ENGLISH WITH THE “MARRIED” NAME:
THE CASE OF LINGUISTIC HYBRIDITY IN ELF COUPLE TALK

Svitlana Kloetzl

Abstract
This paper aims at extending the analysis of ELF discourse to the domain of intimate interactions and to explore how partners with different linguacultural backgrounds accomplish their “coupleness” through English as a lingua franca with a focus on the hybrid features of couples’ ELF. For this purpose five European couples with different first languages were asked to audio-record their ELF home interactions and comment on selected excerpts of their recordings so as to gain some insights about how these interactions were perceived from a participant viewpoint. The investigation of the data suggests that ELF partners use hybrid forms to activate and ratify particular contexts (schematic constructs), and to achieve a particular pretext (an interactive purpose) of domestic intimacy and togetherness.

Key words
discourse analysis, context, pretext, English as a lingua franca (ELF), couple discourse

1 Introduction
This paper attempts to add to our understanding of intimate discourse where partners do not share the same language and use English as a lingua franca (henceforth ELF) – a mother tongue for neither of them – as “the medium of communicative choice” (Seidlhofer 2011: 7). The paper focuses on hybrid forms in ELF couple talk. It suggests that the private communication between couples, like any other communication, is a pragmatic process whereby meanings and relationships are negotiated by using available linguistic resources to key into particular contexts and to further a particular pretext (Widdowson 2004). Contexts are understood here as schematic socio-cultural constructs, and pretexts as the purposes that the interactants set out to achieve (ibid.). My argument will be that ELF couples relate their ELF and hybrid forms within it to their own intimate reality by creating their own schematic conventions for the pretextual purpose of accomplishing their coupleness. However, it is important to note that partners’ ELF has the semantic potential to mean many things, and what pragmatic significance couples make of the available language/s varies and is elusive. In this respect, the hybrid nature of the private interactions of ELF couples I am concerned with in this paper is a particular case of how language