

RESEÑAS

Francisco Yus. 2011. *Cyberpragmatics. Internet-mediated communication in context.*

Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Co. [Pragmatics & Beyond New Series, 213] xiv, 353 pp.

The last decades have seen the emergence of new and really impressive technologies which have not only brought in new modes of communication but have also transformed the traditional dichotomy between speech and writing. Many scholars have recently approached the issue, mainly from a social or anthropological perspective. Yus's volume, focusing on language usage, is an excellent example of the interest aroused by these new ways of socializing and communicating through electronic media. It provides a profound analysis of the different genres of Internet-mediated communication by studying all the varieties of interaction online: the web page, chat rooms, instant messaging, social networking sites, 3D virtual worlds, blogs, videoconference, e-mail, Twitter, etc.

Organised in eight chapters, the book starts with an introduction in which the author explains how he coined the term *cyberpragmatics* for the specific approach he carries out in his study of Internet-mediated communication from the perspective of cognitive pragmatics, using the framework of Relevance

Theory. According to Yus, this theory has proved to be useful to account both for face-to-face and for asynchronous communication. In his own words (2012: xi) "typed texts often appear to be hybrids between the stability and rigidity of the written (i.e. typed) text, on the one hand, and the spontaneity and ephemeral quality of speech, on the other". He finds, however, little difference between interpreting messages in physical contexts or in virtual scenarios, since the only thing that changes is the means used by humans in order to engage in interactions. Today, it is obvious that thanks to the Internet, geographical limits and the lack of physical co-presence are no longer a problem for communication. In addition, Yus underlines the role of the Internet as a broad field of research for those interested in user-to-user communication on the Net.

In the Introduction Yus also offers a brief but detailed summary of the contents and main aims of each of the eight chapters comprised in the volume. Thus, in the first chapter, titled "Pragmatics, context and relevance", he comments on various pragmatic assumptions, underlining the major contribution of Pragmatics to language study, namely "the certainty that it is impossible to analyse language outside the context in which it is produced and interpreted" (p. 2). Subsequently, he

develops the main tenets of Relevance Theory with the aim of using them later in his description of user's communicative behaviour on the Internet. Two final sections in this chapter are devoted to describe *Cyberpragmatics*, a term he coined in 2001, and the foundations of this subdiscipline, together with its connection with cognition and the Internet.

In the second chapter, under the heading "The presentation of self in everyday web use", Yus successfully manages to provide an overview of the links between discourse and identity, by pointing out how our discursive features and interactive behaviours shape our personalities as human beings in the communication process. The author resorts to the film *You've got mail* to illustrate the problem of the construction of identity through discourse on the Net, showing how the Internet modifies the public presentation of people's identities. The Internet is presented not only as "a powerful tool for the definition and development of identities and personalities" but also for "the creation and consolidation of virtual groups and communities" (p. 21).

For this chapter, Yus draws from Goffman's differentiation between the various social roles an individual can play in society and his real identity behind that social façade. Yus applies this model to Internet-mediated communication,

where a number of virtual or electronic identities tend to cover the user's real personality. This way, the author shows the importance and enormous influence of both the social use of language and the feeling of group or network membership. In short, virtual communication can be considered as "an effect of the progressive adaptation of human beings to different environments or habitats: natural, urban and now telematics" (p. 26). The chapter finishes with Yus's comments on two forms of self-presentation on the Internet: the personal web page and the nickname. The former seems to acquire a certain independence or autonomy from the author, as long as it allows for the creation of what is known as the *autonomous media identity*; the latter often tends to be used with the aim of masking one's identity. However, it can also function connotatively, since it may convey information or assumptions that the user tries "to make manifest in a specific context" (p. 44).

The third chapter discusses "Relevance on the web page". Here Yus starts by describing three possible perspectives which can be adopted when carrying out a cognitive pragmatics analysis of web pages, namely, the author's point of view, the textual or discursive point of view and the reader's point of view. Since the main aim of this chapter is to apply Relevance Theory to Internet-

mediated communication, Yus begins by studying relevance in information retrieval systems, before concentrating on the user who is surfing the Net. Then he focuses on usability, i.e., the effort that the use of a computer system demands. Finally, he devotes two sections to analysing the process of transferring offline discourse to the Internet. This is illustrated with the cases of the printed newspaper and the printed advertisement, including comments on their respective pragmatic implications.

Chapter four deals with “Social networks on the Internet: The Web 2.0”. As the title suggests, this chapter is devoted to new forms of interaction through the Internet which have quite recently had a great impact. These communicative resources can be classified under the label Web 2.0, namely, blogs, social networking sites—such as *MySpace*, *Facebook* or, in Spain, *Tuenti*—and the short-messaging microblog *Twitter*. As regards blogs, Yus explains that they can be studied from three main perspectives. The first is the author’s intention when uploading information on the blog. According to Yus, this point of view is essential in a pragmatic analysis. The second perspective has to do with the qualities of blog as a genre, as long as they reflect the blogger’s intention. Finally, the third point of view is that of the content of the blog, since this will be

useful to predict the quality of readers’ interpretations. In Yus’s opinion a fourth perspective might be added: it would be one that focuses “on the blog as a medium to sustain interactions and as evidence of group or community ties” (p. 95).

