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WORLD ENGLISHES AND ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION AND ELT²

1. Introduction

The spread of English, first as a consequence of the first and second dispersals, and more recently of globalization, has led to an unprecedented situation, where this language serves both localised and globalised communicative functions. This has resulted on the one hand in an extended pluralisation of nativised varieties responding to local adaptations of the language (World Englishes) and on the other in the use of English as a common means of communication beyond and across community and territorial boundaries – that is, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). From a demographic point of view, English is likely to be used more frequently among non-native, bilingual speakers of English than with speakers belonging to Kachru's Inner Circle, either in face-to-face communication or in virtual contexts over the web.

The WE and ELF paradigms are closely interconnected; they belong to the field of 'Global Englishes' (Jenkins 2015) since they both take the spread of English as a starting point to look at the pluralisation and international function of English today: as Marlina (5) points out, "[b]ecause the EIL paradigm acknowledges the diversification of English, as a result of the global spread of the language, EIL recognizes Kachruvian World Englishes, and emphasises the relevance of World Englishes in the teaching, learning, and thinking about English today" (cf. also Seidlhofer 2009).

As a response to the extended and global use of English in a range of domains, from business to academia, English has also become – in Europe as in other parts of the world - integral part of Foreign Language (FL henceforth) school curricula, often from an early age. Besides the presence of English as a school subject, exposure to English in educational contexts is also increasingly promoted through CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) at all school levels (cf. e.g. Coonan) and, at a tertiary level, through English-taught courses in connection to the internationalization of universities (e.g. Jenkins 2014).

One further consequence of the global spread of English is its extended presence throughout the media and in the Linguistic Landscape, both as 'passive' exposure and as 'active' use in connection to extended mobility, migration flows and the opportunities provided by Web 2.0 environments, social media in the first place (e.g. Graddol 1997, 2006; Danet and Herring; Herring; Seargeant and Tagg; Vettorel 2014a). This entails that contact with English no longer happens exclusively as a 'top-down' process as part of FL curricula, but it also occurs in connection to this 'extended' presence in the out-of-school environment, where encounters with pluralized forms of English are becoming more and more frequent. Younger generations in particular come into contact with Englishes in a variety of contexts (e.g. Berns et al.; Seidlhofer 2007; Seidlhofer et al.; Giorgis); all over Europe daily encounters with (linguistic) otherness are experienced starting from increasingly multicultural and multilingual school environments (Byram 1997, 2008).

The aforementioned pluralisation of English, as well as its widespread presence in the environment and the consequent opportunities to encounter and use English 'from below' (Preisler) have important implications for English Language Teaching (ELT), where a monolithic view of English can no longer represent the only reference point: in order to prepare learners to effectively use English, the plurality into which it has developed and its lingua franca role have to be taken into account, raising awareness and including

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exemplifications of this diversity in ELT materials and classroom practices. As will be seen in the next sections, in order for such a shift in perspective to take place, teacher education plays a pivotal role: developing awareness of the plurilithic nature English has today and of its diversified nature can be seen as the first step to an informed recognition and inclusion of such diversity in ELT practices.

In this paper we will illustrate exemplifications of how WE and ELF-informed activities can be successfully incorporated into ELT classroom practices, drawing from two main datasets: lesson plans developed within university-run pre-service teacher education courses addressed to Italian secondary school English language teachers, and a project realized in three primary schools in Italy aimed at fostering awareness of English in the linguistic environment, of the plurality of English(es) and of its lingua franca role.

We will also explore how this approach can be applied to other educational contexts, in the perspective that exposure to the plurality of English through active and guided noticing can involve teachers and learners alike in the exploration of, and reflection upon, English in its diversity and as part of internationally-oriented communication practices.

