



Language Regulation in ELF: Study Design and Findings



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▶ Design of my study

- ▶ Focus on grassroots-level language regulation
- ▶ Theoretical starting point: dual approach to regulation
- ▶ Types of data: spoken interaction and research interviews from English-medium studies at UH => ELF

▶ Main findings:

- ▶ Agency of L2 speakers as regulators
- ▶ Acceptability of variation
- ▶ Evaluation of English based on adequacy

▶ Language regulation

- ▶ Construction of acceptable and correct linguistic conduct in interaction and in talk about language
 - ▶ Focus on grassroots-level language regulation: processes of constructing living norms
1. In what ways is language regulation carried out in ELF interaction?
 2. How do speakers of ELF perceive language and regulation?
 3. What do the findings imply in terms of norm construction?

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- ▶ Design and theoretical starting point

3 levels of language regulation:

1. Institutional

=> construction of language policy and standards
(*prescriptive norms*)
=> top-down

2. Ideological

=> speakers' language ideologies (shaped in interaction: reproduced and created anew)

3. Interactional

=> construction of *living norms* (i.e. norms relevant for a community of practice)
=> bottom-up

Bottom-up approach: Language regulation defined as practice through which norms are constructed => focus on the construction of living norms

Dual approach

What speakers think (schematic)

Construction of expectations and beliefs about language, its use and regulation in talk about language => repertoires

How speakers act (emergent)

Managing and monitoring language in interaction
=> language-regulatory mechanisms

No causal relation can be expected

=> Comparison based on *tertii comparationis* (organising patterns found in the analyses linked to wider language-regulatory ideologies)

=> Construction of living norms

▶ **What kinds of data?**

Dual approach, two types of data:

- ▶ Spoken ELF interaction in EMI settings
 - ▶ 3 groups
 - ▶ interrelated recordings (20 h 35 min)
- ▶ Research interviews with students (13), teachers (5) and English instructors (3) (most of) who attended the interactions

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- ▶ Findings: emergent aspects of language-regulatory practice

I. Agency of L2 speakers as language regulators:

- Taking on the role of language expert in interaction
- Reports about intervening in language

Example 1

Discussion after a student's presentation (T2: teacher, L1s Swedish and Finnish)

T2 takes on language expert position: takes up correctness of *the Sudan* vs. *Sudan*

((...))

T2: jaa f- er plural names are natural you know why it is but er but er gambia it's because the river *rivers always have the* so that follows a- and sudan it there was something similar it was the sud was th- the wet area and then the sudan came from the sud probably this is the <T1> [mhm yeah okay] </T1> [explanation] this is my my my understanding but it's also *correct* to say without the [nowadays] <BS2> [mhm-hm] </BS2> especially *in scientific contexts*

- ▶ Usage in *scientific contexts* legitimises 'new' norms vs. grammar rules

Example 2

Discussion in student group work (S5: L1 Spanish; S2: L1 Brazilian Portuguese)

S5: [yeah (there) are economics] but of course er i haven't write i haven't numbers or a study yeah it's something like er (O) it's about O-N-G yeah O-N-G er

S2: N-G-O

S5: N-G-O yeah O-N-G is in spanish sorry

S2: [(that's okay)]

S5: [NGO yeah] NGO and er they have a lot of pages but of course nothing about er numbers.

▶ Student corrects another student, both L2 speakers of English

Example 3

Mentor interview: intervening in language

IR: is there a difference between spoken or written English

IE: yes it is somehow maybe easier for me to comment on written English and I have with my colleague who also just defended her thesis that we've read each other's texts a lot so I have marked lots of things in her texts that to me sound wrong even if I am not sure *whether my assumption is correct* either but everything that looks like or sounds wrong I have marked

- ▶ Readiness to take on language expert position

2. Acceptability of variation

- Outright corrections not common + accommodation also to non-standard forms
- Fluctuation in the norms drawn on
- Reports of mutual understanding in ELF despite variation

Example 4

Student group work: accommodation to non-standard form (S2: L1 Brazilian Portuguese, NS3: L1 American English)

S2: <FIRST NAME NS3a> do you think we need to to find more information about the traditional methods or it's okay from this study case,

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

- ▶ Acceptability of non-standard forms

Cf. Example 1: the Sudan vs. Sudan

T2: ((...)) but it's also correct to say without the [nowadays] especially in scientific contexts

- ▶ *Some fluctuation in the (mainly ENL-based) norms drawn on in interaction*

Example 5

Student interview: on ELF interaction vs. talking to ENSs

IE: ((...)) at the same time i feel that because here it's not an english er country everybody speaks a **more or less correct english** and because everyone understand each other you don't pay attention that you are sometimes making some mistakes especially pronunciation or or some grammar mistakes but **everyone is understanding you** but when i had the chance to talk to somebody from america or from some other english-speaking country then i realise that i have bad english if i have to pronounce (ev-) everything correctly and try to make me er to to m- to make the other understand me well @@

- ▶ Achieving mutual understanding in ELF is not seen to require 'correctness'

3. Evaluation of English based on adequacy (vs. closeness to ENL standards)

- Evaluation based on the purpose of use
- Internalised notions of correctness

Examples 6 and 7

Teacher comments on a student taking an exam

IE: ((...)) the <NAME> was funny she only two were left in the exam and she was poor thing still correcting grammar mistakes there <IR> oh yeah @@ </IR> @and spelling mistakes@ with correction fluid I thought that oh no I'm sure I **would have understood her quite well without the corrections @@**

Mentor on intervening in students' written language

IE: well somehow it is maybe easier and more important to intervene in written text so that in spoken it is not that in my opinion relevant whether all the things word order and inflections and small words are in place but then in written they remain there and there is time to put them in place so then if you correct or evaluate texts it would be good to **correct also the language mistakes there**

- ▶ Focus on achieving mutual understanding
- ▶ Purpose of use influences the practice of intervening

Cf. Example 3: Intervening in language

IE: I have marked lots of things in her texts that to me sound wrong even if I am not sure **whether my assumption is correct** either but everything that looks like or sounds wrong I have marked

- ▶ Use of internalised notions of correctness

Conclusions

- ▶ No simple reproduction of established language standards and notions of correctness
- ▶ Rather:
 - ▶ L2 speakers' agentive role in regulating language
 - ▶ Importance of adequacy for the purpose of use

Conclusions (cont.)

- ▶ **Focus on the grassroots-level language regulation**
 - ▶ Construction of social relevance for language norms (→ living norms)
 - ▶ Reveal the relevance/irrelevance of established standards

- ▶ **Norms as negotiated (vs. rigid rules)**

▶ Thank you!

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