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BELF, COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND ELT BUSINESS MATERIALS

1. Introduction

Communication strategies (CSs henceforth) have been shown to be an essential element of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) interactions, with participants cooperatively building effective communication through a number of pragmatic moves. In English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF) settings CSs aimed at enhancing explicitness and checking comprehension are seen as an essential skill, intertwining with business know-how, clarity of message and explicitness. Together with the ability to draw on plurilingual repertoires (e.g. Cogo 2016b), CSs have been shown to be highly relevant in international business settings to the aim of clarifying, "checking, double-checking, confirming, and reconfirming business issues" (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011, 256).

While CSs from an ELF perspective have been examined in general ELT coursebooks (e.g. Vettorel 2017, 2018), their inclusion in business English Language Teaching (ELT) materials has been less explored (e.g. Franceschi 2018; Lario de Oñate and Vázquez 2013; Caleffi and Poppi 2018, this issue; Pullin 2015). This paper aims at contributing to this area of research through the analysis of business ELT materials, investigating whether awareness and use of CSs is accounted for, to what extent and how. Aspects related to the inclusion of the different layers of the Global Communicative Competence (GCC) model (multicultural competence, BELF competence and business-specific knowledge) in the materials will also be looked into. A series of recently published international business ELT coursebooks at elementary/pre-intermediate/intermediate level have been analyzed in their components (coursebook, teacher's guide, audio/video/online materials). Drawing mainly on Björkman's taxonomy of CSs in ELF (2014), the aim will be to identify the presence of activities and tasks dealing with different CSs, above all aimed at clarification and confirmation, as well as those involving translingual practices.

2. BELF

English as a Business Lingua Franca (BELF) has been a rich and developing area of research for more than a decade. The use of English as a lingua franca of communication has become a well-attested reality in all domains involving communication at an international level, from academia to mobility and leisure, whether in face-to-face or digital communication. Business contexts are of course no exception, not least given the impact of globalization, especially since the 1990s. In business settings ELF is used as a common code of communication between speakers of different linguacultures, either as a corporate language or in international interactions, to the aim of carrying out business. Hence, "the speakers and writers of BELF are members of the global business discourse community and use the language to do their work" (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2010, 205).

Since the 2000s, research in BELF has looked into different aspects and issues, investigating mostly oral interaction (e.g. Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2005; Pullin 2010; Tsuchiya and Hanford 2014), but partly also written communication (e.g. emails, Nickerson 2002; Giménez-Moreno and Skorczynska 2013). Other aspects that have been researched are practitioners' perceptions and language use, both at a macro and at a micro-level (e.g. Kankaanranta and Planken 2010; Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011; Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen, and Karhunen 2015; Ehrenreich 2010; Cogo 2016a). Aspects concerning business intercultural settings and intercultural awareness have been examined too (e.g. Pullin 2015), also in connection to curriculum development. In addition, since (B)ELF users are in most cases at least bilingual, studies have shown that translanguaging phenomena are an intrinsic characteristic both of BELF and of ELF:

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multilingual resources are effectively exploited, either overtly or covertly, in business interactions at different levels (e.g. Cogo 2016a, 2016b; Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen, and Karhunen 2015).

In general, we can say that research into BELF has shown from the start (e.g. Louhiala-Salminen 2002; Poncini 2002, 2003, 2007) that BELF communication is characterised by an "essentially pragmatic approach to language issues as well as their [the participants'] skilful and strategic use of BELF together with other languages" (Ehrenreich 2010, 411).

Although sharing many aspects of ELF communication, BELF is characterised by the specificity of the settings where it is used, that is, business contexts. Kankaanranta and Planken (2010, 390) highlight how three contextual dimensions emerge as relevant in BELF settings: "the shared business domain of BELF use, the shared special field of expertise, and the length of relationship with the communication partner"; these factors all interweave with BELF discourse traits, that is, "the value of using – and accommodating to the level of – simple and clear English" (302) - which includes meaning negotiation through CSs; knowledge of business-related vocabulary and genres; explicitness, accuracy in content, and directness, combined with relational and rapport-building skills.

Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2011) developed the model of Global Communicative Competence (GCC) for business professionals in BELF by contextualising the different dimensions of Communicative Competence (grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence) to the specificity of intercultural and multilingual BELF interactions. The model represented an important and innovative outlook on BELF discourse, since it points to "the need for a multidisciplinary approach to understand the requirements of communicative competence for present-day, business professionals working in global contexts" (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011, 16), where different skills pertaining to the business domain are seen as interweaving and all contributing to communicative effectiveness. The model comprises three concentric and interrelated layers, that is, multicultural competence, competence in BELF and business know-how. The first and innermost level, multicultural competence, refers to skills required in managing interaction with participants of different linguacultures, which include accommodation to diversity both in cultural (national, corporate and professional) and linguistic terms. The second layer, competence in BELF, comprises knowledge of business genres, skills in managing tasks and building rapport; it includes the ability of aptly and effectively employing CSs intended as "clarity, brevity, directness and politeness", as well as "strategic skills, such as an ability to ask for clarifications, make questions, repeat utterances, and paraphrase" (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2013, 28). The latter in particular have been shown to be paramount in successful ELF – and even more in BELF – communication, also in small talk (e.g. Pullin 2010). The last layer is that of business know-how, referred both to the general business discourse community and to more specific domains of use (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2013, 28).

Particularly relevant to the aim of this paper is the second layer, competence in BELF, above all in the key aspects related to strategic competence and the use of CSs in order to effectively negotiate meaning and jointly build effective communication.

2.1 Communication Strategies in BELF communication

Communication strategies are one of the tools employed by ELF users to reach common understanding and effectiveness in communication, within cooperative meaning co-construction attitudes characterising ELF – as well as BELF – interactions. As Pullin remarks, "[e]ffective speakers of ELF have the ability to exploit their linguistic and cultural resources, in using communication strategies to accommodate and adapt to their interlocutors and negotiate meaning and understanding" (Pullin 2015, 34). Pragmatic strategies have been a widely researched area in different ELF domains, from academia (e.g. Mauranen 2006, 2010, 2012; Björkman 2011, 2013, 2014; Kirkpatrick 2007), Erasmus communities of practice (Kalocsai 2014; Jokic 2016), international students' settings (Jafari 2016; Kaur 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2011; Batziakas 2017) to casual talk (e.g. Cogo 2009; Cogo and Dewey 2012; Cogo and Pitzl 2016; Diemer and Brunner 2018; Vettorel submitted). Some studies have also looked more specifically into the use of CSs in business settings (e.g. Cogo 2012, 2016a, 2016b; Bjørge 2010; Ehrenreich 2010; Pitzl 2010; Franceschi 2017, submitted, this issue) and their relevance emerges also in research findings involving business professionals (e.g. Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011; Ehrenreich 2010). For example, in studies focusing on appeals, comprehension checks and responses in the professional business and organizational subset of data of the VOICE Corpus,

Franceschi's findings (submitted; this issue) show that these pragmatic strategies are frequently employed, with participants actively listening and responding to the appeals and requests for clarification and repetition, or paraphrasing, in order to cooperatively reach mutual understanding, in a face-saving and 'natural' way. This is hardly surprising, given the high-stakes nature of BELF interactions where reaching mutual understanding is a paramount professional goal (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011; Palmer-Silveira 2013). An appropriate and effective use of CSs as part of BELF competence is highlighted in the GCC model as well: "BELF speakers need to possess accommodation skills, listening skills, an ability to understand different 'Englishes', and overall, tolerance towards different communication styles" (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2013, 27). In this perspective, linguistic competence is only one of the elements that need to be "deployed flexibly and strategically with awareness of business genres and the relativity of social norms in relation to contexts" (Pullin 2015, 34); that is, CSs in BELF serve to effectively deal with potential differences in socio-pragmatic norms (Pullin 2015, 42).

In BELF contexts above all, CSs are then to be considered part and parcel of (Global) communicative competence, as one of the tools BELF users cooperatively deploy to facilitate meaning co-construction and effective communication, either pre-emptively or retroactively, to ensure mutual understanding and prevent misunderstanding. Communication in BELF contexts may of course be challenging and problematic; three main reasons have been identified for possible failure in BELF communication (Gerritsen and Nickerson 2009, 182-183): lack of comprehensibility, especially at a lexical and grammatical level; cultural differences, also in terms of awareness of communication strategies; and stereotypical associations with a particular accent in English in terms of prestige. Awareness of the relevance CSs can have in dealing with potentially problematic areas ought thus to be accounted for in pedagogic practices, moving beyond the myth of 'perfect communication' (e.g. Pitzl 2017).

