

# ACCEPTABILITY IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION THROUGH MULTIMODAL USES OF ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA A (re)definition

PIETRO LUIGI IAIA  
UNIVERSITY OF SALENTO

**Abstract** – This paper proposes a redefinition of the notion of acceptability in intercultural communication. The novel definition represents one of the outcomes of the PRIN 2022 PNRR research project “Acceptability Strategies through Variations of English as a Lingua Franca in Multicultural and Multimodal Discourse Types”. Building on and extending van Dijk’s logical model of acceptability, the paper advances a cognitive-functional redefinition that accounts for the multimodal uses of English as a Lingua Franca in the context of intercultural communication. Acceptability is connoted as a notion determining the design on texts after the authors’ communicative intent, as well as their expectation in terms of envisaged addressees and the empirical receivers’ interpretation of texts. After illustrating the phases leading to the alternative definition of acceptability, this paper offers an essential analysis of the multimodal compositions of a selected corpus of reformulations of institutional discourse about migration and international protection. The aim is to give evidence of the theoretical dimensions of the definition of acceptability in digital forms of communication and asynchronous intercultural mediation, revealing the multimodal strategies and practices that are activated by senders to make their messages available and acceptable to intercultural receivers.

**Keywords:** acceptability in intercultural communication; asynchronous intercultural mediation; English as a Lingua Franca; multimodality; multimodal reformulations.

## 1. Introduction

This paper presents one of the outcomes of the PRIN 2022 PNRR Research Project “Acceptability strategies through variations of English as a lingua franca in multicultural and multimodal discourse types”, which is being carried out at the Universities of Salento (Apulia) and Salerno (Campania), in Italy.<sup>1</sup> The Research Project investigates the uses of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and the discursive practices and strategies that are activated in intercultural exchanges. The objects of investigation are those messages where the multimedia resources of text production interact to create and deliver meaning. The data that the Research Units have collected belong to the following discourse types: legal discourse, institutional discourse, medical discourse, the discourse of intercultural migrations. Examples are the conversations between doctors and patients in search for medication, as well as the articles that are posted online to increase the knowledge of people searching for institutional rules or information before entering other countries. One of the objectives of the investigation of how English variations are constructed and used in digital communication is to advance the state of research on the standards of textuality that

<sup>1</sup> This “Research Project of Significant National Interest” (“Progetto di Ricerca di Rilevante Interesse Nazionale”, PRIN) is financed by the European Union – Next Generation EU, Mission 4 Component 1 CUP F53D23011190001.

are object of linguistic enquiry, by monitoring the development of new ELF-mediated hybrid genres. The adjective “hybrid” is meant to indicate the specific forms of English in digital encounters, following the evolving nature of messages. In fact, the verbal features of English, which is only partially modified at its lexical and syntactic dimensions to perform its lingua-franca role, interact with the nonverbal resources of communication, thus justifying the study of the arrangements of semiotic modes (which is called “multimodal”) as meaning-making objects that senders design to deliver their intentionality to recipients.

This paper reports on the rendering strategies that are selected by a number of non-native English speakers for the reformulations of selected articles from the *Decreto Flussi 2020*, on migration management in Italy, and a directive of the European Union on intercultural protection, targeting international receivers. These reformulations are created as multimedia that may be consumed by their envisaged viewers after their production. This potential temporal distance has led to the adoption of the label “asynchronous intercultural mediation”, which denotes the specific design of acceptable texts through multimodal uses of English as a lingua franca. Notwithstanding the temporal and spatial distance between interactants, the exchanges that are carried out by means of multimedia as the ones under discussion are seen as instances of symmetric interactions, where senders and receivers share functional objectives or personal needs rather than their native linguacultural backgrounds, thus avoiding those gatekeeping attitudes that may hinder communication. The analysis of the renderings is meant to support one of the achievements of the Research Project, dealing with the definition of the standards of textuality in the context of intercultural communication. The focus is on the notion of acceptability, which represents – along with accessibility – one of the traits of those texts that are conceptually and linguistically available to their addressees. In the contexts at issue, the composition of acceptable texts is expected to allow senders to contribute to the increase of the recipients’ knowledge, to their empowerment and, therefore, to their integration in a foreign country. And yet, whereas “accessibility” is investigated in several research products in the fields of – among others – communication studies (Dopkins *et al.* 1993; Fulcher 1997; Sanders, Gernsbacher 2004) and ELF studies (Elder, Davies 2006; Mauranen 2018; Seidlhofer 2011) –, “acceptability” has been less explored. Scholars have provided definitions from the linguistic or philosophical viewpoints (van Dijk 1977) or have considered the methodological approaches to adopt in order to assess if an utterance is accepted or not (Wescott, Fanselow 2011). The Research Project will propose instead a redefinition of the notion of “acceptability”, which would suit intercultural communication. The contact among cultures, the active choice of a common language, and the consequences of digital and virtual communication on the main traits of texts are all reasons that justify the need for an alternative conception of what makes texts acceptable.

