A Comparative Investigation of Internationalized Universities in Japan and the United Kingdom

English as a Lingua Franca

by
Christopher G. Haswell

A Comparative Investigation of Internationalized Universities in Japan and the United Kingdom: English as a Lingua Franca
by Christopher G. Haswell

2026

Ethics International Press, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2026 by Christopher G. Haswell

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (Hardback): 978-1-80866-069-6
ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-80866-070-2

Dedicated to my family,
with whose support anything is possible

Accepting, perceiving, and dealing with reality on reality's terms.

Dr. David D. Pinsky

When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time.

Dr. Maya Angelou

With statute law, the universal tries to enframe the particular. In contrast, the distinct virtue of common law is that it is out of the particulars and out of genuine cases and practical circumstances, general principles grow.

Harrison Pitt

The purpose of a system is what it does. There is, after all, no point in claiming that the purpose of a system is to do what it constantly fails to do.

Stafford Beer

In the matter of reforming things, as distinct from deforming them, there is one plain and simple principle; a principle which will probably be called a paradox. There exists in such a case a certain institution or law; let us say, for the sake of simplicity, a fence or gate erected across a road. The more modern type of reformer goes gaily up to it and says, 'I don't see the use of this; let us clear it away.' To which the more intelligent type of reformer will do well to answer: 'If you don't see the use of it, I certainly won't let you clear it away. Go away and think. Then, when you can come back and tell me that you do see the use of it, I may allow you to destroy it.'

G. K. Chesterton

Table of contents

Foreword xiii

PART ONE

Chapter 1: English as a Lingua Franca and University Internationalization .. 1
1.1 The theme of this book 3
1.2 Book organization 4
1.3 The Mission 7
1.4 "What is ELF?" 11
1.5 "What is an international university?" 33
1.6 The motivation for this book 51
1.7 Breakdown of the chapters in this book 52

Chapter 2: The history of WE and ELF 56
2.1 Interview #2 - Christopher G. Haswell (Kyushu University) - Published April 1st, 2020 57
2.2 Interview #14 - Jennifer Jenkins (University of Southampton) - Published June 24th, 2020 65
2.3 Interview #24 - Ahmar Mahboob (University of Sydney) - Published September 2nd, 2020 75
2.4 Interview #70 - Ishamina Athirah Gardiner (University of Brunei Darussalam) - Published August 4th, 2021 80
2.5 Chapter Conclusion 85

Chapter 3: Policy-related and teaching-related approaches to ELF 87
3.1 Interview #12 - Aya Matsuda (Arizona State University) - Published June 10th, 2020 89
3.2 Interview #31 - Nobuyuki Hino (Osaka University) - Published October 21st, 2020 109

3.3 Interview #46 - Ana Sofia Hofmeyr (Kansai University) - Published Feb 10, 2021 116
3.4 Interview #65 - James D'Angelo (Chukyo University) - Published June 30th, 2021 124
3.5 Interview #84 - Nicola Galloway (University of Glasgow) - Published November 10th, 2021 132
3.6 Chapter Conclusion 138

Chapter 4: Appreciation of ELF as an approach to language development analysis 140
4.1 - Interview #18 - Mahboobeh Rakhshandehroo (Kyoto University of Foreign Studies) - Published July 22nd, 2020 141
4.2 - Interview #42 - C. B. Lawrence (Ajou University) - Published January 20th, 2021 147
4.3 Interview #98 - Nicos Sifakis (University of Athens) - Published March 9th, 2022 154
4.4 - Interview #150 - Robert J. Lowe (Ochanomizu University) - Published January 24th, 2024 164
4.5 - Interview #179 - Sarah Hopkyns (University of St. Andrews) - Published May 21st, 2025 169
4.6 Chapter conclusion 175

Chapter 5: Outcomes of ELF research 177
5.1 - Interview #52 - Naoko Kojima (Ritsumeikan University) - Published March 24th, 2022 178
5.2 - Interview #54 - Kevin Browne (Prefectural University of Yamanashi) - Published April 7th, 2022 184
5.3 - Interview #154 - Eoin Jordan (University of St. Andrews) - Published March 6th, 2024 190
5.4 Aaron Hahn and Christopher G. Haswell 198
5.5 Chapter conclusion 201

Chapter 6: The Future 203
6.1 What did we learn from Part One of the book? 203
6.2 A new testing system of ELF-oriented English 206
6.3 Part One Conclusion 237