2. Teacher Education: A Possible Model from Practice

Research into the pedagogical implications of the plurality of English has seen a steady development over the last decade. In connection with the increasing diversification of the English language both in terms of WE varieties and of its role as a global lingua franca of communication, there has been a progressive recognition of the need to acknowledge these changes in ELT. A growing body of research has investigated several aspects, from how, and to what extent, ELT textbooks take such plurality into account (Koppeironen; Naji Meidani and Pishghadam; Vettorel and Lopriore 2013; Xu; Matsuda 2012a, 2012b; McKay 2012a, 2012b), to learner's perceptions and attitudes towards a more inclusive and less Anglophone, monocentric perspective (e.g. Matsuda 2003a, 2003b; Galloway; Grau), teacher's attitudes (e.g. Dewey 2012, 2015; Jenkins 2000; Sifakis and Sougari; Sifakis and Fay; Hall et. al.; Llundu; Vettorel 2015a). Teacher education has also been a largely researched area (e.g. Floris; Matsuda 2009; Seidlhofer 2011; Pedrazzini; Sifakis; Bayyurt and Sifakis) since it represents one of the most relevant areas to raise teachers' awareness of the changed role of English nowadays.

Alongside the above research areas, several pedagogical proposals to incorporate a WE- and ELF-informed perspective into the FL classrooms have recently been set forward, with reference to diversified educational contexts, learners and aims (e.g. McKay 2002, 2012a, 2012b; Matsuda 2012a; Lee; Vettorel 2015b; Lopriore and Vettorel 2015; Matsuda and Duran; Matsuda and Friedrich; Brown; Galloway). It should be stressed that the diversification of such proposals is not only referred to contextual educational settings, but also, and most importantly, to the fact that each specific context may require different choices, approaches, materials and activities, that have thus to be tailored to the students (and teachers') needs and priorities in learning English as a communication tool in today's world (e.g. Matsuda and Friedrich; McKay 2012a; Matsuda 2012a).

In this paper the focus will be on the Italian context, particularly on pre-service courses addressed at prospective English language teachers in secondary state schools. In Italy, pre-service secondary school teacher education, in the past run by SSIS³, have been offered since 2012 by Universities with the *Tirocinio Formativo Attivo* (TFA) and, for teachers with at least 3 years of teaching experience, the *Percorso Abilitante Speciale* (PAS); would-be teachers are required to attend these one year courses covering general pedagogy as well as specific language areas subjects, such as, within Foreign languages, English and didactics, with a practicum for TFA teachers, too.

Within the *Tirocinio Formativo Attivo* (TFA) and *Percorso Abilitante Speciale* (PAS) courses run at the Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Verona (Italy) in Academic Years from 2012/2013 to 2014/2015, a Module related to World Englishes, ELF and their pedagogical implications was included. The Module dealt with focal points for both areas (spread of English, language variation, standard language ideologies, main research findings) including exemplifications and reflection based upon the attendees' previous knowledge and experience. The main characteristic traits of different varieties, from American, Australian and New Zealand to Indian and Singaporean English, were presented, together with language use

³ The *Scuola di Specializzazione all'Insegnamento Secondario* (SSIS) was in charge of secondary teacher education from 1999 to 2010.



and communication strategies in English as a Lingua Franca contexts, within a language variation framework at the levels of phonology, lexico-grammar, syntax, idiomatic expressions (Crystal; Jenkins 2015; Schneider). The Module was thus meant as an opportunity to familiarise trainees with the plurilithic nature of contemporary English. Issues such as the conceptualization of native/non-native/bilingual speakers of English in today's multilingual and linguistically superdiverse societies, and the ownership of English in such a complex and changing reality (Widdowson, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2011) were also discussed.

The last lesson in the Module focused on the pedagogical implications of WE and ELF. Taking into account the aforementioned plurality in the English language, as well as its widespread presence, critical reflection on the implications in, and for, ELT, was fostered⁴. Focal issues such as SLA and ELF (Jenkins 2006; Seidlhofer 2011; Cogo and Dewey); English-knowing bilingualism (Jenkins 2015) and multicompetence (Cook) were introduced, as well as the complex relationship between L2/ELF *learners* and *users* (e.g. Seidlhofer 2011; Vettorel, 2014a: Chapter 7). The overall focus was set on the need to re-think priorities in teaching practices within an inclusive and plurilithic perspective (e.g. Alsagoff et al.; Matsuda, 2012c; McKay, 2002, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2011).

