DOCTORAL (PHD) DISSERTATION

THESIS BOOKLET

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# The Pragmatics of English as a Lingua Franca in an International University Context: An Exploratory Study of Language Use From Multiple Perspectives

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**Table of Contents**

# 1 Introduction and Research Niche

The English language had become the de facto medium of international interactions by the 21st century (Crystal, 2003), making it play a potentially more important role in global communication than any other language. The exact number of English speakers is undetermined owing partly to the fact that it is difficult to establish what constitutes sufficient proficiency in the language for speakership; nevertheless, it has been suggested that the number of speakers worldwide—including those who speak English as an additional language—could be as high as 2 billion (Graddol, 2006). The diversity of the speakers makes English a pluricentric language, which Kachru (1996) described "with reference to the Three Concentric Circles of English" (p. 137). In this model, users of English are divided into the triad of the Inner Circle, which includes speakers from countries where English is spoken by the majority as a first language; the Outer Circle, which is comprised of countries where English may be an official language alongside other local languages; and the Expanding Circle, which encompasses the rest of the world. It should be noted that speakers in the Inner Circle form a minority of all English speakers as "the vast majority of verbal exchanges in English do not involve any native speakers of the language at all" (Seidlhofer, 2005, p. 339), which is to say that nonnative speakers of English use the language as a means of communication to interact predominantly with other nonnative speakers. The use of English for this type of international communication has come to be known as English as a lingua franca (henceforth ELF).

The use of ELF in educational contexts has generated substantial research interest (e.g., Björkman, 2012; Gotti, 2014; Hahl, 2016; Knapp, 2011; Mauranen, 2010; Riekkinen, 2010; Smit, 2010; Wang, 2021). ELF communication has been found to be highly efficient despite the fact that it takes place without strict adherence to the norms that may be followed by native English speakers (Seidlhofer, 2009). In fact, the linguistic and cultural diversity that characterises ELF communication is considered to be an asset rather than an impediment to meeting the communicative needs of speakers engaged in ELF interactions (Murray, 2012). Participants in academic ELF interactions have been shown to draw on their linguistic and multilingual resources in adaptive ways in order to make themselves understood (e.g., Cogo, 2009; Gotti, 2014; Kaur, 2022). Another noteworthy feature of language use observed in ELF communication is a type of linguistic collaboration whereby speakers engaged in ELF interactions "jointly develop a shared repertoire to suit their specific purposes on that specific occasion" (Jenkins,

2012, p. 491). It has also been demonstrated that interactants in ELF discourse tend to make use of a range of pragmatic strategies for communicative effectiveness and do so on their own terms, often drawing on their first-language backgrounds and schematic knowledge (Cogo, 2010; Kaur, 2009; Pölzl & Seidlhofer, 2006). What these studies and a multitude of others have shown is that ELF communication is seldom hindered by misinterpretations or communication breakdowns, but when misunderstandings do occur, interlocutors tend to negotiate meaning jointly and establish what they mean by what they say. In other words, speakers in ELF contexts are able to use English resourcefully and successfully for communication in spite of having little shared knowledge due to their diverse linguacultural backgrounds.

As a consequence, the processes that underlie successful ELF communication are of interest to researchers working in the fields of both language pedagogy and applied linguistics. As Mauranen et al. (2010) put it, "for applied pedagogical interests, it is a top priority to analyse successful language use" (p. 184). As such, researchers who set out to analyse language use (i.e., not merely usage) can be expected to attain a degree of understanding of why speakers use language in ways they do. The achievement of such an objective arguably requires the exploration of language users' perspectives on interactional phenomena in addition to that of the analyst because the thought processes that influence language use will remain inaccessible to outside observers without input from speakers. Despite the need for participants' perspectives to be taken into consideration in the analysis of language use, most studies on ELF interactions seem to have focused on the surface level of communication, thereby making the analyst's perspective prevail. Some research has been undertaken to address this issue; for example, Smit (2010) conducted a longitudinal study of ELF classroom discourse in which insight into students' perspectives was sought through prolonged engagement with the participants. Another example is Kalocsai's (2014) investigation, in which the researcher became a participant observer in a community of international students in order to acquaint herself with the linguistic and social practices of the group. Nonetheless, familiarity with the modus operandi of individuals does not appear to be a sufficient basis for analysts to account for choices that speakers make in specific instances of language use. As Illés (2020) argued, researchers need "to capture participants' reality using ethnography" (p. 9) to understand language use in context, but this cannot be fully achieved through observation alone. Hence, the use of additional means of enquiry is necessary for language use to be analysed in a way that reflects language users' experience. This view

seems to be shared by Pitzl (2022), who called for the adoption of novel research methods to describe ELF interactions from the participants' perspectives. In sum, the paucity of studies in which language use is analysed from speakers' frames of reference has carved a niche for research to be conducted with a view to exploring ELF communication from the perspectives of those who engage in it.

Therefore, the main aim of the present thesis is to fill the existing research gap by exploring language use in an academic ELF setting from multiple perspectives. Specifically, the objective of the study is to concentrate on language users' perspectives in the process of communication as much as on the researcher's analytical perspective. The research foci, thus, are threefold: The exploration of pragmatic phenomena in the academic ELF context under analysis begins by providing a description of the features of interaction and language use that appear salient from the researcher's perspective. Thereafter, the focus of the analysis shifts from the analyst's to the participants' perspectives, thereby complementing the researcher's examination of the data with views on the same phenomena voiced by the students who produced the language data. The participants' perspectives are penetrated by means of stimulated recall, for the use of which the rationale is discussed in detail in a subsequent chapter. The intention behind the combination of the different analytical methods is to allow insights that would be concealed from outside observers without the participants' input to emerge from the data. The third and ultimate goal of the analysis, then, is to juxtapose the participating students' perspectives with that of the researcher and to outline the implications that the differences between them may have for applied linguistic research on ELF and for language pedagogy more generally.

## 2 Theoretical Background

### 2.1 Definitions of Key Terms

#### 2.1.1 *Pragmatics*

Pragmatics focuses on how meaning is realised in the course of using language; in other words, it is the study of "what speakers intend to do with their words and what it is which makes this intention clear" (Cook, 2003, p. 51).

#### 2.1.2 *English as a Lingua Franca*

ELF is understood in the context of the present study as the use of English for international communication by speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

### 2.1.3 *Multiple Perspectives*

As the thesis reports on the analysis of ELF communication from multiple perspectives, some explanation of what is meant by the different perspectives is required. The perspectives explored are emic and etic: The difference between the terms is that "an emic perspective is an insider's view of a particular culture or community" (McKay, 2006, p. 78), which is "in contrast to an etic perspective in which researchers interpret what they see largely from their own perspective" (McKay, 2006, p. 78). Thus, the multiple perspectives featured in the title of the thesis are to be understood as referring to the researcher's etic viewpoint as well as to the participants' emic perspectives.

