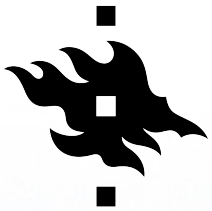
LINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENTS IN CHANGE: THE IMPACT OF ELF

ANNA MAURANEN

UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO 30 JANUARY 2019



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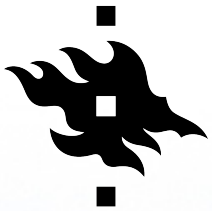
THE MOBILE GLOBAL WORLD

- The rich world: business, academia, entertainment
- The poor world: emigration, immigration, asylum seeking
- Digital communication devices in everyone's pocket

  -> mobility and mobile communication permeate our lives

  -> Language mixing, multilingual practices
- English as the first global lingua franca
- Mobility as a paradigm shift in social sciences (Sheller & Urry 2006)



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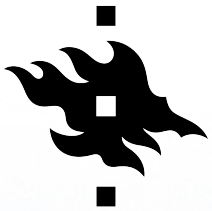
LANGUAGE RESPONDS TO SOCIETAL CHANGE

- Language contact a key factor in language change
- Periods of rapid social change and large-scale mobility associated with accelerated language change.
- Both relevant to English as a Lingua Franca



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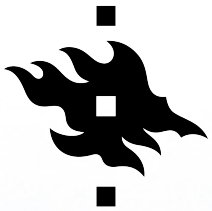
ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL LINGUA FRANCA:

WHAT HAPPENS TO A LANGUAGE WHICH

- spreads around the globe and gets into contact with virtually all other languages in the world?

- the vast majority of its speakers use it as an L2, and a minority as their L1?

- a large number of its speakers are highly mobile and in constant contact with speakers of a wide range of L2 varieties?



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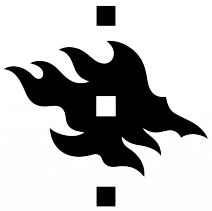
WILL ENGLISH LEAD TO HOMOGENEITY? (1)

English is not the first lingua franca…

…and not likely to be the last



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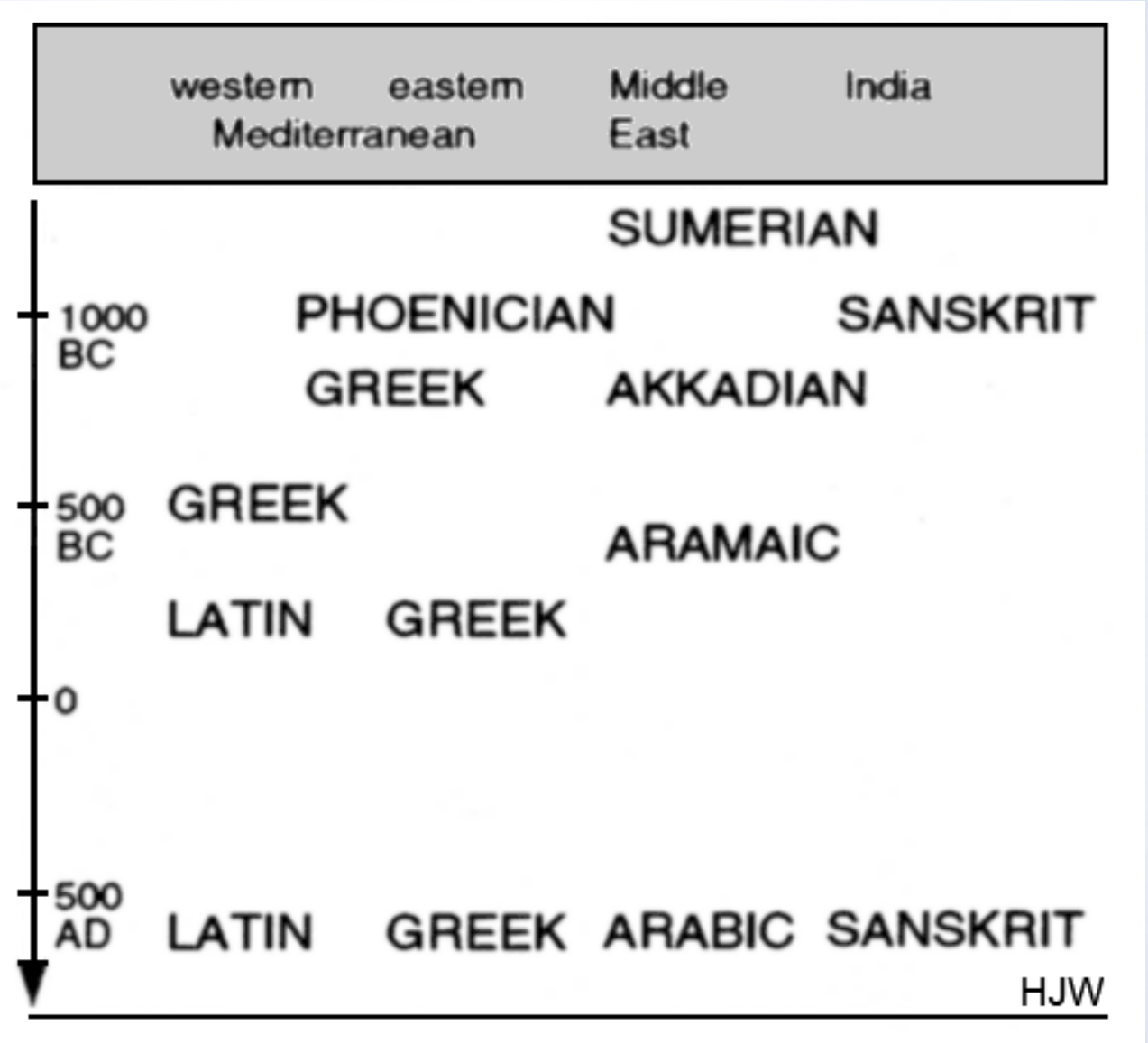
Major lingua francas in history



