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ELF and translation and interpreting: common ground, common interest, common cause

GUY COOK

Abstract

The study of ELF and of translation have been conducted with little reference to each other, yet they have a great deal of common ground, and would benefit from greater recognition of their common interests. Both are concerned with crosslinguistic communication in the unprecedented linguistic landscape of the 21st century. Both are central to the understanding and amelioration of contemporary problems. Both can be regarded as branches of applied linguistics. In addition, translation into English is increasingly both by and for non-native speakers. Having surveyed these similarities, the article explores how concepts and theories from translation studies are relevant to the study of ELF: notably the notions of nativisation and foreignisation, and polysystems theory, which conceives of change beginning in the interaction of systems and at their peripheries. In conclusion, the article discusses the range of crucial contemporary issues to which both ELF and translation are relevant and central, but points out some imbalances and omissions on both sides. It is suggested that given their importance in international and intranational issues of all kinds, and their relevance to other social sciences, the two fields of enquiry, expanded in range and working together, could be central rather than peripheral to applied linguistics.

Keywords: English as a lingua franca; translation studies; applied linguistics; nativisation and foreignisation; polysystem theory

ELF (английский язык как лингва-франка) и письменный и устный перевод: общие черты, общие интересы, общие цели

Аннотация

Исследования в области ELF (английский язык как лингва-франка) и переводоведения происходят в отрыве друг от друга, но оба эти предмета имеют много общего и могли бы существенно выиграть от большего признания их общих интересов. В центре внимания этих двух областей знаний находится кросс-лингвистическое общение в беспрецедентном языковом ландшафте 21 века. И ELF, и переводоведение играют ключевую роль для понимания и решения сегодняшних проблем. Обе области исследований можно рассматривать как ветви прикладной лингвистики. Кроме того, перевод на английский язык все больше осуществляется силами и в интересах лиц, не являющихся его носителями. Рассмотрев эти общие черты, автор статьи анализирует то, в какой степени различные понятия и теории из области переводоведения (translation studies) имеют актуальность для изучения ELF: в частности, понятия нативизации и форенизации и теория полисистем, согласно которой изменения берут свое начало во взаимодействии систем и на их периферии. В заключении, в статье обсуждается, как ELF и перевод соотносятся с кругом важнейших современных вопросов, и отмечаются существующие дисбалансы и пробелы в этих областях исследований. Учитывая важность этих дисциплин для международных и внутринациональных вопросов разного рода и их актуальность для других социальных наук, автор предлагает, чтобы эти две области исследований, расширенные и в комбинации друг с другом, были переведены с периферийных позиций в прикладной лингвистике в ее основное русло.

Ключевые слова: Английский как лингва-франка; переводоведение; прикладная лингвистика; нативизация и форенизация; теория полисистем

1. Bridging (sub-)disciplines

It is an irony of contemporary academic life that despite exhortations to cross-disciplinarity, there is an increasing contrary tendency toward specialization, and a consequent danger that academics remain unaware of work relevant to their enquiries, not only in neighbouring disciplines, but even within their own. As the demands for depth of specialized knowledge increase, the inclination to look beyond boundaries simultaneously decreases. In an age when technology facilitates the collection and analysis of vast amounts of data and yields burgeoning quantities of publications on ever more finely defined subfields, it becomes harder to be either a generalist or a polymath. It nevertheless remains

true that there are considerable intellectual advantages to “bridging”: taking insights from one area of enquiry into another, or finding common ground and common cause between academic enterprises which have previously proceeded in isolation. In addition, specialization to the detriment of general knowledge militates against the kind of holistic view which academics in applied disciplines need if they are to contribute effectively to policy making and public debate. The fragmentation of enquiry brings with it the risk that academic disciplines will become mere service industries to politicians and business interests, rather than active contributors, leaving overviews and decisions increasingly to politicians and business people (Widdowson 1998). In the study of ELF, which seeks not only to describe and theorize the current state of English in the world, but also to promote recognition of equal status among its speakers, this danger of fragmentation, and the need to maintain a broad view, is particularly important.

Two areas of enquiry which could benefit from greater mutual knowledge are the study of translating and interpreting (hereafter “translation” for short) and the study of ELF (hereafter “ELF” for short). There are many ways in which the work of contemporary translators and interpreters between English and another language inevitably and increasingly involves ELF. Firstly, many are non-native English speakers themselves, and face the same insecurities and prejudices as other non-native speaking professionals working in a climate where native English is regarded as best. Secondly, English source texts for translation are increasingly likely to be spoken or written by non-native speakers of English, and equally the audience for translations into English is increasingly likely to be non-native speakers. Thirdly, in a world where increasing numbers of people speak English, receivers of translations frequently understand the source text without an absolute need for translation. In general, however, despite these common interests, the two fields have paid little attention to each other. There is little mention of ELF or language teaching in surveys of translation (e.g. Munday 2012), or of translating and interpreting in surveys and discussions of ELF (e.g. Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2011), though there are signs that this may change. Hewson (2009), Albi-Mikasa (2010), Seidlhofer (2010), Baker (2011), and Mauranen (2012) all address the relation between the two fields.