## 2.2 Theoretical Conceptualisations of Language Use

The theories introduced in this section constitute the backbone of the study in the sense that they served as the theoretical basis for the data analysis. The abstract models of language use below can be used to describe and understand communication in a given context irrespective of whether that is a first-language or a lingua-franca environment; thus, they are universally applicable.

### 2.2.1 *Speech Act Theory*

An influential theory intended to account for how speakers use language to achieve their communicative goals was put forward by Austin's (1962), who pointed out that speakers can perform actions by linguistic means. What gives rise to these actions is that specific words are uttered in particular contexts. Austin referred to these actions as speech acts, and he proposed a three-component model to explain how speech acts operate in conversation. In Austin's view, a speech act consists of a locutionary act, an illocutionary act, and a perlocutionary act. Of these, the locutionary act (often shortened to locution) is the utterance a speaker makes. For instance, a speaker who is desirous of tea may produce a locution such as: "I fancy a cuppa". In saying the sentence, the hypothetical speaker's intention may be to persuade their interlocutor to make them a cup of tea, which is the illocutionary act (also known as the illocutionary force). The perlocutionary act (or effect) is the consequence engendered by the utterance: If the hearer believes that the sentence was intended as a request for tea, they might proceed to put the kettle on.

However, the explanation of how speech acts work is not equivalent to a definition of what a speech act exactly is. This has led Flowerdew (1990) to conclude that the application of

Speech Act Theory is complicated by the fact that the number of speech acts is unknown; indeed, it seems plausible that the number is infinite because a list of language functions may potentially be expanded indefinitely, and the ways in which language can be used to express those functions are also multifarious. In search of a solution, Searle (1971) argued that if a person is to understand a message, they first and foremost "should regard it as having been produced by a being with certain intentions" (p. 40) as this is the only way for humans to derive meaning from a set of signs—spoken or written. Thus, the theoretical conundrum caused by the elusiveness of speech acts can be resolved by the equation of any form of linguistic communication with speech acts (Searle, 1971). In other words, any locution can be considered a speech act because the importance of speakers' intentions in communication is such that language use is essentially the expression of illocutionary acts (i.e., no utterance is devoid of intention). Considering that the illocutionary force is at the core of speech acts (Searle, 1971), making discoveries about it may be regarded as an important objective for analysts. The analysis of speech acts, therefore, may require information in addition to what is at the outside observer's disposal. As such, it seems necessary to examine speech acts through the exploration of the emic perspectives of language users because only by uncovering the genuine communicative intentions behind utterances can researchers ascertain whether their interpretations are representative of participants' experiences. Thus, this is one of the main aims of the present research project.

### 2.2.2 *The Cooperative Principle*

Another theory that may be used to gain an understanding of language use in context is the Cooperative Principle, which was developed by Grice (1975) and is based on logical universals in linguistic interaction. The theory is of relevance to this study as the Cooperative Principle works well in the analysis of complex systems—which ELF is (Baird et al., 2014)—owing to the fact that it has "considerable explanatory power regarding the choices we make about what we say and how we say it" (Murray, 2012, p. 323). What cooperation refers to in the name of the theory is the participants' intention to engage in communication (Yule, 1996), which means that a conversational interaction is considered to be cooperative by default (i.e., even in the absence of collaboration or agreement) because speakers recognise "a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction" (Grice, 1975, p. 45) in speech events. On the face of it, the Cooperative Principle may be mistaken for a set of instructions, which is due to the fact that it was originally formulated in the imperative: "Make your conversational

contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice, 1975, p. 45). What Grice meant, however, was not the mandatory observance of rules as he did not put forward rules (NB. neither did he refer to them as such). Instead, he provided guidelines for establishing the contextual norms of communication. Assuming that the norms are adhered to, utterances carry no additional meaning. In putting the theory forward, however, Grice attempted to account for conversational implicatures by detailing the four aspects that have a bearing on how utterances are formulated and interpreted. Grice called these maxims and identified four of them: "Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner" (Grice, 1975, p. 45). As mentioned previously, the maxims are not rules that must be obeyed. Rather, what the maxims do is provide a description of how conversational interaction is conducted in ordinary circumstances. It is possible to diverge from this default position, which, then, gives rise to a conversational implicature.

### 2.2.3 *Politeness Theory*

Theoretical work has been undertaken also to conceptualise the ways in which linguistic interaction is influenced by the social relations between speakers. Specifically, the role that politeness plays in language use has been analysed vis-à-vis general principles that underlie interpersonal communication. The concept of "face", which is lexicalised due to its use in common parlance in expressions like "losing face" or "saving face", is central to the analysis of the consideration speakers show for one another in the course of interaction. Taken up and developed by Brown and Levinson (1987), face was defined as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (p. 61). In an attempt to specify further how the notion of face should be understood, Brown and Levinson suggested that it consisted of two constituents: positive face and negative face. In this dichotomy, negative face can be thought of as a speaker's "need to be independent, not imposed on by others" (Yule, 1996, p. 131), whereas "positive face reflects every person's need that his/her self-image is appreciated and approved of" (Spencer-Oatey & Zegarac, 2010, p. 76). Thus, impoliteness can manifest itself as verbal action that puts either aspect of individuals' face in jeopardy. For instance, if a hearer were requested by a speaker to do something for the speaker (e.g., put the kettle on), the request would be seen as posing a threat to the hearer's negative face because it would be an imposition depriving the hearer of the liberty to do as they wish. If, on the other hand, the appearance or the character of a hearer were in some way disparaged, the criticism would imperil the hearer's positive face

because negative comments made about the person would alter the default assumption that the hearer is valued and appreciated by their interlocutors. Furthermore, the different types of interactional impoliteness can also be combined, and both faces of a person can be put at risk by, for example, making an utterance comprised of a mixture of threat to the hearer's negative and positive face (e.g., a demand accompanied by an insult). Instances of such behaviour (i.e., verbal action that endangers another person's face) are known as face-threatening acts (FTAs, Brown & Levinson, 1987). Politeness theory can be applied to interactional data through the analysis of how face-threatening acts are performed given that these acts constitute a departure from the default position, which is the assumption that speakers' face wants will be satisfied (Yule, 1996), that is, their self-image will be respected.

