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ENHANCING EXPLICITNESS IN BELF INTERACTIONS: SELF-INITIATED COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN THE WORKPLACE

1. Introduction

Achieving mutual understanding in ELF communication may at times be challenging, due to the difference in the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the participants as well as in their linguistic proficiency (Kaur 2009, Kaur 2011; Mauranen 2006). In Mauranen's words, it is "commonsense" to assume that interactions involving linguistically heterogeneous speakers entail more comprehension problems (2006, 124). However, it is similarly acceptable to assume that speakers in such contexts "anticipate such difficulties, and attempt to offset this by working harder toward mutual understanding" (ibid.). Indeed, in the studies carried out on this subject, it has been determined that ELF speakers "employ a variety of means to facilitate the process of making meaning and achieving mutual understanding" (Kaur 2011, 2705).

Such strategies are part of the co-operative behavior shown by participants to ELF interactions: they adopt convergence practices to ensure successful communication despite the linguacultural differences that characterize ELF talk (Cogo 2009; Kaur 2011). ELF speakers appear to be aware of this asymmetry (Björkman 2014) and they take active measures through their linguistic and strategic behavior – they engage pro-actively in ELF communication (Mauranen 2006) in order to prevent problems of mis- or non-understanding, or, should such issues arise, they act to solve them efficiently and effectively. Securing understanding in ELF is indeed a "joint endeavour" (Kaur 2009, 40), requiring active engagement and co-operative attitude from all parties involved. In interactions such as professional encounters, which may be heavily task-oriented, clarity emerges as an essential feature of communicative success (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011).

1.2 Communication Strategies, ELF and BELF

Communication Strategies (henceforth CSs) were originally conceived of as practices employed by non-native speakers and language learners as a compensative device to fill the gaps in their linguistic competence. Over the years, many scholars have abandoned this deficit perspective, instead supporting a view of CSs as a regular feature of communication regularly employed by native and non-native speakers alike (e.g. Tarone 1980; Firth and Wagner 1997; Savignon 1997; Widdowson 2003). Indeed, CSs are employed to solve communicative problems and breakdowns, which occur ubiquitously even in interactions involving exclusively native speakers (Coupland et al. 1991, 3).

A number of studies have been carried out on accommodation and CSs in English as a Lingua Franca in various contexts of communication (Meierkord 2000; Mauranen 2006, 2012; Lichtkoppler 2007; Cogo 2009; Kaur 2009; Bjørge 2010; Björkman 2011, 2013, 2014) and geographical settings (Kirkpatrick 2007, 2008). These studies have shown that speakers make use of these interactional practices for both proactive and retroactive reasons, engaging with their interlocutors and acting strategically to ensure the success of their interaction.

Indeed, speakers in ELF contexts employ a number of CSs (Cogo, 2009; Kaur 2009, 2011; Björkman 2011, 2014): these may pre-empt and/or solve instances of misunderstanding and communication breakdown - for instance appeals, requests and comprehension checks; other, self-initiated, strategies have the purpose of enhancing explicitness, therefore anticipating potential problems (Mauranen 2006; Kaur 2009, 2011). The first set of strategies, as mentioned, may also be used pre-emptively: requests of confirmation or clarification are made before a problem in communication is identified. However, they also involve a disruption, albeit brief, of the conversation flow and, to borrow from Conversation Analysis terminology, the insertion of side sequences

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(Schegloff 2000, 208). On the other hand, self-initiated strategies such as repetition, paraphrase, simplification, etc. focus more on the accommodation of language use within individual encounters. Such practices emphasize important information and create redundancy, therefore enhancing explicitness and facilitating comprehension: an example of this type may be seen in the following utterance, where the speaker used a more common – and therefore likely to be familiar to other participants - word to express the same meaning: "the poor nutrition level this poor diet" (Mauranen 2007, 251).
The importance of CSs in ELF in professional environments has already been highlighted by several previous studies on BELF. Specifically, a number of interactional practices, including non-verbal ones, have been recognized as being essential for communicative success, namely "asking clarifying questions and of checking, double-checking, confirming, and reconfirming" (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011, 256); "comprehension checks, asking for clarification and repetition, attention to facial expression" (Ehrenreich 2010, 422); "clarification and confirmation requests" among others (Kaur 2009, 46). Such strategies have been investigated in BELF contexts (e.g. Pitzl 2010), where speakers engage in these practices in a tactical, cooperatively-oriented way to prevent or solve misunderstandings in professional contexts where agreement and mutual comprehension on even the finest details are paramount for the success of the specific interactions and for the business or institutional enterprise at large. Indeed, in their Global Communicative Competence model, Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen include strategic skills as an essential aspect of BELF communicative success, stressing the need for a speaker's ability to employ "communication strategies focusing on clarity, brevity, directness and politeness" and to "ask for clarifications, make questions, repeat utterances, and paraphrase" (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2013, 28). As previous studies have focused on other-initiated strategies and comprehension checks, this study has the purpose to explore, from a BELF perspective, those self-initiated strategies that "[allow] speakers to improve on the clarity of their utterances and promote the comprehensibility of speech and in so doing [contribute] to successful communicative outcomes" (Kaur 2011, 2705).