While this journal’s readers may well be familiar with ideas about translation, their main focus is likely to be on ELF, and any similarities between the two fields consequently not at the forefront of their attention. This article therefore is primarily about translation studies and how they are relevant to ELF. As in any bridging exercise, a stepping back from current detailed preoccupations is required to see the common ground. Yet once such a perspective is achieved, common interests, in both senses of the term, should, I believe, be forcefully apparent.

2. Translation and ELF: similarities

Firstly, and fundamentally, both are academic pursuits concerned with communication across language barriers: translation is one means of achieving such communication; speaking a *lingua franca* is another. Secondly, they are both also of necessity concerned with the unprecedented linguistic habitat of the 21st century in which the number of non-native speakers of English far exceeds the number of its native speakers (Crystal 2006, 2008, 2012; Schneider 2011; Seargeant 2012) and is constantly increasing. These facts, which have been extensively discussed in the ELF literature, also have profound implications for translators and interpreters who work from English into another language, as the ever increasing number of people who can understand English makes the need for translation from English increasingly vulnerable to redundancy (Albl-Mikasa 2010).¹ Thirdly, the study of translation and ELF are both, at least in part, branches of the same discipline: applied linguistics. This is not only for the superficial reason that they feature in applied linguistics conferences, journals, courses and introductions. It is because they are both concerned, to quote a much cited definition of applied linguistics, with “the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue” (Brumfit 1995: 27): such as, *inter alia*, what constitutes good translation practice, and what model of English is most appropriate for contemporary English language use and learning. These real-world problems which translation and ELF respectively address however are ones whose nature has substantially changed under the impact of accelerated globalisation, so that these problems now have many aspects which may be considered to some degree new, and consequently also demand, to some degree, new theories and descriptions. The involvement of both areas of enquiry with these new phenomena makes them not only a part of applied linguistics, but also at its cutting edge, potentially addressing the relation between language and the most urgent contemporary social, political, economic, and environmental problems of our times (in ways to which I shall return in the conclusion of this article) and thus potentially contributing to these problems’ amelioration.

3. A common transition from product to process

In addition the two areas of enquiry have similar family histories. ELF might be characterised as the disobedient child of two rather reactionary academic parents, variationist sociolinguistics (Seidlhofer 2011: 69–81) and EFL pedagogic theory (Seidlhofer 2011: 190–194). In a similar way what is now referred to as “translation studies” (following Holmes 1988[1972] and Bassnett 1980) has been born from rebellion against the preoccupations of its ancient pro-

genitor “translation theory” (Gentzler 2001: 77–106). These breaks² and the reasons for them constitute a further point of commonality for the two specialisations.

The distinction between translation theory and translation studies is complex and contentious, but useful nevertheless. The perennial preoccupations of translation *theory* have been the nature of equivalence between an original and its translation and (when applied didactically to practice) the relative merits of those translations which keep as close as possible to the details of the original (notwithstanding the immense problem of defining “closeness” of course) and those versions which depart from such original detail but claim nevertheless to be true to it in some more general way. This same binary opposition has surfaced in different terminologies, under the auspices of rhetoric, literary criticism, and linguistics, but has remained essentially the same. Thus the famous opposition of “word for word” translation against the preservation of “style and force” by Cicero (Copeland 1995: 33), the rival claims of “literal” (e.g. Nabokov 1964) and “free” (e.g. Lowell 1962) translation, and the opposition of “linguistics/semantic” approaches to “pragmatic/functional” approaches in the “scientific” approach to translation of mid-20th-century linguistics (e.g. Nida 1964a) all contrast two different kinds of result. Whatever the terminology, however, the irresolvable nature of the problem endures: that gain at one level will be loss at another, the most obvious and well documented case of such loss being in the translation of poetry where the preservation of the “low level” but quintessential phonological characteristics of rhythm and rhyme is unlikely to be compatible with the quest for “high level” pragmatic or generic equivalence (Lefevere 1975). The descriptive and theoretical focus throughout the centuries has predominantly been then upon the translation and the original as pieces of language, viewed in static terms as texts, with even supposedly functional approaches (e.g. Catford 1965) dealing with translation in this reified and disembodied way.

What is analysed in such studies is the *product* only, the end result of the translation process and not the process itself. (Bassnett 1980: 3)

Underlying this long debate has also been, sometimes implicitly sometimes explicitly, a quest for the Holy Grail of a formula to yield the “best” results.