Current ELT textbooks were examined in the light of the above issues, in order to investigate whether a more inclusive and plurilithic approach was present in any way as to WE varieties and current uses of ELF, both from a linguistic and an (inter)cultural point of view. Trainees were then asked to cooperatively develop didactic activities within a WE- and ELF-aware approach, that were then shared in the e-learning platform forums, which thus acted both as a space for further reflection and a repository of teaching ideas.

A questionnaire was also administered to trainees with the main aim to investigate their attitudes towards the inclusion of a WE- and EIL/ELF-informed perspective into their pedagogic practices before and after attending the Module.⁵ In the great majority of cases the questionnaire answers, as well as comments by the participants in the e-learning forums, highlighted that the topics covered in the Module constituted a valuable opportunity to tackle issues related to the pluralisation of English, WE and ELF and to familiarize trainee teachers with the growing body of research in the areas taken into consideration, fostering reflection on previous assumptions, beliefs and pedagogic practices towards the development of a WE- and EIL/ELF-informed approach. Most trainees stated that before attending the course their knowledge of these issues was general, particularly in relation to the widespread presence of English in young people's outside-school lives, and the implications this and the pluralisation of Englishes can have in ELT. The majority of participants also stressed the importance of making students aware of the global spread of English and of its differences, and that "other forms of English exist" (PAS 2014-15) besides British English so that they would be able to communicate with people of different cultures speaking different varieties – as is most likely to happen in our globalised world.

3.1 WE- and ELF-aware Lesson Plans

As mentioned, during the PAS and TFA courses trainees were asked to plan an activity within a WE-/ELF-oriented perspective either taking a relevant coursebook activity/section as a point of departure, or using other resources such as websites, videos, etc. Besides, as part of the course both PAS and TFA trainee teachers have to produce a final report, that for PAS should include a lesson plan or project on a topic of choice, also drawing on the materials and tools presented during the course.

In the following sections we will provide some exemplifications of such WE and ELF-related activities devised by trainee teachers attending the PAS and TFA English courses at the University of Verona, either as part of their class /e-learning work or in their final Report. The activities that were developed can be grouped into 4 main areas: English in the World, varieties in World Englishes, EIL/ELF, English and multicultural societies, and will be illustrated in the next sections.

⁴ Two videos in which David Crystal deals with implications of the plurality of English for language teachers were also examined; videos retrievable at <http://www.macmillanglobal.com/blog/teaching-tips/which-english-should-we-teach-david-crystal>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItODnX5geCM>. Last visited 10/12/2015.

⁵ In Academic Year 2014-2015 a pre-course and a post-course questionnaires were administered, while in the previous years a single questionnaire containing pre- and post-course questions was handed out. Since Academic Year 2014-15 this research has been carried out in cooperation with Sara Corrizzato as part of a postdoctoral PAS research, Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Verona.



3.1.1 English in the World

The awareness-raising activities about speakers of English as a native (ENL), second (ESL) and foreign (EFL) language in the world are generally based on a geopolitical or tree-like map that students would fill in during class activities; at times concepts related to L1, L2, ENL/ESL/EFL/ELF, mostly in connection to Kachru's three circles, are also explored. In some cases this kind of activity was part of the culture section of textbooks, at times with an accompanying reading passage providing some general information about the global spread of English. Some proposals set forward by the trainees also include references to videos related to varieties of English to be shown in class with the aim of raising awareness of its diversification. Some activities and lesson plans include reflection tasks connected to the presence of English in the students' environment, aimed at fostering 'noticing' processes for loanwords from English into Italian, or lexical items currently used in English but originally coming from other languages, as well as on the presence of English in advertising, music and the printed media. Awareness of different languages, and language families in general, is proposed in two cases, one with a Indo-European languages family tree, then presenting a similar reflection on the development of English in the world, and the other with reference to the Omniglot website⁶ (PAS 2012-13) including some information about the development of the English language with examples of different pronunciations (British, American, Australian as well as South African and Indian English).