After distinguishing social networks on the Internet from social networking sites (SNSs), Yus offers some definitions of the latter, “a subgroup of all the possible scenarios available for Internet-sustained social networks” (p. 111) He continues with some comments on their attributes and types, including some theoretical approaches.

As for the microblog *Twitter*, a very popular short-message service, Yus also offers some definitions, before analysing its communicative and interactive qualities, from the perspective of Relevance Theory. He also comments on some inferential strategies which are normally applied for the interpretation of *tweets*, such as *reference assignment*, *disambiguation*, *conceptual adjustment*, *free enrichment*, among others. After giving examples of *Twitter* conversations, Yus underlines the fact that *tweets* have all the typical features of SMS (short messages of up to 140 characters) but exhibit a social networking orientation.

Chapter five approaches “The virtual conversation”, a type of interaction that constitutes a new mode of communication which establishes its own code and

definitely eliminates the limits between speech and writing; Yus presents a detailed account of the distinguishing features of the conversations held by chat room users and offers an interesting review of the literature regarding the conversational strategies which can or cannot be used in this communicative resource. The author describes the strategies users employ in order to compensate for the lack of audio channels, visual channels and contextual information, such as emoticons; he also gives examples to illustrate the kind of hints they provide. The fact that chat room messages can be considered as *oralized written texts* is clearly underlined. In this sense, Yus points out how this characteristic allows not only for the transmission of information but also of the user's attitude towards the typed text. Instant messaging, chatting in 3D and videoconferencing are also studied in the final sections of this chapter.

In chapter six, Yus undertakes an analysis of the electronic mail (e-mail), a very popular form of asynchronous virtual communication and a label that comprises various types of interaction with some overlapping among them. A first section of this chapter is devoted to the description of the main features of e-mail, with the emphasis put on the difficulty to classify it in the oral/written dichotomy. In another section, Yus reviews the main elements of an electronic

message and studies their role in the process of interpretation. Apart from the *personal message*, the most common e-mail type, Yus also comments on two other worth mentioning types, the newsgroup and the Listserv.

“Politeness on the Net”, or *netiquette*, is the selected topic for the seventh chapter, which starts with the author's recognition of the difficulty to define politeness and the different ways it is expressed in different cultures, despite its universality. Conceived either as social norms or as strategies that determine the choice of certain linguistic formulas, politeness is mostly described as the usage of certain linguistic forms aimed at improving social relationships in communicative interactions. In the case of computer-mediated communication, Yus underlines the fact that these politeness strategies may be used either as a result of a personal option of the speaker/ writer or may be imposed upon by an external moderator of the virtual system. The author also offers a review of the various approaches to the study of politeness, including Brown and Levinson's model. Here, he summarises the connection between politeness and (in)direct speech acts, politeness and transactional and interactional discourse, politeness and rudeness, comparing each aspect with the situations on the Internet. The relationship between

politeness and relevance is also one of the questions approached by Yus, who underlines the possible applications of relevance theory to politeness, despite the initial difficulties.

The last chapter, chapter eight, provides the author's conclusion and prospects for cyberpragmatic research. It is divided into six sections that respectively deal with the oral/written and visual/verbal dichotomy, the ubiquity of the Internet, the consolidation of hybrid networks of interactions, the transference of information from the Internet to the mobile phone, the transference of content to the web, and the consolidation of Web 2.0, participatory culture and user-generated content. In most of these issues, Yus highlights the increasingly important role played by the mobile phone as well as the interesting pragmatic consequences derived from discourse production and interpretation on the Net.

In addition to the usual reference section, the volume includes a name index and a subject index, which complement the edition.

This is definitely a groundbreaking handbook, which provides a brilliant and comprehensive account of the varied types of interaction on the web. Yus's work is really an insightful contribution to a novel area of inquiry. Researchers working on computer-mediated communication and university students

at all levels will surely benefit from this valuable source of knowledge and resources for the study of language use and human interaction. Likewise, general linguists and scholars interested in language and particularly in the impact of the electronic media on language use will undoubtedly find this work a must. [M^a Isabel GONZÁLEZ CRUZ, *Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria*]

Bruce, Ian. 2011. *Theory and Concepts of English for Academic Purposes*. Basingtoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp. 227.

Theory and Concepts of English for Academic Purposes provides an exhaustive overview on key issues in the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as an informed basis for spelling out a set of principles around which EAP courses may be designed, developed and implemented. Following a user-friendly, general-to-specific arrangement, the volume is structured into three parts: the first one deals with a theoretical framework for teaching EAP as differentiated from teaching general English. The second part focuses on the design of EAP courses, paying special attention to approaches to syllabus development in relation to the types of knowledge that are to be integrated in them. The third one offers important

points as for the implementation and delivery of EAP courses in terms of teacher competencies, the development of the four skills, i.e. writing, reading, listening and speaking, and assessment.