Translation *studies*, on the other hand, has moved away from comparison of translation and source text as static products towards the process of translation in its social and political context. It has moved in other words from a preoccupation with what a text means, to what is meant by its speaker/writer, and what it might mean to its listener/reader – that is to say from translation as text to translation as discourse in the sense defined by Widdowson (2004: 1–11). In this it has distanced itself both from literary theories of translation which merely assert a particular point of view, and purportedly “scientific” ones

which claim to demonstrate their validity with reference to linguistics and semiotics. As Gentzler describes it:

Translation studies began with a call to suspend temporarily the attempts to define a theory of translation, trying first to learn more about translation procedures. Instead of trying to solve the philosophic problem of the nature of meaning, translation studies scholars became concerned with how meaning travels. Most characteristic about the new field was its insistence on openness to interdisciplinary approaches: having literary scholars work together with logicians, linguists together with philosophers. Limiting distinctions such as right and wrong, formal and dynamic, literal and free, art and science, theory and practice, receded in importance. (Gentzler 2001: 78–79)

Given the intractability of the problem of what makes a “good” translation in any absolute terms, translation studies has favoured attention to what makes a good translation given certain purposes in a specific context. Van den Broeck, for example, one of the founders of translation studies, draws upon the distinction between “types” and “tokens” to re-evaluate the concept of “correspondence”, legitimating the existence of several versions (“additional instances”) of an original (“prime instance”), shifting the focus of translation studies from a “one-to-one” to a “many to one” notion of correspondence (Broeck 1978: 34) – rather as in current ELF thinking there are many variations in the use of English, each valid in its own context without need to refer to a superordinate correct English from which they derive. As in ELF, the focus for translation studies is very much upon success relative to context rather than in any absolute terms, or by reference to a pre-existing algorithm.

[T]he variable approach acknowledged that the object being investigated is not something fixed in the real world to be scientifically investigated, nor is it the object of higher transcendental truth to be revealed in a mystical way. Rather, the objects of study are the translations themselves, which are by definition mediations subject to the theoretical manipulation and prevailing artistic norms. (Gentzler 2001: 79)

There has moreover, following the influential work of Toury (1985, 1995), been a movement away from prescriptive to “descriptive translation studies.” In short, translation studies presents itself as having moved away from a largely futile quest for a static rule-bound model of translation which can be taught in absolute terms, towards one which is variable and relative.

In practice the difference between translation theory and studies is much subtler, and there are certainly continuities and overlaps between the two. As when parents disown their offspring, or children declare their independence, the denial of resemblance and continuity is not as absolute as claimed. The posited hallmarks of translation studies, such as attention to process rather than product, evaluation of the translator rather than the translation, allowance of multiple context-dependent translations, can all be found in earlier translation theory (e.g. Nida 1964b). Conversely translation studies continues to investi-

gate the parameters of equivalence in ways which draw upon much earlier work in translation theory. Nevertheless, and whatever one may think of the two terms *theory* and *studies* as rival disciplinary designations, there is a real difference of emphasis between the two which makes the distinction valid and useful.³ In translation studies there is a greater focus on the pragmatics of discourse enactment, and thus upon the circumstances and needs of translators in particular acts of translation, with a concomitant concern for contextual factors that regulate which encoded features of the language are put to use, rather than the semantics of the text.

Scholars of ELF may see many parallels between these shifts of emphasis in translation studies and their own approach to English. Ways of evaluating translations relative to context find echoes in ELF criteria for establishing what counts as valid English. The implications of translation studies for translation practice are mirrored by those arising from ELF for language teaching and testing. Reflecting the rejection of abstract models of good translation by translation studies, ELF too is less concerned with any disembodied idealisations of English than with what works for actual speakers in specific circumstances. However, this is much bigger than a simple replacement of various descriptions of ENL with a new one of ELF (rather as a new dictionary might replace an old one). It is rather a challenge to the whole notion of treating abstract systematisations (however valid they may be for certain types of linguistic enquiry) as if they were real models of any individual's or group's actual usage. As Seidlhofer (2011: 58–61) points out, the representations of standard ENLs in grammars and dictionaries, including those based upon corpus findings, do not correspond to the usage or knowledge of any actual individual. In their reconceptualisation of the object of their study, both ELF scholarship and translation studies are in tune with many current philosophical developments and a paradigm change which spans many other disciplines. The general shift is congruent for example with the ideas of the influential philosopher Gilles Deleuze,⁴ who is interested in the tendency of life to lead to becoming and transformation, not what something is in its *actual* terms but rather in its potential to become something else. For Deleuze, we cannot step outside of life and gain a transcendent perspective on it. Life can only be lived and understood *immanently*. For this reason, Deleuze is suspicious of reifications concepts which 'hover' above life. In his view, to understand any concept, we need to know how it is being used immanently, how it is used in actual situations (Deleuze 1990). Could such views not summarise and justify the new paradigms in both translation studies and ELF? Both are concerned with immanent use and eschew reification. For ELF that reification is static models of ENLs which are replaced by a focus upon the successful use of English for communication; for translation studies the reification is translation conceived as a set of texts or rules which is replaced by a focus on translation as discourse.

4. Foreignisation versus domestication

A further point of congruence between ELF and translation studies is the tension between what the latter dubs “nativisation” and “foreignisation”. Although these terms come from translation, and are not used in discussions of ELF, they could easily and usefully be appropriated to reflect the opposed strategies of an English language pedagogy which seeks to nativise learners into an English-speaking community by offering an ENL as their goal, and one which allows them, from a native English speaker perspective, to maintain their foreign identity in English through ELF. While in translation studies the terms are used to refer to texts and/or strategies, in the world of language teaching and learning they are applicable to people. It could be said that conventional EFL seeks to domesticate English-language learners, cutting them off in their studies from their own language and identity, while an EFL which validates ELF as a goal allows the maintenance of difference.

