5 The Transfer of Features and Communicative Strategies

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first considers the transfer of linguistic features and pragmatic norms – the rules of speaking (Wolfson 1989) – from one language to another. The transfer of pragmatic norms can lead to possible misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication as hearers may interpret what has been heard against their own pragmatic norms. A simple example comes from the influential work of Anna Wierzbicka (1985 & 2005). In Slavic languages, it is normal to use the imperative when asking for something from friends. At a family dinner, one member of the family might say to another the equivalent of, 'Pass the salt.' If a Slavic speaker were to transfer this way of speaking to English, s/he may well be regarded as rude or abrupt, as the 'request' would be interpreted by native speakers of English as a command. In native speaker varieties of English, it is more normal to modify such a request with what Wierzbicka has called 'whimperatives' and say something like 'Could you pass the salt, please?' If English speakers were to transfer this pattern into a Slavic language, they could, in turn, be interpreted as rude because the use of the question form would imply to native speakers of, say, Russian, that there was a possibility that the listener would not pass the salt. Wierzbicka argues that 'whimperatives' are used in English as they respect the autonomy of the individual, a value highly prized in Anglo-culture as their use gives, theoretically at least, the hearer the right to refuse the request. This section of the chapter gives some examples of code-mixing where speakers transfer words or grammatical items from their first language into English. The second section describes the use of the strategies used by speakers of Asian languages when speaking English to ensure a smooth flow of communication or to repair communication when a misunderstanding or breakdown in communication has occurred.

Transfer of Pragmatic Norms

Some forty years ago, when I was a postgraduate student in China, I predicted, entirely wrongly as it turned out, that when Chinese spoke English they would not use 'How are you?' as a greeting but would rather use expressions such as

'Have you eaten yet?' and 'Where are you going?' as these were common Chinese forms of greeting. Indeed, enquiring whether someone has recently eaten is a very common form of greeting in many Asian languages. In fact, however, the opposite has happened, and, not only do Chinese tend to use 'How are you?' as a common greeting when speaking English, they have also adapted this into Chinese as '*Ni hao*?', so this English-derived greeting has now become a common greeting in Chinese. The 'have you eaten?' greeting remains common in many Asian languages. It has, for example, been observed that in intercultural contexts when Vietnamese communicate with speakers of other languages using English as a lingua franca (ELF), they have a tendency to use greetings transferred from Vietnamese such as 'Where are you going?', or 'Have you eaten yet?' (Sundkvist & Nguyen 2020). Sundkvist and Nguyen (2020) also report that Vietnamese speakers transfer other Vietnamese pragmatic norms or cultural conceptualisations (Sharifian 2011) into their English communication. For example, the Vietnamese cultural conceptualisation of *tôn người hạ mình*, or 'elevating others while lowering oneself' can be transferred into English as in example (5.1). NES is a native speaker of English and VSE is a Vietnamese speaker of English. NES compliments VSE's car, a compliment that the Vietnamese feels culturally obliged to deflect or tone down.

(5.1) NES: Very nice car actually.
VSE: Oh I don't think so. Uhm It's very cheap. It's alright but sometimes it has problems. (cited in Sundkvist & Nguyen 2020: 695)

The possible implication for misunderstanding and stereotyping which could develop from the transfer of pragmatic norms or cultural conceptualisations from a speaker's first language was studied by the American sociolinguist, John Gumperz (e.g., Gumperz 1982; Gumperz & Roberts 1980). A major insight Gumperz had was the realisation that a mistake in grammar or pronunciation by a second-language speaker could be identified by the hearer. It would be noticed and the hearer could make allowances, knowing that a mistake had been made. In contrast, however, the transfer of a pragmatic norm (Odlin 1989) from the speaker's first language into English would not be identified or noticed as coming from the speaker's first language or culture, but would instead be interpreted by the hearer against the pragmatic norms of English rather than against the norms of the speaker's first language. As Gumperz showed, this could lead to prejudice and stereotyping of non-native speakers of a language by first-language speakers of it. To return to the examples from Wierzbicka noted in the previous section, English speakers might stereotype speakers of Russian or Polish as rude, as they use the imperative when making requests; while speakers of Russian or Polish might stereotype speakers of English as rude or even insulting as the use of 'whimperatives' suggests that the hearer might not fulfil a perfectly straightforward request. The cross-cultural

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realisation of requests has since been studied in some depth (e.g., Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989; Young 1980).

An example of an Indian English pattern being used within a British English environment and causing communication difficulty comes from a transcript of a student participating in a role play at the London-based National Centre for Industrial Language Training (NCILT 1978). In (5.2) the Indian student explains to his supervisor why he wants to take the following day off from work.

(5.2) Two months ago, somebody accident on the road but I am a witness but I received a letter yesterday because my address change but I am going to court in the morning but I day off tomorrow, but I am sorry I can't working tomorrow I want to leave for tomorrow.

