brunner

# Understanding Intercultural Communication

Negotiating Meaning and Identities  
in English as a Lingua Franca Skype  
Conversations

MOREMEDIA



J. B. METZLER

---

# Understanding Intercultural Communication

---

Marie-Louise Brunner

# Understanding Intercultural Communication

Negotiating Meaning and Identities  
in English as a Lingua Franca Skype  
Conversations



**J.B. METZLER**

Marie-Louise Brunner  
InDi – Institute for International  
and Digital Communication  
Environmental Campus Birkenfeld, Trier  
University of Applied Sciences  
Birkenfeld, Germany

Dissertation zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades eines Doktors der Philosophie der  
Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität des Saarlandes  
Tag der letzten Promotionsleistung: 22.04.2021  
Der Dekan: Prof. Dr. Augustin Speyer  
Berichterstatter\*innen: Prof. Dr. Stefan Diemer, Prof. Dr. Astrid Fellner, Prof. Dr. Paola  
Vettorel

ISBN 978-3-662-64555-0      ISBN 978-3-662-64556-7 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-64556-7>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer-Verlag  
GmbH, DE, part of Springer Nature 2021

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Responsible Editor: Anna Pietras

This J.B. Metzler imprint is published by the registered company Springer-Verlag GmbH, DE part of Springer Nature.

The registered company address is: Heidelberger Platz 3, 14197 Berlin, Germany

---

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to thank my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Stefan Diemer, for his continuous and invaluable support, advice, and feedback from the first conception of the idea, during numerous conference presentations and various writing and revising stages, to the final thesis. He always provided food for thought, never got impatient throughout the process, was always willing to brainstorm new ideas and directions and to critically discuss my findings. I am infinitely grateful for his constant encouragement and help which gave me the strength and the opportunity to develop further, to gain experience in various areas, and to spread my academic wings. Over the years, he kept motivating me, and encouraged me to keep going and to strive for more.

I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Astrid Fellner for her advice during the writing process. I am very grateful to her for awakening my interest in culture studies and for enabling me to explore the connection between linguistics and identity research, resulting in the combined approach in this thesis. Including me in a variety of her research forums has been a wonderful opportunity to discuss my findings from a new perspective.

I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Neal Norrick and Dr. Nele Gerhardt for awakening my interest in linguistics. A big thank you also goes to Dr. Selina Schmidt, Caroline Collet, and Nicole Häffner for being amazing friends and colleagues. Thank you for sharing this journey with me, for all the shared laughter and the motivational boosts, for providing me with valuable feedback, for always lending a sympathetic ear, and for making this a fun experience. Additionally, I am grateful to my wonderful friends and colleagues from all over the world whom I have met over the years during various conferences. There is not enough space to name everyone, but know that I am grateful to all of you. In particular, I wish to thank Dr. Kaisa Pietikäinen, Dr. Miya Komori-Glatz, Prof. Polly Szatrowski,

Jon Coltz, Prof. Sofie Decock, Dr. Andrew Kehoe, and Matt Gee for encouraging me and engaging me in numerous stimulating discussions, for inspiring me to explore new avenues of research, for joining me on various adventures, and for creating many joyful memories together.

Last, but definitely not least, I would like to thank my partner and my family for their unwavering support and encouragement, for motivating me to keep going through all ups and downs, for giving me the space to work on my thesis, and for always being there for me.

---

## Abstract

Academics, business professionals, and private persons alike nowadays need to communicate and establish relationships with people from various countries and cultures while using a variety of digital means of communication. Establishing and maintaining such relationships has therefore become an essential skill in a virtual environment.

This book provides an in-depth analysis of how interlocutors negotiate meaning and identities in intercultural video-mediated interactions as an indispensable step to understanding and improving interactions on a global scale. It contributes to understanding the complex negotiation processes and strategies involved in communicating successfully and to establishing rapport in an intercultural and video-mediated context. Speakers in an English as a Lingua Franca context act as accomplished conversationalists who efficiently employ various strategies to negotiate meaning and to preempt interactional difficulties. At the same time, interlocutors (re)negotiate their own identities on various levels as part of the interaction with their conversation partners. Based on the insights into the complex workings of intercultural video-mediated interactions, this book also provides suggestions for educational and professional applications.

---

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	1
1.1	Contextualization of English as a Lingua Franca	6
1.1.1	ELF In The Context of ‘Traditional’ English Language Usage	6
1.1.2	ELF as The Global Lingua Franca	20
1.1.3	ELF as Intercultural Communication	22
1.2	Intercultural Communication: Terminological Considerations	24
1.2.1	Culture And Cultural Identities as a Concept	24
1.2.2	A Terminological Jungle: Inter-, Multi-, Cross-, or Transcultural?	28
1.2.3	Intercultural Communication In The Context of This Study	30
1.3	Video-Mediated Communication: Skype as a Medium	32
<b>2</b>	<b>Data and Methodology</b>	39
2.1	Data: ELF Communication Via Skype	39
2.1.1	The CASE Project	40
2.1.2	The Corpus of Video-Mediated English as a Lingua Franca Conversations	45
2.2	Methodology: An Interdisciplinary Framework	47
<b>3</b>	<b>The Negotiation of Meaning: Communication Strategies and Identities</b>	67
3.1	Meaning and Communication Strategies	67
3.1.1	Meaning as a Negotiated Process	67
3.1.2	The Negotiation of Meaning in Non-Native Contexts: EFL vs. ELF Research	69