**2.2.4** *Metafunctions of Language*

Another model that places emphasis on understanding language in the context of social interaction is Halliday's theory, according to which it is through a social semiotic perspective that the relationship between language and meaning can be understood. Halliday (1978) posited that language can be conceptualised in terms of metafunctions, which are "areas of meaning potential which are inherently involved in all uses of language" (Halliday, 1978, p. 47). In other words, metafunctions are the types of meaning that are expressed whenever language is used. In Halliday's view, there are three metafunctions around which linguistic systems are structured: the ideational metafunction, the interpersonal metafunction, and the textual metafunction. One type of meaning that can be expressed linguistically corresponds to the ideational metafunction of language, which is related to language users' knowledge of the world and of particular situations in which communication takes place, that is to say, the ideational metafunction "is the content function of language, language as 'about something'" (Halliday, 1978, p. 112). In contrast to the ideational metafunction, the interpersonal metafunction "is the participatory function of language, language as doing something" (Halliday, 1978, p. 112), which is connected to speakers' roles (e.g., "questioner-respondent, informer-doubter", Halliday, 1978, p. 112) as well as to the ways in which speakers can enter into dialogue with one another. These two types of meaning can also be thought of as "language as reflection" and "language as action" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, pp. 29–30). By contrast, the textual metafunction of language is different from the first two in that "it is not a way of using language, but rather a resource for ensuring that what is said is relevant and relates to its context" (Halliday & Hasan, 1989, p. 45); thus, the

textual metafunction can also be considered an enabling function of language (Halliday, 1978) as it allows the other two functions to be expressed.

**2.2.5** *Context and Schemata*

It is likely that there is no single definition which could objectively encapsulate the notion of context given that scholars investigating it are not in agreement on its precise delineation because "particular goals of different research agendas affect the way … authors perceive context" (Illés, 2020, p. 19). Nevertheless, context appears to be of paramount significance in a study of language use because language is understood in context. Context is not independent of language users' knowledge; in other words, interactants need to be in possession of particular types of knowledge if they are to understand each other. The background knowledge used in the meaning-making process is known as schema, and it "can be defined as a cognitive construct, a configuration of knowledge, which we project on to events so as to bring them into alignment with familiar patterns of experience and belief" (Widdowson, 2004, p. 43). The definition of schema suggests that an utterance cannot be interpreted in exactly the same way as it was intended because no two language users will have the same set of experiences and beliefs based on which to understand what is said. As a consequence, it may be necessary to analyse meaning in terms of speaker meaning and hearer meaning in all contexts of language use given that there is bound to be disparity between the two perspectives. As Widdowson (1979) put it, "communication can of its nature only be approximate" (p. 175). In spite of the approximate nature of communication, speakers manage in everyday interactions to understand one another, or—at the very least—they are under the impression that they do. The question to which speakers' ability to communicate successfully despite their heterogeneous schemata gives rise is how they decide what is relevant in a given situation and what is not.

### 3 Research Methodology

**3.1 Research Questions**

In an attempt to fill the research niche outlined above, empirical research in which the researcher's pragmatic analysis of ELF communication was supplemented with emic input from the research participants was conducted. To guide the current enquiry, the following research questions were formulated:

1) From the researcher's etic perspective, what features of language use and interaction emerge as salient in contexts of ELF communication between international students at a university in Hungary?

2) From the participants' emic perspectives, what features of language use and interaction emerge as salient in contexts of ELF communication between international students at a university in Hungary?

3) What differences are there between the researcher's etic and the participants' emic perspectives, and what implications do the differences have for empirical research on ELF pragmatics and for language pedagogy?

**3.2 Research Design**

Because of the analytical foci defined by the research questions, it was necessary to incorporate two types of data into the research: It is through a research design which utilised a combination of emic data and interactional data that better understanding of the situation-specific pragmatic practices was expected to be developed. With regard to the interactional data, a criterion which also had to be satisfied was that the ELF data had to be comprised of naturally occurring conversations as otherwise the authenticity of the language use of the participants could have been called into question. Although researchers in pragmatics routinely make use of elicitation techniques such as roleplay tasks or discourse completion tests to collect spoken data (e.g., Dombi, 2020; Ogiermann, 2018; Taguchi, 2022), such investigations usually concentrate on narrowly defined pragmatic phenomena (e.g., realisations of specific speech acts); consequently, the use of elicited interactional data would not have been suitable for the purpose of conducting exploratory research. Instead, a conscious decision was made to analyse only naturally occurring ELF interactions. Therefore, no instrument was used for the collection of interactional data. In order for participant relevance to be uncovered, input directly from the research participants had to be obtained and integrated into the analysis. Thus, a method of data collection which would provide insights into the participants' perspectives was sought, and stimulated recall was deemed suitable for the elicitation of emic information from the interactants. As Ryan and Gass (2012) explained, stimulated recall "is a method used to elicit qualitative data relating to the thought processes associated with performing an action or participating in an event" (p. 145). The crux of the method lies in the stimulus (i.e., recorded material aimed at reviving memories of past events), upon which participants are requested to

comment. Used in several exploratory and ethnographically focused studies (e.g., Borg, 1998; Cuyvers et al., 2022; Dempsey, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2013; Westerman, 1991; Zainil & Arsyad, 2021), stimulated recall as a data collection technique has been demonstrated to be capable of yielding insights into emic perspectives. The research design is summarised in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

*Summary of Research Questions and Methods of Data Collection and Data Analysis*

| Research Question | Data Collected and Methods of Collection | Methods of Data Analysis |
|---|---|---|
| 1) From the researcher's etic perspective, what features of language use and interaction emerge as salient in contexts of ELF communication between international students at a university in Hungary? | Interactional data collected by means of recording 20 naturally occurring ELF conversations | Pragmatic analyses of the interactional data (both extensive and intensive) |
| 2) From the participants' emic perspectives, what features of language use and interaction emerge as salient in contexts of ELF communication between international students at a university in Hungary? | Emic data collected by means of conducting 30 stimulated-recall interviews with the participants | Inductive content analysis of the emic data |
| 3) What differences are there between the researcher's etic and the participants' emic perspectives, and what implications do the differences have for empirical research on ELF pragmatics and for language pedagogy? | Interactional data and emic data | Juxtaposition of the perspectives through a comparison of the results of the analyses |

### 3.3 Research Context and Participants

The empirical investigation was conducted at a university in Hungary. The specific context in which this research project was undertaken was a module within a postgraduate degree course at the university. The module, whose language of instruction was English, belonged to the discipline of education. In terms of its format, the module was a seminar, and the students attending it were required to participate in discussions once a week (i.e., attendance was

compulsory). Ordinarily, the seminars would have taken place in a physical classroom; however, at the time of the data collection, safety measures necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the university from providing in-person education. Consequently, all lessons of the module were conducted via Microsoft Teams in what can be described as an online classroom. In total, 10 students participated in the study. They were all postgraduate students and participants in the module described above. Out of the 10 participants, seven were female, and three were male. At the time of their participation in the research, the students, on average, were 32 years of age ($M = 32.1$, $SD = 6.8$). In terms of their first-language backgrounds, the participants comprised a heterogeneous group: The 10 students spoke nine different first languages, which included Arabic, Burmese, English, Hungarian, Kurdish, Mongolian, Persian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Spanish was the only language spoken by more than one participant ($n = 2$) as a first language. As the list of first languages shows, there was a native speaker of English amongst the students; everyone else ($n = 9$) spoke English as an additional language.