PART TWO

Chapter 7: The Next Mission 241
7.1 Leaving Japan 241
7.2 Defining the mission 242
7.3 Preparations for the mission 243

Chapter 8: The Long Trips to Everywhere 247
8.1 Travel considerations 247
8.2 The Universities involved in the project 252

Chapter 9: The Discoveries 265
9.1 Research Visits: Lakeland University (Tokyo) and Kyushu University (Fukuoka) 265
9.2 Conclusion of the Japan leg of the project 283
9.3 Research Visits: St. Andrews, Southampton, and Sheffield 284
9.4 Chapter Conclusion 303

Chapter 10: Policy beyond the mission 305
10.1 The after-effects of the Top Global University Project 306
10.2 The Asymmetric Trilemma: Identity, Modernity, and Sustainability 317
10.3 (Re)applying the lens of ELF 332

Chapter 11: What Comes Next? 338
11.1 Where will ELF go next? 339
11.2 What will universities do from now? 340
11.3 What will I do next? 344

Appendix 347
K1 Candidate Cards 347
K2 Candidate Cards 347
Chart 1: CEFR/IELTS combined speaking rubric 348
Image 1 349
Chart 2 349

Bibliography of featured interviews 352

Bibliography 355

Foreword

By *Dr. Shaun O'Dwyer, Professor, Kyushu University*

This book represents an effort to comprehend English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) not as "it is," with strict conceptual parameters, not as it should be, but as it is being done, in myriad ways and across localized and international contexts - including internationalized university campuses. Christopher Haswell brings his own expertise to this discussion, having researched ELF for fifteen years and proposed his own "Global Model" for understanding the dynamic and plural varieties of English across the world.

One distinctive contribution of this book is its collaborative approach to ELF research, drawing on insights from podcast interviews with sixteen fellow researchers in applied linguistics and English language teaching. Combining the author's loquacious, anecdotal style with the scholarly rigor drawn from his and his interviewees' expertise, this book offers an engaging introduction to an emerging field in applied linguistics.

September 1st, 2026

PART ONE

Chapter 1
English as a Lingua Franca and University Internationalization

J.R.R. Tolkien was a fascinating character in his own right. Born in 1892 in Bloemfontein, South Africa, he grew up to become the 'Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon' at the University of Oxford. He lamented that there were not enough great legend tales from the British Isles, such as those of The Odyssey from Greece or The Epic of Gilgamesh from Sumeria (modern-day Iraq). He set out to rectify this by writing The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings, and The Silmarillion, two of which have been adapted into internationally acclaimed and commercially successful movies and inspired a billion-dollar TV series. In Tolkien's world, the hobbits, the humans, the dwarves, a wizard, and the elves join forces to fight the orcs, the uruk-hai, and another wizard to defeat Saruman. Great books on a legendary scale of world-building that rival any other mythical tale of great endeavour.

ELF has nothing to do with Tolkien (more's the pity, as we could at least make some money from it). He is, however, the one I blame when I say, "I'm mostly interested in ELF," and the questioners' heads tilt to the side, like a dog being told it has to learn to drive.

ELF is English as a Lingua Franca. If you are an English language or linguistics academic, you may already be familiar with this acronym, but please indulge me for a moment. ELF is my passion. I have a website called "ELFCommunication.com" that provides students and English learners with examples of English users from around the world (sourced from the podcast

"Lost in Citations"; I have more than 30 nationalities to work with) speaking on a variety of subjects.

This book aims to tell the story of ELF, its foundation and development, and its current relevance in the use, teaching, and learning of English, drawing on interviews with experts on world Englishes and English as a lingua franca. The second part of the book will do something original with what it has learned by speaking directly with students and staff at universities about their experiences working in an internationalizing academic world where English facilitates intercultural communication.

A variety of the language, whether geographically or register-based, will necessarily fit in an identifiable place: Appalachian English will always be best understood in places like Georgia and West Virginia rather than in downtown Kowloon; formal English, both in lexical and enunciative choices, will always be preferable when taking part in a business meeting in the ACT than when playing poker in Las Vegas. For this reason, English as a lingua franca has always seemed daunting to personalize, since everything seems to be based on anecdotal information. However, frames of reference are just as crucial as frames of analysis - what we know about a subject is as good a starting point as any if we choose to investigate a phenomenon.

