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Culture-specific and individual affective factors in professional communication

Robin Anderson

Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca, Milan, Italy

robin.anderson@unimib.it

Iga Maria Lehman

University of Social Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

ilehman@spoleczna.pl

Abstract

In this paper we set out to consider the place of the English language in globalised communities. The hegemony, which English enjoys, has ramifications for how it is taught, how and why it is learned and how it is used. We argue that there is a need to consider more socio-cultural and individual factors in the learning and use of English as a lingua franca as these factors constitute crucial aids to successful cross-cultural interactions in professional environments. The latest research on lingua franca English (LFE) (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Kramersch, 2002; Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Block, 2003; House, 2003; Canagarajah, 2006a; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Atkinson, Churchill, Nishino & Okada, 2007) confirms our position since it reveals what has always been the experience of multilingual speakers, i.e., “Language learning and use succeed through performance strategies, situational resources, and social negotiations in fluid communicative contexts. Proficiency is therefore practice-based, adaptive, and emergent” (Canagarajah, 2007: 923).

Keywords

lingua franca English – individual affective factors – socio-cultural contexts – professional communication

1 Introduction

English is widely accepted as the primary international language, and it is becoming increasingly viewed as a basic skill required in most walks of professional life. For many governments and large institutions the question is not whether English should be promoted, but how and what percentage of the national or institution's budget and resources need to be invested in this endeavour. The status of English today sets it apart from other foreign languages. In many countries English is often linked to economic growth, development objectives and increased connectivity to the rest of the world, however each country is responding differently to this reality taking into account their own "distinctive history, internal linguistic landscape, and economic partners" (EF English Proficiency Index 2015: 4).¹ Although most countries view the English language as essential for development, English is still taught and promoted with little regard to its practical use in social-cultural and professional contexts. Therefore, as a first step to promoting international, professional communication in English, we argue that it is essential that policymakers, at national and institutional level are aware of the cultural and individual factors which can affect the successful acquisition and use of this essential tool.

2 New developments in the use of lingua franca English

The role of English as a lingua franca in global professional communities has been a vigorously debated issue in recent years. The latest research on lingua franca English (LFE) (Firth & Wagner, 1997; Kramsch, 2002; Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Block, 2003; House, 2003; Canagarajah, 2006a; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Atkinson, Churchill, Nishino, & Okada, 2007) reveals what multilingual communities have always been aware that: "Language learning and use succeed through performance strategies, situational resources, and social negotiations in fluid communicative contexts. Proficiency is therefore practice-based, adaptive, and emergent" (Canagarajah, 2007: 923). These findings make it possible to theorize second language acquisition (SLA) and use as multimodal, multisensory, multilateral, and, therefore, multidimensional. The previously dominant

1 The 5th edition of the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) 2015 ranks 70 countries and territories based on test data from more than 910,000 adults who took an online English test in 2014. It tracks the evolution of English proficiency, looking back over eight years of EF EPI data.

factors in LFE research such as form and cognition are not abandoned now, but they get redefined as hybrid, fluid, and situated in a more socially embedded, culturally sensitive, and interactionally open model where needs and motives of the individual language user are considered as well.

This approach contests the view that learning and using a second language is simply concerned with the acquisition of a particular set of cognitive skills and mastering its grammar in specially designed pedagogical contexts. It adopts the view that language learning and use is not a unitary concept since literacies² are culturally and socially determined practices, and vary depending on the particular context in which they occur. Along these lines Firth and Wagner (1997) questioned some key dichotomies which operate in second language acquisition (SLA) research and can be summarized as follows:

1. Individual versus community: Are language learning and use orchestrated primarily by the individual even when they occur through interaction? Or do communication and acquisition take place in collaboration with others, through active negotiation, as an intersubjective practice? (Block, 2003).
2. Determinism versus agency: Are learners at the mercy of grammar and discourse forms for communication, or do they shape language to suit their purposes? (Canagarajah, 2006a).
3. Grammar versus pragmatics: Is one more primary in communication than the other, and are they in fact separable? Would pragmatic strategies enable one to communicate successfully irrespective of the level of grammatical proficiency? (House, 2003).
4. Fixity versus fluidity: What is the place of deviation, variation, and alteration in language, and can a system lack boundedness? Similarly, is acquisition linear, cumulative, unidirectional, and monodimensional? (Kramsch, 2002; Larsen-Freeman, 2002).
5. Cognition versus context: Do we formulate and store language norms detached from the situations and environment in which they are embedded? Is learning more effective when it takes place separately from the contexts where multiple languages, communicative modalities, and envi-