### 3.4 Methods of Data Collection

As mentioned above, two types of data were collected: interactional data and emic data. The collection of the interactional data did not require an instrument as only naturally occurring spoken data were sought for subsequent analysis. Thus, the discussions which the students had in smaller groups during their seminars were recorded without any elicitation by the researcher. The students would usually record their own discussions at the researcher's request using the inbuilt recording function of Microsoft Teams. In total, 20 discussions were recorded. The combined length of the 20 recordings is 267 minutes, which is approximately 4.4 hours of video data. The emic data were collected by means of conducting retrospective stimulated-recall interviews (SRIs) with the participants. After each seminar discussion, every student was requested to participate in an SRI in order to share their recollections of what had happened during the conversations. The interactional data collected earlier became the stimuli. The researcher made use of Microsoft Teams to have meetings with the participants individually and to show them recordings of their discussions. The students were encouraged to stop the video stimulus whenever they had something to share in connection with the discussions. In total, 30 SRIs were conducted and video recorded. The combined length of the 30 SRIs is 1,121 minutes, which is approximately 18.6 hours of video data.

**3.5 Methods of Data Analysis**

The data analysis was carried out with the adoption of what Björkman (2011) had described as a "two-pronged" (p. 953) approach: The data were analysed first extensively and then intensively with the aim of producing findings that would enable "the study both to outline general practices in the form dimension and to give in-depth information at the level of pragmatics" (Björkman, 2011, p. 953). As such, the entire amount of the interactional data was coded as part of the extensive analysis. The coding of the data was followed by a detailed analysis and categorisation of the codes, which resulted in a taxonomy of the features of the ELF data. Once the data had been analysed extensively, an intensive analysis of a subset of the interactional data was performed in order to develop in-depth understanding of situation-specific pragmatic phenomena. Out of the 20 group discussions, six speech events were selected for intensive analysis. The intensive analysis of each discussion consisted of two main phases. In the first phase, the interactional data were subjected to pragmatic analysis from the researcher's etic perspective. The analysis, which bore resemblance to what Canagarajah et al. (2020) labelled as "an *Expansive Interactional Analysis*" (p. 503), was both inductive and deductive in its orientation to salience. In the second phase of the speech event analysis, the interactional data were examined from the participants' perspectives. The change of perspective was achieved through analyses of the students' emic opinions that had been articulated during the SRIs. Each SRI was analysed separately; thereafter, the emic views expressed in relation to a given speech event were juxtaposed, and attempts were made at establishing connections between the students' different perspectives. The SRI analysis was a fully inductive endeavour as its aim was the discovery of participant relevance.

## 4 Results

**4.1 Results of the Extensive Analysis**

The first stage of the empirical investigation was comprised of an extensive analysis of the dataset. The entirety of the interactional data (i.e., 20 classroom discussions) was analysed with the aim of obtaining descriptive information that would enable understanding of the features that characterised ELF communication in the context under analysis to be developed. The process of coding mentioned earlier resulted in 76 different codes, which were attached to 1,098 excerpts of the data (i.e., short extracts from the transcripts). Nevertheless, the total number of features coded was higher than 1,098 as it was common for a single excerpt to be labelled with

more than one code. Because the objective of the analysis was the description of the interactional data in general terms, the focus was on features that could be characterised as typical of the data. Those features that were identified infrequently in the discussions were deemed atypical and therefore excluded from the analysis The threshold for a feature to be considered typical was set at a minimum incidence of 10; hence, features coded fewer than 10 times were not included in the analysis. As a result, the number of codes that were eligible for analysis decreased from 76 to 36. The segments of the data to which the 36 codes were attached constituted the analytical foci. As per Saldaña's (2009) suggestions, the initial coding was followed by a second cycle, whose purpose was "to develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organization from" (p. 149) the original set of codes. The categorisation resulted in a taxonomy of the features of the data, which is presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2**

*A Taxonomy of the Features of the Data*

| Features of the participants' language production | | | Features of the interpersonal metafunction of language | | | Features of the ideational metafunction of language | | | Features of discourse related to the channel of communication | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Code | *n* | % | Code | *n* | % | Code | *n* | % | Code | *n* | % |
| repetition | 194 | 21.5 | agreement | 76 | 24.3 | opinion | 78 | 27.7 | moderating discussion | 56 | 52.8 |
| question | 145 | 16 | overlap | 44 | 14.1 | example (personal) | 53 | 18.8 | marker of end of turn | 23 | 21.6 |
| hesitation | 104 | 11.5 | response to question | 27 | 8.6 | example (general) | 38 | 13.5 | comment on technology | 17 | 16 |
| hedging | 90 | 9.9 | clarification request | 26 | 8.3 | adding an idea to the discussion | 36 | 12.8 | leave-taking | 10 | 9.4 |
| searching for words | 85 | 9.4 | apology | 23 | 7.3 | comment on reading | 29 | 10.3 | | | |
| self-repair | 78 | 8.6 | reference to interlocutor's remark | 22 | 7 | uncertainty | 24 | 8.5 | | | |
| false start | 61 | 6.7 | clarification provided | 21 | 6.7 | personal feeling | 12 | 4.2 | | | |
| nonstandard | 49 | 5.4 | laughter | 19 | 6 | discourse reflexivity | 11 | 3.9 | | | |
| question tag | 45 | 4.9 | expression of thanks | 17 | 5.4 | | | | | | |
| unfinished sentence | 26 | 2.8 | backchannelling | 16 | 5.1 | | | | | | |
| paraphrase | 13 | 1.4 | jointly created utterance | 11 | 3.5 | | | | | | |
| pronunciation | 12 | 1.3 | echo | 10 | 3.2 | | | | | | |
| *N* | 902 | | | 312 | | | 281 | | | 106 | |

The first of the four categories into which the features of the data were classified pertains to the participants' use of English, and it includes no fewer than 902 items. In total, 12 features of language production were identified in the data. In descending order of frequency, the features are the following: repetition, questions, hesitation, hedging, searching for words, self-repair, false start, nonstandard usage, question tags, unfinished sentences, paraphrase, and pronunciation. Because all of the data—save for the nonlexical components of communication—materialised as a result of language use, it is worth highlighting that the items labelled with the codes belonging to the language production category were placed within this category owing to the absence of an apparent pragmatic function. For example, false starts were recognised as a feature of the participants' language production, but instances when false starts occurred were not seen either as intentional or as meaningful in a pragmatic sense. In other words, the features of the remaining three categories also materialised through language, but those are characterised by more readily identifiable pragmatic functions from the researcher's etic perspective, whereas the features of language production classified into this category are not.