The first part is entitled “A Theoretical Basis for English for Academic Purposes” and comprises three chapters: “Introduction to EAP: Key Issues and Concepts”, “Investigating the Academic World” and “Students’ Needs and EAP Course Design”. “Introduction to EAP: Issues and Concepts” presents and defines some basic concepts such as EAP itself, which is generally defined as a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that focuses on “the study of English for the purpose of participating in higher education” (Bruce 2011: 6). Therefore, it is a needs-driven activity which aims to train students to master both the spoken and written discourses of the academic community so that they can successfully participate in it. As a needs-driven activity, EAP relies heavily on needs analysis, a systematic process of student needs identification where both present and target situations have to be taken into account. The approach to EAP adopted in this book is also left clear in this introductory chapter: the author rightly notes that binary approaches like the accommodationist and critical ones should be avoided because they offer simplistic views on educational issues which tend

to be complex and multifaceted, and advocates for a combination of both of them.

“Investigating the Academic World” theorises about approaches and tools that can be used when researching academic contexts with the aim of informing EAP courses. In this sense, research must cover several aspects related to the characteristics of the academic community the students want to join, their discipline-specific subject knowledge and academic subjects in general. The author offers a review of different approaches which can be adopted when gathering information in these areas; for instance, the issue of academic communities may be approached from the perspectives of (i) speech communities, (ii) discourse communities or (iii) communities of practice. Textual genres, both written and spoken, play a prominent role when researching disciplinary knowledge since the design of EAP courses will be determined to a great extent by the way knowledge is created, validated and communicated in a given discipline. In relation to academic subjects, EAP courses are also aimed at developing students’ awareness of the way academic institutions operate, i.e. course organisation, teaching methods, interaction between the agents in academic contexts and assessment. The author then proposes three methodologies for investigating

particular academic communities, i.e. ethnographic, genre-based and corpus-based, commenting on both their strengths and weaknesses in a neutral way so that readers can choose the one that fits best into their purposes.

“Students’ Needs and EAP Course Design” presents the three steps to be followed when designing and implementing EAP courses. The first step is needs analysis, which will provide teachers with the necessary information about students’ present knowledge and skills and the ones they are expected to achieve once the course is complete. The second step is the formulation of course aims and objectives on the basis of the information gathered during the first step, and this is followed by the selection and staging of course contents, which is the third step. An important point raised here is that the development of stages two and three has to be informed by theories of discourse, and theories of language teaching and learning, respectively. Theories of discourse will assist the formulation of aims and objectives in relation to the development of the students’ capacity (i) to process and create texts typically found in academic contexts, (ii) to exploit and transfer their linguistic knowledge in terms of textual processing and creation in a variety of contexts, and (iii) to acknowledge disciplinary differences.

Theories of language teaching and learning will obviously help teachers in the selection and staging of course contents in a pedagogical way.

The second part of the book is entitled “The Design of EAP courses” and contains three chapters: “Developing an EAP Syllabus: Approaches and Models”, “EAP Courses and Subject Discipline Knowledge” and “EAP Courses and Language Knowledge”. “Developing an EAP Syllabus: Approaches and Models” gives the reader some general guidelines for designing an EAP syllabus, including (i) the combination of both declarative and procedural knowledge; (ii) the adoption of holistic approaches when setting up the objectives, allowing for the integration of different types of knowledge; and (iii) the top-down, synthetic organisation of the contents, i.e. moving from the general to the specific in such a way that the emphasis is placed on developing the students’ discourse competence. On the basis of these principles, the chapter ends up illustrating how the process of syllabus development can proceed.

“EAP Courses and Subject Discipline Knowledge” centres around the integration of subject discipline knowledge in the EAP curriculum. The role of the EAP teacher is vital here since s/he has to engage with subject discipline staff in order to gather

information from the subject discipline. Following Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), three models of engagement are proposed: co-operation, collaboration and team-teaching. Teachers themselves must be able to analyse not only disciplinary knowledge and practices, but also disciplinary texts and discourses. They must be equipped with discourse analyst tools that help them understand the conventional forms of communication existing in specific disciplines to then transfer that knowledge to their teaching practice. The framework proposed by the author to classify spoken and written forms of communication in academic contexts is the *social genre/cognitive genre* approach. The *social genre/cognitive genre* approach seems to be more than adequate for analysing disciplinary knowledge as it provides EAP practitioners and learners with a framework for carrying out ethnographic and textual analysis.

“EAP Courses and Language Knowledge” argues that linguistic knowledge, i.e. textual grammar, metadiscourse and vocabulary, should be integrated in EAP courses following a holistic, functional approach. This is done by highlighting the problems associated with a decontextualised approach to language teaching and by offering the reader some useful illustrations of how this task can be performed with sample texts and exercises.