2 *Literacy*—the ability to use language, numbers, images, computers, and other basic means to understand, communicate, gain useful knowledge and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture. The concept of literacy is expanding in 35 OECD (the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries to include skills to access knowledge through technology and ability to assess complex contexts (Education for All: A Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO, p. 150).

ronmental influences are richly at play? (Atkinson, Churchill, Nishino & Okada, 2007; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Firth and Wagner ended their article with a broad call “to work towards the evolution of a holistic, bio-social SLA” (1997: 296). In what followed SLA and LFE research progressed to a position of model building by developing alternate theoretical paradigms that would integrate the above mentioned dichotomies (see Zuengler & Miller, 2006, for a review).

These new developments in SLA and LFE research have allowed us to address a wide variety of issues deriving from the processes of globalization. We are now in a position to appreciate how English language learning and use has been taking place in a variety of multilingual communities. These observations include, for example, the emergence of the new forms of English which reflect the sociolinguistic realities in many countries and regions. First among them is the English of China, where more than one variety can be found (Bolton, 2003). The most commonly used forms are: Chinese Pidgin, New Chinese Pidgin, Chinglish, Chinese English and China English. The last of these has been elevated to the highest rank, although there still remains considerable divergence of opinion on how it should be defined (Wei & Fei, 2003). The emergence of new Englishes, not only in China but elsewhere, has generated heated discussion as to how this phenomenon can affect English language use in professional, international contexts.

Nonetheless, there is clearly a research gap in the field of intercultural communication studies pertaining to the following issues: (1) to what degree second language (L2) communication reflects Anglo-American speaking and writing conventions imposed by cultural and institutional requirements and (2) to what extent L2 users construct their discourse practices relying on norms which they transfer from their native languages and cultures. Lehman (2014a: 605) argues that, “A degree of writer’s conformity in adjusting to specific rhetorical standards of a particular discourse community is culture-specific.” This observation is particularly important in the era of globalization as we witness the evolution of contemporary societies into international and intercultural ‘melting pots’. Therefore we argue that the essentialist approach to learning and using LFE, which suggests international language users should align their linguistic and cultural backgrounds to conform to Anglo-American rhetorical norms, should be challenged and reconsidered. There are several interconnected aspects of this argument including the following:

1. Negotiation of identities is a central part of the communication process: there is not such a thing as ‘transparent language user’.

2. Each act of communication reflects linguistic choices made by the speaker/writer within socio-culturally available subject positions.
3. In each communicative event the speaker/ writer reproduces or challenges rhetorical conventions typical of Anglo-American discourse.
4. The extent to which L2 users align themselves with rhetorical standards of English varies across cultures. (e.g., as demonstrated by new developments in merging stylistic features of the Hausa language with English or the legitimization of localized models of English in China).

The linguistic resources L2 users bring to the communication process, which reflect the underlying cultural values, will enable the reduction of the Anglo-American bias in the evaluation of the success or otherwise of intercultural professional interactions.

3 Cultural values that matter in intercultural communication

Value orientations are the cognitive and affective categories that guide people's assumptions about life because they highly shape individuals' beliefs, perceptions, and behaviours, including ways of communicating (verbally and nonverbally), thinking, interacting with others, and approaching learning and teaching. Since the focus of this paper is on individual affective factors in international business communication across cultures it seems worthwhile to analyse those *inward orientations* which exert the strongest impact on cross-cultural interactions, often leading to misunderstandings, communicative failure or even conflict. Inward orientations, which include individualism/collectivism and low/high-context communication, directly determine the ways in which an individual perceives and expresses himself or herself. They constitute the collective, socially-formed aspects of the self³ and allow us to examine culture's effects on each person in two major perspectives: (1) how do we tend to interact with others in individual and collective ways? And (2), how does culture influence communication style?

3 The '*Collective self*' is that aspect of the self which is a social construct, constituted in the act of the individual's alignment with the conventions of dominant practices and discourses located in a particular socio-cultural context (Lehman, 2014a).