3.1.3	The Negotiation of Meaning Through Communication Strategies in Non-Native Contexts .....	74
3.1.4	Selection of Communication Strategies for the Analysis .....	81
3.2	Identities and Identity Negotiation .....	86
3.2.1	Identity Negotiation as a Negotiation of Meaning .....	86
3.2.2	Identity as a Concept .....	88
3.2.3	Identities in a Social Context .....	91
3.2.4	Identities and Identity Negotiation in Intercultural Communication and ELF Research .....	92
3.2.5	Criteria for Analyzing Identities in Intercultural Interactions .....	96
<b>4</b>	<b>Analysis: The Negotiation of Meaning Through Communication Strategies in ELF Skype Conversations .....</b>	<b>99</b>
4.1	Innovative Language Use .....	100
4.1.1	Innovative Language Use: Theoretical Considerations .....	101
4.1.2	Categorization and Extraction: Methodological Considerations .....	103
4.1.2.1	Developing a Taxonomy of Innovative Language Use .....	103
4.1.2.2	Finding Innovative Language Use in ELF .....	105
4.1.3	Innovative Language Use in ELF Skype Conversations: Qualitative Analysis .....	108
4.1.3.1	Plurilingual Resources .....	108
4.1.3.1.1	Code-Switching .....	109
4.1.3.1.2	Transfer .....	111
4.1.3.1.3	Hybridization .....	114
4.1.3.2	Approximations .....	115
4.1.3.2.1	Form-Based Approximation .....	116
4.1.3.2.2	Approximate Idioms .....	119
4.1.3.2.3	Semantic Approximation .....	122
4.1.3.3	<i>Ad hoc</i> Innovations .....	125
4.1.3.3.1	New Word Formation .....	125
4.1.3.3.2	New Idiomatic Expressions .....	126
4.1.3.3.3	Non-Verbal Innovation .....	127
4.1.3.4	Temporarily Persistent Innovations .....	128
4.1.4	Innovative Language Use as a Key Strategy for the Negotiation of Meaning .....	130

4.2	Code-Switching .....	135
4.2.1	Code-Switching: Theoretical Considerations .....	135
4.2.2	Code-Switching in ViMELF: Methodological Considerations .....	139
4.2.3	Code-Switching in ELF Skype Conversations: Quantitative Analysis .....	140
4.2.3.1	Quantitative Code-Switching Behavior .....	140
4.2.3.2	Co-Occurring Features of Code-Switching in ViMELF .....	142
4.2.4	Categorization of Code-Switching in ELF .....	143
4.2.5	Code-Switching in ELF Skype Conversations: Qualitative Analysis .....	147
4.2.5.1	Interpersonal Motivations/Functions .....	147
4.2.5.1.1	Underlining Group Membership and Identity .....	147
4.2.5.1.2	Creation of Rapport .....	149
4.2.5.2	Discursive Motivations/Functions .....	153
4.2.5.2.1	Mot Juste .....	153
4.2.5.2.2	Metalinguistic Commentary .....	156
4.2.5.2.3	Lexical Gaps .....	157
4.2.5.3	Addressee Specification: Change of Interlocutor .....	160
4.2.6	Code-Switching as a Key Strategy for the Negotiation of Meaning .....	163
4.3	Definitions .....	166
4.3.1	Definitions in ELF and in the Context of Code-Switching: Theoretical Considerations .....	167
4.3.2	Definitions in the Context of Code-Switching in ELF Skype Conversations: Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses .....	171
4.3.2.1	Quantitative Analysis of Definitions in the Context of Code-Switching .....	172
4.3.2.2	Interrelationship between Definitions and Code-Switches .....	174
4.3.2.3	Discursive Integration of Definitions .....	176
4.3.2.4	Translations .....	181
4.3.2.5	Paraphrases .....	184
4.3.2.5.1	Analytic Strategies .....	184

	4.3.2.5.2	Holistic Strategies .....	188
	4.3.2.5.3	Combined Strategies .....	190
	4.3.2.6	External Resources .....	193
	4.3.2.7	Vague Language and Definitions .....	194
4.3.3		Definitions in the Context of Knowledge/Lexical Gaps and Difficult Vocabulary: Qualitative Analysis ....	196
4.3.4		Definitions as a Key Strategy for the Negotiation of Meaning .....	203
4.4		Non-Verbal Behavior .....	206
4.4.1		Multimodality and Non-Verbal Behavior: Theoretical Considerations .....	207
4.4.2		Non-Verbal Behavior in a Multimodal Corpus of ELF Skype Conversations: Methodological Considerations .....	214
	4.4.2.1	Challenges and Advantages of CASE Project Transcriptions .....	214
	4.4.2.2	Quantitative Analysis of Non-Verbal Behavior: Findings and Limitations .....	217
	4.4.2.3	Developing a Taxonomy of Multimodal Meaning Making in ELF Skype Conversations .....	221
4.4.3		Non-Verbal Behavior in ELF Skype conversations: Qualitative analysis .....	223
	4.4.3.1	Back-Channeling .....	223
	4.4.3.2	Complementary .....	226
		4.4.3.2.1 Focusing .....	226
		4.4.3.2.2 Imitating .....	230
	4.4.3.3	Replacing .....	237
	4.4.3.4	Nuancing .....	242
	4.4.3.5	Supporting .....	247
		4.4.3.5.1 Metaphorical .....	247
		4.4.3.5.2 Emphasizing .....	251
		4.4.3.5.3 Turn-Taking .....	254
	4.4.3.6	Noticing .....	257
	4.4.3.7	Background .....	262
	4.4.3.8	Incidental .....	266
4.4.4		Non-Verbal Behavior as a Key Strategy for the Negotiation of Meaning .....	268