In this context, the explanation proves to be an awkward example of communication in British English because it apparently lacks focus and the information is expressed in what is, to speakers of British English, an unusual order. The misunderstanding comes not from the incorrect use of grammar as such but from the order in which the information is presented. British English would prefer the following sequence of information (5.3):

(5.3) Focus: I'm sorry I can't come to work tomorrow.
Reason (i): I have to go to court, because two months ago there was an accident on the road and I was a witness.
Reason (ii): I couldn't let you know before because I only received the letter today, because I've changed my address. (NCILT 1978: 11)

Some forty years ago, I first encountered comparable problems associated with the transfer of a speaker's first language pragmatic norms into English when I was working in Hong Kong for the Professional and Company English (PACE) unit of the British Council. The Director of PACE at the time was Celia Roberts. Roberts had worked closely John Gumperz and he came to Hong Kong to give lectures to us at PACE on the potential for this type of stereotyping of second-language speakers by first-language speakers. I soon encountered this stereotyping first hand at work. At the time, I was working with the Hong Kong police. The police force had been beset by a number of embarrassing incidents involving breakdowns in communication. For example, a routine exercise dealing with a mock attack on one of Hong Kong's police stations had had to be aborted as communication between the senior and junior officers broke down. As a result of these breakdowns, the Hong Kong government asked the British Council to look into their possible causes. This task was contracted to PACE and I was lucky enough to be part of the team given the job. One obvious problem was that, at the time, the great majority of senior officers were from Great Britain, and while some had learned Cantonese, the Chinese

language spoken by the overwhelming majority of the population of Hong Kong, they were a minority. On the other hand, the junior officers, from station sergeants down to constables were all locals whose first language was Cantonese. Few had much proficiency in English. That there were frequent breakdowns in communication among the Hong Kong police was therefore not too surprising. However, in order to conduct a proper needs analysis, first-hand experience was essential so I spent six months visiting police stations to observe police-with-police and police-with-public interactions, and going out on the beat. On one visit to a police station, I was in the office of a superintendent when a police constable knocked on the door and was invited by the superintendent to come in. The ensuing dialogue started as follows (5.4) (see also Kirkpatrick 2007a: 25). The S is the superintendent and the PC is the constable.

(5.4) S: Yes?
PC: My mother is not well sir
S: Yes
PC: She has to go into hospital sir
S: uh huh
PC: On Thursday sir

It is clear that the constable was building up to ask for leave, in ways similar to the Indian's pattern, by prefacing the reasons for his request before making it. This was clear to the Superintendent who spoke excellent Cantonese and did grant leave. However, the Superintendent stressed to me after the constable had left that the way the constable had approached asking for leave presented, in his view, a problem. He wanted the constable to learn to be more upfront about his requests by directly asking for leave as in, 'Could I have a day's leave on Thursday please, sir?'

It was this and similar interactions that led me to investigate the pragmatic and rhetorical norms of first-language speakers of Chinese. I eventually ended up some ten years later doing my doctorate (entitled 'Information Sequencing in Modern Standard Chinese') at the Australian National University. The Chinese police constable's way of asking for leave in English followed Chinese rhetorical norms which typically place the reasons for any request before the request itself. This has been called a 'because-therefore' or a frame-to-main sequencing pattern (Kirkpatrick 1993, 1995). In contrast, Anglo rhetorical norms typically place the request, softened by the use of 'whimperatives' or internal modification (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) and *then* provide reasons for justifications for the request. These sequencing patters are not rigid, of course, and both languages can sequence requests in many ways. Native speakers of different varieties of English have been shown to use different request patterns (Kasper 1992). Yet the normal unmarked sequence of Chinese is a marked

unusual sequence in native speaker varieties of English and vice versa. A result of this has been for native English speakers to stereotype Chinese speakers as being vague and taking a long time to get to the point; while Chinese speakers may stereotype English speakers as being too direct. This 'because-therefore' sequence has also been noted in the rhetorical patterns of Thai speakers' English, as in 'Because it is flooded, so I cannot go to class' (Hammond 2020: 640).

The normal unmarked Chinese sequence of placing the reasons and justifications for the request also allows for smoother social relations. The requestee of the Chinese constable's request in (5.4) can always indicate that the request will be granted before the request is actually made. For example, after hearing the constable explain that his mother is ill, the requestee can then say something like 'Please take a day's leave if you need to look after your Mum.' This means that the request can be granted before the constable has to undertake the face-threatening action (Brown & Levinson 1987) of making a request. By the same token, the requestee can signal that the request is unlikely to be made before the requestor actually makes the request. Again, in the example the requestee, after realising that the constable was leading up to a request to take some leave, could say something like 'I'm sorry but we are so busy at the moment, we are not granting any extra leave.' This allows the constable to preserve his face by not forcing him to ask for a request which will then be denied.