The second category into which the codes were grouped concerned the interpersonal metafunction of language. The category is comprised of a total of 312 items, which belong to 12 different codes. The features that were perceived by the researcher as realisations of the interpersonal metafunction of language were the following: instances of agreement, overlaps, responses given to questions, requests for clarification, apologies, references to remarks made by other participants, instances in which clarification was provided, laughter, expressions of thanks, backchannelling, jointly created utterances, and echo. Despite the breadth of the category, the interpersonal language functions detected in the data were distinct from the features of the other three categories. The principal criterion for segments of the data to be included in this category was the presence of signs of interaction between the participants. For instance, examples of language use that consisted of offers of apology were seen to have fulfilled the interpersonal metafunction of language because a speaker who is making an apology must, by definition, apologise to someone. Thus, the codes within this category were attached to instances of language use that involved more than one person—either directly or indirectly.

The third category of codes included those features of the data through which the ideational metafunction of language seemed to have been expressed. The category consisted of a total of 281 items, which were spread across eight different codes corresponding to the following

functions: expressions of opinion, personal examples, general examples, the addition of new ideas to the discussions, comments made on the readings, expressions of uncertainty, expressions of personal feelings, and discourse reflexivity. Although the analysis was focused on salient pragmatic features of the data in general rather than on functional grammar specifically, the term "ideational" was adopted from Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) to create and describe the category because the codes within it were attached to segments of the data in which the participants appeared to "**construe** human experience" (p. 29) through language. For instance, the students' use of language reflected their personal experience on occasions when they gave examples in order to illustrate the points they were making; thus, reflection on the speakers' personal experiences and schemata was more prominent than elements of interaction in these instances of language use. Judgements about prominence were made from the analyst's etic perspective. At the same time, the focus on the speakers' knowledge and experience appeared to result in a shift away from their interlocutors: Whilst the inherent other-orientedness of the interpersonal language functions discussed above can be encapsulated in the participants' use of the personal pronoun "you", segments of the data coded as expressions of the ideational metafunction could be described as having made use of the personal pronoun "I" more typically.

The fourth and final category into which features of the data fell included those elements of discourse that were seen to have arisen primarily due to the online medium of the discussions. Technology allowed the students to participate in groupwork sessions without occupying the same physical space; nevertheless, it remained an inescapable fact that the audiovisual information sent through their microphones and cameras was not as rich and instantaneous as it would have been in a face-to-face conversation. Thus, the circumstances of the discussions created a need for increased explicitness. Even though explicitness is a feature that characterises ELF communication in general (Kaur, 2011; Thongphut & Kaur, 2023), the participants of the study were seen—from the researcher's etic perspective—to have produced some of the overtly explicit features of discourse as a result of the fact that they had been engaged in computer-mediated communication. For example, aspects of turn-taking might have been different if elements of discourse on which interactants can rely in face-to-face conversations (e.g., nonlexical vocalisations, eye contact, or nuances of facial expressions) had been at the participants' disposal. The channel of the discussions, which can be thought of as both an enabler and an inhibitor of interaction, required the participants to adapt to the online context and modify

their customary speech behaviours for enhanced communicative effectiveness. A total of 106 items were identified as belonging to the category of discourse features related to the channel of the discussions, and these were spread across four codes: moderating discussion, marker of end of turn, comment on technology, and leave-taking.

## 4.2 Results of the Intensive Analyses

### 4.2.1 *Speech Event 1*

The features of the conversation that struck the researcher as worthy of analysis can be divided into two main categories: participation patterns and language use. The first one has to do with the manner in which and the frequency with which the students contributed to the discussion. It was noticeable that the two-person dialogue between Students 7 and 10 had dominated the groupwork session, with Student 10 having been the moderator of the talk exchange. It subsequently came to light, however, that Student 10's own assessment of the situation would not support the researcher's view as she had not thought of herself as a moderator of any kind. Neither did Student 7 mention having had such a perception of her groupmate. Apart from one student's moderatorship or lack thereof, the researcher also attached some significance to Student 9's failure to engage in discussion with her peers. Although Student 9's retrospective description of the difficulty she experienced while trying to come to grips with what was being said at the beginning of the discussion went some way towards offering access to her viewpoint, the specific reasons for her disengagement remain shrouded in mystery. The researcher's observations pertaining to the participants' language use included such aspects as Student 7's possible deictic considerations while referring to the teacher in her absence or as instances when the students' use of English did not conform to conventions of Standard English. Notably, none of the linguistic idiosyncrasies was highlighted during the SRIs, which seems to suggest that features of usage were seen as less important from the participants' emic perspectives than from the researcher's analytical perspective.

Concerning Student 10's moderatorship of the discussion, Student 10 explained that she had begun speaking because she had wanted to use the time available for the group discussion efficiently, and it was her impression that the others were reluctant to initiate dialogue. This feeling of Student 10's was vindicated by remarks made by Student 9, who indicated that she had found it difficult to pay attention to what her groupmate was saying, and the initial lack of focus on her part led to disengagement not just at the beginning of the discussion but for its entire

duration. Similarly to Student 10, Student 7 also said, though not at the beginning of the conversation, that she had been keen to prevent protracted periods of silence from occurring during the discussion. Thus, avoidance of silence seems to have been the underlying motive for some of the contributions the participants made to Speech Event 1. Another point of shared interest was signalled by the overlap of comments made by Students 7 and 10 towards the end of the discussion. Student 7 said that she had not held a positive view of her contributions to the conversation up to that point because those were made out of a sense of obligation to keep the discussion going; however, an instance of agreement expressed by Student 10 was significant from Student 7's point of view given that it made the latter feel reassured about what she was saying. Interestingly, the very same comment was seen in a different light by Student 10, who was not sure that she had meant it in earnest. Although Student 10 did not disagree with Student 7, she voiced her agreement as she was cautious about making uninformed remarks—which she might have done if she had disagreed. In addition, Student 10 agreed because she was hoping to produce a smooth transition to the end of the discussion. What makes this exchange remarkable is that the participants' different interpretations of Student 10's utterance gave rise to divergent perspectives on the same situation: Student 10 considered her agreement to be nothing more than a comment made in passing to move the discussion forward, whereas Student 7 attached great importance to it since it boosted her self-confidence.