I say "personalize" because, in my opinion, it is the key factor missing from ELF discussions. This is especially true given that ELF was initially conceived to encompass interactions in English between people for whom English was not their native language (Firth, 1996). If one chooses to learn and use a foreign language, that choice must, at some point, be personal. Because language codes knowledge transfer, epistemologically speaking, one's use of it becomes part of one's front-facing identity. English is used as a tool for internationalization (vertical integration into transnational spaces), but only through personal choices can the language facilitate globalization

(horizontal integration across transnational spaces). This book will give space to individual stories to balance a global narrative.

1.1 The theme of this book

This book differs from my previous two in that it focuses on a single subject rather than the lessons learned from starting and maintaining a podcast (Book One) and the various issues covered in the podcast interviews (Book Two). Given that Jonathan Shachter, my co-host, initially suggested I contact the academics I most often read and quote, it's no surprise that my most common interview subjects are sociolinguists and researchers interested in world Englishes and ELF. This book should serve as a helpful guide for listeners familiar with the subject who might want a bit more background to support their research. Comments from relevant works in the field will supplement the interview excerpts.

As we will discuss in this book, ELF is a mindset, not a variety of English; its grammar cannot be taught as one would a discrete variety or an offshoot of a 'standard,' but the approach to learning, using, and teaching the language certainly can. As the interviews in this text will demonstrate, no one in the ELF space, regardless of how they approach the use and teaching of English, considers ELF anything other than a way of thinking. How they apply this way of thinking differs, as does how they came to their opinions. One of the most fascinating things about the personal journey, both figurative and literal, I have been on over the last 20 years is how many avenues an interest in ELF can lead to. However, despite the many options for investigating the mindset as a whole, using ELF for academic and professional improvement can be reduced to a simple question: "Am I using English to help people communicate better?"

This book is not intended to be a historical narrative on how ELF came to be an important, and some like myself may say crucial, part of the consideration of language learning in the mid-2020s, but rather a state-of-the-art report on what is happening now in practice. Many other works explain in more detail how ELF became part of the international academic landscape of English language use. In all honesty, I don't think I could add much to the analysis of this development except to say I was not there for all of it, but I have kept a close eye on ELF's conceptual evolution and included most, if not all, of these concepts in my published works dating back to 2007.

The book will cover interviews conducted between 2020 and 2026 and place statements by key characters in the current field of ELF in their proper context. Where helpful and/or necessary, adequate context will be provided for additional 'deep-dives' that you, dear reader, may be interested in taking. In this way, this book can be both a helpful manual for negotiating ELF-related topics and a guide to where to look next if you still have questions.

1.2 Book organization

This book is divided into 11 chapters. These chapters are generally organized chronologically, from the history and background of ELF to its expected future development, then to a study inspired by my own interest in the topic. To avoid the pitfalls of anecdotal evidence, I will first support my conclusions with specific excerpts from 18 interviews conducted for my podcast project, "Lost in Citations." To provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic and how people from various perspectives approach it, we will take a trip through six years of interviews with those 'in the know.' As Jennifer Jenkins will later discuss in Chapter Two, ELF is a way of thinking about language rather than a variety of it, so it was vital for me to understand and include others' feelings about their use of the language. i.e, their way of thinking about English rather than the way they

teach it or even use it themselves. Remember the Appalachian English user in downtown Kowloon? How they use the language will be influenced as much by how they feel about English as by their reasons for using it.

Side note: I mention downtown Kowloon specifically, rather than Hong Kong generally, because I have had numerous fantastic experiences there, almost all of them in restaurants with friends. The English wasn't the King's, I can tell you, but we communicated, and we had good times. Kowloon is a great place; the next time you find yourself on a layover in HK or plan to visit for a few days, don't confine yourself to the big shiny bank buildings in the shade of Victoria Peak. Go and try Kowloon; go on, live a little!

1.2.1 Reasons to consider reading this book

I am writing Part One of this book before several key parts of my plan have been implemented or even approved. I wrote this sentence before summer 2025, and I worked hard to produce as much as possible as early as possible in the research cycle to situate it both temporally and philosophically. I will add updates as I re-edit the book later and signpost them along the way. However, I decided to be as honest as possible about preparing this text, in line with grounded theory principles. Therefore, I am writing this sentence now that the project's timeline has been decided for early autumn 2025. This concludes my discussion of the timing of writing in Part One of the book, except to say that I am committed to completing it in its entirety before I begin writing about the activities in Part Two.