In earlier chapters, I made the distinction between a world English and the use of English as a lingua franca, saying that a world English was likely to be characterised by references to and reflections of local cultures, often realised through code-switching into the first language of the speakers. In contrast, I have argued that ELF is not a variety of English but a mode of communication where interactional norms are jointly negotiated on a *pro tempore* basis for each interaction (Seidlhofer 2011; Walkinshaw 2019). Participants in ELF are likely to come from a variety of different cultures with their potentially different cultural norms. This raises a point of contention – to what extent is a speaker's home culture reflected in their use of English when using English as a lingua franca? I have argued that, when using an Asian variety of English with speakers of the same variety within a shared speech community, the English will, of necessity, reflect the cultural norms and values of its speakers. The question is, how much of this 'culture' is reflected when speakers use ELF? Baker (2017: 27) argues that ELF is, by definition, deeply intercultural, as ELF communication typically involves people from different lingua cultures. That ELF typically involves people from different lingua cultures is no doubt true. But the questions is, 'To what extent do they reflect their different lingua-cultures when using ELF?' Walkinshaw (forthcoming) identifies three phenomena associated with the pragmatics of ELF. The first is that the participants suspend their linguistic and cultural norms. Instead, they adopt ad hoc norms

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that are negotiated on the spot, as it were, as they go along. This ability to negotiate ad hoc norms has been noted by other scholars of ELF (e.g., Canagarajah 2013; Meierkord 2000; Seidlhofer 2004). Meierkord suggests that this ad hoc approach is occasioned by the speakers' shared status as second-language users of English. They are therefore more tolerant of the use of non-standard forms and are will not negatively evaluate the use of pragmatic norms against their own first languages (Meierkord 2000). A similar argument is made by House (2003, 2009) who argues that users of ELF tend to avoid conflict. This leads to the second phenomenon of ELF pragmatics identified by Walkinshaw, which is the 'let it pass' principle first noted by Firth (1996), whereby users of ELF will allow something they do not understand to pass in the hope that it will become clear later in the course of the conversation. The third phenomenon identified by Walkinshaw, and which is linked to the first two, is that ELF speakers are cooperative and use strategies that aim to ensure smooth communication and strategies of repair that serve to resolve any misunderstandings. As will be shown later and as documented elsewhere, there are contexts in which ELF speakers do not observe the cooperative principle. These include the police interview in Chapter 4, courtrooms and high-stakes encounters (Kirkpatrick, Subhan & Walkinshaw 2016; Walkinshaw & Kirkpatrick 2014).

In this context, in a comparative study of extended pieces of discourse taken from varieties of Asian English and speakers using ELF in Asian settings, Kirkpatrick and McLellan (2012) investigated three hypotheses, namely:

(i) Any variety of world English (WE) is, by definition, primarily concerned with establishing an identity and membership of a particular speech community. As such, it will be characterised by lexical items and idioms that refer to specific items and beliefs that are of particular importance to the local culture and environment. As the great majority of speakers of a particular world English are multilinguals who have learned English as an additional language and who share a linguistic repertoire (that is to say, they speak the same languages), a WE may also be characterised by frequent use of code-mixing and code-switching.

(ii) As the major function of English as a lingua franca (ELF) is to act as a common medium of communication between people who do not share the same first language and culture, its role is primarily one of ensuring successful communication between people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As such, ELF will be characterised by the relative absence of lexical items and idioms that refer to culturally and locally specific items and beliefs – for the simple reason that such lexical items and idioms are unlikely to be understood by people from outside the culture. As mutual communication is the goal of English as a lingua franca, the latter will also be characterised by a lack of code-mixing and code-switching.

(iii) In world Englishes and in English as a lingua franca, communicative success does not depend on the use of standard native-speaker forms.

They concluded:

(i) The WE data (based on texts from Malaysia and Brunei) supported the hypothesis that WE varieties are, by definition, code-mixed varieties on account of the availability of languages other than English as resources on which writers and speakers can draw, knowing that their readership or audience share similar multilingual capabilities.

(ii) The ELF examples analysed showed a strong orientation towards communication rather than expression or negotiation of identities. The relative absence of both idiomatic expressions and of recourse to other languages (i.e. code-switching) supports this contention.

(iii) The third hypothesis related to 'native speaker' or 'inner-circle norms', and is supported by both the WE and ELF examples.

At this stage, a word of caution is needed. As noted in Chapter 3, scholars working on the European equivalent of the Asian Corpus of English (ACE) and the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE) have found more instances of code-switching in VOICE than in ACE (e.g., Pritzl 2009, 2012). In explaining this difference, I suggested two possible reasons: first, many European languages are linguistically related and share a large number of cognates, that is words that have the same derivation such as 'table' in both English and French; and, second, that the speakers in VOICE are more likely to be multilingual in European languages than speakers of ACE are likely to be multilingual in Asian languages. European schools teach European languages as well as English. The aim is for students to have their first language plus two others. In Asia, on the other hand, local languages, other than the respective national languages, are not typically taught in the school system (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat 2017, 2019). This, coupled with the typological distance between many languages of Asia – to say nothing of the fact that many have different scripts – means that few Asians speak the languages of their neighbours. The language most promoted and privileged after the respective national languages in Asian school systems is, typically, English. I return to these issues in Chapters 9 and 10.

But to summarise the main points so far, when using English, speakers of other languages may transfer linguistic features and pragmatic norms or cultural conceptualisations from their first language or culture into their English. This is an inevitable, indeed necessary, condition for an Asian variety of English. Any variety of English must reflect the cultural norms and lived experiences of its users. This type of transfer may also occur when speakers are using English as a lingua franca. When this happens, ELF users cooperatively negotiate ad hoc norms of communication and tolerate different and non-standard norms of use. The argument is that ELF users are more

tolerant and accepting of difference and variation when communicating with fellow second-language speakers of English than are native speakers. A related argument is that Asian users of ELF are less likely to use idioms and words from their first languages than are European users of ELF. This is, first, because Asian languages represent a wide variety of different language types and, second, because the respective school systems give different prominence to the learning of languages. Asian users of English are less likely to be familiar with Asian languages other than their own, than Europeans are with European languages other than their own. This is not to say that there is no transfer or code-mixing in ACE as the following examples show.