3.1.2 Varieties in World Englishes

Several didactic activities comprised varieties of Englishes, both in the Inner and in the Outer Circle. Generally we find tasks connected to the Inner Circle, such as American English lexical differences; Australian English as well as New Zealand with hints to Maori (the *Haka* dance), and South African slang. Web resources, in the great majority of cases videos, are indicated as a point of departure for different accents as songs in the case of British, American and Australian varieties⁷. We also find a video on multicultural Britain⁸ and one⁹ mentioning slang expressions in South African English, citing the 11 languages spoken in South Africa, for which students are asked to take notes of the words mentioned in the video and to match them with the British English equivalent.

References to Outer Circle Englishes are frequently based on web resources, too, for example the animated video "The English language in 30 accents"¹⁰ (PAS 2014-15) that, although at times representing stereotypical views, constitutes an interesting starting point to raise awareness of the different accents with which English is spoken in the world. Indian English is included in quite a few cases, using videos featuring Indian English¹¹ (in one case a video featuring Apu, a character of Indian origins from *The Simpsons*¹², is presented (PAS 2013-14), or a short telephone conversation related to food¹³, as well as an extract of a video introducing the Project Voices of India¹⁴ (PAS 2013-14). Two proposals include activities related to phonetic awareness as to accents, also involving an Indian student in the class – in several cases students of non-Italian origin are actively involved as linguistic and cultural resources and invited to share with the class their experiences with English, and introducing cultural differences.

Several lesson plans refer to films related to different cultures (e.g. *Bride and Prejudice*; *Bend it like Beckham*, in one case in conjunction with *Slum Dog Millionaire*), and on two cases extracts from the films are used to identify differences, such as, for example, a noticing task related to the pronunciation of dental fricatives /ð/ and /θ/ (PAS 2013-14, PAS 2014-15). It is also suggested that headlines from newspapers

⁶ <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/english.htm>. Last visited 10/12/2015.

⁷ Australian English: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwAd_ag9Q0E;

British English <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oncmL69ZEJ8>;

American English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ss0kFNUP4P4>. All websites last visited 10/12/2015.

⁸ <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/word-street/multicultural-britain>. Last visited 10/12/2015.

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4v4JRHmdayw&hd=1>. Last visited 10/12/2015.

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtB1W8zkY5A>. Last visited 10/12/2015.

¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vk9i6-FDDE8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoF4i77kPak>. Last visited 10/12/2015.

¹² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXccMf1cBgQ>. Last visited 10/12/2015.

¹³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDB70IYP_A. Last visited 10/12/2015.

¹⁴ <http://www.voicesofindia.org/>. Last visited 10/12/2015.



around the world may be used to highlight differences in the lexicon. A textbook passage mentioning the different languages spoken in Kenya is proposed, with some activities concerning the Swahili language, and another one on ‘Chai Tea’ (Tomkinson and Lee 64) containing several localized lexical elements (PAS 2013-14).

3.1.3 EIL/ELF

Several didactic activities, particularly the ones developed in Academic Year 2014/15, contain references to web video resources with bilingual speakers of English, where people from different L1s talk, for example, about typical dishes in their countries, or what they have for lunch and dinner, with the explicit aim of exposing students to L2/L2 interactions that are largely missing from existing published materials. In one case, an overt focus on communication strategies (paraphrasing and describing lexical items connected to different food around the world) is also made. It is worthy of note that findings from the questionnaire surveys reveal that the majority of respondents are favourable to the inclusion of different varieties of English and exemplifications from EIL/ELF settings in coursebooks.

3.1.4 English and Multicultural Societies

As to English and multicultural societies, it should be mentioned that, despite the fact that most textbooks examined by the trainee teachers are almost exclusively based on British English, in several cases cultural topics include multicultural views; this can be noticed particularly in connection to festivals and festivities, like for instance Boishakhi Mela, the Chinese New Year and the Notting Hill Carnival in London, with activities about various aspects of different cultures. These sections in textbooks are often used as a starting point for the development of activities focusing on cultural specificities and differences, tackling topics such as cinema (Bollywood in particular), world citizenship, sports, food and festivals. This area can also be seen in relation to the intercultural orientation present in the Italian Ministry guideline document *Indicazioni Nazionali per il Curricolo della Scuola dell'infanzia e del primo Ciclo di Istruzione*¹⁵, pointing to the need to include ‘otherness’ in terms of (inter)cultural awareness since primary school.

