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Dissertation

**Reevaluating the Teaching of English for
Lingua Franca Communication:
A comprehensive action research study**

vorgelegt von

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List of abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| ACE | Asian Corpus of English |
| CA | Conversational Analysis |
| CAT | Communication Accommodation Theory |
| CEFR | Common European Framework of Reference |
| CLT | Communicative Language Teaching |
| CS | Communication strategy |
| EFL | English (used) as a Foreign Language |
| ELF | English (used) as a Lingua Franca |
| ELFA | English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings |
| ELT | English Language Teaching |
| ENL | English (used) as a Native Language |
| ESL | English (used) as a Second Language |
| GA | General American |
| ICA | Intercultural Awareness |
| ICC | Intercultural Communicative Competence |
| IPA | International Phonetic Alphabet |
| L1 | First language |
| L2 | Second language |
| Ln | Additional language |
| LFC | Lingua Franca Core |
| RP | Received Pronunciation |
| SLA | Second Language Acquisition |
| TU | <i>Technische Universität</i> [Technical University] |
| VKB | <i>Verein zur allgemeinen Förderung von Völkerverständigung, Kultur und Bildung an der TU Kaiserslautern e.V.</i> [Registered Association for the General Promotion of International Understanding, Culture and Education at the TU Kaiserslautern] |
| VOICE | Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English |

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1 Introduction

It is by now a well-established sociolinguistic fact, and indeed a widely accepted truth, that English has become a global language. The use of English is no longer confined primarily to those geographical areas where it is spoken as a first language; rather, it increasingly serves as a common language for international communication between speakers of many different first languages around the world in such areas as business, travel, education, scientific research and the media.¹ This has put English in an unprecedented situation:

English is like no other language in its current role internationally, indeed like no other at any moment in history. Although there are, and have previously been, other international languages, the case of English is different in fundamental ways: for the extent of its diffusion geographically; for the enormous cultural diversity of the speakers who use it; and for the infinitely varied domains in which it is found and purposes it serves. (Dewey 2007: 333)

As a result of its global significance, English is now spoken by considerably more non-native speakers than native speakers. At the turn of the millennium, conservative estimates put the number of native speakers of English at 400 million and the number of non-native speakers at around 1.2 billion, with the number of those acquiring English as an additional language expected to continue to rise (cf. Crystal 2003: 67-70).

This state of affairs carries ramifications for those who are currently learning English, particularly in regions where English has traditionally been taught as a foreign language. For example, English has become the additional language which is most often taught and learned in continental Europe (cf. Eurostat 2011: 204-207, 2022), with many countries in the European Union including English instruction as part of the compulsory school curriculum. At the same time, however, the way that such learners can expect to use their English beyond the classroom has shifted. Rather than communicating primarily with native speakers, as is generally the anticipated aim in learning a modern foreign language (cf. Jenkins 2006a: 139), these learners are now much more likely to use their English with other non-native speakers in *lingua franca* contexts.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Seidlhofer (2001) drew attention to what she perceived to be a ‘conceptual gap’ between sociolinguistic reality and English Language Teaching (ELT): Despite growing recognition of English’s role as a global *lingua franca*, the focus of ELT in contexts such as Europe continued to be on preparing learners primarily for communicating with native speakers – that is, for using English as a foreign language (EFL)

¹ For discussion of the factors that led to English attaining its status as the first truly global language, cf. Crystal (2003), Graddol (2006).

rather than as a lingua franca (ELF). Applied linguistic research continued to focus on the English used by native speakers and on learner English, which, following the traditional Second Language Acquisition (SLA) perspective, was generally perceived as interlanguage (cf. Selinker 1972), an incomplete and imperfect stage of language development on the way to native-like competence. There was virtually no acknowledgement that successful lingua franca communication might make different demands on the user than communicating with native speakers of the target language.