WILL ENGLISH LEAD TO HOMOGENEITY? (2)

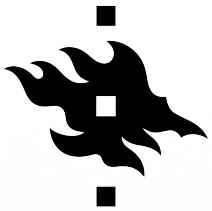
Languages do not just unite…

… they also separate:

no other mammalian species
than humans has spread around the globe

maintaining genetic homogeneity

but at the same time unable to communicate with most others of the same species



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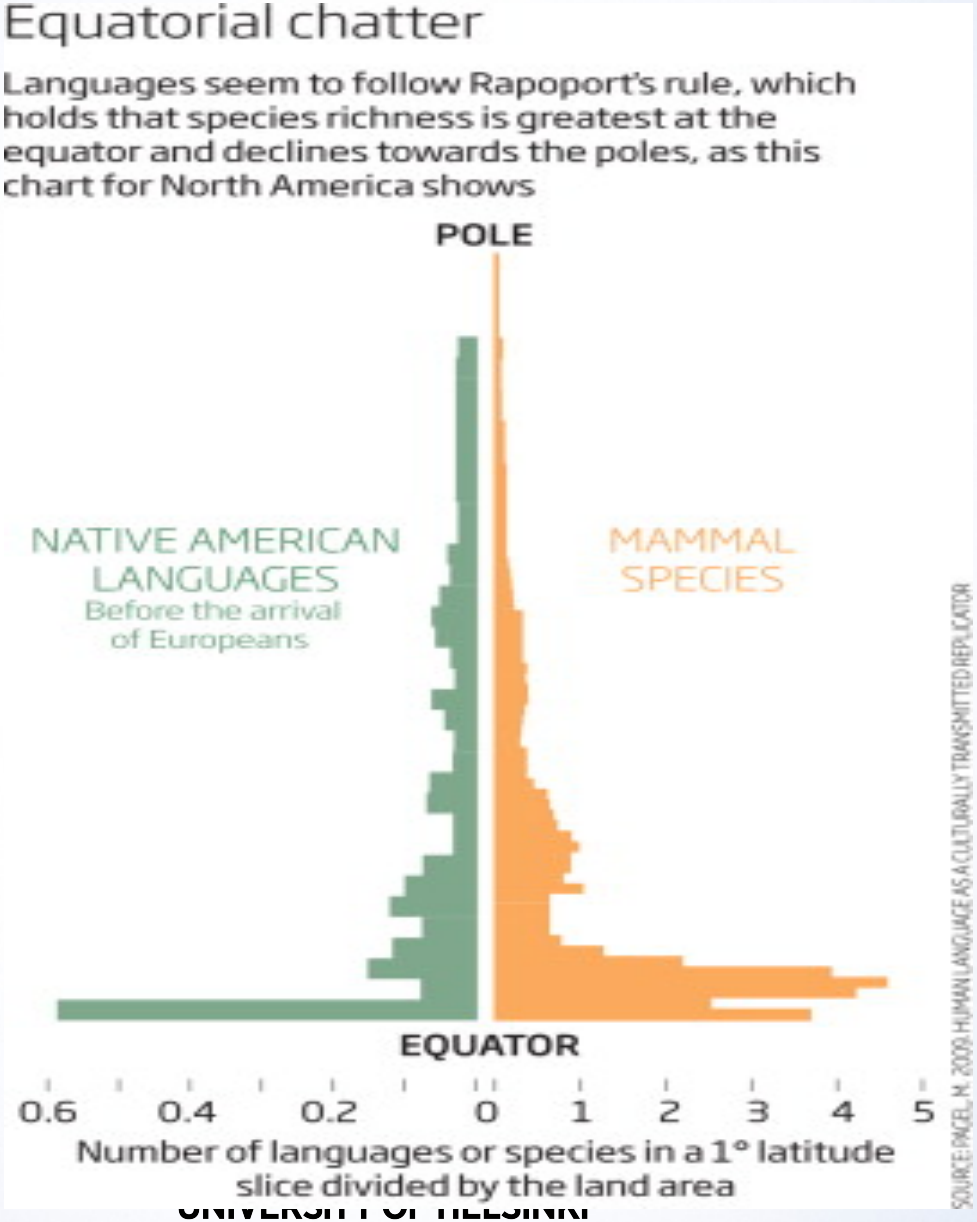
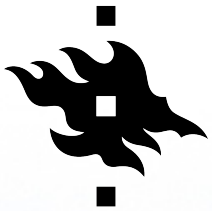