2.2 Communication Strategies and business ELT materials

Business ELT materials have been investigated from several perspectives, and recent studies have focused on representations of cultures in relation to multinational meetings (Angouri 2010), on cultural and intercultural aspects (Latio de Oñate and Vázquez Amador 2013), and on intertextuality and business communication (Bremner 2008). Apart from Bjørge's work on expressing disagreement (2012), to my knowledge the only research study on business ELT materials that has so far been carried out within a BELF perspective is the one by Pashmforoosh and Babaii (2015), which focuses on representations of speakers of different varieties of English and on cultural aspects in two international business coursebooks[1]. Findings from this study show that, as in general ELT materials, interactions among native speakers of English "as legitimate users of language" (231) prevail; although cultural content related to all Kachu's three circles is included, the Inner circle is predominant, often within an informative rather than a critical awareness approach.

Pragmatic and CSs have been researched to a certain extent in ELT materials, (e.g. Meihami and Khanlarzadeh 2015; McConachy and Hata 2013; Ren and Han 2016; Faucette 2001), although rarely from an ELF viewpoint, both in general (Vettorel 2017, 2018) and in business (Caleffi and Poppi 2018, this issue; Franceschi 2018). In general, these studies show that CSs do not seem to be consistently dealt with in ELT coursebooks.

In some BELF studies we find reference to business coursebooks, often in positive terms; for example, Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2013, 27) note how findings from their study related to BELF competence and know-how reveal that "the discourse strategies perceived as 'successful' in international encounters were the same as traditionally emphasised in business communication textbooks: clarity, brevity, directness and politeness". Kankaanranta and Planken (2010, 401) also point out that, even though the native speaker model still seems to be prevalent in business communication coursebooks, the latter often represent a "business professional whose (international) communication is clear". This could be a starting point to include a BELF-orientation in business ELT, through experiences of "real-life practice that is the best school for learning to use BELF" (Kankaanranta and Planken 2010, 401), as professionals in their study pointed out.

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[1] Two coursebooks in their research (*Market Leader*, Pearson and *Business Result*, Oxford University Press) are also part of the present study.

Given the relevance that coursebooks still retain in ELT, also in teaching English for special purposes – in our case business – more research in this area could shed light on whether, to what extent and how BELF competence in its pragmatic and strategic component is included in teaching materials.

3. The study - Research design and questions

The main aim of this study is to investigate whether awareness and use of CSs is included in recently published business ELT materials, and if so, in which way and to what extent. In the analysis, attention was also paid to whether aspects related to the three layers of GCC were present in the materials under examination within a possible BELF-aware orientation, as will be seen in the following sections.

A total of five recent business ELT coursebooks published by international well-known publishers at elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate levels were selected and analysed in their components (coursebook, teacher's guide, audio/video/online materials), for a total of 15 volumes[2]. These materials are widely employed in business training contexts and curricula, particularly in Italy, starting from upper secondary school. Drawing on Björkman's comprehensive taxonomy of CSs in ELF (2014) and integrating it with other ELF-related studies on CSs (e.g. Kaur 2009a; Kirkpatrick 2007), the materials were manually scanned principally to identify the presence of activities and tasks dealing with CSs aimed above all at clarification and confirmation, and/or involving translingual practices. Specifically, the analysis includes appeals (both direct and indirect), requests for repetition, clarification and confirmation, responses (repeating, rephrasing, expanding and lexical anticipation), as well as plurilingual practices (localization devices, discourse markers), which might also have the aim of creating rapport and project identities. The approach to categorization and analysis was mainly qualitative, although a quantitative count of the Css that were retrieved was made.

4. Findings

Findings emerging from the study will be illustrated below, first looking at aspects related to the three layers of GCC in the materials examined, and then focusing more specifically on CSs.