Seidlhofer argued that “[t]he radically changed role of English in the world and the continuing spread of ELF as a global reality should at the very least prompt us to reconsider how realistic and relevant is the traditional way of thinking about the subject to be taught” (Seidlhofer 2011: 190). In order to provide a basis for such a reconsideration, Seidlhofer (2001) drew attention to the need for empirical studies of ELF talk and announced the launch of a corpus-driven research project focusing on naturally-occurring spoken ELF. This call for a concerted research effort led to the emergence of ELF as a subfield of applied sociolinguistic research in its own right. Over the past two decades, the field has grown exponentially, providing a growing body of research insights into ELF talk, which in turn have raised far-reaching implications for ELT.

1.1 From form to function: Empirical research into ELF

Work in the emerging field of ELF initially focused on the description of forms in ELF talk. At this early stage in the field’s development, “ELF researchers, influenced by the example of World Englishes, believed it would be possible to eventually describe and possibly even codify ELF varieties” (Jenkins 2015b: 54; cf. also Seidlhofer 2004: 215). While “researchers were aware that the conventional concept of *variety* was not tenable for ELF due to its nature as a *contact language*” (Matsumoto 2019: 567, italics original), the attempt to identify and describe formal features of ELF talk

was seen as a way to position ELF and ELF interactional phenomena as an *alternative* to traditional second language acquisition (SLA) perspectives; specifically, it was a call for examining language use in ELF interactional contexts *as it is* (rather than seeing it as deficient or nonstandard) and for examining communicative success in such contexts without comparing it with native-speaker norms. (Matsumoto 2019: 567, emphasis original)

Thus, for a number of years, this step was considered “both within and outside ELF research as a necessary step in the direction of legitimizing ELF use” (Jenkins 2015b: 54). Much of the descriptive work at this stage took place in the areas of phonology (Jenkins 2000, 2002) and

lexicogrammar (cf. Seidlhofer 2004), although a few early studies had also begun to explore some of the pragmatic features of ELF talk (Firth 1996; House 1999, 2002; Meierkord 1996, 2002; Lesznyak 2004).

However, the aim of codifying ELF was abandoned quite early in the field's history as it became apparent that, "[a]s a result of the diversity and unpredictability associated with the ELF context of use, English when used as a lingua franca is neither fixed nor stable; it is instead highly variable and fluid, causing any effort to give form to ELF to remain elusive" (Kaur 2015a: 241; cf. also Jenkins 2012: 490-491). The recognition of variability as "a defining characteristic of ELF communication" (Jenkins 2015b: 55; cf. also Firth 2009: 162-163, Jenkins et al. 2011: 297, Cogo and Dewey 2012: 2-3, Kaur 2015a: 240, 252) led to a fundamental shift in the ELF research paradigm, "from the surface description of particular features [...] to an explanation of the underlying significance of the forms: to ask what work they do, what functions they are symptomatic of" (Seidlhofer 2009a: 241). Since this point, the field has adopted "a much more processual, communicative view of ELF" (Seidlhofer 2009a: 241), in which the aim is the description of "the communicative and interpersonal functions the observed forms are being used to express" rather than the description of the forms themselves (Seidlhofer 2009b: 49; cf. also Jenkins 2015b: 55, Cogo 2012: 99). In other words, ELF research has shifted its focus to "the practices involved in lingua franca communication" (Cogo 2012: 98), in which the main goal of empirical research efforts "is to describe and make sense of the processes in operation in lingua franca talk and the strategies used by its speakers" (Cogo 2012: 99). This shift has also brought about a corresponding "emphasis [...] on in-depth, situated, qualitative" methods in studies of ELF communication (Seidlhofer 2009a: 241).