The redefinition of “acceptability”, which is presented in sections 2 and 3 below, stems from van Dijk’s (1977) seminal examination of the function and traits of the notion. Then, in Section 4, a small number of extracts of the texts that have been collected so far by the Research Units will be examined essentially. It will serve to start shedding light on the empirical identification of the theoretical redefinition of intercultural acceptability; precisely, the analysis will help to reveal the multimodal nature of the strategies and practices that are activated by senders to make their messages available and acceptable to intercultural receivers.

## 2. Acceptability in focus

Acceptability is one of the standards of textuality that contribute to effective communication, according to De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). It is joined with accessibility, for both contribute to the evaluation of the amount of information that senders shall include in their messages, in order to deliver their intentionality to listeners appropriately. Acceptability is not a construct that depends on senders exclusively. It is tightly connected with recipients, who interpret the content of the received messages, in order to evaluate those texts as cohesive, coherent and relevant. It follows that the elements of a message are not only arranged in ways that activate logical relations of understanding (what makes texts coherent) and mere relations of grammaticalness (the reference to cohesion). Text authors also consider their expectations about the envisaged recipient, the interpersonal relationship between addressers and addressees, as well as the culture-bound knowledge of interactants in order to create texts that the receivers would feel as if they were prepared for them.

The standard description of acceptability is the outcome of a multidisciplinary framework, revealing the construct's philosophical (van Dijk 1977), cognitive (Carroll, Freedle 1972) and pragmatic (Searle 1969) roots. To enquire into acceptability entails assessing to what extent the speakers' utterances are accessible and perceived as cohesive, coherent and relevant on the part of recipients (De Beaugrande, Dressler 1981). Yet, the evolution of communication, with the interaction of polisemiotic resources when defining language uses and creating texts, raise significant challenges when investigating the acceptability strategies that are deployed by the interactants coming from different linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds. In fact, the most influential models of Discourse Analysis, Cognitive Linguistics (Langacker 1991) and Construction Grammar (Croft 2001) are generally characterized by a monocultural approach (Hilpert 2014), which the Research Units working on this project intend to develop. This is due to the fact that the increasing digitalization and dematerialization (Guido 2023) of reality and intercultural exchanges urge scholars and linguists to consider the consequence of the mix of different ways of delivering one's experience on the meaning-making selection of multimodal and digital semiotic modes to convey one's illocutionary force in ways that are acceptable and accessible to receivers.

As already said, the standard definition of acceptability conceptualises the notion as a construct that is associated with grammaticalness and content. In fact, Van Dijk (1977, pp. 40-43) sees acceptability as an intentional and performative "act of doing" on the part of recipients. Accordingly, acceptability is the result of a cognitive appraisal of a text, which has to "satisfy a number of specific properties" that are "judged satisfactory" (van Dijk 1977, p. 41). This entails that not all receivers can accept the same texts eventually. An utterance is accepted thanks to its topic, to the "grammaticalness of sentences" (1977, p. 39), as well as to its relevance. These properties determine the steps that receivers would follow in order to evaluate a textual product as something that is worth inspecting and interpreting. A positive response should be given to the initial evaluation of the topic – when readers wonder if it is close to their epistemic world and knowledge. Then, the 'physical' examination of messages commences – when addressees look for those traits that indicate cohesive and coherent relations among the elements of the texts. Finally, acceptability is confirmed when what is communicated is evaluated as relevant – namely, when recipients identify those information items helping them to increase their knowledge.