TABLE 1 *The general values typical of individualistic and collectivistic (communitarian) cultures*

Individualism (North America, Northern Europe, Australia, New Zealand)	Communitarianism (Latin America, Africa, Middle East, Asia)
Relationship of separate co-existence	Relationships of living together
Competition	Cooperation
Independence	Filial piety (deference toward elders)
Individual achievement	Shared aspirations and progress
Personal growth and fulfilment	Reputation of the group
Self-reliance	Interdependence
Autonomy	Group harmony and cohesion
Individual responsibility for choices	Group responsibility for choices
Guilt (particularized blame internalized by an individual)	Shame (global sense of unworthiness projected by a group)

PILLAY, 2006: 38; NAMES OF GEOGRAPHICAL TERRITORIES ADDED BY LEHMAN

3.1 *Individualism/collectivism and the self*

According to Hofstede (1997), subscribing to individualistic cultural orientation means that an individual is emotionally independent from group membership. This does not indicate that a person does not belong to any social or family groups, but that self-actualization is at the forefront of identity. In Western cultures the emphasis is put on what the individual thinks of herself or himself without considering anyone else; personal autonomy and self-actualization are critical in the process of adjusting oneself and finding one's place in society. This attitude contrasts that of collectivistic orientation which, in Hofstede's words, can be defined as connection with the power of the group. The concept of individual, therefore, is always described in relation to a group, the family, the clan, the community and his or her place in that community/society where social rules guide behaviour according to what is expected from the group. Table 1 summarizes the general values that are likely to be privileged by individualistic and collectivistic (communitarian) cultures.

In a major review of the literature on conceptions of self across cultures, Markus and Kitayama (1991) distinguish cultural views which they term 'independent' versus 'interdependent' construals of self. As they describe these contrasting conceptions:

In many Western cultures, there is a faith in the inherent separateness of distinct persons. The normative imperative of this [i.e., U.S.] culture is to become independent from others and to discover and express one's unique attributes (Johnson, 1985; Marsella et al., 1985; J.G. Miller, 1988; Shweder & Boume, 1984). of independence requires construing oneself as an individual whose behaviour is organized and made meaningful primarily by reference to one's own internal repertoire of thoughts, feelings, and action, rather than by reference to the thoughts feelings, and actions of others ... In contrast, many non-Western cultures insist on the fundamental connectedness of human beings to each other. A normative imperative of these cultures is to maintain this interdependence among individuals (De Vos, 1985; Hsu, 1985; Miller, 1988; Shweder & Bourne, 1984). Experiencing interdependence entails seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one's behaviour is determined, contingent on, and to a large extent organized by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationship.

MARKUS & KITAYAMA, 1991: 226–227

In that vein, the Chinese psychological anthropologist Francis L.K. Hsu observes, “The major key (though never the only key) as to why we behave like human beings as well as to why we behave like Americans or Japanese is to be found in our relationships with our fellow human beings” (Hsu, 1983: 414). Hsu points that human relations should constitute the basic unit of analysis in studies of identity and interpersonal communication including intercultural communication because “the concept of personality is an expression of the Western ideal of individualism. It does not correspond to the reality of how the Western man lives in Western culture, far less any man in any culture” (1985: 24). For this reason, the idea of self that underlies Western studies of communication, and which tends to be highly individualistic, self-motivated, and open to ongoing negotiation, may not always be appropriate as a basis for studying East Asian discourse, which features a more collectivistic view of the self and is connected to one's membership in such basic groups as family, friends and co-workers. The East Asian collectivistic self is strongly influenced by assumed or unmarked assumptions about roles and responsibilities. This observation prompted Hsu to suggest that in the studies of East Asian discourse the idea of the individual self should be replaced by the Chinese concept of person (*ren*). *Ren* allows not only interior unconscious or preconscious (Freudian) levels and expressible conscious levels of the person to be included in the analysis of identity, but also one's intimate society and culture. For

example, in the analysis of the self based on *ren*, such relationships as those with one's parents and children are considered inseparable aspects of one's identity.

In the individualistic concept of the self, the boundary which defines the self is set up between the person and the person's immediate relationships, whereas the Chinese concept of person (*ren*) places the boundary of the person on the outside those intimate relations. Hsu's purpose in proposing the framework for the analysis of the self based on *ren* is not to offer an alternative to the individualistic concept of the self, but to argue that a socially separated individual is not real. According to him, intimate human relationships "are literally as important as [a person's] requirement for food, water, and air" (1985: 34). Therefore, it is a dangerous analytical fiction to believe that the individual is the source of all social reality.

3.2 *High-/low-context communication styles: directness vs indirectness and face saving techniques*

Cultures vary widely in terms of communication style and in the majority of the cases the relationship to the key value categories of individualism and collectivism is apparent. This happens because communication behaviours are logical consequences of the internalized values, norms, beliefs and worldview of a given culture. Thus, culturally established rules govern rhetorical style, conventions and practices of language use.