In consequence of this shift in research perspective, the pragmatics of ELF talk has received increased research attention, with much empirical work aimed at investigating the interactional processes and communication strategies which allow ELF communication to be successful despite its variability of form and differences in the sociocultural backgrounds of the speakers involved (cf. Jenkins et al. 2011: 293-294, Cogo and House 2018). More recent studies examining the lexicogrammar of ELF have focused not on recurrent patterns in the forms themselves that are used, but rather on the underlying linguistic processes and pragmatic motives behind their use (cf. Jenkins et al. 2011: 291, 292). Significant attention has also been paid to ELF as a form of intercultural communication (cf. Baker 2018), as well as to issues of identity and attitudes toward ELF as a sociolinguistic phenomenon (cf. e.g. Jenkins 2007, Dewey 2011).

In keeping with this more function-oriented approach toward ELF communication, ELF is generally characterized as a use of English, underscoring its overarching function as a lingua

franca in multilingual, intercultural communicative settings (cf. Baker 2015a: 6, Kaur 2015a: 241).² In what is perhaps the most widely-quoted definition of the term, Seidlhofer (2011) defined ELF as “*any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option*” (Seidlhofer 2011: 7, italics original). Likewise, in a more recent, though less frequently quoted definition, Matsumoto (2018) defined ELF as “an *interactional practice* in which English is employed and chosen as a communicative medium among speakers of different L1s” (Matsumoto 2018: 231, italics original). As well as drawing attention to ELF as a use of language, this definition particularly accentuates the interactional nature of ELF and the role of contextually-dependent, interactional processes which have been identified as key to communicative success in ELF talk and which ultimately shape the way language is actually used in ELF interactions.

It is important to note that such definitions of ELF do not exclude native English speakers as participants in ELF interactions (cf. Jenkins 2015b: 56). Although it is true that some of the earliest studies of ELF talk (e.g. Firth 1996, House 1999) did explicitly exclude native speakers in their definitions, “[t]he majority of ELF researchers...accept that speakers of English from both inner and outer circles also participate in intercultural communication (albeit as a small minority in the case of inner circle speakers)” (Jenkins 2006a: 161, quoted in Jenkins 2015b: 56). This is a particularly salient point for this dissertation, since the research project presented and discussed here involved a native English speaker as the instructor of the pilot course which constituted the heart of the study (cf. 2.5.1).

It is also worth mentioning at this point that, more recently, there has been growing emphasis in the field that “ELF researchers are not suggesting that ELF communication is unique compared to other kinds of intercultural communication” (Baker 2015a: 8; cf. also Mortensen 2013, Baird et al. 2014, Baker 2018). The processes taking place in ELF talk also occur in other forms of multilingual, intercultural communication, and the fluid use of linguistic forms is similarly characteristic in lingua franca communication which does not take place through the medium of English. Nevertheless, ELF researchers argue that it is the unprecedented “scale at which ELF use is occurring” that makes it worthy of research attention (Baker 2015a: 8). The current role of English as a global lingua franca “makes it an important field of study and places ELF research in a position that is especially likely to produce new

² In fact, like Mortensen (2013), I “prefer to read the acronym ELF as ‘the use of English as a lingua franca’ rather than just ‘English as a lingua franca’” (Mortensen 2013: 27). However, it should be noted, as Mortensen himself pointed out, that “this is not always necessarily the way it is intended by authors quoted in this text” (Mortensen 2013: 27).

insights concerning the global uses of languages for intercultural communication” (Baker 2015a: 9; cf. also Jenkins 2015b: 72).

1.2 ELF and pedagogy: Drawing implications from ELF research for ELT

The inauguration of ELF as a field of applied sociolinguistic study was motivated in large part by pedagogical concerns, and research was thus undertaken from the beginning with an eye towards uncovering its implications for ELT. Ten years after her conceptual piece calling for a concerted research effort to explore the nature of ELF talk, Seidlhofer (2011) asserted that “ELF research and the consideration of its potential implications for pedagogy is entering a phase of genuine engagement with and examination of the issues from which really productive discussions can unfold” (Seidlhofer 2011: 193). Around the same time, Jenkins et al. (2011), with reference to Dewey (2009), acknowledged that ELF research seemed to have “reached a certain critical mass, a point where the available findings indicate that considerable reassessment and retheorizing of the relevant concepts with which we have customarily been concerned is now required” (Jenkins et al. 2011: 302) – including fundamental concepts informing ELT and SLA (Jenkins et al. 2011: 304-305). Since this point, a growing body of conceptual literature has been published on the implications that insights from descriptive ELF studies carry for ELT (cf. Dewey and Patsko 2018: 442), helping to define what might be called an ELF-informed, or even an ELF-oriented, approach to language teaching.