The above account is shared by all the descriptions of acceptability and represents the grounds of the novel definition. The core is that to accept a message is an intentional

process which follows interpretive and evaluative acts. Interpretation is connected with the mental operations that interactants have to perform – as recipients – and, in fact, anticipate – as addressers – at the time of producing messages. Acceptability works as an “automatized mental act” (van Dijk 1977, p. 43), which is based on syntactic rules, semantic grounds, and pragmatic conditions. In other words, acceptability is the outcome of “intuitive judgments of grammaticability” (Weskott, Fanselow 2011).

The above considerations lead to the formalization of the “logical form” of acceptability (van Dijk 1977, p. 41-42):

- (1) X accepts Y from A because of V
- (2) X accepts Y, with properties W, from Z
- (3) X accepts Y as U from Z

The passage from (1) to (3) foregrounds the paramount features of the process. First, an utterance (“Y” in (1), (2), and (3) above) is accepted when it is recognised as a sentence of the recipients’ language. This is the main trait, which is identified by “V”, “W” and “U”. At the same time, to mention the recipient’s language is one of the main limits of the original model, which betrays the monocultural approach. In fact, when it comes to intercultural interactions, to find common grounds of communication may be rarer. In intercultural contexts of communication, senders’ and recipients’ languages may not coincide, thus triggering the search for and selection of common resources to interact. What is more, contacts may be activated because of other reasons, because of temporary needs, which have justified the reconsideration, in the literature, of the notions of communities – of discourse and of practice. The notion of “groups” seems to fit the context better, in order to label those meetings that may have a “transient and ad hoc nature” (Pitzl 2019), and which may be active “for a limited period of time” (Mortensen, Hazel 2017), even when they are affected by the “dematerialization” of both reality and the physical bodies of the users interacting online (Guido 2023).

Acknowledging that functional needs are shared is what pushes people to think upon how to create acceptable texts. The creation of acceptable texts accounts for the recipients that the authors presume will read their messages. The creation of acceptable texts entails deciding the language that the authors will use along with their (alleged) receivers. The creation of acceptable texts implicates that the authors re-shape the common language verbally and nonverbally, depending on the channel of communication. All these steps are followed in the texts that are being collected and studied by the Research Units, which seem to support the features of the redefinition of acceptability. The alternative definition of acceptability is now proposed. The main reason is that the standard logical form of the construct ((1)-(3) above) does not account for the intercultural contexts of communication, as well as for the linguistic choices that interactants can do and for the consequences of multimodality on text production. In addition, the novel description of acceptability is expected to contribute to the examination of the contemporary forms of intercultural communication by means of common uses of the language of choice.

### 3. Acceptability in re-focus

The redefinition of “acceptability” builds on van Dijk’s (1977) logical description (reproduced as (1)-(3) in section 2 above), which represents how the notion is

conceptualized and intended in the literature. The logical form is made explicit as follows:

(4) A (native) speaker-hearer accepts an utterance from another speakers (e.g., a linguist) as a sentence of his [*sic*] language.

The above definition may seem limited due to the evolution of communication, as already discussed. Hence, an intercultural stance is adopted by the Research Units to develop an original, non-ethnocentric Cognitive-functional Model for the analysis of the processes of syntactic, semantic, phonetic, pragmatic and specialized-discourse transfer from the interacting subjects' native linguacultural schemata to their respective ELF variations and culture-specific registers.