4.1 Global Communicative Competence in BELF

As we saw in the previous sections, GCC comprises three main components: business know-how, competence in BELF and multicultural competence. As to the first component, elements and topics related to business know-how and expertise are largely covered in all coursebooks examined, particularly in the more traditional aspects of "innovation, entrepreneurship, marketing, business purposes, and management strategy" (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2010, 205). Elements of general "communicative know-how" (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2010, 205) are also included, for instance when dealing with small talk (IC-I, 29; ML-PE A6; ML-I A5, LS-I, 50), or how to welcome visitors (BR-I, 42; IE-E, 77). In some cases, often in connection to audiovisual material (IC, BR, ML) we find a special section related to situations in the workplace, often with the declared aim of representing up-to-date realistic situations, and of creating opportunities for practice in context.

As to competence in BELF, no specific reference is present. All coursebooks have a section dealing with business communication skills that are generally related to common work topics and/or communicative functions connected to managing business. In one case (IC) a regular section, named 'People skills' is present, aimed at focusing on communication and on "[a]cquiring communication strategies for a variety of work-related and social contexts and developing interpersonal skills" (IC-TB, 8). In another coursebook, each unit has a section named 'Communication strategies' (LS); in the accompanying Teacher's Book we read that the goal is

> to enable students to speak English with confidence. Conversation is unpredictable and we cannot rehearse all the different English conversations our students will have in our lessons. However, we can prepare them with coping strategies for a wide variety of situations. Communication strategies are techniques for overcoming difficulties in communicating. The communication strategies lessons in Lifestyle are designed to help students to explain what they mean, build relationships and use English effectively to get things done. (LS-TB, 5)

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[2] See Appendix for the complete list and for the coding for each title and volume.

In the example above we can notice how CSs are mainly conceptualised within an "overcoming difficulties" perspective; the 'Communication Strategies' sections in the coursebook are organized in terms of 'functional language', or "units of conversation, which are the building blocks of conversation" (LS-TB, 6), rather than CSs proper; we find nevertheless some examples of reflection on CSs in all the three levels examined, with interesting notes in the Teacher's Book, as will be shown below. It should also be noticed that, although no overt reference to (B)ELF in this – as in other – coursebook is made, the stated goal of helping "students to explain what they mean, build relationships and use English effectively to get things done" can be read in connection with CSs skills that have been shown to be fundamental in BELF communication.

The multicultural competence layer of GCC, which comprises skills to manage interaction with participants of different linguacultures, including accommodation to diversity both in linguistic and cultural (national, corporate and professional) terms, also appears to be dealt with in the materials under examination. Examples of different accents were retrieved in audio and video materials, at all levels (elementary, pre-intermediate and intermediate) for most coursebooks. Besides speakers of British and American native varieties, we have some British regional accents (e.g. IC, IE, ML); bilingual English speakers are also represented, although in different measures, with native speakers still prevailing (cf. also Pashmforoosh and Babah 2015). IC, for instance, consistently includes 'speakers with an accent' in the audio and video materials, and ML in video materials; in some cases the accent is more easily detectable, in others just minimally. Even though we did not notice any awareness-raising activity related to ELF for these examples (e.g. Bayyurt and Sifakis 2015; Sifakis 2017; Sifakis et al. 2018), the instances of speakers with different accents, generally connected to languages spoken in the expanding circle, are still worth of notice for two main reasons. First, these examples produced by bilingual speakers of English represent the widespread use of English in its lingua franca function in a variety of domains, BELF ones included, and thus of actual and current uses of the language in work contexts. Second, their inclusion in more general ELT materials is still very uncommon, apart from a few exceptions (cf. Bayyurt, Lopriore and Vettorel 2018; Lopriore and Vettorel 2013).

As to cultural and multicultural aspects, several coursebooks include references to different contexts, both concerning business genres, as for example selling (IC-PE) and communication styles (ML, IE), taboo topics (IC-I), and cultural expectations (BR-I, ML-E). References to diversity for cultural aspects in more general terms can also be found across different levels (ML, IE, LS). In ML, for instance, the regular section 'Working across cultures' includes topics like 'Doing business internationally' (ML-E, 90-91; ML-PE, 60-61), and 'Preparing to do business internationally' (ML-PE, 120-121), dealing with areas and activities related to cross-cultural issues in a variety of contexts (cf. also Pashmforoosh and Babah 2015). In the Intermediate volume of the same course-book (ML) one unit is devoted to 'Cultures', presenting reflections on cultural differences and on the importance of cultural awareness in business interaction; the notes in the Teacher's Book refer to a list of possibly sensitive areas in intercultural terms (ML-TB, 64). Some aspects of differences in pragmatics are also dealt with: directness in negotiations (IC-I); greetings, directness, names and titles, business cards (Germans doings business in China, ML-E, 65); saying no politely (ML-PE); communication styles (including proxemics, ML-I, 123); turn-taking and turn-giving (IE-PE, 95; LS-PE, 100), also in teleconferencing (IE-I, 119). Teleconferencing could be seen in connection to management of interpersonal relationships, too (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2013; Cogo 2012; Pullin 2010), and in this case part of the activities related to active listening presented in one coursebook (LS-PE, 24); these activities, however, focus only on how to show interest to interlocutors.