Arguably, “the most important aspect of ELF research from the point of view of ELT is what it tells us about effective lingua franca interactions” (Dewey and Patsko 2018: 442). By the end of the first decade of the new millennium, a sizeable body of empirical evidence had been amassed demonstrating that communicative success in ELF talk is far less contingent upon the degree to which speakers conform to a pre-determined set of lexicogrammatical or pragmatic norms such as those of a standard variety of English than upon speakers’ ability to use their linguistic resources flexibly in support of key interactional processes such as accommodation, negotiation of meaning and co-construction of understanding (cf. Dewey and Leung 2010: 11, Firth 2009, Cogo and Dewey 2012: 178). The use of non-standard forms at the levels of grammar and lexis has been shown to be widespread in ELF talk, yet researchers have noted time and again that the use of such forms rarely leads to significant problems of understanding (cf. Hülmbauer 2010: 114, Cogo and Dewey 2012: 77, Deterding 2013: 130). Research has also provided evidence that successful ELF users do not rely upon the communicative norms of English as it is used as a native language (ENL) simply because the

conversation is taking place in English; rather, they generally appear to suspend linguaculturally-based expectations in favor of negotiating and co-constructing communicative norms *in situ* in each new context (cf. Kaur 2016: 149; Baker 2009a: 577-578, 2015a: 98). Subsequent studies in the field have continued to uphold these claims while providing further insights regarding the ways in which key interactional processes appear to function in ELF talk (cf. Jenkins et al. 2018).

These claims stand in sharp contrast to central notions which have traditionally informed ELT, and language teaching more generally, concerning the kind of competence learners need to acquire in order to become successful language users beyond the classroom. In traditional approaches to foreign language teaching, “the grammar of a standard variety is regarded as the primary prerequisite for communication, and intelligibility is seen as norm dependent” (Dewey and Leung 2010: 12). This viewpoint is “deep rooted and pervasive” (Dewey and Leung 2010: 11), to the extent that ELT has largely operated on the “unquestioned assumption that the purpose of pedagogy is to direct learners towards native-speaker competence” (Seidlhofer 2011: 202; cf. also Ferguson 2006: 177, Jenkins 2006a: 138-139, Cogo and Dewey 2012: 175). In turn, this has led to an interpretation of communicative competence in ELT which places “a strong focus on lexical and grammatical competence” (Dewey and Leung 2010: 12; cf. also Leung 2005), to the extent that “[t]here has been a major tendency in classroom language pedagogy [...] over the years to focus primarily or even exclusively on [this kind of competence], and particularly on sentence-level accuracy” (Tarone 2016: 17). By and large, “ELT professionals are trained to look at language primarily with regard to notions of correctness, with accuracy prioritized above all else. In this respect, the principle concern of English language teachers is to encourage and facilitate learners to sound more [native speaker] like, by ensuring they conform as much as possible to ENL norms” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 173). That ELF research indicates that a speaker’s ability to use language flexibly in service of interactional processes appears to be more salient to communicative success in lingua franca talk thus “represents a key challenge to the way we have so far tended to conceptualize language in education” (Dewey and Leung 2010: 11).