The actors identified in the revised definition are not "speaker-hearer[s]", but "senders" and "recipients". In addition, as concerns the latter, both types of addressees are inserted; namely, what we call "empirical recipients" and "implied recipients". The aim is to foreground the deliberate nature of accepting texts, but also to highlight the role of the mental construct of the audience, which is informed by the authors' and translators' linguacultural backgrounds and cognitive schemata. All kinds of texts "are done with the target receiver in mind" (Bogucki 2011, p. 12); they are designed to conform with the notion of "imagined readers" (Fish 1970) – or the "implied audience" (Iaia 2015) of multimodal texts – which "exists merely in the imagination of the author" and represents "an abstract ideal construction" (Schmid 2013), to which authors resort in order to guide the final reaction (Guido 1999). It is for the "implied recipients" that specific linguistic features are selected at the time of producing texts that are (expected to be) acceptable to addressees.

In addition, the notion of "texts" replaces the labels "utterance" and "sentence" used in the conventional definition (4), which do not reflect the evolution of the contents that are exchanged by interlocutors and the communicative contexts that are of interest to the Research Project. In fact, people communicate online through products that are mainly multimodal, transmodal and transmedial. In multimodal texts different semiotic resources interact to make meaning, from words, to images, to sound (Kress, van Leeuwen 2006). "Transmodal" texts are the output of "a series of semiotic modulations" leading to the translations of texts "from one mode to another" (Murphy 2012, p. 1969). Cases in point are "reading a written text aloud" (Manghi *et al.* 2022) or turning monomodal texts to meaning makers that resort to the combination of semiotic modes as in this paper's case study. Finally, transmediality is the property of the messages that unfold "across multiple media platforms" (Jenkins 2006, p. 97), creating communities whose members share discourse practices and knowledge of multimedia franchises. For these reasons, the nouns "sentence" and "utterance" in (4) are replaced by "texts". What is more, for the sake of the redefinition of intercultural acceptability through shared language uses, the texts that achieve those objectives – i.e., to be coherent, cohesive, and relevant to recipients – will be connotated as "communicative messages". The latter label reflects the positive outcome of one's interpretation and evaluation, and it is indicated as the main property of the texts that are considered acceptable. The adjective "communicative" implicates that the core of messages – their gist – is appropriately delivered by senders and interpreted by recipients.

A final aspect to be addressed before presenting the revised definition of "acceptability" is the language whereby messages are rendered communicative – and texts acceptable. Since the texts at issue are exchanged in intercultural contexts, one cannot ignore the specific "roles and functions" of English (Kaur, Roman 2014), which has turned into the "common language of choice" (Jenkins 2009), the lingua franca of most of intercultural interactions (Crystal 2003; Graddol 1997; Jenkins 2007; Kirkpatrick 2007).

Due to having “more non-native speakers of English than native speakers of English” (Kaur, Roman 2014, p. 253), English as a Lingua Franca is the “world language” creating contacts between people (Jenkins 2006). Therefore, the references to “native speaker-hearer” and to the positive outcome of “acceptability” as the identification of the messages as something that sounds or reads “as a sentence of [the receivers’] language” (van Dijk 1977, p. 42) do not reflect what happens in intercultural communication. What is more, language is no longer only verbal in digital exchanges; it has to mirror the multidimensional nature of “texts”, which has just been discussed. Accordingly, these uses of English are included in the novel definition of “acceptability” as well.

The logical form of the novel definition of “acceptability”, which originates from all the above considerations, is reproduced below as (5):

(5) X accepts Y from Z, with properties W, because of V

(5) is made explicit as (6):

(6) Senders (Z) produce texts (Y) that are communicative messages to implied recipients (V) by resorting to shared language uses, which are realised through different semiotic modes (W). Actual recipients (X) receive texts (Y) and evaluate their composition as communicative messages (V) by decoding the shared language uses (W) carried out by senders (Z).

The above definition is introduced for the first time in this paper. It was devised by the Salento Unit and tested through the analysis of the data that are collected by the researchers that are involved in this project. Critical analyses of the reformulations will be covered elsewhere (Iaia 2026), but selected excerpts of the research products are described essentially in the following sections, in order to reveal those features that confirm the reformulation of “acceptability”.