The styles of communication typical of individualistic and collectivistic cultures are characterized by a bipolar typology called high-context and low-context communication. It has been observed that there is a direct link between the location of countries on the continuum of high-context and low-context and their position on Hofstede's scale of individualism and collectivism (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Chua 1988; Pekerti, 2001). Therefore, individuals with independent self-concepts (individualists) tend to be low-context communicators, and those with interdependent self-concepts (collectivists) are more likely to be high-context communicators (Gudykunst, Gao, & Franklyn-Stokes, 1996). According to Hinds, low-context cultures⁴ are speaker responsible, which means that a speaker-writer conveys specific information directly and explicitly, using the literal meaning of the words. The prior knowledge of the speaker's/ writer's intent is not necessary. Conversely, high-context com-

4 *low context culture*—a term proposed by anthropologist Edward T. Hall in 1976—refers to the communication style in which information is communicated primarily through language and rules are explicitly spelled out.

TABLE 2 *The general communication characteristics typical of low context and high context cultures*

High context (e.g., English-speaking and Slavic cultures, Northern Europe)	Low context (e.g., Latin America, Africa, Arab and East Asian cultures)
Nonverbal communication emphasized	Verbal communication emphasized
Contextual, implied meaning	Specific, literal meaning
Indirect, covert	Direct, overt
Implicit message	Explicit message
Reactions reserved	Reactions on the surface

PILLAY, 2006: 35

municators⁵ hold the listener/reader responsible for constructing the meaning based on the background knowledge he or she shares with the listener/reader. The interlocutors rely heavily on context to communicate messages and indicate indirectly the subject being discussed. Table 2 summarizes the general communication characteristics of low context and high context cultures.

A notion related to the high-context and low-context communication styles is the level of directness in communication; individualist cultures are associated with directness whereas collectivistic cultures with indirectness (Levine, 1985; Sanches-Burks et al., 2003). Table 3 shows the key differences in direct and indirect communication styles.

Connected with the idea of whether a culture subscribes to direct or indirect communication style is how people save face. Face is usually defined as “the negotiated public image, mutually granted each other by participants in a communicative event” (Scollon, Scollon & Jones, 2012: 47). This definition pertains only to the negotiable aspects of face, not considering the assumptions participants bring to the interaction. We propose the view that face is a concept which is both negotiated and constituted by the assumptions individuals make before they enter a communicative event. What factors contribute to a desirable self-representation depends strongly on the way interlocutors organize their immediate relationships.

5 *high context culture*—refers to those cultures in which the rules of communication are primarily transmitted through the use of contextual elements (i.e., body language, a person's status, and tone of voice) and are not explicitly stated.

TABLE 3 *Direct and indirect communication styles*

<i>Direct cultures</i>	<i>Indirect cultures</i>
People say what they mean and mean what they say; less need to imply and read between the lines; 'yes' means 'yes'	People don't always say what they mean or mean exactly what they say; more need to imply and read between the lines; 'yes' may mean 'maybe', or even 'no'
Communication is speaker/writer oriented	Communication is listener/reader oriented
Communication tends to be linear, analytical, objective, rational	Communication tends to be nonlinear, intuitive, subjective, synthetic
Time is a limited commodity (importance of schedules and deadlines)	Time is bent to meet the needs of people (schedules and deadlines often change)

The most important aspect of face which exists in 'oriental' discourse is constituted by kinship, which includes both hierarchical and collectivistic relationships. Hierarchical relationships, like those between fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, require children to be obedient to their parents and are practiced in the discourse forms of hierarchical structure. It is only natural that later in their lives they expect all relationships to be of hierarchical order.

The other aspect of kinship reflected in the East-Asian communication style is influenced by collectivistic relationships. As mentioned earlier in this article the sense of identity is constituted by interpersonal relations based on filial piety, interdependence and shared aspirations to maintain group reputation, harmony and cohesion. This preference for kinship relationships, which entails saving face and avoiding shame, contrasts the attitudes of egalitarianism and individualism typical of Western cultures. For example, kinship relationships are at odds with, the American myth of the "self-made man" and are considered formidable obstacles to an individual's independence and progress. While participating in any type of social interaction, American children are expected to show creativity and independence in thinking, along with problem-solving abilities. This observation can be supported by the following comment made by Hsu:

The [North] American emphasis on self-expression not only enables the [North] American child to feel unrestrained by the group, but also makes him [her] confident that he [she] can go beyond. The Chinese lack of emphasis on self-expression not only leads the Chinese child to develop a

greater consciousness of the status quo but also serves to tone down any desire on his [or her] part to transcend the larger scheme of things.