In general, given the relevance of the multicultural component in BELF Global Communicative Competence, more opportunities aimed at the development of (inter)cultural awareness could be provided, and representations of culture "should be redirected toward 'how' to deal with culture problems in business encounters rather than 'which' culture to understand" (Pashmforoosh and Babah 2015, 233; cf. also Lario de Oñate and Vázquez Amador 2013), moving beyond the 'national' - and at times stereotypical - level (cf. e.g. Angouri 2010; Baker 2015).

The layer of competence in BELF in the GCC model comprises knowledge of business genres, skills in managing tasks and building rapport, including the ability of effectively employing pragmatic strategies. While the first two elements are, although in different measures, acknowledged in my data, CSs do not seem to be consistently dealt with, as will be seen below.

4.2 Communication Strategies

As anticipated, the materials were manually scanned principally to identify the presence of activities and tasks dealing with CSs aimed above all at clarification and confirmation, and/or involving translingual practices. On the whole, it can be said that CSs are only occasionally included in my data: examples were retrieved for some of the categories taken into account in the analysis, and it is notable that no example for plurilingual practices was found, in line with other research findings (Franceschi 2018). The most represented areas emerging from the study are the following: asking for repetition (6 instances) and for clarification (3), comprehension checks (5), with three instances for direct appeals and three for paraphrasing and interpretative summary, two of which were other-initiated. No example was retrieved for indirect appeals, responses to a direct appeal with other-repair or repetition, lexical anticipation after hesitation or in broader context, or repair after request for confirmation.

4.2.1 Direct appeals

4.2.1.1 Asking for repetition

In two coursebooks this strategy is associated with interactions on the phone: one coursebook presents a few exercises with "Sorry, What/What company/Who/When/What time did you say?" (IC-E, 125, 126, 128), "Sorry, I didn't catch you. Could you say it again?" as part of a phrase bank (IC-PE, 24), with a brief exercise on "Sorry, what did you say?" (IC-I, 20). Another coursebook presents a similar approach, although including only 'Asking someone to repeat what they said - Can you repeat that?' among other more general expressions (IE-I, 59). In another case (BR-I, 16) the box 'Key expressions – Asking for repetition and clarification' includes the following: "Can you say that again, please?; Can you repeat that? Is that E-R or A-R?; Sorry, was that E-R or A-R?" (with other examples for spelling in the suggestions for 'Checking numbers and spelling'). Similar findings are reported in Franceschi (2018) for more advanced levels of business ELT coursebooks.

4.2.1.2 Asking for clarification

Three examples of activities related to asking for clarification were found: one (BR-PE, 62) is part of a 'Business Communication – Controlling the discussion in meetings' point, with the 'Key expressions' including "Saying you didn't hear: Sorry I didn't catch that, What was (that/the last number?; Saying you didn't understand: Sorry, I'm not with you, Could you be more specific?"; one practice exercise where these expressions could be used is provided.

In another case (BR-PE, 69) we find a 'Practically speaking' section on 'How to ask for clarification' with dedicated activities (e.g. "Sorry, did you say?, Could you explain please?, Did you mean…? Did you say/Are you saying…?, What do you mean by…?"); the Teacher's Book presents the suggestion to "pre-teach clarification - making something clearer or easier to understand. Then elicit from the class their ideas about things to say if you didn't understand something in a meeting" (BR-PE-TB, 61).

In the third instance (ML-PE, 87), within the skills section 'Meetings: interrupting and clarifying' the following are indicated in the 'Useful Language' box: "How do you mean exactly?, What exactly do you mean by?, Are you saying…?, So what you are saying is that…". In this case, the last expression can also be seen as a suggestion for interpretative summary. All these examples, which are not accompanied by further reflection tasks, could have represented an opportunity to overtly focus on raising awareness of the relevance of CSs in business contexts, particularly for BELF; in the second case in particular, the note in the Teacher's Book could certainly have been expanded in this direction, providing teachers with opportunities to encourage overt reflection.