Like most issues relating to translation, debate over the relative merits of “nativisation” and “foreignisation” has a long history. Though the terms themselves may be new, the rival concepts are not. They were for example neatly summarised by Goethe when he wrote:

There are two maxims in translation: one requires that the author of a foreign nation be brought across to us in such a way that we can look on him as ours. The other requires that we ourselves should cross over into what is foreign and adapt ourselves to its conditions, it is due realities, and its use of language. (quoted in Lefevere 1992: 78)

And the same dichotomy occurs in Matthew Arnold’s assault on Henry Newman’s scholarly, precious, literal, and therefore alien translation of Homer

On one side it is said that the translation ought to be such “that the reader should, if possible, forget that it is a translation at all, and be lulled into the illusion that he is reading an original work – something original (if translation be in English) from an English hand. (quoted in Lefevere 1992: 68)

Related dichotomies are those between the ‘visibility’ versus the ‘invisibility’ of the translator (Venuti 1986, 1995), and the degree to which translation should be ‘overt’ (i.e. evidently a translation) or ‘covert’ (i.e. trying to draw attention away from the fact that translation) (House 1977, 1997). These binary oppositions are related to each other and to the debate pitting proponents of free or literal translation against each other. The connection between all four binary oppositions (literal/free, foreignised/nativised, visible/invisible, overt/covert) is that a literal translation will appear more foreign, more visible, and more overt than one which is free. This is very clearly the case for example in Ezra Pound’s translation of *The Seafarer* which, to preserve the alliteration,

syntax, rhyme and even *cæsura* of the original Anglo-Saxon, includes lines such as:

chafing sighs
Hew my heart round and hunger begot
Mere-weary mood. Lest man know not
That he on dry land loveliest liveth,
List how I care – wretched on ice-cold sea,
Weathered the winter.
(Pound 2012: 24)

Literary translation, however, though often the centre of attention in older translation theory can seem far from the day-to-day concerns of many translators and interpreters, and less at the centre of attention in contemporary translation studies which is very much concerned with such everyday contexts. In such contexts, one might say that the nativisation position has very much carried the day, and that the contemporary lay view of a “good translation” is that it should be nativised to the point of invisibility. The fact that they are reading or hearing a translation should be as far as possible from the receivers’ minds, and the presence of the translator/interpreter as unobtrusive as possible.⁵ In a similar way, the proficiency of a non-native speaker of English is conventionally measured by their approximation to native-speaker norms. To be judged successful, their non-nativeness, their history as a language learner, and any vestige of their own language and non-native identity, should remain invisible.

These issues of foreignisation, visibility, and overttness have been a major focus of attention in the translation studies literature over the last two decades or so. They pose some difficult choices, reminiscent of the insoluble balance of loss and gain inevitable in the seeking of equivalence between source and translation. The issues are highly charged politically, as they implicate the status of non-native speakers in an increasingly English speaking world, and the degree to which their non-English cultural identities can be preserved in English. On the one hand, translation which nativises can be accused of seeing everything, rather as Disney adaptations of the world’s legends and fairytales do, in English-speaking cultural terms. On the other hand, maintaining a foreignised style can be seen as a way of keeping non-native authors on the margins, condemned to be seen as quirks and quaint curiosities (Liu 2007). The issues are not dissimilar to the much discussed dilemma which confronted the early post-colonial writers, and their choice between writing in the colonial language and reaching an international audience, thus potentially making common cause with other post-colonial contexts, or writing in their own language and restricting their audience accordingly. Thus while Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o rejected writing in English in favour of his own language Gĩkũyũ as the only medium in which to find his authentic voice, Nigerian author Chinua

Achebe argued that the English language and not the African writer should be the one to bend, adding that the African writer should *not* attempt to write English as a native speaker might:

. . . my answer to the question: Can an African ever learn English well enough to be able to use it effectively in creative writing? Is certainly yes. If on the other hand you ask: Can he ever learn to use it as a native speaker? I should say. I hope not. It is neither necessary nor desirable for him to be able to do so. The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use. The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry out his peculiar experience. (Achebe 1965: 29)

In literary discourse, however, it could be argued, departure from the norm can be particularly effective and, as emphasised in stylistics (see Cook 1994; Leech and Short 2007: 39–46) native-speaker writers often deviate both from prescriptive rules, and from predictable or typical usage of the kind identified by corpus based grammars of English (e.g. Carter and McCarthy 2006). Beyond literary discourse, however, the situation may be very different and this is perhaps one of many instances where insights from the study or theory of literary translation may not readily transfer to more everyday contexts of the kind in which most translators work. In such everyday contexts, both the pressure to conform and the penalties for resistance may be much greater.