These exemplifications show how these trainee teachers have positively taken into consideration the reflection points provided during the Module taking on a WE and ELF-informed approach. On the whole, these teachers seem to have positively built on the awareness-raising aims of the course to move beyond their ‘methodological comfort zone’ as connected to their previous experience both as learners and teachers of English, taking into account possible ‘new’ perspectives.

All the activities that were developed appear to constitute a positive starting point not only to raise students’ awareness of the current plurality of English, but also as a first step to include in teaching and learning materials the current plurality of Englishes, thus showing a shift in perspective towards a more inclusive and representative approach.

It should also be noticed that a connection with the multilingual and multicultural environment that characterizes many Italian (as well as European) schools has been taken into account in several cases, either by inviting students of non-Italian origin to class in order to provide exemplifications of Outer Circle (e.g. Indian) English accents, for example in commenting and explaining the meaning of localized words and expressions (e.g. ‘Chai Wallah’ as part of activities related to the film “Slum Dog Millionaire”, D. Boyle, PAS 2013-14), or in the inclusion of multicultural points of view by drawing on their students’ experiences.

A broader perspective in ELT practices seems thus to have actively been taken into consideration, one that acknowledges the changed scenarios where English is employed nowadays, by creating activities that take into account the principles outlined by McKay (2012a, 81) according to which “EIL materials should be relevant to the domains in which English is used in the particular learning context”, should “include examples of the diversity of English varieties used today” and “need to exemplify L2-L2 interactions”. In selecting the materials and devising WE- and ELF-informed lesson plans, these trainee teachers geared them to their teaching situations, contexts and learners, thus contextualizing their proposals both in practical terms and in keeping with the idea that “EIL should be taught in a way that respects the local culture of learning” (cf. also McKay 2002, 2012b).

¹⁵ Cf. http://www.indicazioninazionali.it/documenti_Indicazioni_nazionali/Indicazioni_Annali_Definitivo.pdf. Last visited 10/12/2015.



In Project 2 words were also collected during a whole class field trip, in one case in the block where the school is set (Figure 3), and in another case visiting a local supermarket as part of a larger class project on food (Figure 4).



Figure 3: English words in the environment (Class 3) Figure 4: English at the Supermarket (Class 2)

Another class included exemplifications from the presence of English on T-shirts (Figure 5), and the children's reflections also included personal experiences, such as music, as exemplified in Figure 6 below.



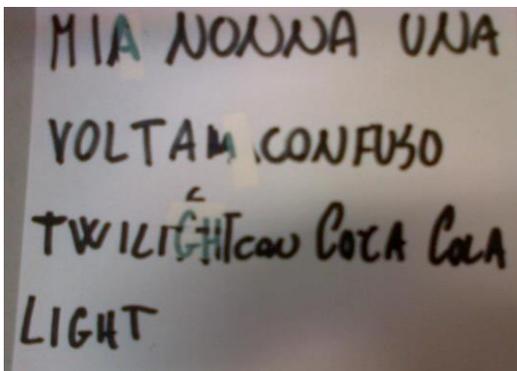
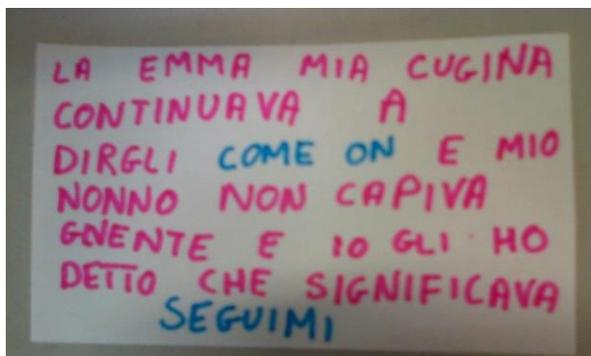
Figure 5: English on T-shirts (Class 1) Figure 6: English in the environment (Class 3)