Equatorial chatter
Languages seem to follow Rapoport's rule, which holds that species richness is greatest at the equator and declines towards the poles, as this chart for North America shows
POLE
NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES
Before the arrival of Europeans
MAMMAL SPECIES
EQUATOR
0.6
0.4
0.2
0
1
2
3
4
5
Number of languages or species in a 1° latitude slice divided by the land area
SOURCE: PAGEL, M. 2009. HUMAN LANGUAGE AS A CULTURALLY TRANSMITTED REPLICATOR

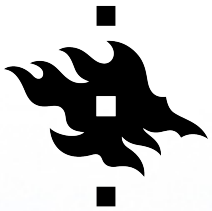
➢Quite unlikely that homogeneity would take over human language

• Lingua francas are needed for communicating across the diversity



WHAT IS ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA (ELF)?

- ELF is second language use (SLU)
- Distinct from learner language (LL) or SLA
- And distinct from L1 English (ENL)



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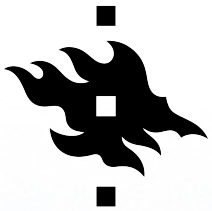
- ELF much like dialect contact:
  speakers of mutually comprehensible varieties

- The 'varieties', lects, (Finglish, Swenglish, Chinglish, Dunglish…)

result from parallel cross-linguistic influence

➢ 'similects' (parallel lects)

- similects are parallel idiolects of speakers of a particular language background in another language they have all learned



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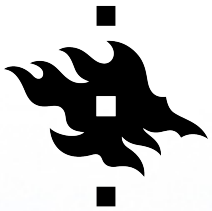
Similects srise through L2 learning, but manifest themselves in use

ELF ‘lects’ are not dialects,

< dialects develop in interaction in (local) communities

Similects remain first-generation hybrids

- Do not diversify, change, develop dialects and sociolects…
- Embody language contact in individuals



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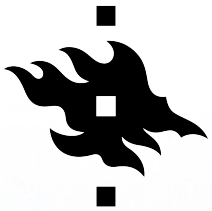
Individuals are sites of language contact;
Similects ≈ parallel idiolects



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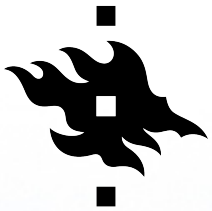
- -> **ELF is a second-order contact between similects**

(including varieties and dialects of Englishes as L1)



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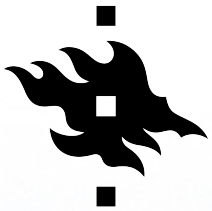
THE CONCEPT OF ELF: COMPLEXITY

- ELF is complex in two senses:
  (1) complicated (as a 'hybrid' language)
  (2) a complex, dynamic system (multiple contact between similects)
- heterogeneous and variable, also unstable ('fluid')
- However, this is true of language overall

- ELF tends to increase variability in English

- This variability makes it more 'diffuse' (cf. LePage & Tabouret-Keller), and thus contrasts with the 'focused' nature of English as a national variety in countries like the UK and the US.



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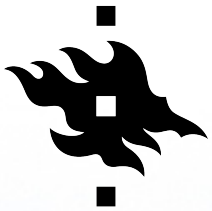
DATA FROM ELF CORPORA AT HELSINKI UNIVERSITY

ELFA: English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings

WrELFA: Written English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings



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THREE PERSPECTIVES

- Macro social
  - Cognitive
- Micro social

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PROCESSES OF CHANGE

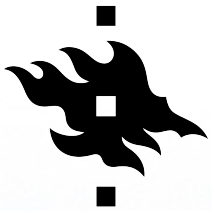
COGNITIVE <-> MICRO-SOCIAL< -> MACRO-SOCIAL

Through the processes of APPROXIMATION and FIXING :

Approximation paves the way by opening up deep-rooted conventions;
(put an end to it - > put the end on it)

Fixing settles for new preferences
(*let me say some words about it*)

Diffused through interactions



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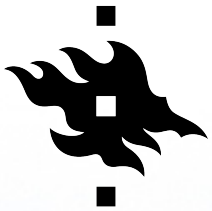
MACRO-SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE: LANGUAGE