<b>5</b>	<b>Analysis: Identity Negotiation as a Means of Negotiating Meaning in ELF Skype Conversations</b> .....	277
5.1	Identity Negotiation Strategies .....	277
5.2	Finding Instances of Identity Negotiation: Methodological Considerations .....	279
5.3	Identity Negotiations in ELF Skype Conversations: Qualitative Analysis .....	279
5.3.1	Highlighting One's Own Identities .....	279
5.3.1.1	Highlighting Identities Through Innovative Language Use and Code-Switching .....	280
5.3.1.2	Highlighting National and Regional Identities .....	284
5.3.1.3	Highlighting Sociocultural Identities .....	290
5.3.1.4	Highlighting Personal Identities .....	294
5.3.2	Othering: Differentiating from Other Identities .....	297
5.3.2.1	Creating One's Own Identity Through Othering .....	297
5.3.2.2	Creating a Common Identity Through Othering .....	306
5.3.3	Positioning One's Own Identities within Problematic Issues .....	311
5.4	Identity Negotiation as a Key Strategy for the Negotiation of Meaning .....	325
<b>6</b>	<b>The Negotiation of Meaning and Identities in ELF Skype Conversations: Discussion and Concluding Remarks</b> .....	331
	<b>References</b> .....	363

---

## Abbreviations

AmE	American English
BELF	Business English as a Lingua Franca
BrE	British English
CA	Conversation Analysis
CASE project	Corpus of Academic Spoken English project
CMC	Computer-mediated communication
CS	Code-switching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
ELFA	(Corpus of) English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings
ELT	English Language Teaching
ENL	English as a Native Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Speaker from University of Bologna, Forlì Campus, Forlì, Italy
HE	Speaker from Helsinki University or Hanken School of Economics, Helsinki, Finland
IU	Intonation unit
L1	Native language of a speaker
L2	Foreign language of a speaker
NVE	Non-verbal element
SB	Speaker from Saarland University, Saarbrücken, Germany
SF	Speaker from St Kliment Ohridski University, Sofia, Bulgaria
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
ST	Speaker from University of Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

---

TIG	Transient International Group
VGT	Virtual Global Team
ViMELF	Corpus of Video-Mediated English as a Lingua Franca Conversations
VMC	Video-mediated communication
VOICE	Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English

---

## List of Figures

Figure 2.1	Interdisciplinary methodological framework .....	63
Figure 4.1	Innovative language use in ELF .....	108
Figure 4.2	Plurilingual resources .....	108
Figure 4.3	Approximations .....	116
Figure 4.4	<i>Ad hoc</i> innovations .....	125
Figure 4.5	Taxonomy of innovative language use in ELF Skype conversations .....	131
Figure 4.6	CS in ViMELF (pre-version) according to switched language .....	141
Figure 4.7	Motivations and functions of code-switching .....	146
Figure 4.8	Taxonomy of code-switching in video-mediated ELF .....	165
Figure 4.9	Taxonomy of definitions .....	171
Figure 4.10	Types of definitions and paraphrases .....	173
Figure 4.11	Position of (types of) definitions with regard to CS .....	174
Figure 4.12	NVEs in ViMELF (2018) .....	218
Figure 4.13	Nodding as non-verbal back-channel .....	225
Figure 4.14	Pointing and camera shift .....	228
Figure 4.15	Showing .....	229
Figure 4.16	Imitation of pea .....	232
Figure 4.17	Imitation of breathalyzer and drinking .....	233
Figure 4.18	Imitation of pretzel making .....	235
Figure 4.19	Imitation of cheers .....	237
Figure 4.20	Imitation of putting eggs in a bowl .....	238
Figure 4.21	Imitation of suspenders (BrE “braces”) .....	240
Figure 4.22	Imitation of freezing .....	241
Figure 4.23	Stance through air quotes .....	243

---

Figure 4.24	Stance through leaning forward and looking to the side ...	245
Figure 4.25	Smile to lessen face-threat .....	246
Figure 4.26	Metaphorical image .....	248
Figure 4.27	Metaphorical throwing-away gesture .....	249
Figure 4.28	Metaphorical distance through pointing .....	250
Figure 4.29	Emphasis through beat gesture .....	252
Figure 4.30	Emphasis through grimacing and shrugging .....	254
Figure 4.31	Signaling completion by looking down .....	256
Figure 4.32	Noticing flag in background and ensuing pointing .....	260
Figure 4.33	Roommates intruding and excluding the roommate .....	265
Figure 4.34	Drinking as non-problematic silence .....	268
Figure 4.35	Taxonomy of multimodal meaning making in ELF Skype conversations .....	269
Figure 4.36	Model of multimodal meaning making in video-mediated interactions .....	272
Figure 5.1	Identity negotiation strategies .....	326



---

## List of Tables

Table 1.1	Situation factors in ViMELF (2018), following Herring (2007) .....	35
Table 1.2	Medium factors in ViMELF (2018), following Herring (2007) .....	36
Table 2.1	Brief overview of CASE project transcription conventions .....	43
Table 4.1	Significant collocates of the most frequent NVEs in ViMELF (2018) .....	219



# Introduction

# 1

*... you just start talking about something, ... culture and stuff like that ((chuckling)).*

*... as long as people can understand us ((chuckling)).. it's not a problem.*

*(ViMELF 2018, 01SB78HE04 & 07SB17SF10)*

The globalized society of tomorrow poses many challenges. Migration processes and the dynamic progression of digitalization blur traditional cultural boundaries. Intercultural communication is no longer a playful by-product of an exotic vacation, but it is everyday reality. International teams that are located all over the world and that need to establish their personal and business relationships in a virtual setting become the norm. Friendships span the globe. How do we make sense of our increasingly multicultural and plurilingual interactions? How do we communicate successfully in a digital environment? How do we negotiate our own identities in view of such a diverse and complex interrelationship of cultures and contexts? This book contributes to answering these questions by investigating which strategies are employed in intercultural video-mediated interactions.