In Project 2 this activity was followed by a guided interview carried out by each child with his/her parents and grandparents: after transcribing on a template ten words of their choice among the ones that had been collected, the children's task was to ask the two different generations whether they knew the words and their meaning in Italian. Generally, it turned out that a greater number of words were familiar, in their meaning too, to parents than to grandparents; in one class, parents knew 88 out of the 107 words that had been retrieved by the children, while grandparents were familiar with only 25 (Class 2); examples of words older generations were familiar with are *cake*, *rice*, *chocolate*, *coffee*, *princess*, *tattoo* and *light*, while words like *chips*, *chili*, *ice-cream*, *volleyball*, *basket* and *noodles* were mostly unknown (Figures 7 and 8 below). The activity was then followed by a class guided reflection on the sociolinguistic reasons and the implications of these findings,



that is, of how and why the global spread of English is increasingly reflected in the linguistic landscape and in the media of countries where English is a foreign language, too.

During this activity in Project 1, words from other languages were also retrieved (e.g. Sinhalese, Romanian, Arabic), in particular by bilingual children whose families were of non-Italian origin, thus providing the opportunity for further reflection on the increasingly multilingual composition of our societies.



Figures 7 and Figure 8: notes from class reflection on the guided interviews (Class 1)

4.2 “Where Do People Speak English in the World?”: Englishes, ELF

As a follow-up of Step 1a, Step 1a.2 was aimed at raising awareness of the different varieties of English in the world with reference to territories where it is spoken as a native, a second and a foreign language, as well as of its lingua franca role.

With the visual support of world maps children were guided to identify the ENL, ESL and EFL territories. The great majority of pupils, especially in Grades 4 and 5, could appropriately identify these areas, also drawing on their first-hand experiences (travelling, relatives, their countries of origin, previous knowledge). Pupils who had previously lived or attended school in Outer Circle countries (e.g. India, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Ghana and other African countries) contributed by reporting about the role of English as an official language, and of the ways it mixes with local languages in more informal contexts; when telling about the languages spoken at home, their bilingual experiences clearly emerged as an asset (Vettorel 2010). Paper world maps were then coloured differently, either individually or in groups, according to the English-speaking areas as previously identified (Figures 9 and 10 below).



Figure 9 – English in the world – Maps (Class 1)



Figure 10– English in the world – Maps (Class 2)



Awareness of the role English plays as a lingua franca of communication was fostered taking the children's first-hand experiences as a starting point, too. Through a guided conversation with the class led by the teacher, children were asked to think how they would communicate with people who do not speak their mother tongue. French, Spanish and English were mentioned in all classes, and attention was drawn to the fact that, given its widespread presence, it is mostly English that constitutes a common lingua franca allowing communication among people of different linguacultures. Pupils were then asked to think of situations in which they had used English to communicate in real-life, out-of-school contexts, for example foreign people they may have met on different occasions. Among the contexts they most frequently mentioned we find holidays, airports, airplanes, emigrant relatives, as well as personal experiences in their environment such as meeting tourists, as exemplified in Figures 11-13 below. Several children whose families were of non-Italian origin said they often speak English at home or at their friends' homes, especially when their families originally come from Outer Circle countries (Figure 14); these were particularly numerous in Class 2 (Ghana, Nigeria and China) and Class 3 (Sri Lanka, Ghana, as well as Romania and Morocco).

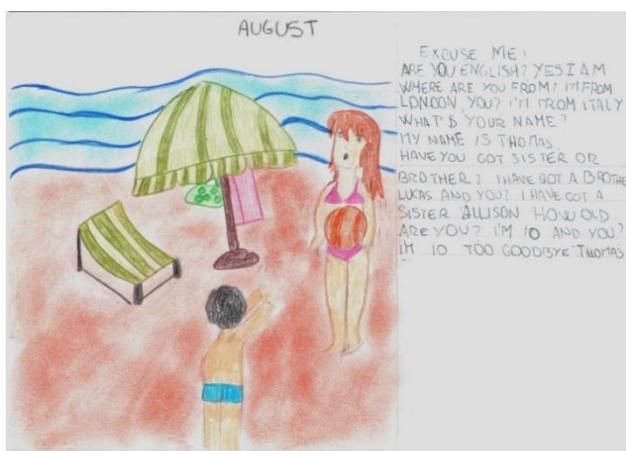


Figure 11 – ELF at the seaside (Class 1)