4.2.1.3 Paraphrasing / interpretative summary

Within a unit focused on effective listening, "paraphrasing regularly to show you're paying attention" is mentioned together with "seek further information, probe with questions" and "clarify any points which are unclear to you" (IC-I, 27) as techniques for good listeners; the 5-point list L.I.S.T.E.N. (Look interested, Inquire, Summarize, Test understanding, Encourage) is followed by a listening exercise and a noticing activity that includes expressions such as: "So what you are saying is…; In other words…; Are you saying…?; Do you mean…?; What do you mean by…?; Sorry, I'm not quite with you; How do you mean exactly?; Okay, fine. Just

one question", which can be mainly related to interpretative summary as a collaborative strategy. Students are then asked to practice active listening techniques following the guidelines that are provided in two short texts. In another coursebook (LS-E, 78[3]) within the Communication Strategies 'What do you call it?' section, we find first a discussion point asking students to discuss in pairs what they do when a word cannot be recalled in their L1, and then in English; the point is followed by a series of tasks involving paraphrasing and direct appeal. The notes in the TB encourage noticing for paraphrasing techniques, and a reference to 'Repairing strategies' reads as follows: "at elementary level Ss [students] often struggle to find the right word. This lesson gives the Ss strategies for when they don't know a word or can't remember a word in English. They are taught how they can still remain fluent in the conversation despite not knowing a particular word by using paraphrasing language" (LS-E-TB, 81).

In both these examples, paraphrasing and interpretative summary are presented as part of active listening and collaborative communication, with reference in the second case to the 'normality' of using paraphrasing. The introductory activity related to the students' L1 could have lent itself to taking into consideration plurilingual strategies, too. Yet, it is worth of notice that both active listening and resorting to circumlocution are here presented positively as communication tools rather than compensatory, learner strategies.

4.2.1.4 Comprehension checks

In several cases strategies to check comprehension are presented in combination with asking for repetition (see e.g. IC-E in section 4.2.1.1 above) and clarification, or to interpretative summary, as in some of the examples reported below.

In one coursebook, expressions to check understanding are present in all three levels. In the elementary one (BR-E, 50) it is found as 'Checking details' with the key expressions "So that's…; Is that right?" in connection to leaving phone messages. In the intermediate level (BR-I, 96) we find a series of key expressions (and activities) related to 'Checking understanding'; within the 'Business communication – Dealing with questions' section we have the following: "Sorry, I couldn't hear you. Can you repeat that?, Sorry, I don't quite understand the question, Let me check I've understood you correctly, You're asking me if…?"; no overt suggestions for reflection are, however, provided in the TB. Similarly, in another case some useful language expression are given as 'Checking information' ("Sorry, did you say…?, Sorry, I didn't catch that[4]; Could you repeat that?, Let me read that back to you"), integrated in one listening activity where the students should tick the phrases they hear (ML-PE, 79).

Always in terms of useful language and checking information the following expressions are provided in another coursebook (ML-I, 79): "Just to get this clear, …, There's just one other thing I'd like to check…; Are you saying…?"; further on in the same course-book (ML-I, 88) other expressions are listed in the 'Training for Negotiation' section, under the heading 'Checking understanding' – some of which could also be related to interpretative summary, as for example "What do you mean?. Have I got this right?, If I understand you correctly, …, You mean, if we ordered…, would…?".

In another coursebook, as part of the 'Communication Strategies' regular section, some expressions for 'Checking information' are given with reference to the accuracy of information needed in an emergency call ("Speak a little slower please; Sorry, what did you say?; Did you say presentation?; Can you repeat that?; Can I read that back?", LS-E, 98); also the TB notes refer mainly to the specificity of the situation, rather than providing noticing and reflecting opportunities on the relevance of this strategy.