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GROWING VARIABILITY THROUGH THE PROCESS OF APPROXIMATION

Approximation – rough equivalents of target elements recognizable on the basis of function, form, or meaning

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APPROXIMATION TOWARDS COMPLEXIFICATION

- **Morphological approximation and 'overproductivity'**

SPOKEN

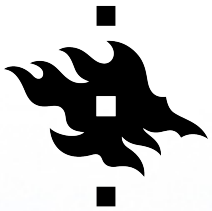
we always must intervent er and ask about alcohol is it it's not a matter of what we believe

[it's here it says] E was always combinated with </S7>

WRITTEN

that's the window when Mecp2 is dramatically *upregulated* in the brain.

the number of dated landslides throughout the world increased *severalfold* and introduction of modern dating methods



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- **Variable expressions for the same meaning**

WRITTEN

On the opposite, according to previous studies, AC can act as reaction site,

Opposite of some other studies,

In contrary to previous investigations on the topic,

…higher channel gradients, coarser sediments and contrary, pool-riffles had greater width/depth ratios

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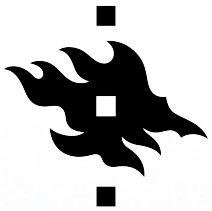
SIMPLIFICATION
MACRO-SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

Sociolinguistic research suggests the consequence of extensive contact is simplification.

Trudgill (2011): (1) language contact and (2) adult SLA conducive to overall simplification.

Kusters (2003) looked at several language groups in a variety of sociolinguistic circumstances:

languages used as lingua francas are more amenable to simplification than those spoken in closed speech communities (cf. Milroy & Milroy (1985)



APPROXIMATION TOWARDS SIMPLIFICATION

- **Regularisation of morphology**

Irregular and exceptional forms get proportionally rarer

SPOKEN

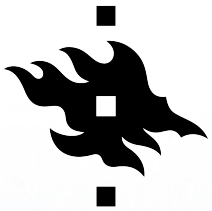
Verbs

the petition that i have just er showed you

maybe these countries have losed they have…

Nouns uncountable -> countable

each sovereign state makes cooperations with each other and keeps their own independencies



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APPROXIMATION TOWARDS SIMPLIFICATION

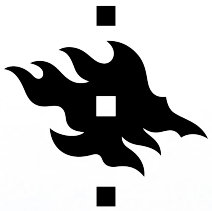
WRITTEN

… improved the toughness and stabilities, but also show higher proton conductivity…

There are evidences that WBV training improves strength and power

the blend membranes were studied in details, which were considered to be suitable for PEMs materials

It *striked* me that the few summaries I checked were very unstructured and short, unlike most summaries I see.



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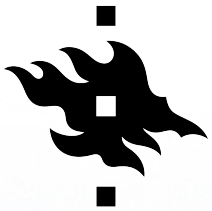
WRITTEN

- **Syntactic shortcuts**

After reported first by Wainright et al. in 1995 [4], the application of PA-PBI has been extensively studied

…however the flight time was generally much longer that of direct transfer.

This complication provokes that the spillage factor be generally scaled from accurate calculations only made for some particular cases.



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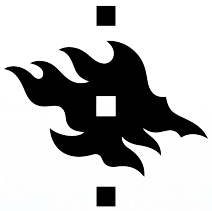
FIXING

Fixing – the counterpart of approximation

settling on a preferred expression for a given meaning



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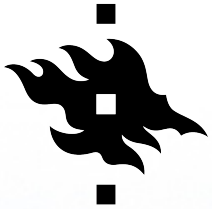
FIXING ON A PREFERRED PATTERN

were evaluated as stage "1",	on the opposite, high occurrenc	Sci17.txt 358 1
ly broken by the valley, and,	on the opposite side, the flat	Sci20.txt 361 1
during high-magnitude floods.	On the opposite, boulders with	Sci22.txt 363 1
fluvially dominated channels.	On the opposite, relatively lar	Sci22.txt 363 2
n recently prevails (Fig. 5).	On the opposite, the most downs	Sci22.txt 363 3
in area than other groups and	on the opposite, very poor depe	Sci23.txt 364 1
form: W=3.228A0.20 (R2=0.49).	On the opposite, bankfull depth	Sci23.txt 364 2
th steeper resulted trend and	on the opposite, lower calculat	Sci23.txt 364 3
ivera-Utrilla et al., 2011).	On the opposite , according to	Sci39.txt 380 1
es and the new martyrs stood	on the opposite side of the mar	SSH41.txt 460 1



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Concordance Results 2:

Concordance Hits 21

Hit	KWIC	File
1	their fermionic superpartners, so to say, and vice versa. The	BDIS_TRF19 copy.txt 18 1
2	nhagen and Paris, and in doing so to say something about their	B11A copy.txt 102 1
3	ased on love and cohabitation (so to say, based on the fact	SSH62.txt 481 1
4	egal marriage itself has been, so to say, "emptied" of its pre	SSH62.txt 481 2
5	different legal ways for the, so to say, "institutionalisatic	SSH62.txt 481 3
6	These Laws usually establish, so to say, "non-marital" impedi	SSH62.txt 481 4
7	onclusion is that from this -- so to say -- functional perspec	SSH62.txt 481 5
8	anus takes from Statilius are, so to say, 'rare' words, with t	SSH65.txt 484 1
9	pear at the end, after some -- so to say -- less regular or le	SSH65.txt 484 2
10	cept of sa-dpyad , that is -- so to say -- the traditional Ti	UDEFS18A copy.txt 516 1
11	happen isn't in my toolbox, so to speak. So if you don'	BDIS_TRF02 copy.txt 1 1
12	ney perturb with their fingers so to speak -- which make real	BDIS_TRF05 copy.txt 4 1
13	have a light shone on it, so to speak, the better off for	BDIS_TRF05 copy.txt 4 2
14	he is the Gauss of physics so to speak. 'T	B01C copy.txt 28 1
15	not an octave but a nonave , so to speak. Meanwhile I alw	B03F copy.txt 43 1
16	after "stumbling upon myself", so to speak. Reference	B06G copy.txt 68 1
17	arkey's intellectual opponent, so to speak, was Owen Jones whc	B12G copy.txt 116 1
18	ence be put on the backburner, so to speak. So what has thi	B26B copy.txt 223 1
19	relationship with the church, so to speak. They hammered the	SSH58.txt 477 1
20	coherent -- in its own right, so to speak. Still, during the	SSH68.txt 487 1
21	rn. The performance reiterates so to speak the painting on the	SSH70.txt 489 1

Concordance Results 1:

Concordance Hits 10

Hit	KWIC	File
1	their fermionic superpartners, so to say, and vice versa. The	BDIS_TRF19 copy.txt 18 1
2	nhagen and Paris, and in doing so to say something about their	B11A copy.txt 102 1
3	ased on love and cohabitation (so to say, based on the fact	SSH62.txt 481 1
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10	cept of sa-dpyad , that is -- so to say -- the traditional Ti	UDEFS18A copy.txt 516 1

LEXICAL SIMPLIFICATION?

Unlike structural simplification, little is being said about lexical simplification.

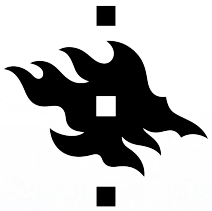
since lexis travels fast, it could just add to the lexical stores of languages in contact.

Lexical simplification observed in learner language

usual explanation: 'imperfect learning' of the L2

and in translations

usual explanation: 'interference from source language' into the L1



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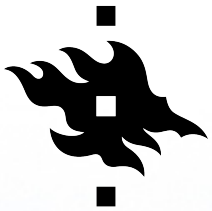

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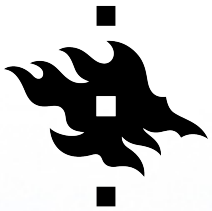
Zipf (1935): the most frequent lexis accounts for a considerable part of any text mass

The Brown corpus: 135 most frequent words account for 50% of the data

ELFA: 44 most frequent words account for 50% of the data



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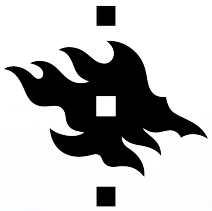
But: mode and genre differences?

- the Brown corpus has a number of genres, and is essentially written
- ELFA is academic spoken
- So what about MICASE - academic (American) English speech?



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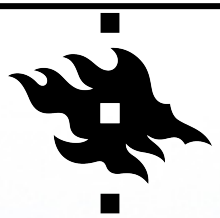
SHARES OF THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN ELFA AND MICASE

Words	ELFA (ELF)	MICASE (ENL)
	%	
Top 44	50.5	
Top 58		50.0
Top 200	68.7	68.0



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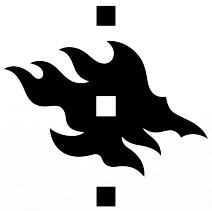
MICASE more similar to ELFA than to Brown

- > Speech radically different from writing (cf Biber 2009; Dabrowska 2019)

- Even so, a notable difference remains between ELFA and MICASE

- > Therefore, we must conclude that

ELF leads to some lexical simplification.



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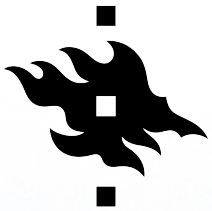
- Even so, a notable difference remains between ELFA

- > Therefore, we must conclude that

ELF leads to some lexical simplification.