**4.2.2** *Speech Event 2*

More often than not, the participants remembered thinking about their own contributions to the conversation (i.e., as opposed to what their groupmates had said). Examples of this aspect included Student 2's concerns over the lack of peer support for her comments or Student 3's surprise at being corrected by Student 8. Interesting overlaps of comments occurred in the emic data at those salient points of the discussion which were also analysed by the researcher. In particular, there were three key moments in Speech Event 2 when an enhanced understating of the conversation was gained from the participants' similar or different views on the situation. The first of these was Students 3's struggle to refer to a scholar whose gender she did not know; it was striking that no one helped her select the appropriate pronoun, but it emerged from the SRIs that only one of the five participants had known the gender of the scholar. In this respect, similarity characterised the participants' emic perspectives as they mostly did not know the

answer; however, there were differences in the way Student 3's question was perceived: Some students looked upon it as a rhetorical question, whereas others did not notice it.

The other two segments of the conversation where the participants' recollections proved enlightening were related to the questions asked by Student 8. A question that prompted Student 4 to speak allowed both participants to reflect on their shared understanding of the relationship between them and to explain how it facilitated communication. Familiarity with members of the group and friendship between the students were also mentioned as tacitly important elements of the classroom context. A question that was addressed to Student 5 proved divisive: Some believed that Student 8 should not have asked Student 5 to speak, while others thought that Student 5 needed to be involved in the discussion somehow. Even more interestingly, opinion was divided on Student 5's explanation of why she had not participated in the discussion. A few of her fellow students appeared unsympathetic to Student 5's predicament and believed that she should have tried harder to contribute to the conversation despite feeling unwell, but other students felt sympathy towards her and thought it important to avoid putting her under undue stress. Compared to the participants' perceptions, the researcher's attention was focused more on the surface-level aspects of communication, particularly turn-taking and language use. The facets of the participants' language use on which the analyst's attention centred included phenomena that feature prominently in the ELF literature such as discourse reflexivity, strategic competence, and the joint construction of utterances.

### 4.2.3 *Speech Event 3*

Although there were overlaps between the SRI participants' comments in terms of time (i.e., on which segments of the stimulus the comments were made), the students' emic perspectives rarely coalesced. For instance, three out of the five participants had recollections to share within the first minute of the conversation, but they all seem to have been preoccupied with different issues at that stage of Speech Event 3: Student 1 was thinking about the discussion question itself; Student 7 was concerned about the potential awkward silence; Student 10 was thinking about the fact that she was speaking again in addition to expecting one of her peers to respond to her prompt. In short, at almost no point did the students think alike.

One of the most conspicuous features of Speech Event 3 was Student 10's active participation in the discussion; therefore, it can serve as a focal point of the summary of some similarities and differences between the participants' emic perspectives. All students spoke

approvingly of Student 10's attempts at maintaining orderliness by moderating the discussion, though each participant had a unique perception of their groupmate's teacherly behaviour. Aside from expressing appreciation for Student 10's discussion moderation, Student 1 talked about his double perspective on what was going on in the classroom: He looked upon the proceedings simultaneously as a student and as a teacher, which resulted in different interpretations of what was happening. Student 2 had a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards Student 10's active role in Speech Event 3 as she liked some aspects of it, but the use of "OK" as a sign of answer acceptance was too bland for her taste, and she pointed out that there had been comprehension issues due to her unfamiliarity with what she believed were idiosyncrasies of the intonation patterns exhibited by Hungarian speakers of English. By contrast, Student 5 was decidedly happy for the discussion to be led by Student 10, and she highlighted the importance of knowledge of the context in which the discussion took place; she valued Student 10's experience and thus thought it right that she should be in charge. Student 7, who viewed the prospect of an awkward silence with trepidation, was relieved to see Student 10 lead the conversation as it meant that someone was speaking. Student 10 herself was aware of her taking centre stage, but she did it begrudgingly after realising that her groupmates were unwilling to speak unless prompted. Importantly, Student 10 relied on her background knowledge and relevant schemata to navigate their way through the discussion and steer her peers towards what she believed were the expected outcomes. As opposed to the participants, the researcher did not have personal views on Student 10's discussion moderation but recognised it as a prominent feature of the conversation due to the frequency of her turns and the overall impact she had on the discussion.

#### 4.2.4 *Speech Event 4*

One of the salient aspects of Speech Event 4 was Student 4's overall role in the discussion. There was agreement between the researcher and the participants in the view that Student 4 had taken on the responsibility of a moderator. Student 4 himself verified this perception by acknowledging the intentionality of his discussion moderation and revealing that he had had specific ideas on how the conversation should progress. The other focal point of analysis was a comment Student 4 made about his Chinese students, which drew a response from Student 9 at the time, but no other student's reaction was discernible from the recording. The SRIs yielded rich data on the participants' perspectives, and it emerged that Student 4 had been wary of voicing his opinion for fear of causing offence. Interpreting what Student 4 said in view

of her own experience, Student 3 agreed with him; what is more, she was not surprised to hear of Chinese students' tendency to plagiarise. Student 8 was listening to Student 4 with genuine interest because she valued her groupmate's experience of teaching international students, but she did not seem to attach importance specifically to the point about Chinese students. On hearing Student 4's opinion, Student 9 was reminded of a story that she proceeded to share. Although Student 4 did not offend any of his peers with his comment, Student 9 did: Student 3 found some of what Student 9 said objectionable as she interpreted her fellow student's negative comments as possibly applicable to herself.

Relevance was brought to the fore at many stages of Speech Event 4, and the analysis showed that it was relative. Student 3's interpretation of Student 9's story about her former flatmate did not seem to align with the message conveyed by Student 9, but relevance for Student 3 lay elsewhere because of her background. Likewise, the story that Student 9 shared was found irrelevant by Student 4 despite its inclusion of a clear connection to the topic that was being discussed. Student 8's unique interpretation of the same remark (i.e., Student 4's Chinese-student comment) also illustrated how one aspect of an utterance can be singled out as relevant by a hearer, resulting in a partial focus on the speaker's message. In all of the situations where a difference arose in what the participants deemed relevant, their schemata and background knowledge appeared to underlie the discrepancies between them. Despite major differences in interpretation, the students' judgements about relevance were internally consistent with their own schemata, which seems to suggest that relevance is a relative construct that cannot be externally established.

