



Lexical and accent accommodation in ELF interaction

Henrik Hakala and Niina Hynninen, University of Helsinki
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- ▶ **Lingua franca encounters are similar to dialect contact**
 - ▶ **But dialect contact studies tend to focus on**
 - ▶ Accommodation of individuals to non-mobile majority
 - ▶ By using sociolinguistic interviews

(see Trudgill 1986; papers in *Journal of English Linguistics* 2010, 38(3))

- ▶ **What if there is no clear target of accommodation?**
- ▶ **What kind of accommodative mechanisms are used in interaction?**

Accommodation

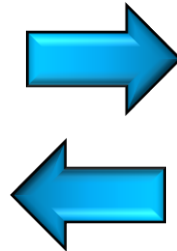
- ▶ We focus on communicative *behavior*
- ▶ Not motivations as in Communication Accommodation Theory
- ▶ Accommodation (speech convergence):
 - ▶ Regulation of communication in order to appear more like each other
- ▶ Non-accommodation (maintenance):
 - ▶ Maintaining one's own behavior and discourse

(cf. Giles et al. 1991; Gallois et al. 2005)

ELF studies show

- ▶ Also unconventional lexical items used as effective resources
→ remain short-term?
- ▶ Situational preferences reflected on speakers' ELF accents and identities

- ▶ No shared norms for pronunciation
- ▶ Maintenance of idiolects
- ▶ Tolerance of accents



- ▶ Reduction in misunderstandings
- ▶ Receptive accommodation?

(Cogo 2009; Firth 1996, 2009; Hülmbauer 2009; Kalocsai 2009; Shaw et al. 2009; Smit 2010)

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- ▶ There seems to be a conflict of accommodative behaviors in ELF: group preference vs. idiolect maintenance
 - ▶ In order to better understand accommodation in ELF interaction we look at two dimensions of accommodative behavior
 - ▶ Lexical accommodation
 - ▶ Accent accommodation

Focus: lexical accommodation

- ▶ Reuse of lexical items in their immediate interactional context
 - ▶ Proof of accommodation
 - ▶ Suggests acceptance of usage
- ▶ Recycling of lexical items (within and across events)
 - ▶ Acceptability reinforced → emerging group preferences?
 - ▶ If no immediate accommodation: proof from unconventionality of item, increase in preference

Data

- ▶ University setting
- ▶ Interrelated group work meetings
- ▶ 2 international groups

Example 1

- ▶ Different lexical items used alongside each other:
study case vs. case study
- ▶ Different individual preferences

(S2: L1 Br. Portuguese, NS3: L1 Am. English)

<S2> <FIRST NAME NS3> do you think we need to to find more information about the traditional methods or it's okay from this study case , </S2>

<NS3> er , i think it will maybe be okay from the study case i can maybe do some explaining er a little further than what the study case says <S2> mhm-hm </S2> but i think they'll mention maybe some traditional previously at least traditional methods as well so </NS3>

- ▶ NS3 accommodates to S2's use of study case

(S6: L1 Lithuanian, S2: L1 Br. Portuguese)

<S6> [(yeah absolutely)] take some case study and <SI> yeah </SI> analyse
(it) </S6>

<S2> (yeah) that's what i thought that we should take some case studies <SI>
[yeah] </SI> [because] if i- not we cannot compare <SI> yeah th- </SI>
[things] </S2>

- ▶ S2 accommodates to S6's use of case study
- ▶ Accommodation in immediate interactional context
- ▶ Yet, maintenance of idiolectal preferences elsewhere

Example 2

- ▶ Group settles to one lexical item: cottage people

(SI:LI Finnish, NS5:LI Can. English)

<SI> i think the problem that um fish that they want to catch like
cottage people in saimaa they are these small little (xx) things and
want really able to catch them <NS5> no </NS5> because they do
it they're tasty </SI>

<NS5> but they're still tiny </NS5>

<SI> yeah but that's [(xx)] </SI>

<SS> [(xx)] @@ </SS>

(S2: L1 German, NS5: L1 Can. English)

<S2> it it looks like we are going to set up this the design for the
(xx) </S2>

<NS5> well the five-minute presentation are we have we basically
decided that it's going to be er (you know) focusing on the fishing
issue , cottage people because if so you can start (xx) make a
power-point presentation full of (pretty) pictures of the (xx) seals
</NS5>

(S3: L1 Finnish)

<S3> and people try to start some in some forum some discussion about this and they @@ take the opinions of the @@ what could saimaa cottage people think <SU> @@ </SU> (xx) </S3>

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- ▶ Unconventional lexical item recycled → became preferred
 - ▶ Spontaneous norms of acceptability
 - ▶ However: in presentation, NS5 used **cottagers** → different register, return to idiolect