#### 4. Acceptability in practice

The following objects of examination were produced in one of the experimental phases of the PRIN 2022 PNRR Research Project that aims to enquire into the acceptability strategies that are activated when intercultural communication takes place in virtual floors. The subjects who represent the authors of the analysed texts are Italian postgraduate students in Communication, Digital Media and Journalism and in Literatures, whose levels of proficiency in English – which were self-assessed – vary from B1 to C1. The participants were commissioned the reformulation of selected extracts from the *Decreto Flussi 2020* – the ‘flow decree’ defining the number of Non-European workers who can enter Italy (DF) – and the European Directive 2013/32/EU, on international protection (DEU) for international receivers.

The objects of reformulation were selected due to their social relevance and benefits, since they deal with the administrative issues that foreigners or migrants may need to know at the time of entering or visiting a foreign country – Italy, in this case. The renderings of the source versions are expected to bring benefits to the local administration of Southern Italy – in particular, the regions of Apulia and Campania, where the Research Units originate – and to advance a vision of integration that also depends on the accessibility to important texts and information items even before entering another country. Although the researchers who are involved in this Project know that specialized texts can be very difficult to decode or need the mediation of specific professional figures

– which are not meant to be replaced by the reformulation activities that were carried out – the production of the objects of investigation has the social objective of improving integration and enquiring into the development of intercultural communication through shared language(s) in the era of virtual exchanges. All the producers of the multimedia at issue selected English as the language of the verbal dimension of their texts. It was a deliberate choice, which all creators justified by mentioning their perception of English as the universal language of intercultural and international communication.

The renderings are not going to be thoroughly commented on in terms of lexical and structural strategies of reformulation, as is done elsewhere (Iaia 2026). Instead, the main characteristics of the multimodal composition of the selected extracts will be pinpointed. The objective is to reveal the extent to which the hypothesis informing the novel definition of acceptability in intercultural virtual communication (see Section 3 above) are found when actual texts are examined.

#### **4.1. Essential analysis of the multimodal traits of the selected reformulations**

The first multimodal composition, reformulating the DEU, adopts the carousel format. The latter is a common text type used in social media platforms, allowing users to include more than one picture or video in a single post. According to its author, a carousel would be more attractive to Internet readers, who represent the envisaged recipients of all the renderings under discussion. The multimodal composition of first text sees English uses and extralinguistic features working as meaning-making resources of intercultural communication. English is characterized by simplified syntactic and lexical choices and, above all, by the selection of a series of question-answer pairs. The sequence of questions and answers is meant to foster the readers' perception of experiential proximity. In fact, the questions address viewers directly, calling on to their attention and, above all, posing queries that reflect (at least, potentially) the reasons why one reads the carousel.

With regard to the extralinguistic features, colours are selected to prompt specific interpretations on the part of addressees. Blue and pale blue are used almost exclusively with the intention of creating a connection with the flag of the European Union, as is claimed by the author of the first text. This is performed in order to entail that there is an association between the content of the carousel and the institutional discourse about international protection. What is more, pale blue is expected to suggest relaxation and positive attitude towards the text, which should be experienced as something that is helpful to readers. The pale-blue background alternates with a white screen only in a single frame, when an important clarification is added. In that frame, the readers' attention is drawn visually through the addition of a warning signal as well. It implicates that inattentive scrolling of the images may prevent receivers from getting important pieces of the message. Finally, the possibility of contacting the author were help needed with the application is explicit in the final photo of the carousel, thus remarking the symmetric – and, above all, altruistic – nature of the reformulation.

Another salient feature is that the multimodal elements of the carousel are selected to match the traits of the expected readers. Everything, from English to pictures, to the positioning of images and words, depends on the fact that non-native speakers can watch the posts. It follows that the creator pursues acceptability from an interactive viewpoint, implicating that it is not only the author's intentionality, or illocutionary force, which drives the creation of the multimodal composition. What justifies the multimedia arrangement is the anticipation of what recipients may need along with the challenges that they may face at the time of searching for institutional information items and assistance.

The grounds of the multimodal composition of the carousel are shared by the second text that will be now described.