As discussion of the implications of ELF research for pedagogy gained momentum within ELF research circles toward the end of the first decade of the 2000s, recognition of the need to reconsider the norm-dependent, native speaker-oriented conceptualization of communicative competence currently underpinning ELT also grew. In light of insights from ELF research, ELF scholars increasingly argued that, “if English is learned in order to engage in interactions for the purpose of lingua franca communication, then we need to entirely rethink the current attachment to ENL usage, predominantly still regarded as the only appropriate model for L2 learning” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 181). Alternative principles and priorities based upon central

insights from ELF research were proposed, many of which continue to be widely accepted in the field as what might be called underlying tenets of an emerging ELF-oriented approach to language teaching aimed at “promoting and enhancing the effective use of English as a lingua franca in communication” (Kaur 2015a: 243). Above all, ELF researchers argued that an ELF-oriented approach to language teaching should prioritize the development of the kind of flexible communicative competence that successful ELF users commonly exhibit (cf. Seidlhofer 2011: 196-197, Kaur 2015a: 243). In order to better reflect this kind of competence, these researchers have generally accepted the principle that the successful multilingual, multicultural ELF user should replace the monolingual native English speaker as the model for an ELF-oriented pedagogy (cf. Baker 2011a: 46, 47; Baker 2012b: 23, 24; Vettorel and Lopriore 2013: 486; Kaur 2016: 153). Likewise, given that communicative success in ELF talk appears to hinge upon the ability to participate in interactional processes such as accommodation and negotiation of meaning rather than adherence to particular norms of use, ELF researchers have also advocated for an emphasis on communicative effectiveness over linguistic accuracy in the ELF-oriented classroom. In evaluating the language that learners produce, “the focus should not be on the *forms* of learner language and how far they deviate from [native speaker] norms, but on how effectively they *function* in making meaning” (Seidlhofer 2011: 195, emphasis original; cf. also 197).

These shifts carry significant implications for language teaching in the ELF-oriented classroom. In such settings, researchers have argued that “it would make little sense to prioritize [native speaker] norms where they cannot be shown empirically to improve communication (and where, by contrast, they are even being shown to have the opposite effect)” in ELF talk (Jenkins 2006a: 140). Instead, they argue that ELF-oriented instruction should give precedence to features, strategies and processes which have been shown to carry “high functional load [...] for achieving understanding” in ELF communication (Seidlhofer 2011: 205; cf. also 207-208). The evidence that non-standard use at the level of grammar has been shown to have a benign effect on communicative effectiveness in ELF has led researchers to recommend that considerably less time and energy be spent on accuracy-based teaching and practice of grammatical structures than is commonly the case in current mainstream ELT (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012: 183, Tarone 2016: 218). By contrast, studies of ELF phonology have indicated that pronunciation plays a key role in intelligibility in ELF settings, suggesting the need to invest comparatively more instructional time in this area (c.f. Jenkins 2000, 2002; Deterding 2013). However, findings from these studies have called into question the need to develop fully native-like pronunciation for successful communication through ELF. Rather, they have illustrated that some pronunciation features are more salient than others in terms of their effects on intelligibility in ELF, suggesting that ELF-oriented instruction might do better

to prioritize these features, at least productively. Likewise, research has suggested that a good basic vocabulary is necessary for successful ELF communication, even though the use of non-standard lexis has not necessarily been shown to have a negative effect on communicative effectiveness in ELF interactions (cf. Hülmbauer 2010, Seidlhofer 2004).