Figure 12 English in the pupils' environment (Class 3)

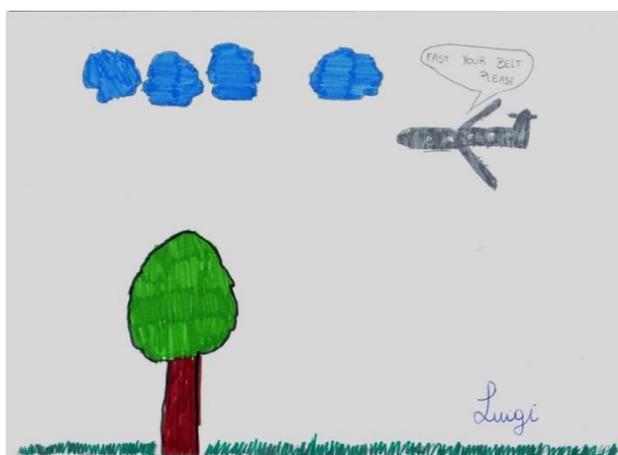


Figure 13 – English on the plane (Class 3)



Figure 14 English at a friend's home (Class 3)

The activities carried out in these phases of the Projects show that these children seem aware that English is spoken with different roles in different parts of the world; they are also aware that it is widely used as a shared means of communication in internationally-set contexts, among people of different mother tongues, even though “we do not speak it at home” (children's comments, researcher diary¹⁸, Class 1). The awareness-raising and reflection activities that were developed seem thus particularly important in order to

¹⁸ In Project 2 the researcher participated as an external observer in this phase for all the 3 classes involved in the activities.



foster since primary school a ‘noticing’ attitude in relation to the different roles that English plays today. As mentioned, the activities included in the two Projects were all planned and carried out in cooperative Action Research with the primary teachers of the schools involved, and can thus represent a possible approach to awareness-raising pedagogical actions in class. While clearly tailored to the age of the students who took part in both Projects, these proposals could constitute a starting point for other educational contexts, too, with due adaptations.

The activities we have illustrated were not only aimed at raising awareness of the plurality of functions, roles and varieties that English has developed into, but – and most importantly – to create connections with the student’s experiences and with their environment. In particular, such activities can:

- foster awareness of diversity and of the role of lingua franca of communication that English plays today starting from the students’ own experiences;
- promote critical awareness in relation to the learners’ first hand experiences with the language in the Linguistic Landscape, the media etc, also in connection to the socio-cultural and linguistic changes that took place over the last decades;
- foster awareness that English, as well as all natural languages, change, adapt, are appropriated, and used differently in different contexts.

Furthermore, the inclusion of experiences of students speaking languages other than Italian at school can support not only awareness of different varieties of English in the Outer Circle in particular, but also enhance awareness of linguacultural diversity and bi/plurilingualism as a positive element;

As shown by the didactic examples - devised by trainee teachers - illustrated in the first part of this paper, similar proposals for older learners can be devised and put into practice within a plurilithic approach to Englishes and EIL/ELF in ELT. For instance, besides fostering awareness of the current diversity of English users and usage in the world in linguacultural terms, further activities could focus upon the exploitation of materials pedagogically aimed at ‘noticing’ the kind of communication strategies used in WE and ELF interactions, with reflections on how they can be employed for effective communication (e.g. Mariani; Friedrich; House; Seidlhofer 2011; Lopriore and Vettorel 2015); on how plurilingual L2 users exploit their plurilingual resources in the creation of ‘unusual’ lexical items and expressions (e.g. Seidlhofer 2011; Hülmbauer 2007, 2009; Seidlhofer 2011) and, more generally, on the language changes brought about by globalization processes, including extended language contact and multilingual superdiversity (e.g. Cogo; Vettorel 2014a). Indeed, developing skills of accommodation and adaptation to the diverse contexts and speakers of English nowadays would prepare learners for effective communication. In Kubota’s words, “[a]s multilingual zones are expanding in the globalized world, teaching EIL needs to move away from the traditional monolingual and normative orientation. Monolingualism is not only functionally limited in responding to actual border-crossing communication demands in both global and local communities, but also philosophically detrimental as it perpetuates the power relation that divides English-speaking and non-English-speaking populations” (67).