For this first reason, consider reading along in sequence, as the narrative is destined to change. Plans will change, schedules will fall apart, arguments will happen, and connections will be missed. In short, this book will be more of a real-time story than a mere retelling of a completed task. In the previous book, we looked at grounded theory as a method for post hoc evaluation.

While still adhering to the tenets of a grounded theory approach, I wrote this book aspirationally, not to rationalize its existence. I hope it is received as such.

1.2.2 Updated statistics of the works being investigated in this book

The previous book drew on the first 180 episodes of the podcast "Lost in Citations." A year has passed since I introduced this seemingly arbitrary endpoint, and we have continued to produce podcasts. Therefore, I will extend this limit to the first 200 interviews. What used to be a weekly podcast became bi-monthly when Jon left the project to pursue his PhD. This left the schedule in my hands, so I kept the publication rate I had maintained for the previous 4 years. However, when I put together the project plan for the UK and Japanese universities, I was still working from a base of 180 interviews. For this reason, Part One of the book will be based on the 180 version, with podcasts 181 to 200 included in Part Two.

Here are the descriptive statistics updated from the last book:

(The numbers from Book Two, covering the first 180 episodes, are given in parentheses)

	Downloads	**Words**	**Minutes**	**WPM**
Total:	48,825 (39,668)	1,741,243 (1,677,350)	10,778 (9,807)	
Average:	245 (227)	8,750 (8,820)	54 (54)	161 (161)

(Note: the number of downloads does not include the five most downloaded podcasts, as they have thousands of downloads driven by inclusion in a

more trafficked site than lostincitations.com. Their exclusion avoids the averages being overly affected by outliers.)

As shown, while totals have increased, the averages remain relatively stable. The first 200 interviews constituted the podcast's inaugural season, representing the initial establishment of the podcast's name through self-promotion, academic conference presentations, and journal and book publications. We encouraged well over 200 people to be interviewed; although some single-interviewee episodes featured repeat appearances, the conference podcasts featured 5-10 short interviews at a time. We had 10 of those in the three post-COVID years covered by the first 200 episodes, which was quite an achievement if I do say so myself.

This report is the end of Season One, a season of work that has encompassed six years (seven calendar years), over 200 interviewees representing more than 30 countries, eight interviewers (myself, Jonathan Shachter, Todd Beuckens, Robert S. Murphy, Kate Maher, Lisa M. Barker, and Chris Cooper), three websites, thousands of miles of travel, countless organizing emails, hundreds of hours of editing, and so many new experiences and opportunities to learn they gave life to more than a two dozen academic publications including conference presentations, journal articles, book chapters, and even whole books. And this all began with an offer to join a podcast project, an offer to which I initially responded with a "no."

1.3 The Mission

The Five-Year Mission is (more than) complete. Unfortunately, it was not "to seek out new life and new civilizations" throughout the galaxy but, in theory, "to seek out new concepts and ways of thinking" within academia. In reality, the mission was to survive at least five years of podcast production and beat the 'curse of the new podcast.' To quote Riverside. FM:

> *90% of podcasts don't get past episode 3. Of the few that continue, another 90% will quit after 20 episodes. In other words, if you reach episode 21, you're among the top 1% of podcasters worldwide who made it. An inconsistent publishing schedule is among the top 10 reasons people stop listening to a show.*
> Riverside: https://riverside.fm › blog › podcast-statistics, May 27th, 2025

As of this typing, episode #199 has been recorded and is ready for release on schedule. That's six years of releasing well-prepared podcasts on time. Regarding the mission at hand, I can at least say I have handsomely beaten the 20-episode barrier.

Book One, "*Podcasting: A Voice to the Words*," breaks down how Jonathan and I approached consistently producing a podcast worth listening to. I think the concept made it easier than most to produce consistently: the producers were genuinely interested in learning about the writers and their work. We wanted to know what they were thinking at the time. We had read the papers many times and had many questions. Every week was a challenge, but we embraced it and learned a lot. Within one year and 50 published podcast interviews, we were ready to publish academic work using the catalog, first as (then-online) conference presentations, and subsequently in a series of articles and book chapters. This cycle culminated in a 'how-to' book formed from the academic review of the interviews we could group and report on. Book One clocked in at 47,881 words (including bibliography of interviews reviewed) and 166 pages.