1.3 Self-repair and beyond

Before delving into the analysis of the individual strategies, it is important to note that ELF conversation is also characterized by the pervasive presence of self-repairs (Mauranen 2006; Kaur 2011). Dörnyei and Scott (1997) define self-repair from a problematicity perspective, that is, as "making self-initiated corrections in one's own speech" (180); on the other hand, Schegloff (2000, 207) identifies them as "practices for dealing with problems or troubles in speaking, hearing, and understanding the talk in conversation", with self-repair initiated by the speaker of the "trouble-source". Within the realm of self-repairs, self-corrections should also be mentioned, which are repairs triggered by the production of a linguistic unit that would be considered unacceptable in native language use (Kaur 2011, 2707). Self-corrections are not uncommon in ELF communication: in her 2011 study on ELF in academic contexts, Kaur identified corrections at different language levels (Kaur 2011, 2707-08). The same types of self-corrections could be identified in the corpus investigated in the present study (cf. par 2), as may be seen in the following examples: the levels involved are the phonological (as in "what was the KOREAN ecommu- economy look(ed) like", S1, VOICE PBmtg3[1]), lexical ("so these objectives (they) are (.) left line (.) left side first line somehow" S6, VOICE POmtg315), morphological ("found find a job in hamburg", S1, VOICE PBmtg27) and syntactical ("i mean if you ASK the [org2] (.) they'll (2) their strong point would be…" (S2, VOICE POmtg541). Content corrections were also identified, as in "he worked for [org12] (.) [org13]" (S1, VOICE PBcon594). Self-corrections appear frequently in ELF data. Although minor linguistic inaccuracies usually do not cause communication breakdown or trigger other-corrections (ibid.), Kaur puts forward that self-corrections may "[suggest] an attunement to the problem and an orientation to accuracy" (2708). Self-corrections were similarly present in the data under investigation, as in the instances exemplified above; however, they were not dealt with specifically, as they are outside the scope of the current study.
Self-repairs constitute strategic usages of language, occurring as a pre-emptive measure even when there is no evident trouble in the speaker's linguistic production; indeed, Mauranen defines them as "strongly proactive" (2006, 137) and, although "not often highly explicit in their attempts to secure comprehension" (139), they still show a certain level of linguistic awareness and orientation to mutual comprehension on the speaker's part.

[1] This code identifies the interaction within the VOICE corpus.

It should however be noted that in her 2012 study, Mauranen expressed a preference for the term self-rephrase, as self-repair appears to have a negative connotation, "imply[ing] something went wrong with the initial formulation, which does not tally with the facts" (Mauranen 2012, 206). For the same reasons, the term self-rephrase will be adopted in this paper. Even though they may still be performed with the purpose of preventing misunderstandings and ensuring comprehension, self-rephrases that could be interpreted as self-corrections were not taken into consideration here, as well as self-rephrases pertaining to pronunciation, morphology, grammar, syntax and content.
However, it should be noted that sometimes self-rephrases and CSs at different linguistic levels are not used deliberately for the benefit of the other participants; in the case of lexical self-rephrases for example, the rephrase may be triggered by "'the unavailability of a word, such as a name, when needed'' (Schegloff 2000, 209). Other CSs may occur without the concomitant occurrence of a self-rephrase, due to a temporary or permanent gap in a speaker's linguistic repertoire. All-purpose words, approximations and paraphrases, including explications and definitions may in that case be employed to carry the message across and ensure comprehension via an alternative route. The main focus of this study are self-rephrase strategies aimed at "enhance[ing] the explicitness of a statement they feel may be potentially risky", or "replac[ing] a word that may not be transparent to the other speakers" (Björmkan 2014, 129). However, other, more 'compensatory' uses of such strategies where a gap – temporary or otherwise – in the speaker's repertoire is filled with alternative forms or expressions were also included in the analysis.