In one case (IE-I, 98) several CSs are found in combination under the 'Functions Checking understanding and clarifying' heading: "Checking someone understands you (Do you follow me?; Are you with me?); Saying you understand (I follow you); saying you don't understand (I don't understand how to…); Asking for clarification (Can you just clarify what I need to do?)"; one activity connected to a listening exercise is also provided, and more general examples given in the Review section (IE-I, 101). The note in the Teacher's Book suggests to check they [students] understand the meaning of *clarification/to clarify* (=to make something clear). We use it when we think we have not understood something but are not sure. It does not mean the same as saying you don't understand something. Also it is not exactly the same as asking someone to repeat something; you want them to repeat it, but in a way that is easier for you to understand (IE-I-TB, 50).

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[3] We also find a hint to 'repeating or paraphrasing' in LS-I, 74, which is, however, related to storytelling only.
[4] This example can also be related to 'Asking for repetition' and 'Asking for clarification'.

Once again, particularly with reference to the note for teachers reported above, this could have been an opportunity to foster noticing and reflection on the importance of CSs for effective communication, and on how they are an integral part of interactional practices, especially in BELF contexts.

In sum, my findings show that some CSs are included in the materials under examination, but mostly without ad-hoc, overt reflection on their importance in business communication, and with no reference to BELF. When compared to general ELT materials (Vettorel 2017, 2018), it is noticeable, however, that some examples of CSs are present in our data starting from elementary levels, with particular attention to asking for clarifications, comprehension checks and paraphrasing. As we have seen, expressions related to CSs are often provided/summarised in useful language boxes, at times connected to tasks and activities, without, however, overt noticing and reflection tasks in the greatest majority of cases.

5. Discussion and conclusions

This study has focused on the analysis of some recently published business ELT coursebooks, investigating whether the different layers of the GCC model, and particularly awareness and use of CSs, have been taken into account. Given the globalized dimension of ELF use, and of BELF in business contexts, one would expect these aspects to be dealt with in training materials, which, however, proved only partially true in my data. Findings show that, despite the inclusion of some CSs since elementary levels, these business ELT materials do not deal consistently with pragmatic strategies and even when examples are provided, they are rarely accompanied by reflection tasks; opportunities to raise awareness of the role CSs play in business contexts and BELF are not overtly and consistently dealt with[5]. As to GCC, the overall impression from my data is that its different components are not integrated, but rather dealt with separately; one case in point are, for instance, the units, tasks and activities devoted to negotiations that are present in most coursebooks under examination (e.g. IC, BR, ML): these sections focus mainly on business know-how and skills, without providing opportunities for overt and active reflection on the interconnectedness of the different elements and competences, nor on the relevance strategic competence plays in BELF. Significantly, no example was found for plurilingual strategies and resources, despite the inherently multilingual dimension of (B)ELF communication (e.g. Jenkins 2015; Cogo 2016a, 2016b).

Findings show that these materials do not take account of the complex set of competences and skills through which BELF users successfully interact in the workplace. As Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen (2005, 419) point out, in order to learn to be flexible BELF users "in BELF teaching, learners should be trained to see themselves as communicators", focusing on "real jobs to perform" rather than only on language; they should be guided towards listening actively "to what the other BELF speakers say and imply in interaction", and "should be encouraged to be aware of their own and their interactants' discourse practices, conventions, and cultural preferences". The inclusion in business ELT materials of the different GCC competence layers, with the skills they involve, would seem paramount in order to allow greater attention to strategic language use, such as "being able to accommodate one's communication to the partner's knowledge level, to connect on the relational level, to clarify information, to paraphrase, to make questions, and to ask for clarifications" (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2013, 30).

In terms of accommodation, multicultural competence in the GCC model includes tolerance and openness towards differences not only in cultural but also in linguistic terms, for example in pronunciation and lexico-grammar, that are part of Global Englishes and (B)ELF. In this perspective, adopting in business ELT a "BELF speaker's approach to communication, in terms of flexibility regarding socio-cultural norms and effective communication strategies, would appear […] to be a more appropriate model for teaching in terms of going beyond purely linguistic competence" (Pullin 2015, 34; cf. also Pullin 2013 for examples).