This implicit demand for nativisation and cult of invisibility is as much a problem for interpreters and translators as it can be for non-native speakers of English. Any attempts to argue in favour of more overt, foreignised, invisible translation inevitably come up against popular and popularised prejudice, just as do arguments for the recognition of ELF (Seidlhofer 2011: 28–33). A vivid example of the prevalence of these popular ideas, and a challenge to the *status quo*, is provided by Jieun Lee (2009) in a study of consecutive interpreting from Korean into English in an Australian courtroom. She explains how certain characteristics of Korean grammar (such as the frequency of ellipsis, the lack of definiteness markers, and the absence of subject verb agreement for person, gender, or number) often make translation into English difficult. She gives numerous examples of instances where rival interpretations are valid, and where making the right choice is crucial to the witness' evidence being correctly understood. An obvious strategy for the interpreter would be to seek clarification from the witness – and this is sometimes done surreptitiously while talking to the witness in their own language – or to explain the problem to the judge. Yet, disturbingly, when one interpreter did try to adopt this latter strategy, they were ordered dismissively by the judge to “Just translate!”, prompting Lee to observe that an interpreter who ever draws attention to her-

self, or the process of translation in which she is engaged, runs the gauntlet of being categorised as failing at her job. Is this not rather similar to the situation of the English speaker whose non-native identity is constantly evident and is thus branded as an inadequate English language learner? Such an English speaker is characterised not as failing to do her job conventionally, but of failing to use English conventionally, and thus of failing to communicate effectively. Yet in both cases – the interpreter who makes herself visible or the expert English speaker who is noticeably non-native – such departures from convention are not indices of failing to communicate effectively. And just as an interpretation which departs from the norm such as that in Lee’s study can enhance communication, so too can ELF departures from ENL. Yet both are reprimanded on the misguided assumption that effective communication necessarily follows conformity to some specified set of linguistic norms, almost invariably those of standard US or British English. Ironically, this fallacy confounding conformity with communication is quite at odds with the theory of communicative competence (Hymes 1972) underpinning the very communicative language teaching to which contemporary EFL generally subscribes.

5. Polysystems and change

There are then some relatively straightforward ways in which contemporary debates in translation studies relate to those about ELF: both concern cross-linguistic communication; both are operating in an unprecedented linguistic landscape in which one language has overtaken all others in international communication; both are areas of applied linguistics; both have broken with earlier traditions of enquiry; both assert the right to a non-English identity in English.

But there is another more profound level at which the two areas find common ground. This is in their theorising of the relations between and within languages, and the ways in which they change and mutate. A further point of contact between ELF and translation is the way they conceptualise the relations between systems, and turn inside out traditional notions of centre and periphery. As before I shall start with translation, then draw out similarities with state-of-the-art conceptualising of ELF, as found in Seidlhofer (2011).

An influential idea in translation theory over the last four decades or so has been the polysystems theory of translation initiated by Even-Zohar (2004[1978], 1979, 2005), who suggests that change in a language arises from the interplay of related systems rather than from within any one of them. Change moreover frequently arises in the periphery and the margins – indeed in the marginalised – and spreads from there towards the centre. ‘System’ here is defined as “semiotic phenomena, i.e. sign-governed human patterns of communication (e.g. culture, language, literature, society),” and polysystems

as systems of systems, and a contrast is made between a “static functionalism” (e.g. that of Saussure) which treats a system as closed, and a “dynamic functionalism” which treats systems as open and in interaction (Even-Zohar 1979).

Drawing upon, but also developing, an idea from Russian formalist literary theory (see Cook 1994: 130–140), he suggests that in any system there are canonical and non-canonical phenomena: that is to say phenomena which are established, respected, and held up as models in the former case, and phenomena which are regarded as deviant, substandard, and lacking in order and principle in the latter case.⁶ The higher status of canonical phenomena is however not intrinsic to the system itself but validated by some other system such as for example the political power of élites, or the historical forces of tradition, and so forth. A classic example is the belief of privileged and powerful speakers of a language that their variety is more logical and more ordered than the varieties spoken by other groups. Another is the belief that some languages are superior, in the sense of being more logical, elegant, orderly etc., than others, and that this is the reason for their use in various spheres; indeed one explanation frequently given for the spread of English is that it has an intrinsic clarity which makes it easy to learn, rather than that its prominence derives from extrinsic causes, i.e. ones deriving from other systems, such as earlier British and later US economic and military ascendancy. The literary phenomenon in the Russian formalist theory from which this idea derives is “the canonisation of the junior branch” (Eikhenbaum 1978[1926]: 32), a process by which a low-status genre, excluded from the literary canon, gradually becomes acceptable, making its way into the canon and fundamentally changing it. Examples⁷ are: the way in which the ballad – originally popular, oral, working or peasant class (Buchan 1970) – was appropriated by, and influenced, Romantic poetry; the ways in which the novel, originally regarded as a light low-status genre, grew to become the pre-eminent vehicle of literary prose (Watt 1957); in our own time, the way in which the lyrics of some “pop” or “rock” songs, such as those of Bob Dylan, vie with highbrow poetry in terms of originality, linguistic innovation, and complexity (Ricks 2003). In a polysystems model it is through such instability on the periphery, where systems are both most susceptible to interaction with each other and most unstable, that the biggest changes begin, and where consequently the greatest vitality is found. It is thus also on the periphery that the future shape of the canonical system is most clearly evident. New non-canonical forms have a tendency to rigidify into a new canon which will in turn be overturned by later developments on its own periphery.