Nevertheless, although attention has been drawn to the need to reevaluate the relative amount of instructional focus given to language features at different linguistic levels in light of research insights into ELF, ELF scholars have placed particular emphasis on “the need to focus [...] more on the communicative practices and strategies of effective speakers” in the ELF-oriented classroom (Jenkins et al. 2011: 306; cf. also Tarone 2016: 218). Even very early on, when the field was still largely focused on the description of ELF forms, ELF research was already providing some initial insights into the role of communicative processes and strategies at the levels of pronunciation and lexis. Thus, the earliest work on pronunciation also highlighted the crucial importance of the ability to accommodate phonologically to the needs of one’s interlocutors, both productively, where a speaker’s own pronunciation proved problematic, and receptively, where a speaker encountered significant differences in an interlocutor’s pronunciation (cf. Jenkins 2000, 2002). Similarly, research relating to the impact of lexis on communicative success drew attention to the importance of the ability to negotiate meaning through paraphrasing strategies for successful ELF communication (cf. Hülmbauer 2010, Seidlhofer 2004). As a result, even in relatively early discussions of implications for an ELF-oriented pedagogy, attention was drawn to the need to include instruction aimed at developing learners’ ability to participate in interactional processes such as phonological accommodation and paraphrasing intended meaning. As research in the early 2000s increasingly highlighted the inherent variability of ELF and accumulated evidence that communicative success in ELF “has more to do with awareness of linguistic and cultural difference, and a speaker’s ability to accommodate toward an interlocutor than knowledge of a single set of linguistic and pragmatic norms” (Dewey and Leung 2010: 11), ELF scholars placed even more emphasis on developing a conceptualization of language pedagogy that prioritized “a whole range of communication skills, knowledge, and attitudes” (Cogo 2012: 104) viewed as necessary for participation in central interactional processes of ELF such as accommodation to one’s interlocutors, negotiation of meaning and co-construction of understanding.

According to this perspective, what learners need to develop in order to be successful in ELF communication is not communicative competence with a particular variety of English, but rather what Widdowson (2003, 2022) has called a communicative capacity that will allow them to adjust their use of language flexibly according to the demands of the communicative context

in which they find themselves (cf. Widdowson 2003, 2022; Seidlhofer 2011, 2022). Particularly in light of

the absence of a defining form of English when used as a lingua franca, an ‘ELF-oriented approach’ needs to concern itself with the use of English rather than the form it takes. [...] Learners need to be equipped with the knowledge and ability to deal with the variability and instability inherent in English when used as a lingua franca in order to enable them to achieve communicative effectiveness. (Kaur 2015a: 243)

This focus on use rather than form has motivated calls for a shift “from a product-based to a process-based approach” in ELF-oriented language teaching (Maley 2009: 197, quoted in Seidlhofer 2011: 206). In terms of the priorities that such an approach suggests, “[f]indings from ELF research have much to offer in terms of identifying the practices and skills that support and promote effective communication in ELF” (Kaur 2015a: 243). Many researchers have drawn particular attention to the use of pragmatic and interactional strategies as a key element of communicative success in ELF talk, leading to the widespread recommendation that an ELF-oriented pedagogy should prioritize instruction aimed at developing learners’ ability to use communication strategies (cf. Seidlhofer 2004, 2011; Kirkpatrick 2010; Cogo and Dewey 2012; Dewey 2012; Murray 2012; Galloway and Rose 2015; Kaur 2015a; Tarone 2016). Researchers have also highlighted the intercultural nature of ELF communication, calling for instruction that supports learners in developing skills, knowledge and attitudes which can help them deal with the fluidity and variability of cultural norms in lingua franca communication (cf. Baker 2012a, 2015a; Jenkins 2014). Furthermore, ELF scholars have advocated for the need to include activities aimed at developing learner awareness of the implications of the current global role of English (cf. Jenkins 2012, Kaur 2015a: 242), as well as of the variable use of English in different contexts (cf. Cogo 2012: 102, Kaur 2015a: 242, Jenkins et al. 2011: 306, Vettorel 2018: 59). This is seen as an important step in helping learners appreciate and accept the need for the kind of capacity that such an ELF-oriented approach aims to develop.