In the first example, (5.5) the speaker is a female Malaysian Chinese who speaks Malay as well as Chinese dialects. She uses a series of discourse particles that are common in Malaysian English. There is some debate about whether these particles are transferred from Malay or Chinese as both these languages use discourse particles of this type. The presence of several potential substrates influencing a variety of English makes determining which substrate is acting on the variety of English complicated (Ansaldo 2009) and this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. What is clear here, however, is that these discourse particles have been transferred from the speakers' other languages. The transferred discourse markers are underlined.

(5.5) then he said erm if the if i was younger lah and then i would think about leaving school lah i say why give it to your mother or father to take care lah i might have done that lah cos my parents then he said then he said no lah the most important time for a child is four years mah and i want to bond with my child.

The speaker's audience here all also speakers of Malay, so the use of the discourse markers could indicate that the speaker is using a Malaysian variety of English rather than English as a lingua franca. In (5.6), however, the speakers do not share the same first language. S1 is a Vietnamese female and S2 is a Thai female. The Thai speaker uses a Thai discourse marker 'kah'. This signals politeness.

(5.6) S1: [first name1] how are you today?
S2: i'm fine thank you kah how about you?
S1: i'm: good doing well do you have your lunch mhm?

Hammond (2020: 640) also notes the presence of Thai polite particles in the English use of Thais. As she notes:

the polite particles, namely 'ka' (used by females), 'krup' (males), 'na ka' (females), and 'na krup'(males) are retained to various degrees when Thais revert to English and they are evident both in speaking and writing. Polite particles could then be described as an

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instinctive display of etiquette which Thais are born into, although polite particles can also be viewed as conscious strategy to help emphasize a request or a favour. This 'conscious strategy' is apparent in written English and, as an example, it would not be unusual for an e-mail written by a female Thai university student addressed to a native English speaking instructor requesting an assignment deadline extension, to be liberally punctuated with 'ka' and 'na ka'.

These two examples show the transfer of discourse markers from the speakers' first languages. Example (5.7) illustrates the transfer of a single word from the first language of one of the speakers. *Kampung* is a Malay word meaning village. The three speakers are all female: S1 is Burmese, S2 is Malay and S3 is a native speaker of Arabic.

(5.7) S1: er:
S2: i think
S1: insya Allah friday
S2: another two yah
S1: his his
S3: she's going to kampung
S1: yah i'm going to kampung

Two points are of particular interest here. The first is the use of the Arabic term *insya Allah* meaning 'God willing'. This is used by the Malay speaker – and being a Malay of Malay ethnicity she will, by definition, be a Muslim. The extent to which this is an instance of code-mixing or one of borrowing is debatable as this expression is very commonly used by Muslims (and others) when speaking English. The second point of interest is the Arabic speaker's use of the Malay word *kampong*. This shows an example of ad hoc negotiation of interactional norms whereby the Arabic speaker signals closeness with the Malay speaker by choosing to use a word from her language.

In (5.8), three Thai females (S1, S2, S3) are in conversation with a Burmese female (S4). S1 reverts to Thai to consult her Thai colleagues about a word in English she does not know. She asks, in Thai, 'How do you call it? The staff that they hire.' Her Thai-speaking colleague, S3, provides the English word 'agent', which S1 happily accepts. This is an example of 'exclusive' code-switching, as S4, not being a speaker of Thai, is excluded.

(5.8) S4: ah busy
S1: for that line
S4: busy line
SS: mm
S1: because er {(in Thai) how do you call it? the staff that they hire?}
S3: agent
S1: oh the the agent can can handle

In (5.9), S2 and S5 are both female Vietnamese and S3, S4 and S7 are speakers of Malay. S7 is male. This is another example of 'exclusive' code-switching, but one which seems ruder than the previous example where the switch to Thai was to help the communication flow, as S1 sought the word in English she needed in order to make her meaning clear. In (5.9) however, the Vietnamese speakers take up another topic in their first language, asking each other how late they can park their bikes on Saturday night. They do not seem to be that interested in hearing that Malaysia imports rice from their country.

(5.9) S7: even we import from Vietnam
S3: huh huh wow
S7: the rice? sometimes we import from Vietnam
S4: yeah we import rice
S5: (in Vietnamese) {until what time are we allowed to park our motorbikes on saturday}
S2: (in Vietnamese) {nine at night}

The tone in the next example, (5.10), is more typical of most informal ELF communication in that it is cooperative. It is also further evidence of the multilingual nature of ELF. The interesting aspect of this example is that the Vietnamese speaker coaches the Malay speakers how to pronounce two expressions in Vietnamese, the first meaning 'see you again' and the second 'thank you'. S5 is the only first-language speaker of Vietnamese. The others are all Malay. S4 and S1 try and say the Vietnamese expression *hen gap lai* (see you again) and then S5 models it for them.