Even-Zohar’s claim (e.g. 2004[1978]) is that translated texts, often regarded as marginal by speakers of the receiving language, act in this way, penetrating and destabilising the native core of the language, but also refreshing and stimulating it. Changes to the relative statuses of different languages and the political power of their speakers interact with this process to make it more or

less smooth. Thus it is at times when the host literature is most deferential to the source language and culture of the translation that influences are most likely to be felt. During the Middle Ages and Renaissance, English was more readily influenced by Ancient Greek and Latin, and the ideas communicated by these languages, which its speakers saw as founts of knowledge, enlightenment, and beauty, than it is open to influence today when the overwhelming direction of translation is from English into other languages (Heilbron 2010): an index of the current power of English but also of potential stagnation. Indeed one might argue that the most vital periods in the development of the English language and English-speaking societies have also been the periods when they were most open to outside influence. In England, as elsewhere, for example, both the Renaissance and Enlightenment were very much driven by translation from other languages into English, while in the 18th century, in the British American colonies (which were to become the USA), translations from French philosophy and politics played an important role in inspiring the struggle for independence.

The multiple equivalences between the changes brought about through interaction of English with other languages through translation, and those brought about by the interaction of ENLs and ELF, should be readily apparent. The identification and theorisation of ELF has destabilised the canonical view of the English language in at least three ways.

Firstly, for descriptive and theoretical sociolinguistics, ELF has occasioned a serious rethinking of established views about language variation and change. The strength, irrationality, and emotive nature of the response to this rethinking by some traditional sociolinguists, as documented by Seidlhofer (2011: 31), is perhaps indicative of just how threatened that canon of established sociolinguistics ideas is by recognition of a phenomenon which does not easily fit into a rigid systematisation of languages, varieties, and the boundaries between them.

Secondly, for English language pedagogy, ELF has undermined assumptions about appropriate models of English for language learners, and consequently also subverted ideas about the way English is best taught and tested. These pedagogic effects are by no means as strong yet as they might be. English teaching in most places is still obstinately entrenched in the notion that native models are best, and that the learner's aim is to approximate to native-speaker usage, operating as inconspicuously as possible in monolingual contexts. In polysystems terms, this could be partly accounted for as the effect of an interaction between economic and political systems in which the inner-circle English-speaking countries are ascendant with the systems of language pedagogy. (The status of a variety follows economic and political fortunes, as is evident in the close correlation between the rise of US power and the acceptance of US English as an alternative standard.) Nevertheless, there are signs

of a weakening of this monolingual assumption which is not unconnected to ELF. There is a recognition that new language learning by definition involves at least two languages (Widdowson 2003: 149–164), and that the goal of most contemporary language learners is to become non-native-speaking bilinguals without losing their original identity rather than reincarnate themselves as monolinguals (Sridhar and Sridhar 1986). Such new ideas are evident in the strength of the NNEST (Non-native English-speaking teacher) movement (Mahboob 2010), in arguments for the validity of using students' own languages as a resource for language learning and teaching (Butzkamm and Caldwell 2009; Cook 2010; for a survey, see Hall and Cook 2012). Such developments are both very much in harmony with arguments about the implications of ELF in English language education and may yet provide a fertile environment for a new dispensation.

Thirdly, most importantly, and underlying the changes to linguistics and pedagogy described above, the English language itself is changing from the outside inwards, and to such a degree that we might well want to redefine what is the “outside” and what is the “inside”. The model of inner, outer, and expanding circles (Kachru 1985), which has dominated thinking about international English for so long, implies a metaphor of movement outwards from the centre towards the periphery: diagrams of the three circles suggest a ripple spreading outwards from a central point; the word “expanding” makes explicit the direction of this motion. Historically valid, in that English has spread from its original home outwards, Kachru's model was undoubtedly useful in its own time and own way, but seems less so today. To extend its own metaphor, the centripetal backwash of the ripple is now stronger than the original centrifugal dispersion. It is this change, and this direction of change, which is the inspiration for ELF.

What is strange is the denial of this direction and its implications by those who criticise the identification and positive evaluation of ELF, when this inevitable bi-directionality of change has long been acknowledged in linguistics. Dick Hudson, cataloguing “some issues on which linguists can agree” as long ago as 1981 included:

whenever speakers of two languages or dialects are in contact with each other, the languages or dialects concerned may be expected to influence one another in proportion to the extent of that contact. (Hudson 1981: 338)

This is unexceptionally true at every descriptive level. At the phonological level, for example, English speakers have no problem talking about “Dr Zhivago”, even though the initial sound /ʒ/ in word initial position is not conventionally allowed by the rules of English phonology. The grammar of English is not immune to imbibing constructions from other languages such as, from Yiddish, “He don't know from nothing,” “It's all right by me,” and the elliptical