Book Two, "*Using podcast interviews as a source of qualitative investigation*," presented a different approach to reporting interview content. Interviews were grouped not by keywords but by 'issues': these included 'social issues,' 'policy issues,' 'legal issues,' etc. We analyzed these interviews using a post hoc grounded theory approach, interspersing the interview transcripts with real-time analysis. Essentially, the reporting was as if you, the reader, could

listen to the workings of our brains in the moment and the thoughts they produced as we interviewed the academic in question. This required referring to notes taken during the interview, which were used to decide which follow-up questions would best maintain the interview's productive flow. Book Two clocked in at 66,368 words (including an updated bibliography of interviews) and was 255 pages.

Book Three, this book, is titled "A comparative investigation of internationalized universities in Japan and the United Kingdom: English as a Lingua Franca." However, while I was writing it, I referred to it as "The Worldly Story of ELF" because I am a bit of a romantic. It invites a deeper investigation into ELF, its sub-themes as explored by the podcast, and its manifestations in university life at both Japanese and British universities. This book is also the most in-depth investigation yet attempted in the six years of the podcast and involved thousands of kilometers of travel, in cars, trains, planes, trams, on pathways, highways, and byways, including lost maps, bad directions, poor decision-making (mostly me), temper tantrums (all me), and hundreds of participants across a dozen locations. It could have been a Netflix series, but they were busy with "Drive to Survive." Only time will tell if this marks the beginning of the next five years, the start of something new, or the end of an era.

While writing the final section of the first book, "*Podcasting: Giving a Voice to the Words*," the podcast recorded its first episode in Europe, after initially going international at the KOTESOL conference in Korea. The only UK episode to date was recorded in a classroom at Pembroke College, Cambridge University, with Dr. Paul Elliott. The theme was "Escape the Room," inspired by an interview I had with Fiona Wall-Minami called "Escape the Classroom." It showed how the experiences and opportunities built through the podcast project came together to create something truly original. This book follows that same vein of adventure.

Let me explain how we got here. When Jon first approached me about being interviewed for his fledgling podcast, it was my first time on a podcast. When he invited me to join the project as an interviewer, it wasn't the first time I'd interviewed peers, but it was the first time I wasn't doing it for an ostensibly research-related reason. When I edited my first podcast, the interview with Jonathan Shachter himself, it was my first time using all the related features of the editing program, Audacity, to level, clean up, trim, and otherwise prepare a complete episode. Then I did it again the following week with Kris Ramonda, and again, and again. When I went to Lakeland International University with my handheld recorder and cut together eight interviews in one afternoon to make that week's episode, it gave me the confidence to do it again and again until I met Fiona Wall-Minami at the SUFTL conference in Kumamoto, with a five-minute mini-interview leading to a sixty-four-minute full interview on her textbook concept. And when Paul Elliott, over a third pint of Guinness, mentioned he used a similar idea with his Japanese exchange students, I was there the next day with my recorder, in real time following the class, interviewing him and his students, then cutting it together that evening and publishing it from my hall room in Cambridge. After that professional journey, I had the background, experience, confidence, inspiration, and skill for it all to come together and let me seize the next chance to make something original.

All of this is to say the podcast was more than just something to do one evening a week while ignoring all my other work and responsibilities. It has grown into a career-building exercise like nothing outside my PhD has come close to. For this reason, I decided to attempt another PhD-sized project to lead into Season Two. The start of the UK leg of this project will see the end of Season One of the podcast. The first 200 interviews in this project will be released into the public domain before the UK leg begins. The series will then be on hiatus for around six months. At the same time, I will travel

throughout the United Kingdom speaking with students and faculty members about the connection between the academic field of ELF and the reality of internationalized university education.

This part of the project will follow the same approach we have been using since the spring of 2020. I know we don't want to think back to 'those times,' but the initial seeds of this project were sown within the constraints of COVID. Without a bit of pressure from the government, i.e., not allowing us to meet anyone ever, this podcast series would not have begun. Little did we know that, just six years later, it would lead to an international research project. What is it they say? Luck is when preparation meets opportunity.

1.4 "What is ELF?"