HSU, 1981: 94

Since the concept of face is connected directly with respect and group harmony, words which convey strong meaning must be chosen carefully. For example, Asian people will not want to disrupt harmony during a business negotiation by saying 'no'. Therefore, saving face means that one must be indirect and hint at meanings. Dave Barry commented on the Japanese style of refusal in the following way:

To the best of my knowledge, in all that time we travelled around Japan, nobody ever told we couldn't do anything, although it turned out that there were numerous things we couldn't do. Life became easier for us once we learned to interpret certain key phrases, which I'll summarize in this convenient table:

English statement made by Japanese	Actual meaning in "American"
I see.	No.
Ah.	No.
Ah-hah.	No.
Yes.	No.
That is difficult.	That is completely impossible.
That is very interesting.	That is the stupidest thing I ever heard.
We will study your proposal.	We will feed your proposal to the goat.

BARRY, 1992: 37

Other pertinent examples of cultural preferences for directness and indirectness in communication can be found in idioms and proverbs. Direct cultures, including English, use the following expressions: "let's lay our cards on the table," "stop playing games and get to the point," "tell it like it is," "call a spade a spade," "let the chips fall where they may," "don't beat around the bush," "you're going in circles," "the squeaky wheel gets the grease"; whereas in indirect cultures the following sayings are typical: "Nobody tells all he knows" (Senegal), "The nail that sticks out gets hammered down" (Japan), "Those who know do not speak, and those who speak do not know" (China), "It is better to say something pleasant than something true" (India).

The differences in cultural preferences for directness and indirectness often lead to ethnocentric stereotypes and biased value judgments. To indirect cul-

tures, direct speakers may seem impolite, aggressive, egotistical, blatant, and simplistic in thinking whereas to direct cultures, indirect speakers may seem unfocused, illogical, inarticulate, unsure of themselves, and evasive.

Directness in communication is necessary in certain situations in all cultural groups; however, how it is used depends on the socio-cultural context. Cultures differ significantly in their motives for directness and indirectness; collectivists for example frequently choose politeness over truth (as it is understood in individualistic cultures), to avoid embarrassment and preserve harmony. In collectivistic cultures truth is not an absolute but depends on a social situation which indicates the degree of directness necessary for successful communication. Smith and Bond (1999) observe that making untrue statements (white lies) to preserve group cohesion and harmony is universal, but the extent of its use is higher in collectivistic cultures.

4 Cultural values and individual second language user variables

Since cultural values make certain patterns of thinking and behaviours more natural, preferable, and legitimate, the differences in cultural attitudes and behaviours are reflected in the logic of a language. According to Kaplan, “Logic (in the popular rather than the logician’s sense of the word) which is the basic of rhetoric, is evolved out of culture; it is not universal. Rhetoric, then, is not universal either, but varies from culture to culture and even from time to time within a given culture. It is affected by canons of taste within a given culture at a given time” (Kaplan, 1966: 2).

Consequently, L2 users who participate in several communities of practice, professional and social (Wenger, 2000) are challenged with new rhetorical or linguistic and non-linguistic behaviours in each community they enter. These social/professional interactions require L2 users to adjust themselves and their linguistic and non-linguistic behaviours to suit the situation’s demands (see Giddens, 1999: 416). As Bakhtin points out, for every social activity there is a particular genre which limits and constrains the linguistic choices and behaviour and it is these genres that allow for mutual understanding (Bakhtin, 2003: 282–283). In using English as a second language (E2L) in professional situations, the interactions the learner/user experiences with ‘others’ will affect the way the second language learning process is accomplished. A E2L user’s opportunities to interact are “socially structured sites of language learning” and it is the quality and quantity of these opportunities which allow for the development of successful SLA (Norton & McKinney, 2011: 73–74). We argue that SLA acquisition is both a cognitive and individual process but it is also a matter of

relations between speakers in specific socio-cultural, including professional, contexts. And this observation raises questions as to how those social relations are constructed, the power relations involved and the constraints or freedoms those relations allow the E2L user in his/her interactions in the professional setting. So E2L users have to not only “negotiate language as a system” but also language as a “social practice” (Norton & McKinney, 2011: 81) as Norton argues, “speech, speakers and social relations are inseparable” (Norton, 1997: 410). So we argue that factors which will impinge upon the success or otherwise of professional interactions are both individualistic, i.e. how the individual’s L2 user’s identity develops and social, in that successful professional interaction is directly affected by external influences such as levels and quality of participation in professional contexts, which involves the social positions attributed to the participants, which involves considerations of issues of power and inequality.