2. Data and Methodology

This study sets out to expand on the existing research on BELF, and specifically on accommodation strategies in workplace settings; the investigation wants to explore how speakers ensure effective comprehension in professional interactions by adopting proactive linguistic practices aimed at enhancing clarity and explicitness, in order to prevent communication breakdowns or repair sequences.
To this purpose, a subset of the existing corpus VOICE[2] (Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English) was selected as the source of naturally-occurring ELF data in professional settings. The corpus indeed contains over a million words of ELF data in various contexts and different types of interactions. For the goal of this analysis, a data subset was selected from the Professional Business (PB) and Professional Organizational (PO) subsections of the corpus, focusing specifically on two types of interactions that were present in both: conversations and meetings, for a total of 291,009 running words. This choice was made in order to analyze similar types of interaction and to balance the wordcount in the two subsections, with PB including 156,830 words and PO consisting of 134,179 words. The analysis, building upon current CS theory and previous ELF studies, was prevalently qualitative: a close reading of the transcription was necessary to identify instances of the CSs under investigation and determine their role and function within the exchange.
This study focused on a set of self-initiated CSs selected on the basis of pre-existing studies carried out on CSs and on their relevance in ELF. Dörnyei and Scott's 1997 comprehensive taxonomy was used for convenience as a starting point of reference; the set was then adjusted according to existing studies discussing accommodation strategies in ELF contexts (Mauranen 2006; Cogo 2009; Kaur 2009, 2011; Björkman 2014), although no comprehensive studies have looked specifically at BELF interactions, with most research focusing so far on academic ELF.
The following self-initiated Strategies were eventually identified for analysis:

- Repetition
- Signaling importance
- Simplification
- Approximation
- All-purpose words
- Paraphrasing (conflating self-rephrasing and circumlocution as defined in Dörnyei and Scott 1997)
- Word-coinage

[2] https://www.univie.ac.at/voice/ Last Visited January 7, 2019

In addition to these pre-determined strategies, analysis showed that onomatopoeia was also used proactively with the purpose of enhancing clarity and facilitating comprehension; a section of the findings is therefore dedicated to its use in the data.
The strategies were identified and their function analyzed through a close reading of the conversation transcripts under investigation. This process was not always straightforward: indeed, the surface form and pragmatic purpose do not always correspond. For example, 'empty' terms that are used as all-purpose words often occurred simply as cohesive devices to avoid unnecessary repetition, or because it was not necessary to provide any specific or more detailed information on the matter at hand. It was not always easy to determine whether these words (*people*, *stuff*, *thin*', *place*, etc.) were used for the purposes described above or with the strategic goal of maintaining the flow of the conversation or the floor. In other cases, when the strategies used did not involve self-rephrase, as will be seen in some of the upcoming examples, it was impossible to determine whether it was used to enhance clarity for the interlocutor or to fill a gap in the speaker's own repertoire.

3. Findings

3.1 Repetition

In this study, the definition of repetition is borrowed from Kaur, according to whom it is "the practice of re-saying some or all of the elements occurring earlier in an ongoing turn or in a preceding turn" (2009, 71). Repetition appears to be frequent in ELF, and may be employed by speakers with multiple purposes (Cogo 2009; Mauranen 2012). However, the use of both same- and other- speaker repetition is not exclusive to ELF interactions, "as it has also been noted in native speaker conversations, particularly in unplanned, everyday discourse" (Kaur 2009, 70).
In the data subset analyzed the focus was on self-initiated repetition, which was found to fulfill two main functions in the interactions under investigation, namely gaining planning time (Norrick 1987) and emphasizing important information (Björkman 2014). The former function appeared to be the most frequent in the data, with repeated words and utterances being employed as fillers to hold the floor and gain time while the speaker formulates his/her upcoming utterances. This can be seen in the example below:

Example 1

268 S3: okay hh so <reading_aloud> stakeholder press pack </reading_aloud> e:r (.) yeah. (.) they call it stakeholder press pack they call it press pack which will go (.) e:r together with the: to to a co- well a company (.) e:r press briefing for general media WITH the participation of stakeholder who will support and saying (.) this is right thing to do. (.) okay?
(VOICE, PBmtg269)

In this extract, after reading one of the points in her presentation, S3 repeats *press pack* twice before moving on to explain the meaning of the expression. The rephrasing, introduced by the discourse marker *well*, is preceded by a number of hesitations (pauses, elongated vowels in *e:r* and *the:*), the omission of the term after *the:*, and the non-meaningful repetition of the preposition *to*, indicating a problem in speech production. This suggests in turn that the repetitions may have been used as a filler to hold the floor and gain time while planning the following utterance. In this extract we also see an instance of exemplification, in which the meaning of the expression is clarified. In this case, the item is not necessarily described because of an assumption on the speaker's part that the other participants are not familiar with the term itself. Instead, S3 might have wanted to clarify the implications of that term in the specific business context they are discussing.
The role of planning time device was common in self-initiated repetition in the data; however, repetition was also employed to highlight key information, therefore contributing to enhancing explicitness via redundancy: an example may be seen in the excerpt below, where S4 repeats the expression *more demanding* adding an intensifier after both S3 and S2 have signaled comprehension in their turns:

Example 2

80 S4: but it's very very similar i mean [S3] and myself we are MO:RE demanding <slow> than than our (.) er ma:le co-workers </slow>

81 S3: <soft><2> that's true </2></soft><3> @@@ <loud> @@ </loud></3>
82 S2: <soft><2> mhm </2></soft>
83 S4: <3> much more demanding </3><4> and from time to time </4> really have to (.) […]
(VOICE, PBcon594)

In this case, the repetition may have the purpose of emphasizing information that the speaker deems important. The conversation appears fairly informal and playful as participants discuss leadership styles and the difference between male and female leadership during a coffee break. Through her repetition, S4 might want to put emphasis on her behavior towards her colleagues and subordinates. Although this information may not be directly related to the conversation at hand, she might want to project a specific image of herself as a businesswoman to the other employees before the meeting resumes.

3.2 Signaling importance

Signaling importance was not a common strategy in the data analyzed; however, there were instances of speakers pointing out that certain issues – or aspects of those issues - being discussed in the interaction are central to the success of their endeavor. Signaling importance draws the interlocutor's attention to the item being discussed, as can be seen in the examples below:

Example 3

(a) 2179 S4: […] I think a very CRUCIAL point (1) o:f what LICENCE (.) is in the <spel> c v s.</spel>
(VOICE, PBmtg3)

(b) 129 S2: […] (.) it can never be outside project(-borne) funding {soft parallel conversations start} that needs to be <fast> sort of </fast> clear (11)
(VOICE, POmtg316)

While not common in this dataset as in other studies such as Björkman's (2013), where it appeared to be frequent in lectures, it may be said that signaling importance contributes to communicative effectiveness by highlighting key information (Björkman 2014, 131).

3.3 Simplification

The strategy of simplification of terms and concepts is used to create additional explicitness and clarify meaning when a speaker thinks their choice may lead to comprehension issues and communication breakdowns (Björkman 2014, 130). The example below does not include any rephrasing; it is therefore difficult to determine whether this choice was made deliberately to make the message more comprehensible for S4 or because S3 does not have the terms *still* and *sparkling* in her repertoire.

Example 4

137 S3: {S3 offers S4 water}<to S4> with gas? without gas?</to S4>
138 S4: e:r without gas please (3)
139 S3: some more (2) <6> a bit more hm?</6>
(VOICE, PBmtg414)

This example also contains an example of paraphrasing, with S3 offering more of a drink (from the surrounding turns, it appears that S3 may be adding milk to S2's tea) and then, not receiving an immediate feedback, rephrasing the offer as a question. The question goes unheeded by S2, who makes a joke, overlapping S3's paraphrased utterance, although it is not possible to say whether S2 may have answered with a gesture or hand movement that has not been transcribed.