The second text is a short video, where pale blue is again the dominant colour, because of the experiential and emotional reading associated with it, which replicates how the creator of the carousel perceives the tint. Besides the chromatic dimension, both texts share uses of English that may not correspond to the standard variety; by way of example, some typos can be read at the end of the carousel (“informations” instead of “information”) or in the course of the video (“submit” instead of “submitted”). Actually, as is discussed in another article (Iaia 2026), these traits prove that the lingua-franca uses of English, although not correct from a standard-grammar viewpoint, try (and manage) to achieve the fullest communication, also thanks to strategies of multimodal compensation, whereby words and images work together to guide one’s reading. A case in point is represented by one of the most evident traits of the video – the flag icons appearing in the middle of the clip. Their function is to replace words when listing the countries of origins of the foreign workers admitted to Italy. The order of flags does not reflect the one that can be read in the *Decreto Flussi*. It is a free elaboration on the part of authors, who only like the positioning of flags – in fact, the flags from the other video show a different order. The inclusion of flags is present in another video reformulating the same source version (the *Decreto Flussi*), and this recurring strategy demonstrates that it is pivotal to include the non-linguistic elements in the redefinition of acceptability and its practices (see (5) and (6) in Section 3 above). The meaning-making and mediating functions of the nonverbal dimension are what matters. The extralinguistic dimension contributes to the delivery of the original message in ways that are expected to be more accessible to implied readers and, indeed, more acceptable. As the creators of the short video claim, “people can see the flags of their nation and feel the video closer to them”, thus confirming preference for the experiential and emotional interpretation.

A further nonverbal feature supporting the revised definition of “acceptability” advanced in this research is represented by the depiction of human beings in other posters and videos. The authors of the multimedia under discussion think that it is important to underline the inclusive nature of their creations from a multimodal perspective, as well. Hence, people are portrayed of different age, colours and, even, in both animated and live-action forms. When the participants to the experimental part of this research were interviewed, they justified their choices through a main term – inclusivity. According to them, it is important to depict men, women and even anthropomorphic (although non-human) subjects in order to prevent someone from feeling as if the texts that they were reading did not talk to them. From the perspective of cross-cultural communication, this is a very interesting feature, which confirms the ground of the reformulations that were (and are being) collected in the course of this research, along with the principal perlocutionary effect of the reformulations. The latter aim to render original texts in a way that increases the attention to the implied readers, while delivering the sense of help and assistance that is central to the work of mediators, even from digital and multimodal perspectives. Despite the temporal distance between the creation and consumption of texts, which can be watched after being posted online, the interactions that are activated aim to ‘talk’ to all their potential viewers. Hence, the people and other figures that can be found in the media that are created cannot reflect the ‘standard’ representation of only one group of participants. What is more, the representations may betray an influence from the authors’ native schemata of multimodal representations – for example, in the association between female or male characters and specific jobs. Yet, the variety of human participants, along with the multiplicity of professional contexts that are found in the multimodal creations, confirm that the compositions of the examined texts revolve around the interactants

exchanging the media that they had created for their implied viewers.

Finally, the multimodal compositions are completed by the conventional characteristics of the lingua-franca uses in intercultural communication. First, English as a Lingua Franca serves the simplification of messages that may be obscure to recipients, or which may hinder the desired interpretation. Then, English as an international language also reveals the influence of mediators' native tongues in the creation of words that do not respect the standard features, but manages to pass the core of messages anyway, thanks to a mutual commitment to reciprocal understanding on the part of interactants. The pivot of the (re)definition of "acceptability" – namely, the attention to addressees from the earlier steps of the authors' creative effort, when the semiotic resources and other meaning-making means are selected – is confirmed by the multimodal compositions that have been described. All the characteristics of the organisation of the semiotic modes in the examined texts, along with the search for experiential and emotional readings on the part of viewers, indicate that addressees are expected to feel themselves part of these instances of mediation, even though these exchanges are asynchronous.