“What’s with . . . ?” (Feinsilver 1962). At the lexical level borrowings are so numerous and well-documented that they need no further demonstration here. And at the discursive level, many genres have travelled into English through translation as the etymology of their names demonstrates: psalm, epic, novella, haiku, sonnet, and many more. Indeed it should be common wisdom in linguistics to concur with the view, documented in Ellis and Larsen-Freeman (2006), that extensive contact with speakers of other languages, in terms of learning, translation, and use as a *lingua franca*, both initiates and *accelerates* language change. More controversially, Ellis and Larsen-Freeman (2006) also suggest that languages which become most changed by that contact also become simplified, developing a more streamlined relation between form and function, while those with fewer such contacts stagnate and become more complex, if less vibrant. Their examples include a contrast between the closely related Scandinavian languages Norwegian and Faroese in which the latter, as a low contact language, “has maintained a degree of inflectional complexity which Norwegian has lost,” and they go on to make explicit reference to ELF, and an analogy with evolutionary fitness.

Stasis allows a language, left to its own devices to develop historical baggage – linguistic overgrowths that, however interesting and valuable are strictly incidental to the needs of human exchange and expression. In the same way that in nature, niche-stability during the flat periods of punctuated evolution allows the continuation of elaborate vestigial forms while competition selects them out, so in language, isolation allows the slow accretion of complexity and its maintenance, while large amounts of external contact and adult language learning select out the less functional linguistic overdevelopments, such as what is happening these days in the development of English as a *Lingua Franca* (Seidlhofer 2004). (Ellis and Larsen-Freeman 2006: 574)

There is certainly room for reasoned disagreement with such views, and this controversial attempt by Ellis and Larsen-Freeman to overturn the conventional linguistic wisdom that “all languages are equally complex” is certainly open to challenge from many directions. Yet such ideas about the relationships between language change, language contact, and language complexity should surely be, as they are for Ellis and Larsen-Freeman, a topic for rational enquiry based on evidence rather than mere assertion. The description and theorisation of ELF should be at the centre of such debates, rather than, as it sadly often is, either ignored or cavalierly dismissed. It is a sign of the strength of conservatism, and the contamination of the integrity of linguistics by the vested interests of the English-speaking countries (Kachru’s “inner circle”) which accounts for the reluctance of many linguists to relinquish “the ownership of English” and recognise the fact of ELF. This already has a history. Widdowson’s (1994) seminal paper challenging that ownership, which in many ways prepared the conceptual ground for ELF, persuasively made the rational and factual point

that once a language spreads through the whole world – from inner, to outer, to expanding circles – it can no longer expect to be regarded as the property of its historic speakers, that the hierarchy of those circles will be subverted, and changes will come from outside as well as inside. Such a rational and unexceptional view was regarded as radical, and was indeed contested at the time.

Scholars of ELF still find the same prejudice today. One of the purposes of this paper is to suggest that their case might be strengthened and broadened by making common cause with others. Having so far explored at some length the relations between translation and ELF, it is to this possibility of making common cause, not only with translation studies, but with others as well, that I now, in conclusion, briefly turn.

6. Conclusion: common cause

So far in this article, following my subtitle, I have discussed how translation and ELF have common ground, in that they can draw upon the same theories, and have common interests, in that they address related problems. Following up the third phrase of my subtitle, I now conclude by arguing that they can also make common cause, seeking to influence both the world outside academia, and ideas within it.

This claim, however, needs justification. In many ways translation and ELF (as phenomena rather than academic topics) seem incompatible, mutually exclusive solutions to the perennial human need to communicate across language barriers. The growth of a lingua franca can end a need for translation, and for this reason, taken at face value, the growth of ELF seems destined to influence detrimentally the very multilingualism which translation both depends on, and sustains. If so, ELF will not so much find common cause *with* translation, but be a cause *of* its decline. The relation, however, is not necessarily so simple. House (2006) argues convincingly that “paradoxically the use of a lingua franca may become a means of ensuring and indeed promoting diversity.” This is not however the issue I wish to pursue in this conclusion.

Instead I want to suggest that both translation and ELF, because of their focus on crosslinguistic communication in a highly globalised world, are particularly well-placed to bring the centrality of language in human affairs to the attention of those working with a wide range of key contemporary concerns related to the linguistic habitat of the 21st century, and to make distinctive contributions to their work. In addition, within the academic world, they can explicate the centrality of language, and methodologies for analysing it, for other disciplines. At the same time, within applied linguistics, they can inform all other areas of the discipline. Let me briefly deal with each of these contributions: to the wider world, to other academic disciplines, and to applied linguistics.

In the wider world, translation and ELF are pertinent if not central to a range of issues of contemporary urgency. While not new, these issues have been foregrounded by increased globalisation and the concomitant need for more effective crosslinguistic and crosscultural communication, both internationally and intra-nationally. They tend to involve issues around the preservation of diversity and identity, the redress of inequalities of opportunity and wealth, and the promotion of justice, equity, and human rights. They include environmental problems such as climate change and species loss, as these too can only be effectively tackled internationally. Indeed they embrace any area where there is a need for international communication or inter-community negotiation and any situation where individual speakers of different languages need to communicate with each other – i.e. pretty much everything!