Focus: accent accommodation

- ▶ Challenges in tracking ELF accommodation
 - ▶ Expanding circle NNSs open to different standard and non-standard models: 'pick-n-mix'
 - may be inconsistent in their accent
- ▶ Longitudinal data from English-medium BA degree programme in nursing
 - ▶ Stable participant pool, 10 L1s

Case: S3 from Finland

- ▶ Male, 19 yrs. L1 Finnish.
 - ▶ S3: “basic, street level English made for simple communication”
“I don’t think about my English I just speak”
“always been able to express my own thoughts”
- ▶ Starting point: S3 accent *predominantly*
 - ▶ non-rhotic but also instances of rhoticity
 - ▶ Intervocalic /r/ in disyllabic words and assimilation cases (e.g. *bit of*) but /t/ in polysyllabic words
 - ▶ standard realization of interdental fricatives /θ/, /ð/ but also /t/, /f/ for voiceless and /t/, /d/ for voiced

Example 1: Rhoticity

Blue: non-rhotic Red: rhotic

i) First interview

<S3> i **first** came in contact with the language a really young boy i was playing i was playing comp- a lot of **computer** games and that's the **sort** of how i **learned** English then i **started learning** from the school </S3>

ii) S9: LI Kambe (Cameroon)

<S3> most of the families don't **care** , **are** not taking **care** of **their** <S9> we don't have **elderly** [homes]</S9> [**elderly**] </S3>

→ Recorded increase in rhotic realizations from less than 15% to appr. 40% over four months with rhotic accent interlocutors

Example 2: Intervocalic /t/ and /r/

Blue: /t/ Red: /r/

i) S7: LI English, GA (S3: LI Finnish)

<S7> henderson helping with fourteen **activities contributing** to healthy recovery help the individual become an in- the become independent of assistance </S7>

<S3> definition of nursing , fourteen **activities contrutubing contributing** to health **what are** the fourteen **activities** </S3>

Example 2: Intervocalic /t/ and /r/

Blue: /t/ Red: /r/

ii) S16: LI Finnish, S20: LI Croatian; both use intervocalic /r/ (S3: LI Finnish)

<S16> i think there's way too much serious people in the world </S16>

<S20> i agree </S20>

<S16> so they make people like me </S16>

<S3> and you know **attitude** makes such a difference [you know if you have a]
</S3>

<S20> [of course] </S20>

<S3> **negative atti-** **attitude** it's every- of course everything you are making it
harder for yourself </S3>

→ Interdental /r/ spreading to polysyllabic words

Example 3: Interdental fricatives

Blue: standard, Orange: /d/, Red: /r/

S9: LI Kambe (S3: LI Finnish)

<S9> the the family take care of them or if they are sick or in institution like that then they go to the hospital and then the family take care of them </S9>

<S3> that's , good i prefer that <S9>mhm-mh</S9>, to the finnish , uhm environment </S3>

...

<S3> [yeah my friend] my friend's family has done that but their grandmother actually she didn't want to move <SS>@@ </SS> so they have this you know extra house for nothing </S3>

→ Expansion of repertoire for interdental fricative

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- ▶ **S3 intra-speaker variation:**
 - ▶ Considerable increase in rhoticity with rhotic interlocutors
 - ▶ Use of ‘flap’ spreading to polysyllabic words
 - ▶ Makes use of four different realizations for voiced interdental fricative and three for voiceless

Discussion

Lexical accommodation

- ▶ Both accommodation in immediate interactional context and recycling of lexical items
- ▶ Accommodation also to unconventional lexical items
 - ▶ Also L1 English speakers accommodated
 - ▶ Accommodation in immediate interactional context + maintenance of idiolectal preferences → Acceptability of variation in language form
 - ▶ Recycling of unconventional items → New group preferences not in line with St. English?
- ▶ New norms of acceptability: influence on the development of ELF?

Accent accommodation

- ▶ Immediate speaker-sensitive accommodation and shift towards group preferences
- ▶ Acceptability of variation in language form: maintenance of idiolectal preferences
- ▶ Flexible use of wide repertoire of segmental features, acquisition of new ones
 - ▶ support to Jenkins 2000: *beneficial intra-speaker variation adds up to solution rather than problem*

Contact

By email:

niina.hynninen@helsinki.fi or henrik.hakala@helsinki.fi

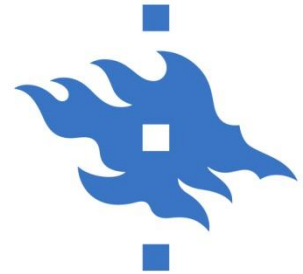
ELFA project:

<http://www.helsinki.fi/elfa>

Global English (GlobE) -consortium:

<http://www.uef.fi/globe>

Project leader: Prof. Anna Mauranen



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