(5.10) S4: so i studied there that there that this there is a goodbye erm t- er hen gap lai hen gap lai
S1: hen gap lai
S5: hen gap lai
S4: hen gap lai
S7: hen gap lai
S4: ah that is and then

In (5.11) the Malay speakers also try to say 'thank you' in Vietnamese (*cam on*). The Vietnamese speaker (S2) listens to the Malays trying it and then models it for them, after which they all repeat the phrase several times.

(5.11) S1: cam on
S4: and then cam cam en
S3: cam en
S4: cam en
S5: er::m
S4: cam cam en
S5: thank you
S4: cam en cam en

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S1: cam en
S2: cam en {all speakers repeat the Vietnamese expression many times}

In the final example of co-operative modelling (5.12), two Vietnamese females (S5 and S2) are helping an Indonesian female (S3) pronounce words in Vietnamese.

(5.12) S5: when you are in danger you say help me
S4: yeah
S5: that is cuu giup cuu cuu{S3 repeats the word many times}
S2: e:r if you erm carry something heavy and you need the help just say giup giup yeah (laughter)
S3: giup
S2: it's a difficult sound

These examples of code-switching all come from ACE. They include examples of the transfer of discourse markers, the use of single words or 'islands' from the speaker's first language, exclusive code-switching, and even the use of code-switching to model the speaker's first language. However, as noted, the instances of code-switching in English as a lingua franca in the corpus is rare. In the next section of the chapter, I move to look at the communicative strategies that speakers using English as a lingua franca from ACE adopt to ensure communication. At the outset, I stress that these strategies are not necessarily unique to ELF speakers, but can be found in all intercultural communication (Baker 2017). I do suggest, however, that native speakers of English who have little experience in communicating in English with people for whom English is an additional language would benefit from becoming familiar with these strategies.

Communicative Strategies of ELF Speakers

First, I look at formal situations and how turns are assigned and then analyse more informal 'spontaneous' situations to describe and exemplify the communicative strategies adopted.

An example of a formal situation was a meeting of ASEAN Centre directors held in Bangkok (see also Kirkpatrick 2010a). This was a large meeting as thirty-seven representatives from various ASEAN Centres were present.[1] They were seated around a large horseshoe-shaped table. I had been invited to be present and record the meeting. The meeting was held over two days. It was

[1] ASEAN funds specialist centres to conduct research and training in various fields. They include, for example, a Centre for Tropical Biology (based in Indonesia), a Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (based in the Philippines) and a Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (based in Thailand).

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chaired by the Director General (DG) of ASEAN, a Malaysian. On each side of him, sat a Deputy Director General (DDG). The Director General opened the meeting by greeting those present, first in Malay, his own first language, and then in Thai, the language of the country in which the meeting was being held. This was the only time that languages other than English were used by those present when addressing the meeting as a whole. After his welcoming remarks, the DG, now speaking in English, urged delegates to make sure they attended the sessions on time and used a golfing metaphor saying how inconvenient it was for the other three players if the fourth member of a foursome was late on the tee. I was not sure how many of the assembled delegates understood this golfing reference. Seidlhofer (2009) has noted that 'unilateral idiomaticity', the use of idioms from one's first language, can impede communication when using English as a lingua franca, as the idioms are unlikely to be understood. There was only one other use of an English native-speaker idiom. This was when a native speaker of English – the only one present –who was a member of the ASEAN Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts, said that 'the whole organisation needs to be on an even keel'. I was unable, after the meeting, to canvass all the participants about whether they understood the idiom, but the three I did manage to consult said that they had not understood it.

The meeting was conducted by the DG and the two DDGs and followed a pattern that was strictly adhered to. The DG or one of his deputies would invite the lead representative of each of the Centres to make their report. No one interrupted the speakers when they were making their reports. The only people who questioned the individual speakers after they had given their reports were the DG or DDGs. Thus the first part of the meeting was very ordered and controlled, consisting of each of the Centre Directors giving their report in turn to a silent audience.

This orderliness and acceptance of the rules of the meeting was challenged by one agenda item. The DG announced that the Centres would be required to complete a new common form when submitting their annual reports. In the past, Centres were able to submit their reports using their own templates. It was clear that this was unpopular with the delegates, but no one was explicitly critical of the DG's request. In their response to the request, the delegates typically stressed that the Centres were very different from each other, but no one actually went on to say that therefore the DG's proposal was unworkable. Indeed, delegates went as far as to conclude that they were not criticising the DG's proposal. The concluding remarks of an Indonesian and Singaporean delegate were typical. The Indonesian delegate concluded his remarks by saying, 'I just want to comment on some of the question [*sic*] with due respect to the Secretariat.' The Singaporean concluded, 'They are just my thoughts, with no attempt to criticise.' I noted in Chapter 4 that the so-called ASEAN way of communicating can be captured by two key Malay

terms, *musyawarah* (dialogue) and *muafakat* (consensus) (Curley & Thomas 2007) and illustrated how these were realised in conversations between immigration officials about the issuing of visas. It would appear that these two terms also underpinned the discussions and ways of speaking in this two-day meeting. These concepts of 'dialogue' and 'consensus' are also strengthened by traditional Asian values which accord deference to age and authority. Explicit criticism is frowned upon, a sentiment voiced by the Singaporean delegate. Further evidence of this desire for dialogue and consensus and a wish to avoid explicit criticism comes from a comparative study of how academic seminars were conducted in Australia and Indonesia (Rusdi 1999). Rusdi found that Australian seminars were characterised by interruptions and apparent attempts at stealing turns. Speakers would be constantly interrupted by participants in a sort of free for all. In contrast, Rusdi summed up the Indonesian style as follows:

> Each seminar session is opened by a moderator. In his/her opening remarks, the moderator greets the participants … introduces the topic of the seminar, introduces the members of the presentation team, sets the house rules for the activity and invites the presenter to give a presentation. After the presentation, the moderator summarises the main points of the presentation and calls for additional information from other presentation team members. The moderator then summarises the additional information and calls for questions from the audience. (Rusdi 1999: 71)

Rusdi goes on to report that, in the calls for questions, turn-taking was determined by age or seniority and sex. This meant that the moderator would inevitably invite the eldest male present to ask the first question or make the first comment. This might not always be taken up by the eldest male present, but he would always be asked first. The moderator would then choose other people to ask or comment, based on their seniority. It is important to note, however, that the moderator would ensure that everyone who wanted to ask a question or make a comment would be allowed to do so and in an orderly fashion. Thus, Indonesian seminars were conducted in an orderly way, following a pattern understood by all. Everyone who wanted to had a chance to speak, uninterrupted by others. As Rusdi concluded, it was not surprising that Indonesian students studying in Australia found it very hard to contribute to seminars, as they were used to the presence of a moderator who would orchestrate who could ask a question and when.

The desire for dialogue and consensus and creating a cooperative atmosphere is also evident in the communicative strategies adopted by speakers on ACE in less formal situations. I will illustrate these by using examples from ACE (see also Kirkpatrick 2010a: 126 ff). The strategies are in bold and listed together at the end of the chapter in Table 5.1. I again highlight that the use of

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non-standard forms, or what have been traditionally regarded as grammatical errors, do not interfere with understanding in these examples. The only non-standard form that does cause misunderstanding is the mispronunciation of 'holes' as 'horns' in (5.13).

The first strategy used to ensure a smooth flow of conversation is **lexical anticipation**. In (5.13), a Filipina (S1) is talking to a Bruneian female (S2). The Bruneian anticipates and provides the words 'school' and 'income'.

(5.13)
S1: and the parents are well educated whereas those coming from the public
S2 school
S1: really come from lower er
S2: income
S1: income families

Later, in the same conversation (5.14), the Filipina provides 'better' in an example of **lexical repetition** to facilitate cohesion in the conversation.

(5.14)
S2: . . . these people who are from the government er the private school usually do better and they will continue doing better
S1: better
S2: better until . . .

In (5.15), the Bruneian female (S2) offers a **lexical suggestion** to the male Thai speaker (S1), a suggestion which he readily accepts.

(5.15)
S1: right, but actually we can share some experiences right because teaching grammar is a continuation continual process
S2: continuous
S1: right

A further example of **lexical suggestion** is illustrated in (5.16), where a Singaporean female (S2) suggests the word 'benefits' to the Cambodian male (S1). Again, as with the Thai in example (5.15), the Cambodian appears to happily accept the suggestion, with no sign of irritation. As noted earlier, the fact that the participants in these English-as-a-lingua-franca conversations are all speakers for whom English is an additional language and who feel 'the solidarity of non-native ELF speakers' (House 2009: 94) may mean that they tolerate non-standard forms and feel comfortable with help and suggestions more readily than they might if such help or suggestions were provided by a native speaker.

(5.16)
S1: . . . i will tell cambodians i will them about about the advantages advantages of english and motivate them to learn english because i know the good things of english
S2: the benefits
S1: yeah, the benefit . . .

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In addition to these examples of lexical anticipation, repletion and suggestion, there are also examples of **lexical correction**. Here in (5.17) the Singaporean female (S2) offers the correct word 'stay' to replace the 'sit' that the Indonesian male (S1) has used.

(5.17) S2: now, i mean how many years do students have to sit
S1: stay
S2: to stay in the junior high school

The next strategy (5.18) is the **don't give up** strategy and is a strategy in direct opposition to the **let it pass** strategy suggested initially by Firth (1996: 243). This example is necessarily rather long as it exemplifies the **don't give up** strategy. The speakers here are all female and comprise a Vietnamese (S1), a Thai (S2), a Bruneian (S3) and a Malaysian (S4).