Every day we (co-)construct meanings and identities in numerous contexts and intercultural settings. Understanding these complex negotiations is an indispensable step to understanding interactions on a global scale. Academics, business professionals, and private persons alike nowadays need to communicate and work together with people from various countries and cultures while using a variety of digital means of communication. The current delocalized dynamics also reflect

recent trends of sustainable living; the increase of digital options offers an alternative to traveling to meetings on site and contributes to reducing the carbon footprint.

The growing importance of internationalization and digitalization in today's economy also has consequences for the education system. Competencies in intercultural and digital communication have become essential skills and pedagogical concepts therefore need to be adapted to account for these developments in secondary and higher education. So far, research on digital (and in particular video-mediated) intercultural communication is rare due to the sporadic availability of this type of data for research purposes. As a consequence, there is a lack of theoretical groundwork that could be used for new pedagogical developments in this area. My research provides a detailed analysis of strategies that are employed in such an environment and thus contributes to bridging this gap. I base my analysis on intercultural Skype conversations which are carried out by means of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Diemer et al. 2012–2018, ViMELF 2018). Since English is employed in the majority of intercultural settings nowadays, it is an ideal starting point for an investigation of intercultural communication in a digital context. An analysis of ELF is also an excellent first step to understanding and facilitating internationalization and globalization processes today. In general, my research contributes to closing the existing research gap in the area of intercultural video-mediated interactions; in particular, I analyze how meanings (and, by extension, identities) are co-constructed in interaction through various strategies.

My findings show that interlocutors in the analyzed data are accomplished conversationalists who efficiently and preemptively employ various strategies to negotiate meaning. I combine qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze meaning in context. My methodology is based on an interdisciplinary framework of research fields combining multimodal and corpus-based discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, conversation analysis, pragmatics, and interactional sociolinguistics. Based on my analyses of the negotiation of meaning in interaction, I develop taxonomies of particular strategies and strategy bundles that are employed during the negotiation processes. First, I analyze four communication strategies that contribute to the negotiation of meaning: innovative language use, code-switching, definitions, and non-verbal behavior. Then, an investigation of three identity negotiation strategies is carried out: highlighting one's own identities, othering, and positioning one's own identities within problematic issues. The effects all of these strategies have on the interaction as well as the roles they play in terms of the analyzed intercultural and video-mediated interactional

environment are explored. Results indicate that speakers communicate successfully and competently in the intercultural video-mediated environment. Issues in communication are rare and easily resolved. My findings provide insights into how successful intercultural video-mediated interactions can be achieved. They provide a research-based background for the development of communication (optimization) strategies in intercultural, ELF, and video-mediated contexts and are relevant for a wide range of practical uses in education, academia, and business.

Meaning and the negotiation of meaning are some of the most basic but also most central concepts of language, and in particular of interpersonal interactions. Meaning, however, is also quite difficult to define and is understood in terms of a variety of conceptualizations in different fields of research. For the purpose of this book, meaning is not a fixed entity but it is interactionally constructed by interlocutors. As it unfolds in the particular interactional context, it is negotiated on two levels, which are often interconnected:

- 1) Meaning is negotiated with regard to individual concepts (see Section 3.1, Chapter 4). In this case, meaning and the negotiation of meaning are focused on a word or phrase that serves as an anchor for the negotiation in the interaction. The negotiation itself then usually goes beyond the word or phrase level to include the surrounding passages. This narrower sense of meaning is then expanded to a broader context in the second part of this book.
- 2) On a discourse level, negotiations of particular concepts contribute to the broader negotiation of identities in interaction. In this sense, the meaning that is negotiated is understood in terms of the identities that are portrayed and interactionally negotiated by interlocutors (see Section 3.2, Chapter 5). Interlocutors' situated identities take form and are (re-)negotiated during the course of an interaction, creating increasingly complex meanings as the conversation progresses.

Both types of meaning as well as their interplay are analyzed in the interactional context. If we consider, for example, an interlocutor using the German term *Plätzchen* in an ELF interaction instead of cookie (or biscuit) which are often named as translations in dictionaries, the two types of meaning quickly become clear. The code-switch, together with the explanation of the meaning of the term, is a good example for the negotiation of meaning of an individual concept. The meaning of the term is positioned as different from a 'general' cookie. The connotational context, for example, is more specific to Christmas and there are certain requirements concerning shape. The use of the code-switch implies

that *Plätzchen* come in forms and tastes that differ from American or British cookie (or biscuit) traditions. This example also contributes to the negotiation of meaning on a larger discourse level. The interlocutor's German national identity is portrayed and negotiated through the interaction. The use of the code-switch itself as well as the ensuing explanation imply a knowledge of the German language as well as of German cultural traditions. *Plätzchen* is also positioned in opposition to the American term cookie. Both the positioning as a linguacultural expert and the opposition to a perceived 'Other' contribute to illustrating and emphasizing the interlocutor's German identity in the interaction.