**4.2.5 *Speech Event 5***

Although no single aspect of the conversation was considered important by every student, two segments of Speech Event 5 emerged as significant from—some of—the participants' perspectives. The most notable part of the discussion was an instance of negotiation of meaning between Students 8 and 9 because not only did the interactants themselves see it as interesting and share their emic perspectives on the episode, but the researcher also found it to be deserving of analysis independently of the students. The interaction that culminated in overt negotiation of meaning looked different from the perspective of each participant. Student 8 was confused by what her groupmate had said; therefore, she felt she needed to ask questions to establish what Student 9 had meant. What appears to have caused the misunderstanding from Student 8's

perspective was that her expectations of what her interlocutor would talk about were difficult to reconcile with the actual information that was imparted to her. By contrast, Student 9 seems to have attached less importance to the negation of meaning that had taken place between her and Student 8. From Student 9's point of view, the reasons for the misunderstanding were opaque as she did not know what Student 8's expectations were; moreover, she was aware of the alternative channels of communication that would allow her and Student 8 to clarify the misunderstanding after the lesson, which is why she did not necessarily feel that it was mandatory that the negotiation of meaning succeed. Nonetheless, the researcher's analysis showed that Student 9's efforts had contributed more to the resolution of the communication problem than those made by Student 8. Ultimately, however, the negotiation was a cooperative act of communication as Student 8's comprehension of Student 9's utterance was made possible through the recognition that there was a problem, which needed to be followed up by efforts made mutually to bring their different conceptions of what the other person was saying into alignment.

Another aspect of Speech Event 5 that proved salient from the participants' perspectives was Student 10's discussion moderation. Although Student 1 had not contributed to the conversation himself, he emphasised the importance of Student 10's occasional moderation of the discussion. In Student 1's view, what Student 10 did to involve the rest of the group in the talk exchange was necessary to keep the conversation on track. What is more, Student 1's comments once again highlighted the significance of schemata as his expectations of what Student 10 would say and how she would behave in this specific discussion were based on his prior experience and background knowledge of the broader classroom context. From the perspective of the moderator (i.e., Student 10), however, the discussion moderation appeared to be motivated by an altogether different aspect of Speech Event 5: time pressure. It was because of her acute awareness of the passage of time that Student 10 felt she needed to intervene and make those speak who had not yet made their views known. In addition, Student 10's comments gave rise to the conclusion that backchannelling had played an important part in the conversation in that it helped Student 10 maintain continuity in her involvement, which directly facilitated her subsequent assumption of the role of a moderator. Similarly to Students 1 and 10, the researcher noted that the pragmatic function of Student 10's questions had amounted to discussion moderation, though no judgement was made as to whether Student 10's mediative endeavours had been useful or necessary for the discussion as a whole. However, the researcher—in contrast

to the participants—scrutinised some of the linguistic features of the interaction and analysed idiosyncrasies of usage, particularly the word order in Student 10's questions.

### 4.2.6 *Speech Event 6*

Some general findings about Speech Event 6 emerged from the SRI data. First and foremost, Student 4's participation in the conversation was brought to the fore by the recollections of his groupmates. Interestingly, Student 4 did not consider himself to be a central participant of Speech Event 6, but his self-perception does not appear to have been echoed by his interlocutors, who unanimously opined that Student 4 had played an important role in the moderation of the discussion. What is more, the students held overwhelmingly positive views of the manner in which Student 4 presided over the conversation because they believed that his involvement facilitated the discussion overall (e.g., by enabling individuals to express their opinions). Another important finding concerns the use of English as a lingua franca: Even though the participants of Speech Event 6 were conversing in an ostensibly carefree fashion, it transpired that Student 2 had covertly been self-conscious about her accent. Her feelings of insecurity were caused primarily by concerns over the comprehensibility of what she was saying. Fortunately for Student 2, the feedback she received from her interactants, and particularly from Student 4, was indication enough that she was being understood. The SRI data also provided insight into the intricate ways in which context had taken shape in the participants' minds. Notably, the students' shared background knowledge and experience appeared to have been influencing the immediate classroom context of Speech Event 6, resulting in variation on an individual level in how the context of the discussion was perceived.

The value of these findings lies chiefly in the fact that much of this information would have been inaccessible to an outside observer if only the surface level of communication had been available for analysis. In the case of Speech Event 6, the analysis performed by the outside observer (i.e., the researcher) focused mostly on Student 4's dominance and the resultant orderliness of turn-taking, the manner in which the participants related to what other members of the group had said, and a dialogue in which Students 7 and 4 were discussing the differences between two terms. Out of these analytical foci, the importance of Student 4's role in the conversation was borne out by the participants' emic perspectives, and the various techniques used by the students to refer to one another's points were also considered—albeit to a lesser extent—important by the informants. Although the conversation between Students 7 and 4

offered a wealth of material for the researcher to analyse, the episode had not made much of a mark on the participants involved. Student 7 revealed that she had spoken merely to eschew silence, whereas Student 4 admitted to having been uncertain about what he had been saying. Ultimately, the participants' impressions of the exchange were different from that of the researcher, which is illustrative of the depth of understanding that can be gained by investigating the emic perspectives of those whose language use constitutes the object of enquiry.

## 5 Conclusion and Implications

The findings allow a few general but comprehensive statements to be put forward in response to the research questions. The first research question, then, can be answered with reference to the results of both the extensive analysis and the intensive etic analyses. From the researcher's analytical perspective, the salient features of language use in this context of ELF communication were frequently predetermined by theory, making the enquiry a somewhat deductive enterprise: The analyst was disposed to recognise relevance on the basis of previous research. In this sense, the findings of the etic analyses can be considered a form of validation of theoretical models of language use such as the Cooperative Principle, Politeness Theory, or Speech Act Theory. It ought to be noted, however, that salience was chiefly ascribed to what appear to be surface-level features of language use, pertaining mostly to language production and to usage. As shown by the extensive analysis of the data, the researcher's examination of the interactions highlighted more features of the participants' language production than of any other facet of their language use. In a similar vein, the intensive etic analyses concentrated on participation patterns such as discussion moderation or turn-taking as well as on meaning negotiation and on aspects of usage. Although some expressions of the ideational metafunction of language were also identified, the number of these was small in comparison. Thus, the researcher's etic analysis was focused predominantly on aspects of language use that were outwardly noticeable.

The answer to the second research question is less straightforward due to the diversity of factors that appeared to have influenced the participants' emic experience of communication in the ELF context explored in this thesis. From the students' emic perspectives, the relevant features of language use cannot be delimited in a similarly finite manner as in the case of the etic analysis. Although it is difficult to predict what might take on significance in a given interaction, the heterogeneity of interpretations can be foregrounded as an overarching feature of (ELF)

communication from the perspectives of the participants. The findings have demonstrated that an utterance is seldom interpreted by hearers in the same way as it is intended by the speaker. The relevance of linguistic input seems to depend on the schematic knowledge of interlocutors: A point made by a speaker may not be apprehended by hearers unless they can relate it to what they already know, and this also depends on how well the interlocutors know one another. Furthermore, it is important to emphasise that the students in this study tended to be unaware of the differences that underlay the surface level of their language use, which would make them labour under the misapprehension that they perfectly understood one another. It seems that differences in the participants' schematic knowledge (i.e., their perceptions of context) were the most important factors influencing language use in this setting. The students invariably drew on their general background knowledge and topic-specific schemata in the interpretation of language within the specific contexts of the speech events, which simultaneously bore out theoretical descriptions of language use (e.g., Widdowson, 2004) and guaranteed disparity in meaning on the personal level of speakers. It was the language users' individual schemata that determined the salient features of language use from the students' perspectives. As such, it can be posited that salience from the participants' emic perspectives emerges from within and, thus, cannot be externally established.