The third part of the book is entitled “The Implementation of EAP Courses”. Six chapters are included in this part: “EAP and Teacher Competencies”, “EAP and Teaching the Writing Skill”, “EAP and Teaching the Reading Skill”, “EAP and Teaching the Listening Skill”, “EAP and Teaching the Speaking Skill: Teaching Critical Thinking” and “EAP and Assessment”. “EAP and Teacher Competencies” focus on the type of knowledge and skills an EAP teacher should have. The information contained here is based on the *Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes* (CFTEAP) as developed by the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP, 2008). The discussion on this document starts with an overall statement that insists on the teacher’s capacity to help their students in the acquisition and development of language, skills and knowledge as necessary for studying in higher education contexts. It then continues with other competency specifications related to academic practice, EAP students, curriculum development and programme implementation. In general, EAP teachers should have knowledge of organisation and values, including communicative ones, governing academic contexts as well as of disciplinary differences and the way these shape how knowledge is communicated. They should be aware

of their students' needs bearing in mind the specific target contexts they wish to join. Apart from this, they are required to know about critical approaches to creation and processing of academic knowledge to help students develop a critical voice towards the knowledge generated in their field. Moreover, they are expected to have knowledge of both syllabus and programme development so that EAP courses actually address students' needs in academic contexts, as well as of text-focused and genre-based approaches to text processing and text creation. The CFTEAP document finally comments on teaching practices and assessment practices. As regards teaching practices, the document highlights the importance of locating teaching practices in the specific contexts in which they are to occur, namely, academic, in contrast to general ELT contexts. In relation to assessment, EAP teachers should assess the four skills, and particularly the productive ones, at a performance-based level and in such a way that assessment serves as ongoing feedback for learners.

"EAP and Teaching the Writing Skill" emphasises the idea that writing instruction in EAP courses should be based on developing the students' discourse competence, i.e. social, generic and textual (Bahtia 2004: 144-145), and critical competence so that they can

improve their skills when writing extended academic texts in an analytical, critical way. The author recommends again a genre-based approach, and particularly the *social genre/cognitive genre* model, because it will provide a principled methodology for the deconstruction and construction of disciplinary genres. The employment of this approach is illustrated by means of some prototypical cognitive genres, i.e. recount, report, explanation, discussion and results section, as well as some writing tasks as can be found in a course syllabus.

In "EAP and Teaching the Reading Skill", the author notes that teaching the reading skill in academic contexts should take account of a number of different types of knowledge that are involved in textual processing, i.e. contextual knowledge, pre-textual expectations, study skills and sub-skills competence, and discourse competence. The way reading should be integrated in an EAP course is also touched upon in this chapter. The author proposes a curricular progression based on the principle that receptive skills should be placed before productive ones. Receptive texts will then be the focus of attention to analyse content and discursive, organisational and linguistic features. The knowledge obtained after this analysis is to be then transferred to productive texts following a genre-based pedagogy. The chapter

ends up with considering two important issues, i.e. reading speed and vocabulary knowledge, both of which are commented on as related to strategies that can be used for improving reading proficiency and vocabulary development.

“EAP and Teaching the Listening Skill” concentrates on the processing of extended spoken texts, mainly monologic, in higher education contexts. The chapter begins with an overview of the types of processes, i.e. top-down and bottom-up, and knowledge, i.e. contextual and pragmatic, semantic, syntactic, lexical and phonological, that are involved when listening to spoken texts. Taking as the starting point the notion that developing the listening skill involves a number of areas and tasks which have to be worked on actively, the author then discusses those areas and proposes some tasks in relation to processing skills and task knowledge. The genre-based focus is also considered here: preparing students for processing extended spoken texts would benefit from creating awareness about the macro-structure of the spoken texts so that they become familiarised with their conventional organisation and most recurrent linguistic features.

“EAP and Teaching the Speaking Skill: Teaching Critical Thinking” starts with an overview of theoretical frameworks in relation to the

development of this skill, i.e. cognitive and physical, knowledge-related and task-related. Relying on Levelt’s (1989) processing model and Martínez-Flor’s, Usó-Juan’s and Alcón-Soler’s (2006) communicative competence model, the author posits that speaking is also a complex activity in which a number of processes and knowledge have to be integrated. Performance in speaking is said to improve by means of repetition of tasks since it helps students in internalising the elements involved, and as said later on in the chapter, an emphasis should be made on encouraging students to participate regularly in class. It continues with an overview of the most frequent types of speaking routines, tasks and genres in academic contexts, such as asking questions in lectures, seminar participation, oral presentations and verbalising data. This chapter finishes by addressing the development of critical thinking, relying on the two approaches taken by Atkinson (1997) on this issue, namely, the teachable skills approach and the cognitive apprenticeship approach. The former takes the teaching of critical thinking as a set of general skills that may be then transferred to disciplinary contexts; however, this view has been challenged by scholars like Ramanathan and Kaplan (1996) who consider the teaching of critical thinking as inextricably bound to

the context in which it is to be developed. The cognitive apprenticeship approach, the one favoured by the author, considers that students who wish to join a given discourse community have to learn the practices of that community and so the teaching of critical thinking cannot exist but in a discipline-specific context: its teaching has to be shaped by the discursive characteristics and practices of the academic discipline.