4.1 *Motivational drivers in L2 use in professional contexts*

Dörnyei points out that of the many conditions which are necessary to acquire and use a second language successfully “researchers would agree that motivation was one of the key factors that determine learning achievement” (Dörnyei et al, 2006: vii). However as Ushioda states; L2 motivation is “an abstract, multifaceted construct” (2012: 401) and there is “no general consensus on the definition of the notion” (Dörnyei et al, 2006: 9). One of the complicating factors in L2 motivation is, as stated above, the fact that the dominant global position of English means that “more and more learners do not make a motivated choice to learn English, English has become a self-evident component of the 21st century” (Dörnyei et al, 2006: 89). In other words the target reference group has become a global not geographically specific reference group. According to Ushioda E2L learners/users therefore have a concept of self as a de facto member of that global community of English users (Ushioda, 2006: 150). English has become an educational, social and professional requirement in most countries and its adoption as a lingua franca in global professional contexts means that correlation between how learners/users feel about the English language and culture and their choice to learn English as a second language, is reduced (see Dörnyei et al, 2006: 88–89). It seems reasonable to suggest that for many E2L users in these professional settings the nature of their motivation to learn English is a ‘required motivation’. ‘Required Motivation’ theory proposes that L2 learners can be motivated to learn a L2 in order to meet social expectations and this variable has been identified in a number of L2 motivational studies. (see Warden and Lin, 2000; Chen et al, 2005). This would seem to argue against a previous held notion that L2 motivation “always has an

integrativeness component” (Gardner, 1985: 168), that learners had an interest in the target language culture, country and native speakers.

4.2 *Required motivation*

An aspect of how ‘required motivation’ is activated to satisfy social expectations is connected to the global hegemony which English now possesses. Among the conclusions of the EF EPI report was the finding that “the correlations between English ability and income, internet connectivity, scientific research, and a range of other indicators remain strong and stable over time” (2015:4). As we have stated above English is not as closely tied to the United States or the United Kingdom as it once was, it is a fundamental tool for the entire global workforce and it “is truer than ever today that English makes it easier to do business around the world” and “in countries where English is not an official language, the ease of doing business closely correlates with the strength of English skills” (2015: 53). Worldwide companies in non-English speaking companies have adopted English as their corporate language, including Honda, Nokia, Renault, and Samsung. As the EF report found, “English skills are a key component for creating a business-friendly environment”, it plays a role in “generating opportunities, determining employability, and expanding horizons” (2015: 53). EF also found a number of correlations between social and economic advancement and English language proficiency such as; English proficiency and Gross National Income per capita, English proficiency and salaries and English proficiency corresponding to lower unemployment rates among the young (see EF 2015: 54). We argue that the above constitute strong factors in the creation of ‘required motivation’ in L2 learners/users.

As we stated in the introduction, institutional and national policymakers need to embrace the reality of LFE and prepare their citizens to be able to function in English in multi-cultural, professional settings. The 2016 EF EPI report,⁶ although perhaps not completely, statistically reliable, does point to aspects of external factors influencing required motivation and English language proficiency. We have chosen to focus on the two countries in which we work, Poland and Italy. With regards to English language proficiency, Poland is classified as 10th and Italy 28th from a total of 72 countries. These standings are considered to be respectively; ‘high proficiency’ (users can, make a presentation at work, understand TV shows and read a newspaper) and ‘moderate proficiency’

6 The 6th edition of the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) 2016 ranks 72 countries and territories based on test data from more than 950,000 adults who took an online English test in 2015. It tracks the evolution of English proficiency, looking back over eight years of EF EPI data.

(users can, participate in meetings in one's area of expertise, understand song lyrics and write professional emails on familiar subjects) (EF EPI, 2016: 5). In terms of national spending on education, these 2 countries spent respectively, 11.4% and 8.0% in 2014. English language proficiency in 2015 compared with 2013 was seen to be down 1.31% in Poland and up 1.22% in Italy, none of these changes are seen as statistically significant. If we examine national abilities in reading, science and maths, according to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) 2012 Pisa report⁷ our 2 countries scored as follows: Poland 518 and Italy 485, the mean average from a total of 64 countries was 494 (OECD PISA report 2012). According to the EF report "Poland has an effective education system" and it has seen a "threefold increase since 2002 in adults aged 30–34 with university qualifications" (EF EPI, 2015: 12). Two thirds of Polish children choose to study English rather than German. In Italy, English is also predominantly the first choice of foreign language. As the 2016 report points out; "Europe's English proficiency remains far higher than that of other regions, with Northern and Central Europe leading the world. The large Romance-language countries are at or below the European average, and countries at the edge of the European Union perform at an entirely different level from the rest of the region." (EF EPI 2016: 19).