- However, this levels out at 200-word rank (still very high)
- ->thus, heavy clustering among the very top frequency words only

The avarage person's vocabulary size From 20,000-35,000w upwards



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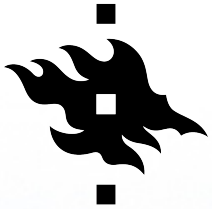
COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE: THE INDIVIDUAL



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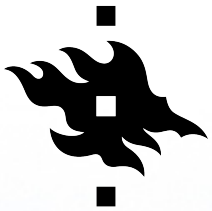
If two competing systems are active in a speaker's repertoire,

a reasonable assumption could be that the best entrenched parts of each are likely to become more salient.



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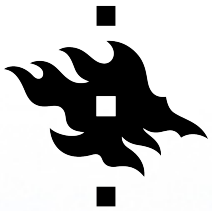

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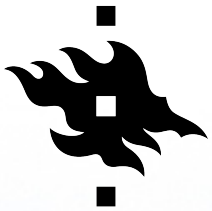
If two competing systems are active in a speaker's repertoire,

a reasonable assumption could be that the best entrenched parts of each are likely to become more salient.

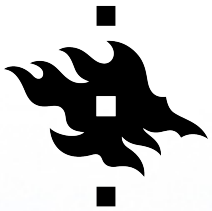
In productive cognitive terms, one of the consequences of language contact

could account for the relative overrepresentation of the most frequent lexis of the language that is currently being used.



Second or additional languages tend to be more weakly entrenched than the first

-> processing should be fuzzier and manifest more approximations of target items.



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APPROXIMATE MULTI-WORD UNITS OF MEANING

…to er throw some lights in female deputies

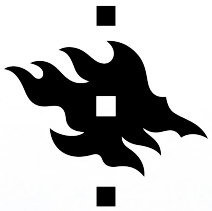
…talking of a process and the same way around but i think

…conflicts which is happens well right next doors

… small children who one of those days could be the grown ups

- Approximation in MWUs: overall shape, meaning and key elements intact

-> less salient elements loosen up



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MECHANISMS CAN BE SIMILAR TO HISTORICAL CHANGE

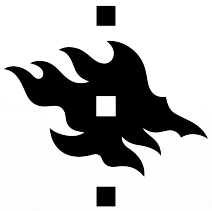
Blend:

…in fact behind the lines you could very well read that

(< between the lines + behind the scenes)

Back-formation:

bed sediments of headwater channels of Appalachian Mountains are strongly *predisposited* by an ultra-fine-scale dynamic equilibrium with bedrock erodibility (…variance in resistance of individual geological units was recognised as one of the downstream coarsening *predisposition*.)



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SPEAKER AND HEARER PROCESSES

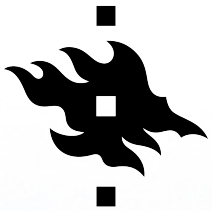
Speakers tend to economise on their effort in expression given the constraints of working memory,

-> individuals settle on certain preferred expressions for given meanings

Hearers: weak entrenchment applies to the hearer too - approximate forms may not be harder to understand than precise forms,

a typical ELF hearer is not precisely attuned to Standard English
but likely to rely on fairly fuzzy processing for sense-making

Such matching of cognitive processes is collaborative activity -> interactional consequences: acceptance of approximate forms in interaction.



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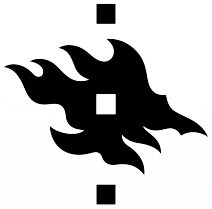
MICRO-SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE: INTERACTION



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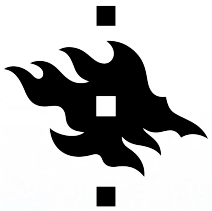
INTERACTION – COGNITION INTERFACE

Interaction is crucial to cognitive processing on account of

the fundamental altercentric orientation of the brain
(cf. Meltzoff & Brooks 2007; Bråten 2007; Hari 2007; 2016),

the recency effect (Christiansen & Chater 2016),

the priming effect (Pickering & Garrod 2017).



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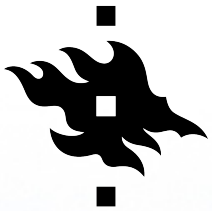
Other humans are the most important environment for the brain (Hari 2007; 2016)



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Interaction: resources speakers draw on to achieve mutual comprehension

Explicitation tendency in ELF

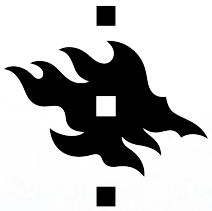
E.g. in negotiating topics,

fronting ('left dislocation') particularly common

wealthy people they are opposed to this monopoly insurance system

or **tails** ('right dislocation')

this is our greatest problem the the regional tensions



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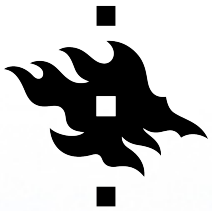
Rephrasing

... because of the poor nutrition level this poor diet the whole standard of living was poor...