5. Conclusions

The current pluralization of the English language calls for a shift in perspective in ELT in order to prepare today’s learners to use English in its diversity. Such a shift is not an easy one: as Matsuda and Friedrich point out, “one of the problems with current approaches to the selection of the instructional variety is that the process is often taken for granted” and “American or British English is selected simply because picking one of the two is the way it has always been” (23).

Providing opportunities, first of all in teacher education, to develop awareness of the current sociolinguistic realities of Englishes and ELF can equip teachers with knowledge and reflective tools, allowing them to make informed choices and go beyond representations of models of English that are uniquely based on Anglophone models. As we have seen, English is nowadays used in an array of contexts to communicate and has developed into nativised varieties and ELF usage that are as real as ‘native speaker’ English varieties. Once teachers become aware of this plurality, they may deem it relevant to include exemplification of Englishes and ELF in their (everyday) pedagogical practices, in order to prepare learners for communication through English in the ‘real’ world. In Matsuda’s words, “if students do not understand the



significance of the uses of English among non-native speakers, they may not take full advantage of the opportunities that accompany the use of EIL. Instead, students may assume that English belongs to the Inner Circle, and that others are expected to conform to Inner-Circle norms and remain in a peripheral position in international communication in English” (2012a, 171-172).

The experiences illustrated in this paper, one related to teacher education and the other to a project carried out in collaborative Action Research with some primary school teachers in Italy, provide an exemplification of how incorporating a shift in perspective in ELT, one that takes into account the current and deep changes in relation to the English language, can be realized through a shift in perspective in pedagogical practices. As we have seen, after attending the course teachers appeared willing to experiment with materials and activities within a more plurilithic perspective, acknowledging first of all the importance of including actual experiences of their ‘learners’ as L2/ELF users, promoting awareness of such experiences, that are closely connected to the pervasive presence of English today in different domains and across lingua-cultural boundaries. The same can be said for the projects that were carried out with primary school children, who were encouraged to acknowledge the different realities of Englishes, and to critically reflect on both the pervasive presence of English in their environment and on their uses of English ‘in the world’ outside the language classroom.

Both experiences can be seen as exemplifying starting points from which to develop possible, localized and locally-relevant projects aiming to raise awareness of how a WE- and ELF-informed approach can actually be put into practice. An additional advantage of moving away from a monolithic, Inner-Circle-focused perspective is that of fostering awareness of languages not as fixed entities, but as changing living ones, that are shaped by use, users and influenced both by processes of language creativity and language change (e.g. Mauranen 2012, 2015; Widdowson 2012, 2015). As Barrats puts it, “learning and using a language involve coping with the constant variation and expanding universe of a language over the course of a lifetime. Hence, learners must be taught how to take ownership of their own learning [and use] long after they stop taking classes” (111) something that, I would add, applies not only to their future needs but also to their simultaneous roles of EFL *learners* and ELF *users*.

In this perspective, the plurality in World Englishes, as Saraceni highlights, “should represent a general *attitude*, a *mindset* of scholars, teachers and students alike, who are *not* happy with blind, a-critical adherence to pre-conceived, never-challenged ideas but are willing to question them and, if necessary, develop them further to replace them with new ones altogether” (Saraceni, 185, italics in original). The same can be said for ELF, that undoubtedly questions well-entrenched conceptualizations of languages, standardness, nativeness, language ‘ownership’ and the like, both in second language acquisition and language teaching; similar calls for reflection can thus be made, first of all towards acknowledgement and respect for diversity (and creativity as an appropriation process, Widdowson 2003, 2012; Seidlhofer 2011). Last but not least, moving towards the acknowledgement of this plurality in a WE and EIL/ELF-aware perspective in ELT would mean creating a connection between the ways in which English is developing and used today, equipping learners with language-awareness tools that could effectively be put into practice in ‘real’ communication.

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