4.3 *Development of professional L2 identity*

Therefore the emergence of English as a global language, which is no longer geographically situated and the consequent shift in E2L users being intrinsically motivated to learn and use English, to users having a required motivation which is driven and sustained by external references, has led to a focus on the internal domain of the L2 learner/user. This has led to research into the (re)creation of a second language user's identity as he/she interacts in the variety of cross-cultural, professional and social contexts he/she inhabits. How E2L users feel about themselves as they strive to function in English will determine the way they deal with the challenges of interacting in English in these international, professional contexts (see Arnold, 2007).

As we have said above, one important aspect of an individual's identity is constituted in relation to a group where social rules guide behaviour. For the purposes of this paper, our group is other target language users, functioning in English in cross-cultural professional and social contexts. Such interactions will

7 PISA 2012 is the programme's 5th survey. It assessed the competencies of approximately 500,000 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science (with a focus on mathematics) in 65 countries. All 34 OECD member countries and 31 partner countries and economies participated in PISA 2012, representing more than 80% of the world economy.

involve the individual in ‘matching’ him/herself against other group members and in this way, he/she will be involved in a constant process of re-appraisal of the self. A person’s idea of self is built through experience with and interpretations of one’s environment and is influenced mainly by evaluations by significant others, reinforcements, and attributions for one’s own behaviour (Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976). How one perceives oneself will influence how one behaves in professional/social interactions and will also play “a central role in all learning situations” (Arnaiz & Guillen, 2012: 81). However, E2L learners/users are much more vulnerable as using a L2 is potentially more ‘ego-involving’ than communication between two speakers with the same mother tongue, as they do not have full command of appropriate language skills (Tsui, 1996: 155). Second language users often feel their ideas are not expressed properly in the target language and in professional settings this may have a negative effect on the development of their professional L2 identity. It is this ‘visibility’ characteristic of having to function in a L2, especially as regards the oral skill, that may turn cross-cultural interactions into an emotional ordeal (Mercer, 2011). There is broad consensus that self-concept plays a key role in successful L2 learning/using in situated contexts such as inter-cultural professional interactions (see Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003; Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2009; Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999; Horwitz, 2001; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Yashima, Zenk-Nishide & Shimizu, 2004; Matsuoka, 2009). This ‘ego involving’, more ‘visible’ aspect of using a E2L in a professional setting is likely to impact negatively on what Dörnyei calls the “L2 Motivational Self System” (see Dörnyei, 2005). This notion states that learners/users have an *ideal self*; which is the representation of all the attributes that a person would like to possess (i.e. a representation of personal hopes, aspirations, or wishes) in the future. The complement concept to the *ideal self* is the *ought to self*; a representation of the attributes that one believes one ought to possess in the future (see Dörnyei, 2005). This is a powerful concept for the consideration of motivation of E2L users in international, professional contexts as it maintains that if “proficiency in the target language is integral to one’s *ideal* or *ought to self*, this will serve as a powerful motivator to learn the language” (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012: 400–401). In international, professional contexts E2L users’ concept of self will be constantly re-appraised in terms of the reinforcements they receive to their linguistic productions and how these reinforcements match with their notions of the ideal and ought to notions of E2L self. A mismatch between these factors would lead to negative reinforcement, a possible crisis in confidence and a possible communication breakdown, which in business, may likely have consequences beyond aspects of E2L user identity. Connected to this is the notion of E2L learner/user self-confidence is the learner/user’s belief that he/she has

the “ability to produce results, accomplish goals or perform tasks competently” (Dörnyei, 1998: 123). An E2L learner/user’s self-confidence is composed of perceived competence and a lack of anxiety (see Clément, 1986). When there is an absence of confidence, then L2 learners can be anxious about interacting in the L2 altogether.