The following excerpt includes self-rephrasing due to a lexical choice that, as analysis of the adjacent turns has shown, may be due to S4 perceiving a risk of misunderstanding on S3's part and proactively offering an alternative, more comprehensible option:

Example 5

158 S4: toilet's on the: erm (.) er: (toilet) er:m {parallel conversation ends} left-hand <un> x </un> (or?)
159 S3: par<3>don me?</3>
160 S4: <3> on </3> left side. the toilets (.)
(VOICE, PBmtg414)

When providing information on the location of toilets, S4 first uses the expression *left-hand* and, as S3 asks for repetition - or clarification -, S4 provides a simplified option (*left side*). It appears that S4 is aware that her lexical choice may not be comprehensible to her interlocutor, possibly due to extralinguistic cues we do not have access to, and she appears to anticipate S3's request, as their turns overlap.

3.4 Approximation

Approximation occurs when a speaker uses "a single alternative lexical item, such as a superordinate or a related term, which shares semantic features with the target word or structure" (Dörnyei and Scott 2017, 187). This can be seen in the example below:

Example 6

1079 S1: <fast><3> this is not wealthy </3> for the airlines?<10> and it's not wealthy fo:r the </10> BROKERS <11> like WE are </11></fast> (.)
(VOICE, PBmtg300)

S1 uses the word *wealthy* twice to express the meaning of financially/economically advantageous. This is one case in which the use of a non-normative form may contribute to economy of expression, as the use of the adjective *wealthy* is expanded to include not only its traditional meaning of rich but also events that bring a financial benefit to the noun the adjective modifies.
In another example of approximation, a speaker talking about the different geographical areas covered by their business uses the expression *MAIN lands* (S1, VOICE PBmtg300), where *lands* approximates the word area or territory.

3.5 All-purpose words

All-purpose words are general, empty (Dörnyei and Scott 1997, 188) words used to replace a more specific term that the speaker cannot retrieve at that moment, thus avoiding a disruption in the conversation, as may be seen in the example below, where the speaker's difficulty is signaled by the hesitation marker *er* before the use of the all-purpose word:

Example 7

1154 S1: i'm RAISING this question [S7] knows this er when i get a frustrated er thing hh i can hire (1) people (2) from the WAREHOUSE (.)
(VOICE, PBmtg27)

The same can be observed in example (8), where hesitation and repetition after an attempt at rephrasing are followed by the use of the word *thing*. The expression is accompanied by laughter, which may signal the exploitation of humor to mitigate the contingent communicative difficulty.

Example 8

663 S2: […] it takes three days er special <pvc> documentations </pvc> and all kinds of (.) well this this <@> kind of things </@> (.) […]
(VOICE, PBmtg300)

3.6 Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing or circumlocution occurs when speakers rephrase information with different words. The use of paraphrase has been attested in ELF as a means to "clarify meaning but also to provide redundancy" (Kaur

2011, 126), that is, to facilitate comprehension for their audience by "providing the same content by modifying the previous utterance or ongoing utterance" (Björkman 2014, 131). Paraphrasing is considered a different strategy from simplification, which involves the simplification of a single lexical item (ibid.). However, paraphrasing may still involve one single item rather than an entire phrase or part of it (Kaur 2011, 127). In this case, the new term could be either classified as a synonym or near synonym, or as a specific term, more fitting for the conversation at hand.
These different occurrences may be observed in the three examples below:

Example 9

(a) 214 S3: y- y- yah (.) i i'm in prague but i can (.) come back to anywhere an- anyplace <soft> or </soft>
[…]
(VOICE, POmtg541)

(b) 375 S2: [org1] members at the general assembly must be taken (.) <fast> i mean </fast> must be inCLUDED into the document (1)
(VOICE, POmtg403)

(c) 1984 S1: you have you spent (.) (you) INVESTED a LOT (.) to [org40]
(VOICE, PBmtg3)

In 9a, S3 uses *anywhere* first and *anyplace* immediately after. The two words express the same meaning, suggesting that S3 might want to emphasize her availability regardless of the location. While the two terms are synonyms, with *anyplace* being a North American, more informal alternative[3], S3 might perceive the term *place* as being more specific, highlighting her willingness to travel to any place they may select for a meeting. In 9b, the general verb *taken* is used first and then, introduced by *I mean*, replaced by a more appropriate verb, likely with the purpose of clarifying the meaning of the utterance in a more precise way. These instances of self-rephrase may occur because the appropriate word is unavailable when needed (Schegloff 2000, 209). Finally, in 9c, we see the replacement of a "previously used lexical item with a different one, one that is related to the prior but is semantically more specific and narrow" (Kaur 2011, 2709). In our case, for S1 it is indeed not only a matter of outgoing money, but the purpose for which the money was provided – an investment, so a business move from which the company expected a return.
In other examples, longer strings of text are rephrased to make sure that comprehension is reached by other participants to the conversation:

Example 10

138 S3: […] because they DID this research </fast> (.) trying to prepare themself for <fast> the deveLOPment of concept i mean to understand what's are the risk on country levels </ fast> (.)
(VOICE, PBmtg269)

In example 10, the discourse marker *I mean* is used again to introduce the paraphrase of the previous expression, specifying what preparation entails for the agency involved. Assuming that her explanation was not clear enough to the other participants, S3 rephrases the utterance, clarifying the concept.
In example 11 below, a description is given of the word *shippers* even though S2 signals comprehension. It is possible that S8, rather than provide a definition of the word *shippers*, is here referring to a specific type of shipper (line 2265).

Example 11

2261 S8: […] you (start) </7> to (offer all of your) (.)
2262 S2: <7> mhm </7>

[3] "anyplace, adv. and n." OED Online, Oxford University Press, December 2018, www.oed.com/view/Entry/8978. Last Visited January 7, 2019

2263 S8: shippers you know i mean =
2264 S2: = yeah
2265 S8: hh the people which are booking with you huh?
(VOICE, PBmtg300)

The use of the discourse marker *I mean* is not uncommon in paraphrases; indeed, it is frequently used in self-rephrase sequences such as 9b, 10 and 11 as a flag to warn interlocutors of an imminent change or addition to previous content. The use of the marker draws the attention of the listener to the upcoming information, and by adjusting or adding information, speakers contribute to enhancing clarity and facilitate comprehension (Mauranen 2007; Kaur 2011).

3.7 Word-coinage

Word coinage appeared to be the most common strategy among those investigated in my data. According to Dörnyei and Scott's taxonomy, word-coinage may be defined as "creating a non-existing L2 word by applying a supposed L2 rule to an existing L2 word" (1997, 189).

Lexical creativity in VOICE has already been investigated in the past (Pitzl et al. 2008; Seidlhofer 2011). Attention was paid to the use of existing word-formation processes in English by ELF speakers who either create alternative, non-normative forms of an existing term or produce new words (28). In VOICE, non-normative forms are marked with a <pvc> tag: however, for the purpose of this study, not all items marked <pvc> were considered as instances of word coinage, as the tag itself marks "[s]triking variations on the levels of phonology, morphology and lexis" in addition to "'invented' words" (VOICE Project 2007, 4) The tag <pvc> also marks as alternative forms a number of business terms or words pertaining to specific registers, such as *compaction*, *documentation*, *exemptors*, that were not included in the dictionary used as a reference[4] by the VOICE team.

In the dataset under investigation, word-formation processes identified include for example back-formation (*increasement* for increase, *decreasement* for decrease); affixation *(priorly* for previously, *partnershipping* for partnership, *comparance* for comparison), involving the exploitation of existing suffixes to create new words (e.g. *-wise* for passengerwise). The production of a new term may sometimes entail the restructuring of the grammatical context of the word, as in the example below:

Example 12

1220 S5: which for the time being is not big issue? (.) so (.) <fast> i don't know what you want to try to develop afterwards </fast> you gonna be <pvc> increasive </pvc> by a hundred per cent or two hundred per cent (.)
(VOICE, PBmtg27)

Here the adjective *increasive* is created from the verb increase and the adjectival suffix -ive; the term appears within a non-normative grammatical pattern, *you gonna be increasive* rather than the standard 'you're going to increase'. Despite the non-native variation, intelligibility appears not to be in any way compromised, as the conversation continues without requests for clarification or interactive repair sequences.