## 5. Conclusions

This paper has proposed a novel definition for the notion of "acceptability". The redefinition was developed at the University of Salento in the context of a PRIN 2022 PNRR research project on intercultural communication and mediation by means of multimodal texts that are delivered online. For the purpose of this project, and due to the nature of the interactions under discussion, the examined instances of intercultural mediation are defined "asynchronous" since the mediators authoring the reformulations produce texts that would be received and processed by recipients at different times. In fact, the analysed messages are thought of as texts that are posted on a potential online institutional platform aiming to increase the accessibility to acceptable information items on the part of receivers. The envisaged addressees of the reformulations are migrants or other people intending to reach Italy (which represents the country where the research project is developed) for work reasons or leisure. Hence, access to information is seen as a paramount element of that mosaic corresponding to the integration that is reached by means of one's empowerment.

The redefinition of acceptability has started from acknowledging that accessibility and acceptability as standards of textuality are not systematically defined from the multimodal and transmedial perspectives, which characterise the development of communication – even intercultural communication. Accordingly, the novel definition of acceptability focused on highlighting the main subjects contributing to its achievement – namely, text producers and text receivers (even the envisaged receivers, which are defined "implied" here). The reason is that addressees are indeed mental constructs affected by the senders linguistic and cultural backgrounds who, in turn, influence the production of reformulations. At the same time, the redefinition aimed to underline the particular characteristics of contemporary messages, which resort to the interaction of semiotic modes to deliver the authors' intentionality. Finally, the novel definition accounted for the importance of the (actual) recipients' interpretation at the time of deriving the focus of texts and therefore assessing their evaluation of the messages' acceptability.

After presenting the redefinition of acceptability for the first time, this paper has pinpointed the essential characteristics of the multimodal compositions of a number of reformulations of selected articles from the Italian *Decreto Flussi 2020* and the European Directive 2013/32/EU on intercultural protection. The renderings were produced in

English, thus confirming its value as an international language to promote intercultural communication. The reformulations also revealed the search for forms of interaction between verbal and nonverbal elements that would increase accessibility and acceptability to viewers. Although the discussion of the reformulations is developed and more thoroughly carried out elsewhere (Iaia 2026), it has served in this article to confirm the main elements of the redefinition of acceptability. The attention to the role of the international language, to its hybridization by means of nonverbal modes of communication, to the influence of the envisaged recipients on the design of texts leads to the identification of specific, multimodal uses of English as a Lingua Franca (Iaia 2026). The results of this research are expected to stimulate discussion on the nature and actualization of acceptability as well as on the evolution of English uses and intercultural mediation processes in the age of multimodal and transmedial communication. The data that are presented in this study aim to confirm that human intelligence and contribution is still vital in educational and institutional dimensions, as a fundamental guide for the technological (r)evolution guiding how people and cultures meet, interact and (hopefully) develop together.

**Bionote:** Pietro Luigi Iaia is Full Professor of English Linguistics and Translation at the University of Salento, where he is also Director of the Language Centre. He is Principal Investigator of the PRIN 2022 PNRR Research Project entitled “Acceptability Strategies of through Variations of English as a Lingua Franca in Multicultural and Multimodal Discourse Types”. His research interests focus on: the cognitive-semantic, pragmatic and socio-cultural dimensions of multimodal translation; the production and adaptation of the multimodal composition of memes; ELF variations in cross-cultural audiovisual discourse; game localization. His publications include the monographs *Analysing English as a Lingua Franca in Video Games* and *The Dubbing Translation of Humorous Audiovisual Texts*, and the articles “Creativity and Readability in Game Localisation” (*Lingue e Linguaggi*) and “Towards a ‘COOPING’ Model for the Investigation of Gamers’ Online Conversations in English” (*Iperstoria*).

**Author's address:** [pietroluigi.iaia@unisalento.it](mailto:pietroluigi.iaia@unisalento.it)

## References

Bogucki Ł. 2011, *The Application of Action Research to Audiovisual Translation*, in McLoughlin L.I., Biscio M. and Ni Mhainnín M.Á. (eds.), *Audiovisual Translation Subtitles and Subtitling: Theory and Practice*, Peter Lang, Bern, pp. 7-18.

Carroll J.B. and Freedle R.O. (eds.) 1972, *Language Comprehension and the Acquisition of Knowledge*, Winston, Washington.

Croft W. 2001, *Radical Construction Grammar*, Oxford Academic, Oxford.