4.4 *The concept of second language user anxiety*

In psychology, anxiety is generally classified into trait anxiety which is related to a stable part of an individual’s personality and can be defined as a more permanent disposition to be anxious, which Ellis notes “is perhaps viewed as an aspect of personality” (Ellis, 1994: 479–480) and state anxiety, which is an apprehension that is experienced at a particular moment in time as a response to definite situation connected to specific events or situation. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is distinct from state anxiety, which occurs within specific, temporary situations and fades when the threat (or situation) disappears (MacIntyre, 2002). FLA is also distinct from trait anxiety, a permanent, individual difference, where people with high levels of trait anxiety have a general tendency to become anxious in any situation (Casado & Dereshiwsy, 2001; Ellis, 2008). According to Horwitz et al. (1986), FLA is distinct from these types of anxiety and is classified as ‘situation-specific anxiety’. This type of anxiety is prompted by specific set of conditions for example public speaking, or participating in meetings. E2L users having to interact in what are often ‘high-stakes’ cross-cultural business settings are quite likely to experience this language anxiety, defines by Gardner and MacIntyre as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993). While researchers have suggested that FLA can interfere with L2 communication (see Norton, 2000: 122), research has shown that anxiety is not necessarily negative; debilitating anxiety “is considered to be detrimental to performance” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989: 252) while on the other hand, “facilitating anxiety mobilizes resources to accomplish a task” (Ehrman, 1996: 148) and can motivate L2 learners/users to “to make extra efforts to overcome their feelings of anxiety” (Ellis, 1994: 482). FLA, along with the E2L users attitudes and motivation, has been shown by various researchers to be an important affective variable which influences success in a variety of communicative situations (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Spolsky, 1989; Ehrman, 1996). And while it is true that not all studies have produced significant correlations between anxiety and achievement (see Ellis, 1994: 482), there “is sufficient evidence to show that anxiety is an important factor in L2 acquisition” (Ellis, 1994: 483) and a predictor of success in communications (Al-Saraj, 2011). An added relevance to this paper’s focus on E2L use

in cross-cultural professional settings is the fact that FLA research has also suggested that anxiety-related behaviour differs from culture to culture (Oxford, 2005; Matsuoka, 2009). Therefore, for example, Europeans and Asians using English in a professional context may experience different levels of FLA.

4.5 *The concept willingness to communicate*

Another affective variable in L2 acquisition and use, closely related to self-confidence and anxiety, is the learner's willingness to communicate (WTC), which has been defined as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2" (MacIntyre et al., 1998: 547). Yashima et al. theorised that WTC is influenced by the learner/user's confidence in the L2, his/her second language anxiety and the his/her perceived L2 competence (Yashima et al., 2004). The two principal antecedents of WTC are communication apprehension and self-perceived communication competence (see Matsuoka, 2009). Communication apprehension is defined as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977: 78). Self-perceived Communication Competence indicates the level of communication competence or skills that individuals perceive themselves to possess and it has been found to correlate positively with WTC (Matsuoka, 2009). McCroskey predicted a substantial positive correlation between the self-perception of communicative competence and WTC scores, and this prediction was confirmed across cultures with positive correlations between self-perceived communication competence and WTC in Sweden (McCroskey, Burroughs, Daun, & Richmond, 1990; McCroskey, 1997).

Learners/users who do not have confidence in their abilities to learn and use English in professional settings are therefore likely to be less motivated. Krashen argued that learners with high motivation, high self-confidence and a low level of anxiety towards the target language possess better psychological conditions for learning a second language. On the other hand, if motivation and self-confidence are low and the learner is more anxious, it will aggravate the process as the learner/user's affective filter is raised, creating an obstacle to learning (Krashen, 1985). What's more, learners/users who have a negative attitude towards a language or the culture represented by that language (Brown, 1994: 63) are said to have a high affective filter.

5 Conclusion

Today the undisputed evidence of quality thinking is the Anglo-American communication convention based on linear, coordinated and symmetrical principles for speaking and writing. Other cultural orientations demonstrating alternative standards for communication styles are disadvantaged. The unchallenged, dominant position of English in the world today, has meant that nations and institutions have needed to consider how best to equip their citizens and employees to function in English in cross-cultural, social and professional contexts. With these two factors in play, it has been argued in this paper that there is a necessity for the merger of rhetorical and stylistic features of local languages with English in order for English to continue to function as the lingua franca of the global professional and business culture. It has also been argued that for English to maintain its status of lingua franca in global, professional contexts, national and institutional policymakers need to provide the conditions in which E2L learners are equipped not only with the necessary language skills, but also with the pragmatic knowledge. Because the ways in which people learn English as a lingua franca and their motives for doing so are changing we have highlighted how cultural and individual factors are essential aspects of an E2L user's success in cross-cultural, professional interactions. Approximating the ideal of a successful cross-cultural communication in professional settings involves a fundamental shift in our views, norms, values and attitudes but will give us a profound opportunity to learn about our shared world, ourselves, and improve conditions for intellectual exchange.

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