1.3 From implication to practical implementation: Mind the gap

Since ELF research reached a certain ‘critical mass’ a little over a decade ago, the implications of empirical ELF research for ELT have received considerable attention in ELF circles. The principles and priorities of an emerging ELF-oriented approach to language teaching which have been derived from this discussion are by now relatively well-established and widely accepted within the field. However, such discussion has taken place chiefly at a conceptual level; little research is available on how these principles and priorities might be translated into

actual classroom practice (cf. Choi and Jeon 2016: 1). Yet ELF researchers have argued that an ELF-oriented approach is unlikely to truly ‘take hold’ in ELT without pedagogic research that sheds light on the ways in which such an approach can be practically implemented in the classroom, especially since adopting this kind of approach will generally require a significant shift in teachers’ understandings of fundamental concepts underpinning language teaching. Accordingly, Dewey (2012) argued that

it is not enough to simply say that ELF has implications for pedagogy, that teachers need to be aware of ELF, and that it would therefore be useful for language teachers to adopt an ELF perspective in classroom practice. Instead, we need to undertake a close examination of what research findings in fact mean for our conceptual approach, especially where these findings might be incongruous with existing ideas about language. (Dewey 2012: 143)

In considering the relationship between empirical studies of ELF and pedagogy, Baker (2012b) further noted that “[i]t should not be assumed that descriptions of language use will necessarily translate into findings that are relevant in the classroom. [...] Therefore, equally crucial is research into effective pedagogy that reflects and equips learners for [ELF] communication” (Baker 2012b: 34; cf. also Widdowson 2003: 106). Moreover, from a practical standpoint, ELF researchers have generally acknowledged that “ELT practitioners are in a better position to decide on what kinds of methods, materials and learning activities are likely to work in their classrooms, taking into account the local context and various constraints faced” (Kaur 2015a: 251). That is, ELF researchers commonly agree that ELT professionals are better placed to work out practical solutions for the implementation of an ELF-oriented approach in the classroom within the educational context in which they find themselves.³

These arguments all help to highlight a gap between the research-based implications of ELF and the practical implementation of an ELF-oriented approach to language teaching (cf. Dewey and Patsko 2018: 442) – a gap which, it has been argued, can best be filled by pedagogic research from within the language learning classroom:

What all this means in practice requires further empirical research [...] preferably action research carried out not by academics but by language teachers themselves in order to reassess practices in their own specific, situated teaching contexts, and incorporate changes in approach in whatever ways and to whatever extent is most appropriate. (Jenkins et al. 2011: 206)

³ On the whole, ELF researchers have been wary of issuing sweeping prescriptions regarding what exactly should be taught in the ELF-oriented classroom or how such an approach should be implemented. They have argued that the practical implementation of an ELF-oriented pedagogy is “above all a *local* question” which must involve contextually-sensitive solutions reflecting the complexities of the pedagogical and institutional contexts in which they are developed (Seidlhofer 2011: 202, emphasis original; cf. also Seidlhofer 2004: 225, Seidlhofer 2011: 198, Jenkins 2007: 238, Jenkins 2012: 492, Jenkins et al. 2011: 205, 206).

The action research approach specifically called for in this quotation has been used for “a number of different purposes” as a research methodology within applied linguistics and language teaching. These purposes have included “to address and find solutions to particular problems in a specific teaching or learning situation” and “to provide a vehicle for reducing the gaps between academic research findings and practical applications in the classroom” (Burns 2005: 62)⁴, both of which are highly relevant to the stage at which pedagogical ELF research currently finds itself. As a methodological approach, action research has a number of defining characteristics which make it particularly appropriate to these purposes. It is generally characterized as “ha[ving] a practical end: to transform practices” (Banegas and Consoli 2020: 183). This practical, transformative element “represents a key distinction from other forms of research” (Burns 2005: 60), making it an especially fitting methodology for research which seeks to have an influence on practice as well as theory.⁵ Furthermore, action research supports the adoption of an insider perspective on the processes involved in teaching and learning. It is a participatory form of research, in that it generally involves the same person as both language teacher and researcher. It thus represents an ‘experience-near’ research perspective which provides insights into the first-hand experience of these processes, rather than relying on external observation (cf. Seidlhofer 2022). Finally, as a qualitative form of research, action research generally attempts to account for, rather than control for, the complexity of the processes involved in teaching and learning. It “confronts rather than minimizes the variables present in the research context and attempts to seek explanations inclusive of those variables. The aim of the research is to provide rich descriptions and practical solutions that may have resonance for other practitioners in comparable situations” (Burns 2005: 67). In summary, action research in the field of language teaching

aims to generate fine-grained and relevant pedagogic findings that only those directly connected with the classroom life investigated can holistically understand, and ultimately share by painting complex pictures of classroom insights which