Many of these areas are already investigated by academic experts on translation and ELF – though generally working separately. Translation studies, for example, has concerned itself with conflict resolution (Baker 2006), policing (Nakane 2007), legal process (Lee 2009), and medical communication (Li 2011), all areas of actual or potential interest to ELF. There have been notable studies of the role of ELF in, for example, conflict resolution (Friedrich 2007; Birch 2009). Such studies illustrate the capacity of both translation and ELF to contribute to other areas of social scientific enquiry.

Yet there are also omissions and imbalances, most notably with regard to language teaching and learning. Here the two fields are mirror images. While translation studies have almost completely ignored language teaching,⁸ ELF by contrast is preoccupied with it, sometimes missing the opportunity to pursue connections to non-pedagogic issues. Both emphases are regrettable: the omission by translation because language learning is for many people the pre-eminent activity in which they actually encounter translation, and the treatment in ELF because there is so much scope to demonstrate how approaches to English pedagogy have repercussions in the world beyond, as does, for example, Guido (2008) in her study of miscommunication between Nigerian immigrants and Italian immigration officials. She describes the considerable problems arising from their very different and conflicting conceptions of English, and how these derive in part from the way the Italians have been taught English at school.

Without connections of this kind being constantly made between pedagogic and non-pedagogic issues – in the kind of bridging exercise advocated in my opening – both translation and ELF risk being more peripheral in applied linguistics than they should be. There was a time when applied linguistics was almost exclusively concerned with English language teaching, a field in which translation was considered to have no part to play (Cook 2010). For this historic reason, translation is still under-represented in applied linguistics publications, conferences, and university courses; in effect it is treated as a separate

topic of study. Conversely, while ELF is very active indeed in cutting-edge applied linguistics activity, it needs to ensure that its interest in the relevance of ELF to EFL is constantly related to other areas of applied-linguistic enquiry. As now widely recognised, applied linguistics has expanded immensely in scope over the last two decades or so (Cook 2003, 2005), and while language teaching is still a key area, as it should be, it is by no means as pre-eminent as it was, nor is it considered in isolation. This is borne out by the contents of introductions, surveys, handbooks, courses, conference presentations, and leading journals. From 2006 onwards, for example, the field's leading journal *Applied Linguistics*, moved language teaching and learning from first place in its list of applied linguistic areas, to take up an alphabetically ordered place in the list below. It now

welcomes . . . contributions in such areas of current enquiry as: bilingualism and multilingualism, computer mediated communication, conversation analysis, corpus linguistics, critical discourse analysis, deaf linguistics, discourse analysis and pragmatics, first and additional language learning, teaching and use, forensic linguistics, language assessment and testing, language planning and policy, language for specific purposes, lexicography, literacies, multimodal communication, rhetoric and stylistics, translation and interpreting. (*Applied Linguistics* AIMS statement September 2006 onwards)

As all of these areas, either by definition or in practice, involve communication across language barriers, and as the use of a lingua franca, translation, and indeed language learning (in which both ELF and translation have a stake) remain the only resources for crossing those barriers, then both ELF and translation should be together at the centre of the discipline as it is now conceived. They have so much to say to all its areas, and to the world at large.

Notes

1. Although there are many reasons for continuing to translate from English other than providing straightforward access to information, such as symbolically maintaining a distinct identity, or pragmatically allowing negotiators more thinking time.
2. Both breaks are comparatively recent, though the ages of the parents are of course very different. While scholarly introductions to translation theory routinely take us back at least to Cicero and Horace, sociolinguistics and EFL pedagogic theory originated only in the last century (although theories of general language pedagogy have a much longer pedigree [Howatt 2004: 9–110]).
3. The validity of the change is disputed or even denied (e.g. by House 2012) despite extensive documentation (e.g. Gentzler 2001: 77–106) and an overwhelming shift from the use of the term 'translation theory' in the literature to 'translation studies' (compare the titles of e.g. Catford [1965], Nida and Taber [1969], Bell [1991], Biguenet and Schulte [1992] with those of e.g. Koller [1989], Venuti [2004], Baker and Saldanha [2009], Munday [2012]). The relation between studies and theory is by no means simple or exclusive however, and translation

theory can be seen as part of translation studies – indeed, ironically, Gentzler’s championing of the latter occurs in a book called *Contemporary Translation Theories*, one of which is Translation Studies!

4. In 2007, Deleuze was the 12th most cited thinker in books written in English in the humanities (<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=405956>). I am grateful to Kieran O’Halloran for extensive discussion of the relevance of Deleuze to applied linguistics.
5. For further discussion, see Cook 2010: 74–79.
6. Partly analogous, as Even-Zohar points out, to Bakhtin’s (1981[1934], 1984[1940 & 1965]) later contrast between “official” and “non-official” discourse. A partial analogy could also be made with Kuhn’s (1970) ideas about paradigm change in science.
7. My examples, not Eikhbaum’s or Even-Zohar’s.
8. Though see entries on the topic (Cook 1998, 2009) in both first and second editions of *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies* (Baker 1998; Baker and Saldanha 2009).

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