While findings from this research study cannot be generalized, and further research in this area is needed, some suggestions can tentatively be set forward. As we have seen, effective communication in BELF relies on multiple skills, where "business competence together with knowledge of business communication and genre rules are clearly more important than, for example, grammatical and idiomatic correctness" or native-like fluency (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2010, 207). In internationally oriented business interactions, all

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[5] In more advanced levels for similar ELT materials some awareness-raising activities and opportunities for reflective practice appear to be present; in Franceschi's study (2018), for instance, a few examples for overt reflection were retrieved as to clarification, confirmation checks, also in connection to active listening.

three levels of the GCC model – business know-how, competence in BELF and multicultural competence – interweave and contribute to reaching effective communication. In pedagogic terms, this entails that "students need to be trained to be flexibly competent" (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2010, 208) to effectively use BELF as a "working language" in their work-related interactions (Kankaanranta, Louhiala-Salminen, and Karhunen 2015), particularly in employing CSs to accommodate their interlocutors, to successfully interact, and to 'get the job done' efficiently. In order to foster the development of BELF competence - one of the layers in GCC - the inclusion of CSs in business ELT materials ought to be connected to the ways in which the language is used, and meaning negotiated, in BELF interactions, providing exemplifications as well as awareness-raising and reflection activities. At the same time, a closer interrelation between the GCC layers in business ELT materials could foster the development of those communication skills that can equip (future) professionals with the necessary tools to effectively operate in globalized business.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1: Coursebooks included in the analysis

Authors	Title	Code	Year	Publisher
Barral, Irene and John Rogers	*Lifestyle Elementary Coursebook*	LS-E	2011	Pearson Education Longman
Alexander, Karen	Teacher's Book	LS-E-TB		
Hollet, Vicki and Norman Whitby	*Lifestyle Pre-Intermediate Coursebook*	LS-PE	2010	
	Teacher's Book			
Alexander, Karen		LS-PE-TB		
Dubicka, Iwonna and Margaret O' Keffe	*Lifestyle Intermediate Coursebook*	LS-I	2010	
NewBrook, Jackie	Teacher's Book			
Buckingham, Angela, Bryan Stephens and Alastair Lane	*International Express Elementary Student's Book*	IE-E	2014	Oxford University Press
Leeke, Nina	Teacher's Resource Book	IE-E-TB		
Harding, Keith and Rachel Appleby	*International Express Pre-Intermediate Student's Book*	IE-PE	2014	
Amanda, Maris	Teacher's Resource Book	IE-PE-TB		
Harding, Keith and Alastair Lane	*International Express Intermediate Student's Book*	IE-I	2014	
Baker, David	Teacher's Resource Book	IE-I-_TB		

Clarke, Simon	*In company 3.0 Elementary Student's Book Pack*	IC-E	2015	Macmillan
Gomm, Helena and Edward Price	Teacher's Book Pack	IC-E-TB		
Clarke, Simon	*In Company 3.0 Pre-Intermediate Student's Book Pack*	IC-PE	2014	
Gomm, Helena	Teacher's Book Pack	ICE-PE_TB		
Powell, Mark	*In company 3.0 Intermediate Student's Book Pack*	IC-I	2014	
Gomm, Helena	Teacher's Book Pack	IC-I-TB		
Cotton, David, David Falvey and Simon Kent, with Nina O'Driscoll	*Market Leader (3rd edition extra) Elementary Coursebook*	ML-E	2016	Pearson Education – FT Publishing
Barrall, Irene	Teacher's Resource Book	ML-E-TB		
Cotton, David, David Falvey and Simon Kent	*Market Leader (3rd edition extra) Pre-Intermediate Coursebook*	ML-PE	2016	
Mascull, Bill	Teacher's Resource Book	ML-PE-TB		
Cotton, David, David Falvey and Simon Kent	*Market Leader (3rd edition extra) Intermediate*	ML-I	2016	
Mascull, Bill	Teacher's Resource Book	ML-I-TB		
Grant, David, John Hughes, Nina Leeke and Rebecca Turner	*Business Result (2nd edition) – Elementary Student's Book*	BR-E	2017	Oxford University Press
Hughes, John and Nina Leeke	Teacher's Book	BR-E-TB		
Grant, David, Jane Hudson and John Hughes	*Business Result (2nd edition) – Pre-Intermediate Student's Book*	BR-PE	2017	
Appleby, Rachel, Mark Bartram and David Grant	Teacher's Book	BR-PE-TB		
Hughes, John and Jon Naunton	*Business Result (2nd edition) – Intermediate Student's Book*	BR-I	2017	
Hughes, John and Lynne White	Teacher's Book	BR-I-TB		