Let us consider another example: A Spanish interlocutor describes Spain as a Catholic country while putting 'Catholic' in air quotes. Here, the two levels of meaning also become clear. Meaning negotiation clearly takes place on the level of the specific word 'Catholic.' The meaning of the word is nuanced and a new individual concept for this word in combination with air quotes is constructed. On a discourse level, this instance simultaneously contributes to negotiating identities. The Spanish interlocutor uses it to portray her own regional identity as an inhabitant of the Galician city of Santiago de Compostela in opposition to southern Spain. She also distances herself from the often very conservative religious traditions that are practiced in the south, positioning herself in opposition, i.e., as not being very religious. It is the interplay of the negotiation of the two outlined types of meaning as well as the realizations of such negotiations through concrete strategies that is the main focus of this book.

In the following paragraphs, I will briefly outline the general structure and aim of the book. Chapters 1 to 3 outline the background and specifications of the data, the employed methodology, and the theoretical basis of my analysis. Chapter 1 is concerned with providing an overview of the general background and basic terminological considerations regarding ELF, intercultural communication, and video-mediated communication. Chapter 2 lays further groundwork for the analysis by describing the data and methodology. The intercultural ELF Skype conversations (Diemer et al. 2012–2018, ViMELF 2018) that are used as data are, to date, unique in their particular composition and combination of available resources. They are an ideal resource to investigate intercultural communication in a multimodal video-mediated context. I take a result-oriented approach to the analysis, employing a combination of methods. My interdisciplinary framework primarily draws on multimodal and corpus-based discourse analysis; additional methodological considerations are based on conversation analysis, pragmatics, and interactional sociolinguistics. Chapter 3 provides a detailed overview of the main theoretical concept of the book: The negotiation of meaning. Meaning is

defined as interactionally constructed and as fulfilling a certain function in interaction which is negotiated by interlocutors in a certain context. As outlined above, the negotiation of meaning takes place on two levels, the narrower word or phrase level and the broader discourse level.

Chapters 4 and 5 represent my own analysis. Chapter 4 is concerned with the analysis of the narrower understanding of meaning in the form of four central communication strategies which are frequently used to negotiate meaning in ELF: 4.1 Innovative language use, 4.2 Code-switching, 4.3 Definitions, and 4.4 Non-verbal behavior. The four strategies are analyzed in great detail, quantified where possible, and systematically organized within taxonomies of categories and sub-categories that occur in the data. This in-depth analysis goes beyond the current state of the art in terms of the complexity of the established categorization and the interactional functions that were identified. The analysis investigates how the four strategies contribute to the negotiation of meaning and how interlocutors employ them to reach mutual understanding and a successful conversational development. The outlined communication strategies do not only negotiate meanings of individual concepts but also contribute to creating regional, national, expert, multilingual, and ELF identities in a larger discourse context. They are essential parts of the identity negotiation process taking place in the interactions and are therefore also incorporated into the analysis in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 analyzes identity negotiations in intercultural interactions. Contextually dependent and situated meaning is negotiated in terms of speaker identities rather than only focusing on narrower meanings of individual concepts. Identity negotiations are subdivided into three strategies: The first strategy, 5.3.1 Highlighting one's own identities, incorporates the four communication strategies from Chapter 4 and also investigates other contexts in which regional, national, international, sociocultural, and personal identities are negotiated. 5.3.2 Othering: Differentiating from other identities, as the second strategy, demonstrates how underlining differences from other identities can contribute to creating one's own identities. The third strategy, 5.3.3 Positioning of one's own identities within problematic issues, combines the previous two strategies and describes instances where interlocutors carefully negotiate their stances to clarify their own position, maintain rapport, and avoid offending the interlocutor.

Chapter 6 brings together the analysis and discusses the results with regard to existing research. Implications of the findings as well as possible applications in the areas of education, academia and business are outlined and discussed. The chapter concludes with a general overview of results and an outlook regarding future research.

## 1.1 Contextualization of English as a Lingua Franca

Sections 1.1 to 1.3 outline and discuss the theoretical background of the data that is used in this book. They serve to put the data into the larger research context and provide insights into possible influences the particular data composition may have on the interactions. I start with a contextualization of ELF in this section, then elaborate on the terminological quandaries that are a part of intercultural communication in Section 1.2, and finish with an overview of research on video-mediated communication and its implications for the analysis in Section 1.3.

The current section provides an overview of ELF and contextualizes it within three main frameworks. First, ELF is placed in the larger context of ‘traditional’ English language usage, i.e., the English of ‘native speakers,’ learners, and second language speakers (1.1.1). Then, the global role of ELF (1.1.2) and the role of ELF within the field of intercultural communication (1.1.3) are discussed.

### 1.1.1 ELF In The Context of ‘Traditional’ English Language Usage

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is still a relatively new phenomenon which is not considered part of the ‘traditional’ paradigms of English language usage. I use the established categories of English language usage as a basis, following both Kachru’s (1985) paradigm of inner, outer, and expanding circle varieties and Görlach’s (1991) roughly corresponding distinction of English language usage into English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a Second Language (ESL), and English as a Foreign Language (EFL)<sup>1</sup>. After briefly discussing these three traditional types of English language usage, I introduce the concept of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and position it within the framework of the three established concepts.

---

<sup>1</sup> The two categorizations are often used interchangeably (e.g. Meriläinen et al. 2017) since they are functionally very similar, denote similar groups of language users, and are very often used in the same context to further elaborate on and explain the other (see, e.g., Edwards 2014: 173, Kachru 1990: 3). I follow this convention in this book since I consider both models to be highly useful and both contribute valuable aspects to conceptualizing traditional understandings of language use, though I am aware that they are not fully synonymous.