Having laid out the background to what this text will encompass, let's return to the central conceptual hub around which this project will revolve and from which all actions will be motivated. English may seem from the outside to be a language like any other, but it really isn't. When viewed from a truly global perspective, which I tend to do (I ran a decade-long mission to try to convince linguists to adopt a globalized model of its use - still ongoing), English has numerous aspects, both material and metaphysical, that can be investigated. This leads us to a central question of this project: *What is ELF*?

As mentioned above, this is not a question that *needs* answering, as it has been addressed many times before in hundreds of articles, books, seminars, and plenary speeches: ELF is a multifaceted, ongoing discussion of the nature of English use in the common era. However, to understand where my idea for this book came from, I must ask myself what fascinated me so many years ago.

I have chosen to link ELF specifically with internationalization because, to date, ELF has been defined as a method of communication between users of other languages, rather than necessarily involving a first-language English user. This is because people who use English as their first language generally do not need to negotiate their language use, as their context rarely changes or, when it does, they might resist changing their performance because they are "speaking English." Therefore, ELF is, by definition, a contextualized manifestation of the English language, so any topic that includes contextualization of a process which includes English will need some consideration of ELF; internationalization is a driver of recontextualized user interactions, and I have therefore chosen to make internationalization a major consideration in this investigation of ELF.

At this point, providing some background on how ELF has been described may help frame the chapters that follow. In her work on 'language regulation' in 2016, Niina Hynninen tried to isolate the definition she was working with from a (somewhat) historical perspective:

> *"Firth (1996) gives the following definition for lingua franca use of English: "a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (Firth 1996: 240).*
>
> Hynninen, 2016: 11

In the definition Hynninen chose as her starting point, there is "neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture." That sounds like a conversation or other communicative act that crosses national borders. That also sounds international rather than intranational. Of course, historical lingua francae, such as Greek, Latin, Arabic, and Sanskrit, were used during trade, political negotiations, and personal travel to other countries. Hynninen's definition of ELF clearly situates the interaction in which both

parties are foreign to each other in both location and culture, and English is not the common vernacular but a matter of necessity.

In my context, and indeed the readily available context for investigation, such interactions occur on a university campus. This being the case, the conditions of the Firth definition utilized by Hynninen can be met in that the parties to the interactions using English will likely not have that language as their first language and will also not share a national culture (insofar as one can be adequately defined or that the individuals are exemplars of it). However, if we accept that universities create a micro-culture of their own, one could say that those who experience ELF communication on campus share more than a need to communicate. I hope to use this shared experience to refine further the lens through which I analyze their lived experiences.

Turning to the words of other experts in the field, I must first give credit to Professor Jennifer Jenkins, whose interview will be featured several times later in this book. It should be noted that, unlike varieties of language, one of the features of ELF is that it has no geographical or temporal anchor: "The whole point about ELF is that it is a multilingual activity involving speakers who have come together from a range of different geographical regions" (Jenkins, 2011, p.285). Fifteen years after Firth's definition, the theme remains: a multilingual activity between speakers from differing locales. Very international indeed, but also very personal: because it's use context-defined rather than standard-relative, ELF reflects many personal decisions.

The most recent, far-reaching article I could find while researching this part of the book was published in 2026 by Dobric et al. This work covered all aspects of common languages and posited a new category of apex lingua francae. The article proposed the label 'Lingua Cosmopolitina,' which the authors suggest could historically apply to only four languages: Sanskrit, Latin, Classical Arabic, and English. To state this conception of ELF simply,

the use of several languages has, over the years, become so crucial to disparate societies that it transcends the bonds of any single cluster of contexts: language becomes the social conduit for transmitting messages. As such, the language also occupies a place in culture that recognizes the fluid backgrounds of its interlocutors.

Let us look at the definition provided to us by Lady Merriam of House Webster for the word "cosmopolitan":

1. having wide international sophistication (synonym: 'worldly')
2. composed of persons, constituents, or elements from all or many parts of the world
3. having a worldwide rather than limited or provincial scope or bearing
4. found in most parts of the world and under varied ecological conditions

Now, let us approach this definition step by step. What is being explained here? The words 'wide' and 'many' are repeated throughout the definition, and the image being created is definitely one lacking a single person or locale by which to situate the token being described. Indeed, part (2) of the definition suggests being connected to 'all or many parts of the world,' so it cannot be ascribed to anyone singularly. I am also drawn to the words 'limited' and 'provincial' being used in opposition to the word being defined: something 'cosmopolitan' is not contained or localized.