(5.18) S1: uhm uhm i think that the western people when they come to the come to vietnam they like nam pho
S2: nam pho yeah
S1: pho it is very very traditional you know
S3 Ve..
and S4:
S1: P H O (spelling it out)
S3 P H O (repeating the spelling)
and S4:
S1: but you pronounce [it
S3: [what] is it actually?
S1: pho, pho
S4: No no no she is she is just saying what is the dish actually is it fish is it what what is it rice?
S1: ehn nam you know nam?
S3 nam nam
and S4:
S1: yes there are many kinds of nam
S4: what is nam?
S1: it is some kind of
S4: made of pork?
S1: yes it's made of pork and some green bean no not green bean just some kind of
S2: bean sprout
S1: yes maybe bean sprout and er some noodle (er i mean) you mix eggs you er mix them (ehm) and you use er some kind of it is also made from rice round a little and you pack it (yeah) and then you put in the oil (eh huh) and fry them
S4: oh it must be very nice but minus the pork of course (laughter)
S3: put it in the packet and then you fry it
S1: no no no no not the package
S4: not the noodle

S1: you use them i mean the package here it is made of rice sorry made of rice it is er ehm always circle or square you
S4: is it something like
S1: only use only only little and then you pack it so it is usu usually very small just yeah round
S4: maybe our version of popiah
S1: yeah popiah
All: popiah yeah popiah popiah [*loud laughter/shouting*]
S3 and S4: at least we find something that we know

Here the Vietnamese speaker is trying to explain a traditional Vietnamese dish to the other interactants. This is particularly interesting as I think she is, initially, trying to describe a traditional Vietnamese soup, *pho*, but which is usually made of beef, beansprouts and noodles, rather than pork. But during the discussion, the dish seems to switch to a different one, *popiah*, a type of fresh spring roll. After a great deal of negotiation and not giving up, the group seem to agree that they are describing *popiah*, with the Bruneian and Malay participants triumphantly announcing, 'at least we find something that we know'.

In another strategy that runs counter to the **let it pass** strategy, participants can signal they have not understood and **signal a request for repetition**. In (5.19) a Burmese female (S2) simply says, 'pardon' in response to a question from a Singaporean (S1).

(5.19) S1: but how did you manage to cope when you were taught english at the very later stage? (1.4 second pause)
S2: pardon?
S1: how how are you all able to cope you know when in your during your time, you were taught english only at secondary level?

(5.20) provides an example of the **let it pass strategy.** The Vietnamese speaker (S1) pronounces the word 'taught' as 'torch'. This is not understood by either the Thai or Bruneian participants (S2 & S3, respectively) but both provide a backchannel 'mmm' to indicate that the speaker should continue.

(5.20) S1: on the first year, um . . . those students um will be taught ('torch') all the basic er rules
S2: mmm
S1: like . . . i i mean this, for the er for the sub- for the grammar subject itself, it's not for interpreter skills.
S3: mmm
S1: so, er . . .

In addition to strategies adopted by the person who is being directly addressed, other participants can also employ strategies to help ensure smooth

communication. In (5.21), the Singaporean (S1) addresses a question directly to the Laotian (S3). The Burmese participant (S2) realises that the Laotian has not understood the question so paraphrases the question in the hope that this will allow the Laotian to understand. This strategy of **participant paraphrase** is successful.

(5.21)
S1: do they] do they write essays do they write essays do the pupils do the pupils write compositions?
S2: can your students write an essay or paragraph writing {S2: eh hm} a composition?
S3: yes I think they can because er as i ask them to write er the story they can write and some mistake i think that's ok for them because they have never learned english before.

Thus far, we have provided examples of communicative strategies employed by listeners. Speakers can also employ strategies to ensure smooth communication if they feel that they are not being understood. Example (5.22) is of the same three participants as (5.21). Again the Singaporean (S1) is addressing the Laotian female (S3). It is clear that the Laotian does not understand, so the Singaporean paraphrases her question no fewer than 5 times in an attempt to help her understand. She adopts the strategy of **speaker paraphrase**. The numbers in brackets indicate the length of the pause in seconds between S1's paraphrasing. At no time during this exchange does the Singaporean indicate any sense of impatience or irritation with the Laotian, thus providing an excellent example of the cooperative atmosphere surrounding the exchange. This example also illustrates the strategy of **participant prompt** when the Burmese (S2) offers a potential answer to the question for the Laotian.

(5.22)
S1: eh huh ehm do the do the children you know in er in your country those who come from a very poor families are they given financial assistance?
S3: ehm
S1: are they in in terms of money?
S3: ehm
S1: i mean does the government support them? (2) ok is there is there like you know those children who are very poor and their parents cannot afford to send them to school? (3) does the government actually given them assistance? (4)
S2: yeah the government will assist i think so your government will assist
S1: example you know like buying uniform for them or textbooks and paying for their school fees
S3: i th i think they don't do like that yes only the family or parents
S1: can afford
S3: yes afford them er for example in the er countryside some studen cannot learn because er it's hardly for them to er go to school

On occasion, when the listeners simply cannot make out what the speaker is saying, they **request repetition or clarification** as in (5.19). In (5.23), neither the Burmese female nor the Malaysian male nor the Filipina participants (S2, S3 and S4 respectively) have any idea what the Laotian male (S1) is saying and explicitly indicate this by requesting repetition and clarification several times. Eventually the Laotian speaker adopts the strategy of **spelling out the word**, a strategy also illustrated in the previous chapter in (4.7b). Only then do the listeners realise that the speaker has been pronouncing the word 'holes' as 'horns'.