“EAP and Assessment” provides a short overview on issues related to assessment in EAP contexts. Due to the fact that EAP courses have to integrate a wide range of skills and knowledge, assessment of outcomes have to be done in an integrative and holistic way, too. Some key concepts related to language testing discussed here include the identification of the tasks used for assessment, the relationship between language tests and the type of knowledge and/or skill they are to assess, language test typologies, and approaches to measuring the outcomes of testing. Focusing on the productive skills, the author proposes that both the speaking and the writing skills should be assessed at a performance-based level by using sample tasks as carried out in class. These, in turn, should be analytically scored on the basis of those criteria that relate to the fulfilment of the tasks. Both performance testing and analytic scoring provide optimal

feedback to students who want to develop their discourse competence.

This book is highly recommended as an invaluable theoretical presentation and revision of fundamental concepts and theories related to EAP activities. It stands as an informative and insightful work for anyone interested in the design and implementation of EAP courses as it provides a sound theoretical basis to carry out such a task, being amply illustrated with examples of syllabus development, areas of language knowledge to be included and specific activities aimed at developing students’ discourse competence. EAP teachers and course developers can benefit from this detailed discussion on EAP where theory and practice are skilfully organised and combined, making this volume a practical guide which can be used as help in EAP practitioners everyday activities.

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Walsh, Steve. 2011. *Exploring Classroom Discourse. Language in Action*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 239.

Exploring Classroom Discourse is part of the Routledge Introductions to Applied Linguistics series, introductory level textbooks covering the core topics in Applied Linguistics and primarily designed for those entering postgraduate studies and language professionals returning to academic study. According to its author, “the central thesis of the book is that language teachers can improve their professional practice by developing a closer understanding of classroom discourse and, in particular, by focusing on the complex relationship between language, interaction and learning (2011: 1).”

Divided into nine chapters, each of them includes an introduction, some tasks and a concise summary. After the Conclusions, the reader will find the Task commentaries, Appendix A with the Self Evaluation of Teacher Talk Procedure and Lesson Cover Sheet, Appendix B with the transcription system used in the textbook, a glossary, a suggested list of additional reading with a brief comment after each reference and, finally, the references and the index.

The introduction is divided into three sections. In the first one, the author presents a description of the nature of classroom interaction in the context of language teaching and highlights the important role of language in the classroom as “it is through language in interaction that we access new knowledge, acquire and develop new skills, identify any problems of understanding, deal with ‘breakdowns’ in the communication, establish and maintain relationships.” He offers an overview of the most important features of second language classroom discourse, e.g. control of the interaction, speech modification, elicitation and repair, illustrating them by using data extracts. Finally, the author shows how different strategies are more or less appropriate according to the particular pedagogic goal of the moment and to the teacher’s understanding of local context. In the second section, one of the most commonly found structures—the IRF exchange—is introduced and exemplified. Finally, the author considers some of the challenges that teachers and learners face in relation to classroom interaction which will be addressed in the following chapters.

In chapter 2, “Classroom discourse and teaching”, the author turns his attention to the ways in which an understanding of classroom discourse

can help teachers enhance their understanding of teaching. These understandings can be enhanced in terms of whole methodologies such as task-based language teaching, in relation to the teaching of specific skills, and in response to specific strategies such as increasing wait-time or reducing teacher echo. According to Walsh, “the basic argument is that teachers can do much to improve their professional practice and enhance learning by studying their own interactions with students.” By either recording or recording and transcribing their own interactions with students, teachers can gain true understandings of the complexities of classroom interactions.

“Classroom discourse and learning” reviews a sample of the literature on class-based second language acquisition. It begins by considering the complex relationship between interaction and language learning. In the section “Learning as a cognitive activity”, there is a brief overview of some of the more important hypotheses that have attempted to explain this relationship. The three main hypotheses presented all place interaction at the centre of learning: Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, Long’s Interaction Hypothesis and Swain’s Output Hypothesis. The position taken by the author is that, while interaction is central to the L2

teaching/learning process, the interactive processes that make up classroom discourse are not adequately understood by either teachers or learners. In section “Learning as a social process”, a second strand to the theoretical framework for language learning is presented in the shape of socio-cultural theories of education and learning including the Learning and the Zone of Proximal Development.

In Chapter 4, “Approaches to studying classroom discourse”, Walsh discusses the issues involved in recording and transcribing classroom data from ethical considerations to sound quality or the role of the observer. Next, he provides a critical overview of some of the better-known approaches to investigating L2 classroom interaction, both the Interaction and the Discourse analysis traditions, while in the final section Conversational Analysis (CA) is offered as a potentially more powerful approach to recording classroom discourse and the main features of this approach are summarised.