Verbs are sometimes created through the process of class conversion or zero derivation, as in "[…] i mean they have to be <pvc> (moneyed) {paid} </pvc> […]" (S3, VOICE PBmtg269), where the collective noun *money* is transformed and then conjugated as a verb in a passive form, with the meaning of to be paid. Another example of this is the utterance "<2> they </2><3> don't </3><4> play </4> they don't <5> sport any more </5><6> they </6><7> don't </7> play any more" (S2, VOICE PBmtg414); the noun sport is used here as a lexical verb. This instance expands on the use of an existing word; however, it may also be somewhat related to the strategy of approximation, as the non-normative verb *to sport* here means to exercise. S2 may have employed this verb either because he was unfamiliar with the verb *exercise*, or to avoid using a word that may potentially be incomprehensible to other participants. The former option might be the more plausible, as S2

[4] Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 7th edition (OALD7) (Pitzl et al. 2008)

repeats *play* again after introducing the newly-coined verb. As comprehensibility appears to be maintained, S2 employs the verb again later in the conversation: "[…] tomorrow i will go out and sport" (S2, VOICE PBmtg414). Other processes pertaining to word-coinage in the BELF subcorpus are redundancy (*executional costs* for execution costs); semantic extension (*Luxembourgish* as a nationality in addition to the language spoken in Luxembourg); analogy (*inbelievable* for unbelievable, *easilier* for more easily).
Such non-normative forms may also be "influenced by plurilingual forces" (Hülmbauer 2013, 59): newly coined words may be partly informed by linguistic resources other than English in the speaker's repertoires. Referred to as "borrowing" by Pitzl et al. (2008) and comparable to the strategy of foreignizing in Dörnyei and Scott's 1997 taxonomy, it is an established phenomenon in ELF conversation. Although it was not always possible to identify this type of coinage, or resolve the ambiguity regarding specific instances, at least one occurrence was present in the corpus, as reported in the example below:

Example 13

1546 S4: […] internally we: we couldn't find a a <5> <pvc> consense {consensus} </pvc> </5> regarding regarding this @@ <6> collection </6>
(VOICE, PBmtg463)

The non-normative form consense, produced by a native German speaker may easily have been informed by the German equivalent of the word, that is, *Konsens*, which would be pronounced very similarly to the coinage produced by the speaker. As a cognate of consensus, the word appears to remain easily accessible to the interlocutors, as no repair sequences were identified in the following moves.
As already attested in previous research, such formations are "effective and also functional" (Pitzl et al. 2008, 40). Indeed, these forms appear to be successful in conveying the intended meaning, as no moves are made to signal lack of comprehension or to further clarify the message when such coinages are used. Some of these forms, in addition to filling gaps in a speaker's vocabulary, can enhance explicitness through redundancy, as in *increasement* and *decreasement*, where the suffix –ment further distinguishes the noun from the verb (32), and *hostman*, where the added suffix -man provides redundant information about the host being a person. Newly-coined verbs like *moneyed* and *sport* may also increase clarity, as both are based on frequent words that may be more familiar and comprehensible to other participants.

3.8 Onomatopoeia

Due to a lack of audio tracks for the majority of the interactions, and a complete lack of visual information, para- and extralinguistic strategies were not taken into consideration in the investigation. However, as the VOICE corpus has a specific tag for onomatopoeia, it was possible to identify three instances where recurring to onomatopoeic sounds facilitated communication, substituting target words.

Example 14

1892 S3: <5> it's really SERbian.</5><fast><ono> bəbəbəbə bəbəbəbə bəbəbəbə </ ono></fast>{S3 is imitating the sounds of a trumpet}
1893 S5: AH :
1894 S3: the trumpet.
1895 S5: a<6>ha:</6>
(VOICE, PBmtg462)

In the example above, S3 imitates the sound of a trumpet, which effectively carries the message across, as S5 signals comprehension in the following turn. S3 reinforces the message by producing the name of the instrument he was referring to. In the following example, emblematic gestures and sounds are used:

Example 15

135 S1: <6> you </6> made it quite harmless and at the end of the day you (.) <ono> dɪʃ dɪʃ dɪʃ </ono> {S1 makes gesture of hitting someone} (.) <8> somebody </8> okay? (1)
136 S2: <8> ye:ah </8>

(VOICE, PBmtg300)

Here, S1 falls back on para- and extralinguistic cues to fulfill a gap in his own vocabulary. Unable to retrieve the word hit, he uses gestures, as indicated in brackets, and an onomatopoeic sound to convey the intended meaning. S2 signals comprehension, which confirms the success of S1's strategy.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The use of the CSs under investigation in the VOICE PO and PB dataset supports both the results of previous studies on accommodation and communication strategies in ELF, as well as the established assumption that ELF speakers engage in listener-oriented behavior to ensure effective comprehension. This is true of all ELF interactions but may be especially so in high-stakes environments such as workplace interactions, where mutual understanding in even the finer details of the conversations is paramount to the success of the individual interaction and, at large, of the professional endeavor (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011; Palmer-Silveira 2013).