(5.23)
S1: you know at the time that ehm tsunami occurs there were some problem in my country
S2: what problem
S1: yeah we've got some problem we have big horns in in some areas
S3: horns? sorry
S1: horn you know horn
S4: what horn
S1: yeah big horn
S3: (laugh) what
S4: what's a horn
S3: sorry
S1: H-O-L-E something like this
S3: holes?
S1: yeah

It is worth noting at this stage that, despite the Laotian's extended non-understanding in (5.22) and the initial bewilderment of the listeners in (5.23), both conversations are repaired by the adoption of appropriate communicative strategies.

A further speaker strategy is to **make explicit the topic** to be discussed. In (5.24) an Indonesian female (S1) asks the participants what they think of their rooms (they have recently arrived in Singapore). The Burmese female (S2) hears 'rooms' as 'food' and answers accordingly. The Indonesian listens patiently to her answer before repeating that what she is talking about is the rooms.

(5.24)
S1: what about your rooms?
S2: er
S1: you feel ok any [problems
S2: i find the taste er quite ok but er like yours is i think er the rice a little bit sticky in our country we don't er eat er rice as sticky as that rice here and then ehm how shall i say er and then vegetables er maybe er the same vegetables we eat in our country but er the price for them is also expensive i think because i prefer eating vegetables i prefer vegetables er to meat er
S2: ok what i'm asking is about **room** ok er do you feel cold?

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The great majority of examples which have been provided both in this and earlier chapters have confirmed 'the supportive and cooperative nature of interactions in ELF where meaning negotiation takes place at different levels' (Archibald, Cogo & Jenkins 2011: 3). Exceptions include the police interview discussed in Chapter 4. We conclude this chapter with further examples which show an unfriendly atmosphere from courtroom discourse in Hong Kong. Both speakers are first-language speakers of Cantonese but are using, English, which still remains the primary language of the higher courts. These examples show that, when the stakes are high, the cooperative nature which typically frames the use of English as a lingua franca may disappear and be replaced by confrontation. Indeed 'Direct, confrontational questioning and bald-on-record disagreement are common currency in these exchanges, where winning the argument supersedes the desire for interactional comity' (Kirkpatrick, Subhan & Walkinshaw 2016: 87). Example (5.25) shows S2 repeating several times that he cannot grasp the point that S1 is making. In a way, S2 is adopting the strategy of **requesting repletion or clarification**, but at the same time suggesting, in an aggressive way, that S1 is being unclear.

(5.25) S1: that is the distance from the top of the retaining wall to the surface of the berm
S2: then what's your point?
S1: okay
S2 what's the point?
S1: now okay my point is with that figure in mind . . . A few lines later S2 continues:
S2: sorry i can't catch your point
S1: really i can't catch your point
S2: okay
(Kirkpatrick, Subhan, & Walkinshaw 2016: 87)

The tone here is quite different from that in (5.19). Far from being cooperative and preserving the face of the participants, this exchange illustrates an attack on a speaker's face. Such exchanges are common in the courtroom and police data. This serves to underline the importance of context. Typically, ELF use is characterised by cooperation and ELF users share a commitment to ensure smooth communication and adopt a variety of communicative strategies to achieve this. But, in high-stakes contexts such as the courtroom or police station, the context will determine the speech styles and motivation of the interactants, which may well be to threaten 'the other's' face and undermine their arguments.

These examples show that code-mixing and transfer of features from a speaker's first language do occur when Asian multilinguals use English as a lingua franca, underlining that ELF is a multilingual phenomenon. However,

Table 5.1 *Communicative strategies of ELF users in ACE*

Strategy type (Listener)	Illustration
Lexical anticipation	[5.13]
Lexical repetition	[5.14]
Lexical suggestion	[5.15, 5.16]
Lexical correction	[5.17]
Don't give up	[5.18]
Request repetition /clarification	[5.19]
Let it pass	[5.20]
Strategy type (Participant)	Illustration
Participant paraphrase	[5.21]
Participant prompt	[5.22]
Strategy type (Speaker)	Illustration
Spell out the word	[5.23]
Be explicit	[5.24]
Paraphrase	[5.22]

the use of these features seldom appears to cause communicative breakdown or misunderstanding. Instead, generally speaking, ELF users adopt a series of ad hoc communicative strategies to help them negotiate meaning in a cooperative way. A number of these communicative strategies were illustrated. These might be useful for native speakers of English when they are communicating with ELF users and second-language speakers of English.

Table 5.1 provides a summary of the communicative strategies identified in this chapter and indicate which of the examples illustrates which strategy. The strategies are divided into listener, participant and speaker strategies. (The Table is adapted from Kirkpatrick 2010a: 141.)

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter considered the transfer of pragmatic norms from the speaker's first language into their use of English and then illustrated how this transfer might cause speakers of English to incorrectly ascribe negative personality traits to the speaker. Then, while arguing that world Englishes are, by definition, characterised by code-mixing, the chapter also exemplified the transfer of words and grammatical items from a speaker's first language into their use of English as a lingua franca, thereby illustrating the essential multilingual nature of ELF. The chapter concluded by illustrating the types of

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strategies adopted by speakers of English as a lingua franca in order to ensure successful communication. These strategies were listed in Table 5.1. In the next chapter, I look at the borrowing into English of words from the speakers' first languages in more detail and also give examples from Asian writers writing in English.

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