In “Alternative approaches to studying classroom discourse”, the author considers alternative approaches for studying classroom interaction such as the Corpus Linguistics (CL), a combined approach both of the Conversational Analysis and the Corpus Linguistics (CLCA), and some variable approaches

which focus on promoting detailed understandings of micro-contexts in a bid to understand the complex relationship between language, interaction and learning. After outlining the main benefits of a CL approach, the CLCA is proposed as one way of overcoming the CL’s shortcomings, allowing a multi-layered perspective that offers a description of both linguistic and interactional features. Walsh presents a brief summary of the work that has been done to promote variable approaches to analysing classroom interaction and mentions van Lier (1988), Jarvis and Robinson (1997), Kumaravadivelu (1999) and Seedhouse (2004) studies. He then presents an argument for adopting a variable approach to classroom discourse, which emphasises the fact that interaction and pedagogic goals are inextricably linked, that the discourse is constantly changing according to the teacher’s agenda, and that teaching and learning can be greatly improved by adopting a variable approach.

In chapter 6, “Enhancing understandings of classroom discourse”, the author presents a framework that is conceived to help teachers improve the quality of the interaction taking place in their classes as the first step towards improving teaching and learning. Named SETT (self-evaluation of teacher talk)

and devised in collaboration with L2 teachers, this framework is designed to enable teachers to access the interactional organisation of their classes to facilitate understanding. The SETT framework comprises four classroom micro-contexts, called *modes*, and fourteen interactional features, called *interactures*. The four modes, identified and described according to their pedagogic goals and interactional features, are: the managerial mode, the classroom context mode, the skills and systems mode and the materials mode. Each mode is made up of specific interactional features (such as display questions, repair, or content feedback) and particular pedagogic goals. Each mode has its specific interactional features that are related to teaching objectives, and it may last for one whole lesson or for much shorter periods with more frequent changes.

The aim of the following chapter, “Classroom discourse as reflective practice”, is to introduce readers to the idea that reflective practice can be enhanced by making classroom discourse the main focus of the reflection. In the first part, the author presents a critique of the notion of teacher as reflective practitioner and explains that teachers in training need to be taught how to reflect so that reflection plus action becomes an integral element of their

professional practice. Therefore, Walsh proposes action research as one of the best ways to promote teachers reflective practice. The second part of the chapter deals with a classroom discourse oriented approach to reflective practice as this approach is, according to the author, more likely to result in sustainable professional development and enable teachers to really gain close understandings of the contexts in which they work.

In “Classroom interactional competence”, Walsh presents and develops the notion of classroom interactional competence and considers how it can be characterised in different contexts. The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first, the author reviews the work that has been completed on Interactional Competence. In the second section, he characterises classroom interactional competence (CIC) using data extracts to examine the strategies open to both teachers and learners to enhance interaction and improve opportunities for learning. In the final section, he considers how teachers and learners might develop their own classroom interactional competence and offers some specific strategies, activities, tasks, etc. designed to help both teachers and learners enhance their CIC.

The final chapter with the conclusions is divided into two sections:

“Classroom discourse: looking back” and “Classroom discourse: future directions”. In the first section, the author makes some observations on the current position of classroom discourse research taking more than fifty years of research into account, while in the second section he summarizes the reasons why he believes that an understanding of interaction is crucial to effective teaching. He also justifies the need to make a distinction between research tools for teachers and for researchers. Finally, Walsh states that future challenges will be concerned with collecting data that offers greater insights into what really happens in classrooms.

Following an innovative “practice to theory” approach, the author leads the reader from real-world problems and issues through a discussion on the need to reflective practice and the use of the SETT framework to analyse classroom discourse. In most chapters there is one or two exercises of personal reflection, where the reader is asked a question about his or her personal experience on the topic that is going to be introduced, and some tasks taken from real teaching experiences with commentaries at the end of the book. For the author, there is a compelling need to put classroom discourse at the centre of reflective practice by advocating a more structured

approach to the process of reflection on practice. Both pre and in-service teacher education programmes should teach teachers how to do reflective practice and should be given the tools and skills needed to make reflection a part of a teacher’s professional life. *Exploring Classroom Discourse* is a highly recommendable book, with many examples and exercises on how the proposed framework works. [María Jesús VERA CAZORLA. Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria]

Seidlhofer, Barbara. (2011). *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford: OUP. Pp. 231.

Understanding English as a Lingua Franca, structured into eight different worth reading chapters, is the result of several years of research by Professor Seidlhofer. Jenkins defines *lingua franca*, as follows “a lingua franca is a contact language used among people who do not share a first language, and is a commonly understood to mean a second (or subsequent) language of its speakers” (2007, p. 1). Seidlhofer, being one of the main precursors, along with Jenkins, of the relatively new field of research namely English as a *lingua franca* provides a deep account of this interesting area of study.