Above, I described this title of 'cosmopolitina' as essentially making languages like English, Sanskrit, Arabic and Latin "apex lingua francae," meaning that among other languages of international common use, no other languages match all of the criteria required to be a lingua cosmopolitina. As we shall see in Part Two of this book, the word 'cosmopolitan' makes a

reappearance in reference to a location with aspirations of being described as unlocalized. Opinions are divided on whether the place achieves its lofty goals.

1.4.1 Relation to my previous work(s)

In my previous book, I looked at 'issues.' These were categorized into 'social & moral,' 'education policy,' ' language teaching (both in terms of philosophy and practice),' 'research and publishing,' and 'legal.' All interviews included in the coverage were conducted in English and featured 21 participants from 9 countries (drawn from a pool of over 200 interviewees representing 33 countries). The activity was cosmopolitan; the medium was a lingua cosmopolitina. All of these issues were investigated in English, published in English, discussed in English, and further analyzed and published in the book in English, so readers around the world could access them regardless of location or linguistic background. It wasn't that investigations of these issues couldn't be conducted in other languages, nor that the results couldn't be disseminated in other languages that might be more convenient for those interested in hearing and reading about them. English was not the gatekeeper of information but the conduit through which it flowed among all agents in the process.

At this point in the disambiguation process, I should clarify that I do not use 'international' and 'global' interchangeably. Please consider this distinction whenever I present either of these words, and keep in mind that I use EIL very differently from WE or GE. In my experience, international can mean as few as two locations in different countries; for example, a bank transaction between London and Berlin is an international transaction, and a ZOOM call between Berlin and Buenos Aires conducted in English is an international interaction using ELF. The word global suggests something approaching the ubiquity of medium and content. The internet is a worldwide tool for

interacting with others and extracting information from distant sources. I say 'distant,' but the data itself is equidistant from the user regardless of where the server is located. This makes it global: the form of interaction is standard for everyone, as are the methods of displaying or transmitting information and prompts. The prompt can be multilingual, as 15 languages have an internet usage rate of at least 1% (according to Statista.com, as of February 2025). That being said, 49.4% of internet interactions were in English (again, from Statista.com). Interactions with others using English may be international, but they are not necessarily ELF.

The above explanation is a long way of saying a simple phrase: it's complicated. If they will allow me, I'd like to borrow some of my intersectional colleagues' argument-framing, using adjunct phrasing: as an Englishman living in Japan, I am international, not global.

1.4.2 My answer to my question

To answer this ELF question to my satisfaction, in a way I haven't seen in previous iterations of this explanation, we should break down the five words that make up the acronym: English. As. A. Lingua. Franca. This is not academic navel-gazing. This is what initially attracted me to ELF: I could get my head around WE and GE and EIL fairly easily, but ELF eluded me until I came into the final stages of my data analysis in my PhD and looked for ways to explain the reports of 'confusion' during their interactions in English with international students on an internationalized campus.

Please allow me to include some of the analysis from my PhD to explain my thought process on this 'confusing' phenomenon (so that it no longer confuses me). It all begins on page 250 of my PhD thesis in a section labeled "5.4.5 Further consideration of the concept of 'Confusion' discussed by APU students in the FTF (face-to-face) focus groups." I noted:

> *Of the 37 participants in the FTF focus groups at APU, 32 of them agreed that having different varieties of English was 'confusing' for them. This is an overwhelming majority of the APU students represented in this study, and highlights a key issue related to the internationalizing of university education. Almost two thirds of those students who agreed gave a specific variety of English as an example of the confusion, with all of those specific examples being from Asian users of English.*

This analysis, drawn from the focus groups, led to the main findings of my PhD: students on internationalized campuses can identify various problems they have with English use, whereas those without experience cannot. These problems are personal, as not all 32 focus group attendees who reported 'confusion' in dealing with English varieties cited the same varieties; their experiences differed, but their conclusions were the same.

As the next section shows, this reported confusion was not always seen as a problem. In fact, the exposure was a learning experience. Let us read on:

> *To put this finding into perspective, only slightly less than half of the students from APU reported that they felt 'weak' when they had to use English, as reported and discussed in Section 5.2.5. This was explained by comparing their ability to use the language with that of other, often highly proficient, users of English. However, a large majority of the same students in this study judge the performance of other Asian users of English more harshly than they do their own problems with using the language, and label these differences 'confusing'.*

The APU students used the problems in their experiences as opportunities to enhance their own ability to use English by recognizing communication issues, an opportunity not typically afforded to students at non-internationalized universities that use English - they don't have the people around them to provide the chance. APU students' linguistic environment was daily and ELF-rich. Their linguistic landscapes (a concept we will

discuss in Chapter Four) were unavoidably full of input on campus, in class, in halls of residence, in clubs and sports teams, when getting lunch, or grabbing a coffee: ELF was all around them.