The third research question, which was aimed at the description of the differences between the etic and the emic perspectives on language use as well as at the examination of the implications that the differences may have for the applied linguistic profession, can be answered in two parts. The first part of the response concerns the differences between the researcher's and the participants' perspectives, which have been illustrated in rich detail throughout the thesis. It has been shown that the etic–emic dichotomy is somewhat misleading as it ought not to be seen as a binary distinction between two perspectives. In reality, there are multiple emic perspectives (i.e., at least as many perspectives as participants in a speech event), and the emic perspectives may differ from each other to the same degree as they differ from the researcher's etic perspective. It is shared knowledge between the participants that appears to facilitate successful language use, which implies that the extent of common ground engenders difference or similarity between perspectives, though this is something that needs to be ascertained on a case-by-case basis as there are always bound to be differences.

Despite the dissimilarity between the students' perspectives, their emic views on language use appeared to differ in two notable ways from the etic perceptions. Both points were related to the use of English, and it can be hypothesised that a connection may exist between them. The first aspect in which the etic and the emic views noticeably differed pertained to the importance attached to nonstandard usage. The results clearly demonstrate that features of language production—including usage—were among the foci of the etic analysis, whereas nonstandard usage does not seem to have been a concern from the participants' emic perspectives given that they never mentioned it. The students did not make instances of nonstandard usage relevant during their group discussions (e.g., by drawing attention to them), and neither did they comment on usage at any point during the retrospective SRIs. On the face of it, the absence of reference to nonconformity with Standard English usage may be indicative of indifference on the part of the students. After all, they used English as a lingua franca in a highly international context, which may have disincentivised them from wishing to observe norms of correctness traditionally associated with Inner Circle (Kachru, 1996) usage.

However, this does not appear to have been the case in the light of the second English-related difference between the etic and the emic perspectives on language use: consideration shown for the participants' status as native and nonnative speakers of English. With regard to speakership, the attribution of relevance was reversed: The outside observer's etic analysis seemed largely to gloss over the disparities between the students' English language skills, whereas the participants were acutely aware of the differences. In this respect, the stimulated-recall data proved immensely valuable as this facet of the students' language awareness would never have manifested itself if it had not been for the recollections shared privately with the researcher. It emerged from the SRIs that some of the participants had been self-conscious about speaking in English due to their dissatisfaction with their accents and proficiency. This is a novel finding that sheds some light on concerns with which speakers may be preoccupied whilst engaging in ELF interaction. Furthermore, the students could not help but see their native English speaker groupmate as the touchstone of linguistic competence—and a standard they were unable to reach. This, then, is a major difference between the perspectives. From the researcher's point of view, all of the students participating in the study were seen as users of English on an equal footing; any other assessment would have constituted a challenge to the prevailing orthodoxy of ELF research. By contrast, the emic perspectives of the participants were

at odds with this view; some students—unbeknownst to the rest of the group—found differences in language proficiency to be highly relevant and a cause for concern in the context of the seminar discussions.

The second part of the answer to the third research question can be provided by outlining the implications of the findings. The empirical results of the study have the potential to supply ELF researchers with food for thought. As the analyses of different perspectives on language use have conveyed a sense of the complexity of ELF communication in the context examined, the findings may induce investigators to consider the appropriacy of the reductionist approach which has mostly characterised empirical research on ELF (Pitzl, 2022). In order for ELF communication to be captured and analysed in its full complexity, innovation in research methodology seems to be necessary as etic analyses may not be capable of shedding much light on language use from speakers' emic perspectives. This research project represents an attempt at bridging the gap between those perspectives; hence, the study may be considered as a step towards the development of research methods that permit the complexity of language use in ELF contexts to be explored—to a degree—by empirical means such as via the hitherto underutilised stimulated recall technique to capture participants' perspectives. The complexity ELF interaction in the present investigation also implies the importance of multimodal pragmatics (O'Halloran et al., 2014) given that meaning was reconstructed by the participants and the researcher alike through engagement with multimodal video data. A secondary research implication pertains to the description of ELF as a linguistic phenomenon. Features of usage (e.g., lexicogrammar) and pragmatic strategies (e.g., the negotiation of meaning) have been suggested in the literature as suitable descriptors of the attributes of ELF communication (e.g., Cogo, 2010; Mauranen, 2006; Pitzl et al., 2008), but the results presented in this study have indicated that the content of utterances (i.e., ideation) may play a more influential role in shaping speakers' perceptions of language use than surface-level features such as usage. Consequently, the outcomes of the research have highlighted the importance of accounting for the ways in which speakers' schemata bear upon their language use.

Pedagogical implications also derive from the findings of the present thesis. A key question that has been of interest to ELF scholars and language teachers alike is how students of English can be prepared for using the language successfully in contexts of international communication. According to Seidlhofer and Widdowson (2020), "the relationship between

descriptions of language use and prescriptions of language for learning has long been an issue in the pedagogy of English language teaching" (p. 324) because communicative language teaching attempts to present learners with models of English that do not necessarily suit their communicative needs in the specific settings in which they may wish to put their language skills to use. Indeed, the results of the present study have shown that it is difficult to predict what features of language and context will become relevant for participants in ELF communication. As a result, those in the language teaching profession are faced with an unfeasible task if they harbour ambitions of teaching their learners how to use English in every conceivable context. For this reason, Illés (2020) suggested that "Teaching Language as Communication … can provide the basis for an ELF-informed approach to ELT" (p. 129). The essence of this pedagogical approach lies in the combination of language use and language learning: Instead of learning English for subsequent use, students use the language for communication and for learning something about the world. For this to happen, language teachers need to engineer opportunities for learners to engage in authentic language use in the classroom, which may be achieved, for example, through content and language integrated learning (Illés, 2020).

**Publications Connected to the Topic of the Dissertation**

Farkas, Á. (2020). A pragmatic analysis of linguistic humor: Understanding situation comedy. In
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**Other Publications**

Divéki, R., Farkas, Á., & Pereszlényi, A. (Eds.). (2021). *Nyelvtanulással a boldogulásért:
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