Crystal D. 2003, *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

De Beaugrande R. and Dressler W. 1981, *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, Longman, London.

Dopkins S., Klin C. and Myers J.L. 1993, *Accessibility of Information about Goals during the Processing of Narrative Texts*, in "Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition" 19 [1], pp. 70-80.

Elder C. and Davies A. 2006, *Assessing English as a Lingua Franca*, in "Annual Review of Applied Linguistics" 26, pp. 282-304.

Fulcher G. 1997, *Text Difficulty and Accessibility: Reading Formulae and Expert Judgment*, in "System" 25 [4], pp. 497-513.

Fish S.E. 1970, *Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics*, in "New Literary History" 2, pp. 123-162.

Graddol D. 1997, *The Future of English*, The British Council.

Guido M.G. 1999, *The Acting Reader: Schema/Text Interaction in the Dramatic Discourse of Poetry*, Legas, New York/Ottawa/Toronto.

Guido M.G. 2023, *Representing Disrupted Identities in West-African Migrants' ELF-mediated Trauma Narratives: An Online Ethnopoetic Approach*, in "Testi e Linguaggi" 17, pp. 174-191.

Hilpert M. 2014, *Construction Grammar and Its Application to English*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.

Iaia P.L. 2015, *The Dubbing Translation of Humorous Audiovisual Texts*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Iaia P.L. 2026, *Multimodal Uses of English as a Lingua Franca and Transmodal Strategies of Reformulation in Asynchronous Intercultural Mediation*, in "Textus. English Studies in Italy" XXXIX [1].

Jenkins H. 2006, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, New York University Press, New York/London.

Jenkins J. 2006, *Points of View and Blind Spots: ELF and SLA*, in "International Journal of Applied Linguistics" 16, pp. 137-162.

Jenkins J. 2007, *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Jenkins J. 2009, *English as a Lingua Franca: Interpretations and Attitudes*, in "World Englishes" 28 [2], pp. 200-207.

Kaur P. and Raman A. 2014, *Exploring Native Speaker and Non-Native Speaker Accents: The English as a Lingua Franca Perspective*, in "Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences" 155, pp. 253-259.

Kirkpatrick A. 2007, *The Communicative Strategies of ASEAN Speakers of English as a Lingua Franca*, in Prescott D. (ed.), *English in Southeast Asia: Varieties, literacies and literatures*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, pp. 118-137.

Kress G. and van Leeuwen T. 2006, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, Routledge, London.

Manghi H.D., Jarpa Azagra M., Morales I.G. and Montes Fredes P. 2022, *Transmodal Moments During Teaching of Writing in Emergency Remote Education: Cultural and Semiotic Practices*, in "Pensamiento educativo" 59 [1], 00112.

Mauranen A. 2018, *Second Language Acquisition, World Englishes, and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)*, in "World Englishes" 37 [1], pp. 106-119.

Mortensen J. and Spencer H. 2017, *Lending Bureaucracy Voice: Negotiating English in institutional encounters*, in Flippula M., Klemola J., Mauranen A. and Vetchinnikova S. (eds.), *Changing English*, De Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 255-275.

Murphy K.M. 2012, *Transmodality and Temporality in Design Interactions*, in "Journal of Pragmatics" 44 [14], pp. 1966-1981.

Pitzl M.-L. 2019, *Investigating Communities of Practice (COPS) and Transient International Groups (TIGS) in BELF Contexts*, in "Iperstoria" 13, pp. 5-14.

Sanders T.J.M. and Gernsbacher M.A. 2004, *Accessibility in Text and Discourse Processing*, in "Discourse Processes" 37 [2], pp. 79-89.

Schmid W. 2013, *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, <https://www-archiv.fdm.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/node/59.html>. (22.12.2025)

Searle J.R. 1969, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Seidlhofer B. 2011, *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

van Dijk T.A. 1977, *Acceptability in Context*, in Greenbaum S. (ed.), *Acceptability in Language*, De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin, pp. 39-62.

Weskott T. and Fanselow G. 2011, “On the Informativity of Different Measures of Linguistic Acceptability”, in “Language” 87 [2], pp. 249-273.