I concluded this section of my thesis by saying:

> *It does not appear that the open-mindedness of the students alone is enough to ensure that issues such as 'confusion' do not occur. As was noted in the discussion of 'weakness' in Research Question 1, 'confusion' is not necessarily always a negative experience, as it could lead to more introspection in their performance and in a wider understanding of the global issues related to using English as an international medium of communication. However, it cannot be concluded that this is the most likely outcome, or that the university can ignore what is a clear problem with the use of English on its campus, and a problem that has the potential to engender negative opinions of other students on campus.*

Please remember that these words were written and submitted for consideration in September 2014, right at the end of the Global 30 (G30) and at the very beginning of the Top Global University project (TGUP), the former being a push to increase the number of international students and the latter being a round of investment to enable universities to start initiatives to better integrate the skills and talents of international students into the domestic student population. Issues stemming from ELF interactions were the teething problems of accelerated international recruitment that would be ameliorated by following the lessons from research projects like my own. I continue to look for follow-up studies. With TGUP coming to a close in 2023, the final reports are expected soon.

1.4.3 Upon further investigation

I have included the above sections of my thesis to help you understand my own take on ELF, and when it became both a settled concept and a research

aspiration (as I would never revisit that bound copy of nightmare-inducing memories for only nostalgic reasons): I was going to find out about as many situations where students were interacting 'internationally' and see where these interactions were leading them as individuals with linguistic agency. I had found that many of the larger questions about why English was being targeted as the language for top-down internationalization policy decisions had been answered or were beyond the reach of an individual researcher like myself. However, the students were right there. I could investigate my questions in my current campus environment.

Following my PhD, I first examined the role of international students as teaching assistants. I asked them about their professional, personal, and interpersonal perspectives on their time in EMI and ELF-related classrooms. The project was titled "Utilizing TAs for institutional internationalization" and included a comparison of the students working as TAs at Ritsumeikan APU and those at my current university, Kyushu University. I found that the TAs felt they gained certain professional skills, such as timekeeping and organization. Still, they were just as likely to say they improved inter-personal skills, such as intercultural communication, using English as the class lingua franca. Most of the TAs did not speak English as their first language, and they all taught classes with Japanese, Korean, and Chinese students.

The overall takeaway from this project was that if the institution aims to integrate internationally, using the built-in human resources on campus is an effective strategy. This aligns well with the Top Global University Project's listed policies by increasing the number of international students, increasing the number of non-Japanese people in university roles, and improving intercultural exchanges on campus. Using English as a lingua franca is both a necessity and a benefit to all of these initiatives and therefore came up frequently in interviews with both students and staff.

I included this summary of my work before 2020, after completing my PhD, as an example of how my interest in this area of sociolinguistics at Japanese universities was progressing. I never lost sight of the importance of adopting an ELF mindset, not because I was actively investigating that concept specifically, but because it was impossible to ignore how often it manifested whenever the subject of university internationalization was examined.

1.4.4 An attempt to answer the question of ELF

I hope the previous sections have provided enough context for my investigation of this linguistic concept. Ever since I first read the work of Jennifer Jenkins and Aya Matsuda back in the autumn of 2005, I have been interested in learning more about the journey the English language continues to take and where its investigation will lead me. In this vein, here is my analysis of the acronym 'ELF' from a word-by-word approach.

Question 1: What is "English"?

Big question, this one. Huge. Without using the other words we will be investigating too often, it is simplest to say that English is a language. One cursory look at the world will tell you this is a complete understatement of what English was, is, and has become. A resource I will return to time after time is dictionaries, preferably at least one of the two paper versions (Longman and Penguin) on my nearby shelf, and Merriam-Webster's online dictionary. "Why not the OED?" I hear none of you ask. "Are you not an Englishman?" Indeed, I am, but I have always found it helpful to listen to what my friends across 'The Pond' have to say about the language, to keep me at least on the same page (so to speak) with those who claim to represent a standard.