**English as a Native Language (ENL)** refers to Kachru's inner circle which includes the "traditional bases of English, where it is the primary language: it includes the USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand" (Crystal 2003: 60). The image of the monolingual English language 'native speaker' is ever-present and widespread. Many 'native speakers' are monolingual, particularly since English has become a world language and learning other languages has become a "waste of time" for *some* native speakers of English (see Crystal 2003: 15). There are, however, also those ENL speakers who are multilinguals, be it due to a heritage language background, a foreign language classroom, a bi-/multilingual upbringing, or societal or cross-border language contact. The situation is much more complex in these contexts, speakers of ENL incorporate many other languages in their repertoire so that the simplified categorization of the monolingual 'native speaker' is no longer valid. Such multilingual environments lead to an interplay of different languages. Languages are not isolated but interconnected and influence speakers' language production and identities.

The infallible nature of the 'native speaker' that is often perpetuated in foreign language classrooms has been widely disputed (see, e.g., Anchimbe 2006, Davies 2004, Hymes 1972, Lee 2005, Seidlhofer 2011, Shakouri and Shakouri 2014). Shakouri and Shakouri (2014: 222) note that "being a native speaker is no guarantee for competence in communication," while Anchimbe (2006) points out that error analysis actually emerged from studies of native speaker language. This suggests that being a 'native speaker' certainly does not guarantee "error-free language transmission" (Anchimbe 2006: 8). Hymes (1972: 55, 56) observes that linguistic studies also should not ignore the sociocultural dimension of actual language use since this is the "difference between what one imagines and what one sees" (1972: 54). According to him, we need

a theory that can deal with a heterogeneous speech community, differential competence, the constitutive role of sociocultural features—that can take into account such phenomena as [...] socioeconomic differences, multilingual mastery, relativity of competence in 'Arabic,' 'English,' etc., expressive values, socially determined perception, contextual styles and shared norms for the evaluation of variables. (Hymes 1972: 59)

Lee (2005: 154) goes a step further in suggesting that the term 'native' in itself is misleading. He argues that the term 'native language' implies a language that is either the language that is spoken in our place of birth or the first language we get in contact with after birth, for example through our parents. However, this



'native language' is not always the language that is spoken best or most frequently despite the fact that the term is often understood in such a way. Particularly in the context of language teaching, 'native speakers' are still cited as role models. The 'native language' can be replaced by another language which may become the more frequently and fluently used language, e.g., in cases of "children who are transplanted, either through migration or adoption, at an early age" (Lee 2005: 154). The term 'native language' *per se* is as a consequence not connected to fluency or competence in the language in any way.

Davies (2004: 434) states that everybody "is a native speaker of his/her own code," which places the term in a different context. Based on his observation, every speaker has a unique way of speaking which s/he feels most comfortable with as it is a result of early socialization combined with personal identity-related choices. Davies adds that this personal code of a speaker does not need to adhere to a "codified standard" (2004: 434); it may also adhere to an "informal (standard) language, which may be a dialect" (2004: 434). This clearly puts the concept of the 'native speaker' as the speaker of the 'standard' (meaning the codified 'standard') into question.

All in all, the concept of the 'native speaker' is quite complex and we need to keep in mind that 'native speakers' are not infallible speakers of the language, that their language use is usually not identical with the idealized and codified 'standard' that is portrayed as the learning aim in the language classroom, and that they are likely to be influenced by a variety of sociocultural and contextual variables (cf. Anchimbe 2006, Davies 2004, Hymes 1972, Lee 2005, Seidlhofer 2011, Shakouri and Shakouri 2014). 'Native speakers' may also have different competences in more than one ('native') language and may be influenced by their multilingual repertoires (see, e.g., Hymes 1972, Lee 2005). To encounter a 'native speaker' who speaks *the* 'standard' that grammar books propose in every interactional context is highly unlikely. Other language use (such as EFL, ESL, and ELF) is thus compared to a 'standard' which is based on language use by speakers who each have their own individual way of speaking, who are not immune to making errors and mistakes, who exhibit non-standard and dialect language use, are subject to multilingual influences, and are influenced by sociocultural contexts. 'Native speakers' are not speakers of the 'standard.' Measuring other language use against 'real' ENL speakers is very different from measuring other language use against a codified and idealized speaker of a 'standard.' The term 'native speaker' is used in this book to refer to such an abstract, conventionalized, and idealized 'standard' that has been established through codification.

**English as a Second Language (ESL)** encompasses the former colonial Englishes of Kachru's outer circle, often also called 'World Englishes' or 'New Englishes,' such as Indian English or Nigerian English. In these contexts, English serves "country-internal functions" (Jenkins 2015a: 2). Crystal (2003: 60) defines it as English use that "has become part of a country's chief institutions and plays an important second-language role in a multilingual setting." ESL is used to communicate with other ESL speakers and also acquired in this context (Sridhar and Sridhar 1986: 5). Specific language norms develop and are increasingly negotiated between ESL speakers who use their variety as a "lingua franca for interethnic, *intranational* communication" (Meierkord 2012: 69) with its own conventions and characteristics. As a consequence, they have the "potential to develop endonormative and local standards and norms" (Hundt and Mukherjee 2011: 2). ESL varieties<sup>2</sup> do not only follow ENL 'standards' but also develop their own 'standards' (cf., e.g., Schneider 2011).