... I wouldn't say that he was against it was just a question a matter of the time…



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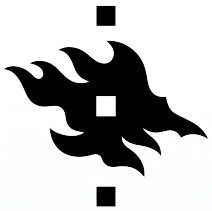
DIFFUSION AND ACCOMMODATION

Innovations do not diffuse without interacting individuals

Accounts of language change implicate **accommodation** as a key mechanism

Croft 2000: a response to speakers from outside one's own community.

Speakers compensate for the lack of common ground by adjusting their speech, e.g. by elaborating content or simplifying grammar (Giles & Smith 1979).



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Accommodation theory (Giles 1973; Gallois, Og a

pervasive feature in social interaction: & Broo

> The duplication of the action patterns, mannerisms, and ge others use is part of the fabric of human communication. It runs in the background and fosters emotional cohesion in everyday interactions, oftentimes outside explicit awareness. (Meltzoff & Brooks 2007: 152)

Also involved in **alignment** (interaction) and **priming** (interaction-cognition interface)

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CROSS-LINGUISTIC PRIMING

Cross-linguistic ('between-language') priming found in many studies.

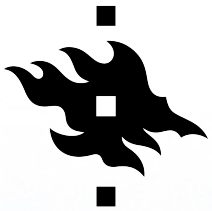
Often structural,

Can be persistent,

Shares many properties with within-language priming.

> So long as a speaker of one language can understand some utterances in a second language, those utterances might influence his or her native language (Pickering & Garrod 2017)

=> no absolute, vital difference between what are traditionally conceived of as languages – separate, distinct, with clearly demarcated boundaries.



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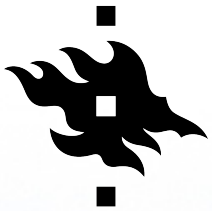

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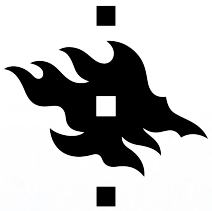
If primed, speakers can accept and use what they have previously regarded as ungrammatical in their L1

=> no absolute, vital difference between what are traditionally regarded as languages – separate, distinct, with clearly demarcated boundaries



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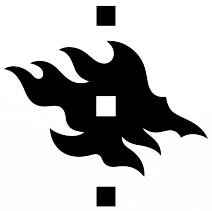
PRIMING IN INTERACTION - AND PROCESSING

S1: [yeah] from time to time I think er it kind of er , first this law for that you can registrate your er how you say your (S5: sort of partnership) partnership er I think er you cannot argue for too much in in in Finland you have to , go li- by [steps] (S5:[(it was)]) yeah (S5: yes) with small steps so [that you can]

S5: [was it] in this , er

S1: it was [together]

S5: [this spring] , spring 2002 was it 2001 (S1:mhm) that it became possible in Finland that you can register you can't [get] (NS2: [ah]) married and you can't you can register yourself , to be partners [with]



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S1: ...you can registrate your er how you say your...

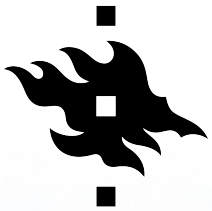
S5:... you can register you can't get married and you can't you can register yourself ...

S5:... very much against this, er registration thing because ...

S3: ... between registration and marriage so

S5:... got the right to registrate so I suppose in another ten years ...

S1: ... er getting re- registrated was were kept together but then ...



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Back-formation
<= *registration?*

S1: ...you can **registrate** your er how you say your...

S5:... you can register you can't get married and you can't you can register yourself ...

S5:... very much against this, er registration thing because ...

S3: ... between registration and marriage so

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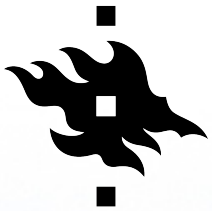

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Blocking: *register* is what I've learned

S1: ...you can registrate your er how you say your...

S5:... you can **register** you can't get married and you can't you can register yourself ...

S5:... very much against this, er registration thing because ...

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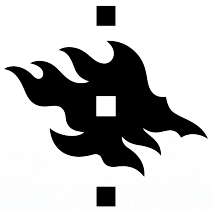

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Uncertainty: safe option

S1: ...you can registrate your er how you say your...

S5:... you can register you can't get married and you can't y... can register yourself ...

S5:... very much against **this, er registration thing** because ...

S3: ... between registration and marriage so

S5:... got the right to registrate so I suppose in another ten years ...

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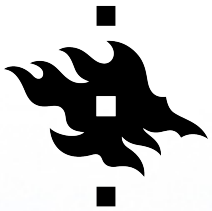

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S3: ... between **registration** and marriage so

S5:... got the right to registrate so I suppose in another ten years ...

S1: ... er getting re-registrated was were kept together but then ...

Reinforcing

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S1: ...you can registrate your er how you say your...