In the preface, the author gives a succinct description of her objectives, and she also makes some references to the VOICE project (VOICE=Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English). VOICE aims at compiling a corpus of spoken English to provide evidence of English as a *lingua franca*. Chapter 1, *What is this thing called English?*, is subdivided into eight different sections, each of which contributes to the general understanding of English as a *lingua franca*. Notwithstanding, there are some key concepts that should be highlighted. Firstly, this scholar clearly states the importance of figures when it comes to the number of native speakers of English and non-native speakers, being the number of non-native speakers much higher. Accordingly, non-native speakers of English should not be attached to the linguistic norms set by native speakers. However, against the logics of figures, and following the tradition, native speakers of English are associated with positive connotations, whereas the fact of being a non-native speaker of English trying to imitate (more or less successfully) native models is more related to negative connotations. In that sense, the author questions the impact that research in applied linguistics has had on teachers and practitioners throughout the last years, since most of them remain loyal to native speakers'

norms. Personally, I think there is still much work to do by applied linguists in this area, but it will finally have effects not only on those people who teach English, but also on anyone who want to learn the language. There is a change in the teaching orientation where native and non-native speakers have the 'right' "to speak in ways that meet diverse local and situational needs" (Seidlhofer 2011, p. 14).

This chapter also explains the differences between EIL (English as an International Language) and ELF (English as a Lingua Franca), and aptly criticises the widespread model of the three concentric circles by Kachru (1992). This model, which was very appropriate when it was created, is currently outdated, since it does not reflect the increasing uses (encouraged by globalisation and electronic communications) of English across the globe. The ownership of English is also questioned in this chapter, as non-native speakers clearly outnumber native speakers. Finally, the author encourages more urgent research on how ELF is successfully used in different contexts.

Chapter two, *Assumptions and presumptions*, provides various examples of the prescriptive vision towards the ownership of English by well-known linguists and scholars such as Peter Trudgill or Vivian Cook. Even the

committed linguist activist Robert Phillipson seems to be in two minds about English when it is used in international contexts. Seidlhofer invites these scholars to reflect upon these conservationist views of English as the property of native speakers, and the underestimation of non-native speakers who may adapt better to use English appropriately in any intercultural context. This short chapter gives the reader an idea of the academic atmosphere related to the view of English as something international, not only attached to native speaker norms.

In Chapter three, *Standard English and Real English*, Seidlhofer insists on the unprecedented situation of English as the *lingua franca* of international communication, and therefore, it must be considered as the language of all its users, and not merely as the property of its native speakers. She refers to some works by Quirk who is a great supporter of the need for native models for foreign language teaching and learning. Seidlhofer aptly rejects these “naive” and outdated theories, since “ELF users typically operate in international settings in which native speakers of English may or may not figure, but certainly are not a priori models” (2011, p. 54). I strongly agree with Seidlhofer, since the aim of using a language is to achieve effective communication. The author follows

with a discussion on the variety of English mostly used. Standard English seems to favour effective communication in contrast to other American and British models.

In Chapter four, *Reconceptualising English*, the author suggests that some key concepts such as “variety”, “community” and “competence” needs being reconsidered. English as a *lingua franca* must be seen as a tool that allows international, intercultural communication, and is not tied to specific countries or people. Obviously, it implies a dynamic process of constant adaptation of this language to the new realities that come with globalisation (technological advance, mobility, economic changes, among others). The idea of competence also needs to be reconsidered, as levels of competence in a language have been traditionally measured depending on the degree of mastery of grammar of the language. But, does it really reflect the actual competence of a speaker? The paradigm of English as a *lingua franca* advocates for the capacity of communication through the use of negotiating resources among speakers rather than through the imitation of rules that represent the ideal speaker. This is the way the author understands English nowadays.

Chapter 5, *The dynamics of ELF usage*, deals with the dynamism and fluidity that

is associated with ELF communication. Users of ELF exploit the potential of the language in interactions by focusing on the message rather than on the grammatical aspects of language. This brings about specific uses of language including lexical innovations, e.g. *bigness* and *clearness*, and grammatical disruptions, e.g. the drop of the third person singular in the present simple tense, probably as the result of redundancy. The interchangeable use of *who* and *which* is another example of this creative use of language. In line with Seidlhofer's interpretation, I see these new uses as a result of flexibility and dynamism of ELF. These uses merely reflect the capacity of adaptation of a language that intends to be effective in terms of communication, rather than "grammatically correct". Therefore, creativity is a natural process of performance.

Chapter six, *Form and Function in ELF*, discusses the importance of form and function in ELF, as in any other language. In the paradigm of ELF, form is subject to function in the sense that the form of ELF has to adapt or accommodate to the function of this language, as Cogo (2008) aptly depicts. Seidlhofer refers to the concept of *unilateral idiomaticity* as "a sense of lack of concern for one's interlocutor, a neglect of the need for accommodation"

(Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 135). This act goes directly against the principles of the ELF paradigm, where negotiation and accommodation are the basis of communication. Idioms and other especial uses of the language have to be understood in the particular context where they are produced, rather than following the meaning they have in an ENL context. This is one more example where the principles of adaptation and flexibility apply to ELF. Seidlhofer (2009, p. 39) states that

Conditions of language use in the early 21st century have changed drastically compared to even the second half of the 20th. Countless interaction networks are now independent of physical proximity and are instantiated through interaction over vast distances, often without the participants ever meeting in the same physical space. Instead, virtual communities have achieved considerable significance in the sum of global interactions.

Therefore, the ELF paradigm intends to meet the needs of any speaker, anywhere, anytime, especially in a globalised world where many communicative situations and transactions take place in a "virtual" way.