It is questionable, though, how unified such varieties really are. There are often (many) other languages beside English that are involved in the ESL context. The complex interplay of various indigenous linguistic traditions and cultures that are unified under the cover of one nation may actually lead to the creation of several conventional norms of language use, i.e., several varieties that are subsumed under a higher-level ESL variety like 'Indian English' or 'Nigerian English.' In the case of India, for example, it may be "said to have many varieties of English" (Tripathi 1998: 56, see also Wiltshire 2005) based on the different indigenous languages that interact with English. In many African and Caribbean contexts English-based pidgins and creoles additionally play an important role in the mix, as is, for example, the case in Nigeria (see Crystal 2003: 66). There may also be other *lingua francas* covering large parts of the country that co-exist with English, such as Swahili in East Africa (see Tripathi 1998: 56). In view of such complex linguistic traditions and influences in these contexts, it is unlikely

---

<sup>2</sup> In this book, I use Catford's (1965: 84) general definition of a language variety as "a sub-set of formal and/or substantial features which correlates with a particular type of socio-situational feature." The term variety is understood to mean a type of language use that can be described by a number of concrete language features that consistently co-occur in this combination with a certain socio-situationally bounded group of speakers.

that one unified variety is used by all speakers across linguacultural<sup>3</sup> (and ethnic) boundaries (see also Tripathi 1998, Wiltshire 2005), despite the usually unified and ENL-based education system.

An all-encompassing ESL variety (like ‘Indian English’) that subsumes a wide range of different linguacultural ‘standards’ is consequently even less representative of realistic language use of *all* speakers of this particular ESL variety than is the case for speakers of ENL varieties. In addition to the many potential sub-varieties, the same considerations apply to ESL speakers as was the case with ENL speakers when confronted with conventionalized ‘norms:’ there are no infallible language users and sociocultural and context-dependent factors apply. In this sense, ESL varieties are even less stable than ENL varieties, making an analysis more complicated and calling for a more differentiated perspective.

**English as a Foreign Language (EFL)**, often also called learner or performance varieties, refers to “those nations which recognize the importance of English as an international language, though they do not have a history of colonization by members of the inner circle, nor have they given English any special administrative status” (Crystal 2003: 60), i.e., Kachru’s expanding circle. It is also well-established in English Language Teaching (ELT), where EFL is, for example, defined as English that “is taught in schools, often widely, but [...] does not play an essential role in national or social life” (Broughton et al. [1980] 2003: 6).

---

<sup>3</sup> Linguaculture here refers to a concept from linguistic anthropology (originally theorized by Agar 1994, who called it languaculture) that showcases that “there is always a cultural dimension to language” (Baker 2015: 80) and that “languages are never culturally neutral” (Risager 2014: 110). Linguistic meaning is reflected in “the cultural perspective of linguaculture communities” (Shaules 2016: 3). This concept often, but not exclusively, refers primarily to the native language of a speaker (Risager 2014: 110). The original linguaculture can then be expanded by accumulating and incorporating cultural knowledge and experiences of other linguacultures through learning other languages (Risager 2014: 109). Language is therefore not always connected to one specific culture and cultural connotations are not always obvious from the language use. English, for example, is “a language that carries a wealth of meaning from its diverse and conflictual histories in colonial expansion, in postcolonial settings, and in the more or less global spread of domains of use such as commercial and scientific communication” (Risager 2014: 110). Meierkord (2000: no pages) even goes so far as to attribute a “lingua franca culture” to English which goes beyond the individual cultural connotations that English usage may be attributed to. In this case, ELF interaction gains a new cultural dimension which goes beyond the original linguacultures involved. While this may be the case in some instances of interaction, I argue that both the original linguacultures of the interlocutors and the various connotations of English as the language of communication also potentially influence the interaction and will still need to be considered as well in terms of possible underlying factors.

Foreign-language varieties have been the domain of English language learning and teaching research, which focuses on the goal of interaction with ‘native speakers,’ resulting in the idealization of ‘native speaker’ competence (cf. also Seidlhofer 2001: 133). This implied ‘standard’ affects learners’ motivation negatively by penalizing ‘non-standard’ usage. Tuan (2012), for example, examines students’ extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. In the context of extrinsic motivation, learners have “functional reasons” (Tuan 2012: 431) for learning a language, i.e., they aim to be successful at school/university or in a future job. Having a realistic teaching approach that evaluates communicative success based on what is necessary and needed in a future job rather than an undifferentiated ‘standard’ bench-mark is highly likely to improve students’ extrinsic motivation. At the same time, intrinsic motivation rises when students are interested in the activity, the classroom climate is positive, and tasks are cooperatively practiced (see Tuan 2012: 432). This is more likely to happen when students feel like they can actively contribute to activities without fearing penalization of every mistake. Even though modern communication-focused ELT didactics has strongly reduced the negative effect by valuing learners’ communicative success more than ever and reducing the penalization of every small mistake, it still takes a ‘deficit’ approach to learner language by referring to ‘norms’ that are being violated by learners (e.g., Haß 2006: 281).

Recently, the borders between ESL and EFL have been challenged. Certain European countries like the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, and Germany, who are traditionally seen in the expanding circle, have been observed to move towards an English language use in the context of youth culture that decisively resembles ESL usage (cf. Edwards 2014: 174–175). Berns (2005) even suggests that “this is the dawning of the age of Expanding Circle Englishes.” The increasing importance of English language *use* in contexts that have traditionally been focused on language *learning* cannot be denied in many expanding circle countries, although whether or not such use can already be classified as emerging varieties is questionable. It could be argued that such phenomena can be explained as being a result of globalization. Speakers are getting used to employing English as a *lingua franca* in various online and offline contexts and useful elements of this type of language use then enter their everyday communicative repertoire.