Self-initiated strategies are used in the data to enhance clarity in multiple ways: highlighting key elements, simplifying and clarifying information for the listeners to avoid a potential problem in communication, and filling a gap in the speaker's repertoire by producing an alternative form that can effectively convey the message without disrupting the flow of the conversation.

The strategies appeared to be used pervasively in the data - although some were more frequent than others - as proactive means to anticipate and pre-empt misunderstandings and therefore the need for side sequences and interactive repairs. The strategies were also used by speakers to fulfill gaps in their repertoires, attempting to convey their message without resorting to direct appeals: these indeed occurred rarely in the data (Franceschi submitted). While strategies appeared in all the interactions analyzed, they were distinctly more frequent in the Professional Business subset of data. It is hard to make assumptions about the reason for this difference with such a small sample, as it may simply be due to individual speakers in those interactions making more frequent use of certain strategies.

We could also observe that the strategies rarely involve domain registers or terminology. This may be due to the fact that, while ELF interactions are asymmetrical, the participants to work-related interactions both in business and academic-organizational endeavors appear to have similar levels of proficiency and be very well-versed in the register and vocabulary of the subjects discussed in the interactions. As Kankaanranta and Planken point out, shared knowledge of the concepts and terminology pertaining to a specific work area is paramount to the success of a BELF interaction (2010, 391); indeed, expertise in the relevant terminology was also indicated as a crucial skill by professional themselves: "the shared vocabulary of the specific field—and the shared genres and genre knowledge which such vocabulary implies […] – were perceived as essential for doing the work" (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta 2011, 253). Some strategy uses could be ascribed to the business context of interaction – strategies, both self-initiated and other-initiated are not necessarily triggered by a lack of vocabulary on the part of the speaker or by the need to get the message across to someone who does not share the same proficiency level; they are on the other hand related to the business or institutional aspects discussed in the interaction, and the particular nuances of meaning a specific term or expression may acquire in that individual context of use. Examples 1, 3a, 9c, 11, involve different strategies that share the purpose to enhance comprehensibility of terms pertaining to business, by providing a definition (1, 11) of what the term means in a certain context; using the most appropriate word to refer to a work activity (9c) and drawing attention to the specificities of a term within the context at hand (3a). This actively shows cooperative behavior, as participants are well-aware of the potential differences in other lingua-cultural contexts, and they act as to make sure that all participants are conscious of the terms that are being discussed and what they entail before continuing with the conversation.

An interesting next step for this research would be to investigate BELF monologic events – namely presentations and seminars - more closely, as they do not necessarily rely on interaction with an audience. In such contexts, disruptions of the flow of conversation to ask for clarification or repetition would likely be much less frequent than in fast-paced meetings with multiple active participants. Studies in academic settings have shown the frequent use of self-initiated strategies such as rephrasing (Gotti 2014) and signaling importance (Gotti 2014; Björkman 2011, 2013) in mainly monologic events. It would indeed be interesting to see whether

ELF speakers engaging in monologic talk would rely more heavily on self-initiated strategies such as those investigated above to ensure effective comprehension for a variegated audience.

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Appendix 1: relevant VOICE transcriptions conventions

?	rising intonation
e:r	lengthened sound
(.)	brief pause
(1)	longer pause, timed in seconds
<pvc></pvc>	variation from native norms in terms of phonology, morphology or lexis. May indicate creations that do not exist in ENL
<ono></ono>	onomatopoeic noises
<reading_aloud></reading_aloud>	speaker reading from a text
@	laughter
<1> </1>	overlapping speech
(because)	uncertain transcription
{words}	translation of non-English speech and contextual events
CAPS	emphasis of a syllable or a word
=	continuation/completion of speech by another speaker without pauses
<soft> </soft>	soft voice
<loud></loud>	loud voice
<fast></fast>	fast speech

<spel></spel>	words spelled out by the speaker
[org23]	anonymization of organization names
[S4] / [first name 2]	anonymization of participants / non-participants
<toS2></toS2>	addressing an individual speaker
di-	the hyphen indicates that a word is not produced in its entirety