S5:... you can register you can't get married and you can't you
yourself ...

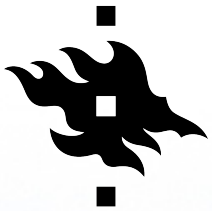
S5:... very much against this, er registration thing becaus

S3: ... between registration and marriage so

S5:... got the right to **registrate** so I suppose in another ten years ...

S1: ... er getting re-registrated was were kept together but then ...

Primed!



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S1: ...you can registrate your er how you say your...

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S3: ... between registration and marriage so

S5:... got the right to registrate so I suppos[illegible] in another ten years ...

S1: ... er getting **re-registrated** was were kept together but then ...

Confirming - reinforcing!

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One-off event (individual coinage)

Or encountered before?

Google search:

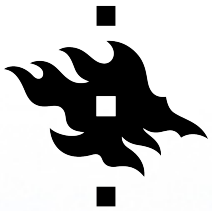
About 46 600 000 hits for *registrate*

About 700 000 000 for *register*

registrate represents 6.7% of *register*'s frequency

⇒Far more likely to encounter *register* than *registrate*

Well-established frequency effects would seem to suggest no change as a result



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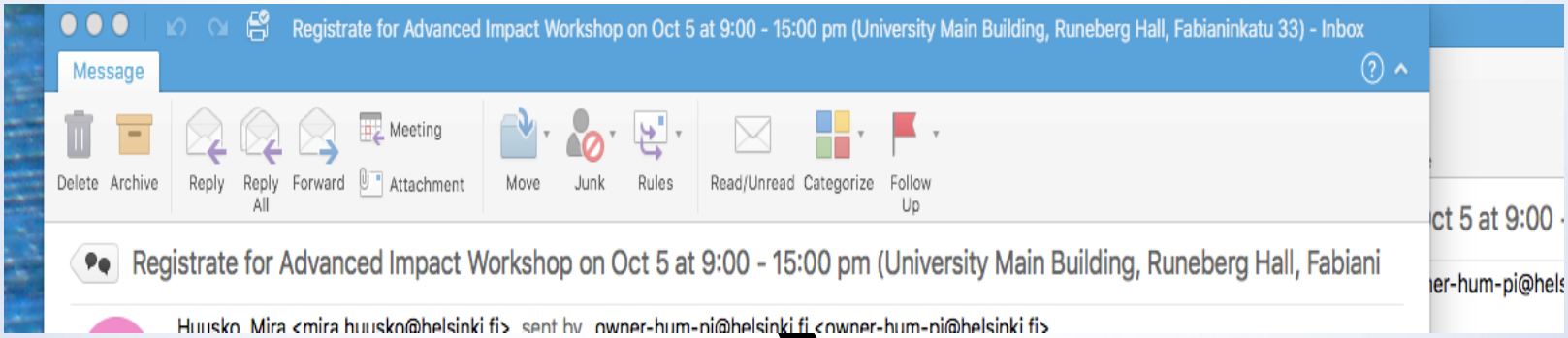
BUT
AN INDIVIDUAL'S EXPERIENCE IN A GIVEN ENVIRONMENT MAY BE BIASED TOWARDS ONE OPTION

Dear All,

there is still some room.
Hopefully, one can still registerate, at least you can try.
yours

Registrate for Communications, Pitching and Branding Workshop on Nov 16



CONCLUSION

Language contact works at three levels:

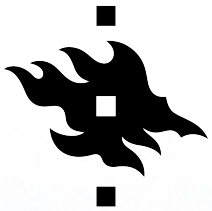
- **Cognitive** processing
  - > affects search and salience, e.g. conventional preferences
- **Micro-social**: Social interaction
  - > explicitation tendencies

➢**Macro-social** consequences: language change

ELF:

> wide range of features from different similects intermingling

-> we can expect considerable variability in speech forms and accents



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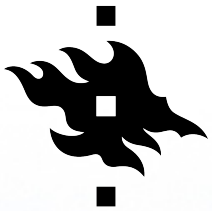
ENGLISH TOMORROW?

Wipes out all other languages?

- Not likely:
  contact languages have their functions, other languages have theirs

- The interests of small and minority languages
  compatible with one major international lingua franca

- Reduces the chances of other large languages to maintain or gain a status as an international lingua franca



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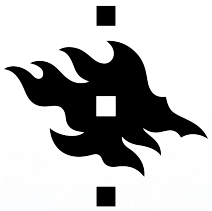
ENGLISH TOMORROW?

- Still around in 200 years?

- Quite likely:
  strong momentum at present;

    'developing economies' likely to use English amongst themselves



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THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL ENGLISH?

- Mobile groups tend to be linguistic and cultural innovators
  - regionally
  - socially

- Norms tend to be shaped by elites

- International economic, political, academic elites are no longer Anglo-American

➢English is in the hands of its non-native majority

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THANK YOU!