Chapter seven, *Designing English as an international language*, deals with description vs. prescription, language planning and linguistic intervention. All

these topics are closely related to the question *what kind of English should be taught and learned?* In this chapter, the author refers to three different approaches or proposals: *Globish*, created by J.P. Nerrière, is the most recent one. It consists of a list of 1,500 English words that this author selects, based on impressionistic observation as the most commonly occurring terms in interactions among non-native users of English. Nerrière, in addition, provides a set of prescriptions or recipes with instructions that guide users about how to use the language (<http://www.globish.com>). A second proposal, *Nuclear English*, comes from Quirk, and his proposal “is an airing of ideas about the ways in which native English might be modified to make it easier to learn as a foreign language and easier to use as an international language” (Seidlhofer 2011, p. 158). To illustrate, non-restrictive relative clauses can be replaced with adverbial clauses, as in: *I expressed my sympathy to the captain, who had been reprimanded*, which could be replaced by *I expressed my sympathy to the captain because he had been reprimanded*. In short, *Nuclear English* intends to be a simplification of native norms of English and its rules of usage.

The third proposal, *Basic English*, dated back from 1938 and created by C. K. Odgen, compiles a set of 1,500 words that attempt to regulate the

language to make it a more effective way of global communication. Differently from *Globish*, this compilation of words is the result of a decade of scientific research by the author. *Basic English* stands for *British American Scientific International Commercial*, what implies that English still remains the property of the British and the Americans.

ELF is another approach or paradigm that assumes the international status of English in a natural way fulfilling the functions of this unplanned development. There is evidence that different attempts to solve the problem of English as the vehicle of international communication have been created. However, which attempts do really respond to real needs of international users? From my point of view, the ELF paradigm is probably the most democratic, neutral and appropriate way of understanding these uses of English as the global language of communication.

The last chapter, *ELF and English Language Teaching*, is the most interesting one. The author refers to different pedagogical approaches such as CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), TBLT (Task Based Language Teaching) or CLIL (Content Language Integrated Learning) to language teaching, but none of them questions, “what kind of language constitutes the best learning investment” (Seidlhofer 2011, p. 178).

All these methods, along with others such as the Basic (referred to in the previous chapter) give for granted that the linguistic learning achievements have to be measured against the imitation of the rules set by native models. Even the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2001), despite its claims to promote and support a plurilingual Europe, insists on its orientation to keep native norms as the models to imitate.

I find particularly interesting the fact that Seidlhofer invites reconsideration of these strongly ingrained ideas. There are other ways of teaching, and above all, learning English where the use and the capacity of accommodation of users to create effective communication may also be considered as an alternative. The author (2011, p. 187) considers that “the result of learners putting their learnt language to use as an end in itself... we should make reference to descriptions of what people actually do with the language they have learnt, how they actually communicate in English as an additional language”. Such descriptions represent what learners actually achieve as a communicative ability rather than what they are expected and guided to achieve following NS linguistic competence. This rationale is closely connected with Pennycook’s (2010) claims that

language should be a local rather than a global practice. It is the adaptation of language to the real needs of speakers of a certain community rather than the use of norms and materials created by a single native speaking community and exported to different and distant places. Meeting the needs of each speaker, native or non-native, should be the final goal of effective communication.

Reactions towards this new approach are various, mostly of rejection and denial, especially by governments and ministries of education. This is unsurprising because a long period of time is normally required before innovations have an impact on established procedures. However, a similar attitude of resistance may be observed in the case of practitioners, probably for conformity or for the ‘teachers’ peace of mind’ in Seidlhofer’s words (2011, p. 192).

The list of bibliography is quite extensive and updated, compiling all the literature which has been published related to this topic. Finally, an Index closes the volume.

Personally, I believe that English as a *Lingua Franca* paradigm provides dynamic and flexible ways of thinking about English. It is unquestionable the role of English as the tool that allows international communication among speakers of such different and distant countries. In addition, this communication

takes place not only in face-to-face communication, but also by other means as a result of technological advances (e-mail, chats, forums, skype, and so on). In this kind of interactions, what is more important: to be effective in communication or to follow the standard norms described by grammarians or the models used by native speakers? From my point of view, effective communication takes priority over any other aspect. Why do learners and teachers have to imitate native models? L2 learners are not native speakers, and they will never be. Therefore, the priority should be communication and exploitation of the linguistic resources of the learners with the aim of interacting and communicating effectively. The accent they use should not be important as long as communication takes place.

We can consider the book as a valuable contribution within the field of *English as a Lingua Franca*. This work contributes to clarify basic issues related to the paradigm of ELF, which has been rejected or misinterpreted by some scholars who share a different (probably, more traditional) point of view towards English and its spread throughout the world as a result of globalisation. Written in a very accessible language, it can be of great interest to all scholars working in sociolinguistics, and to the more general audience interested in the

issue of English as the international language of communication in this globalised world. It is also an invaluable tool for English language specialists to reconsider their traditional practices and ideas. [Carmen LUJÁN-GARCÍA, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria].

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