**English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)** has developed from research on EFL, Second Language Acquisition (SLA), as well as World Englishes (cf. Pietikäinen 2017, Seidlhofer 2011). ELF is the result of a paradigm shift from a focus on ‘native-speaker norms’ to an investigation of how English is actually used on a global scale. This shift was prompted by the fact that English developed into the

*de facto lingua franca* for international communication (Widdowson 2018). Following this shift, the need for empirical research on how ELF speakers use the language, and by doing so succeed in communicating effectively in intercultural contexts, has come to the fore (see Seidlhofer 2011: 23). Well-founded descriptions of ELF language use and its communicative success are needed to achieve a recognition of ELF in academia and education alike (Seidlhofer 2011: 23). Knapp (1987) and Firth (1990, 1996) are early examples of researchers who refer to this type of English in terms of a *lingua franca*. They introduce the terms “English as an international lingua franca” (Knapp 1987: 1022) and “‘lingua franca’ English” (Firth 1996: 237) in their investigation of English used between non-native speakers in an intercultural context. Since then, and particularly since the early 2000s, research on ELF data has developed in various directions, including research from different contexts, such as business (e.g., Ehrenreich 2010, Kassis-Henderson and Louhiala-Salminen 2011), academia (e.g., Dafouz and Smit 2016, Mauraanen 2012), immigration and refugee discourse (e.g., Guido 2008), and family interactions (e.g., Pietikäinen 2017). Research also includes studies on various combinations of interacting cultures as well as various linguistic characteristics and functions that ELF fulfills (see, e.g., the edited volume by Jenkins et al. 2018).

Jenkins (2015b) observes three phases that ELF has undergone since it was introduced. The first phase followed in the tradition of World Englishes and focused, in particular, on linguistic features, such as pronunciation and lexicogrammar (see Jenkins 2015b: 53) that would allow a type of codification of ‘ELF varieties’ (Jenkins 2015b: 77). During the second phase, this understanding of ELF as a ‘variety’ was abandoned. Seidlhofer (see, e.g., Seidlhofer 2009) instead called for a new understanding of ELF independent of World Englishes traditions and their focus on describing new varieties. Variability was introduced as one of the central concepts of ELF (Jenkins 2015b: 55). The conceptualization of ELF thus became quite different from World Englishes varieties: “ELF, with its fluidity and ‘online’ negotiation of meaning among interlocutors with varied multilingual repertoires, could not be considered as consisting of bounded varieties, but as English that transcends boundaries” (Jenkins 2015b: 55). The current and last phase marks a recent expansion of ELF research towards an understanding of ELF as being inherently multilingual. Jenkins (2015b: 73) has proposed this third phase, in which ELF is understood as “English as a Multilingua Franca.” It “refers to multilingual communicative settings in which English is known to everyone present, and is therefore *always potentially ‘in the mix,’* regardless of whether or not, and how much, it is actually used” (2015b: 74, emphasis in original). This notion includes all languages that speakers know besides English and

recognizes their potential role in and influence on the interaction (Jenkins 2015b: 75). Both the second and third phase of ELF are currently valid research traditions in the field. They are both practiced in ELF research, particularly since the third phase is more an extension of than a total break from the second phase (Jenkins 2015b: 78). I see myself in the tradition of both the second and third phases as I incorporate elements from both in my research and conceptualization of ELF.

In this book, ELF is understood as a “spontaneous, creative, and flexible medium of communication between speakers of different language backgrounds who efficiently make use of their respective linguistic (and plurilingual) resources in order to achieve reciprocal comprehension rather than a ‘correct’ and ‘standard’ output” (Brunner and Diemer 2018a: 61). Seidlhofer’s (2011: 10) functional conceptualization considers ELF to be “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option.” This definition includes ESL and ENL speakers in intercultural situations. ELF is often the preferred (or even only) way speakers from different linguacultural backgrounds can communicate and interact successfully (cf. Mauranen 2012: 7, Seidlhofer 2011: 10). At the same time, these linguacultural backgrounds play a central role in how they interact as they are incorporated in the way speakers use the language. Successful communication is the key objective, whereas the imitation of ENL ‘standard’ varieties does not play a central role (Hülmbauer 2013: 50–51, Jenkins 2015a: 45). As Jenkins (2015a: 45) puts it, in ELF “differences from native English that achieve this [successful intercultural communication] [are] regarded not as deficiencies but as evidence of linguistic adaptability and creativity.” By its very nature, ELF is an ideal and new ground for analysis in the context of the negotiation of meaning. It does not follow any established conventions and allows a vast amount of flexibility and creativity. For further elaborations on ELF see also Sections 1.1.2 and 1.1.3.

### *ELF vs. ESL and EFL*

There are many similarities and differences between ELF and ESL as well as ELF and EFL, respectively, which I will briefly outline in order to make their relation to each other as well as the positioning of ELF within the traditional paradigm clearer.

ELF, ESL, and EFL are quite similar. The restriction of EFL to learner varieties has favored the traditional separation of research approaches into EFL and ESL, respectively, focusing on different acquisition and usage settings (see also Hundt and Mukherjee 2011). Sridhar and Sridhar (1986: 5) have already observed a “paradigm gap” between existing EFL theories and ESL variation in 1986, and