⁴ Other recognized purposes include “to underpin and investigate curriculum change or innovation and to understand the processes that occur as part of an educational change”, “to facilitate the professional development of reflective teachers”, “to acquaint teachers with research skills and to enhance their knowledge of conducting research” and “to enhance the development of teachers’ personal practical theories” (Burns 2005: 62). Burns (2005) lists multiple publications related to each of these purposes in language teaching research.

⁵ Burns (2005) notes that action research has often been “portrayed predominantly as a means of enhancing teacher professional development. The current goals and outcomes tend to lie in the realms of personal and/or professional action and teacher ‘growth’ rather than in the production of knowledge about curriculum, pedagogy or educational systems” (Burns 2005: 63). Nonetheless, some perspectives on action research clearly acknowledge that it can contribute to the generation of knowledge and theory which may be taken up at both practical and conceptual levels of discussion within the fields of applied linguistics and language teaching (cf. McNiff and Whitehead 2011).

‘external researchers’ may otherwise fail to capture. (Banegas and Consoli 2020: 178)

These characteristics make it a particularly appropriate research methodology for addressing the gap between research implications for pedagogy and practical classroom implementation which exists at this stage in ELF research.

In the quotation above, Jenkins et al. (2011) argued for the need for “action research carried out not by academics but by language teachers themselves” (Jenkins et al. 2011: 206). However, in conceptualizations of action research as a methodology within educational settings, it is generally recognized that “the skills and expertise of teachers and researchers *in combination* are required” if questions related to classroom-based teaching and learning are to be “genuinely and rigorously” explored (Burns 2005: 67, emphasis added). Consequently, those undertaking such research “are usually referred to as teacher-researchers” to accentuate the significance of both roles in the action research context (cf. Banegas and Consoli 2020: 178). It is therefore argued here that action research which aims to address the gap between empirical ELF research and classroom implementation of an ELF-oriented approach in the language learning classroom should ideally be carried out by teacher-researchers, rather than by those who identify with only one role or the other.

Despite the recognition since the early 2010s of the need for classroom-based studies exploring the implementation of an ELF-oriented pedagogy, such studies continue to be relatively rare. To date, only a handful of publications (Baker 2012c, 2015a; Infantidou and Tzanne 2012; Dimoski et al. 2016; Rahimi and Ruzrohk 2016; Yu and van Maele 2018; Abdzadeh and Baker 2020) have reported on pedagogical studies examining how an ELF-informed pedagogy might be implemented in practice, and only some of these studies have adopted the kind of action research methodology called for in Jenkins et al. (2011).⁶ There is

⁶ Burns (2005) draws attention to the “low incidence of publication” of action research studies as a problematic feature of action research more generally (Burns 2005: 70). It seems likely that more small-scale action research related to ELF may be going on than is actually being published, especially considering some of the ELF-oriented teacher training initiatives that have been set up in the past decade. However, as Banegas and Consoli (2020) have pointed out, wider “[t]ransformation [only becomes] possible if the processes and outcomes of action research are shared within the community of practice where action research is located” (Banegas and Consoli 2020: 184). In considering the channels that some practitioners are using to share insights they are generating into the implementation of an ELF-informed approach, Dewey and Patsko (2018) mention a number of alternatives to publication through the usual academic channels, including blogging, online discussion forums and participation in conferences and seminar events (cf. Dewey and Patsko 2018: 250-252). However, many such alternative channels may not be considered by research communities as reflecting the same rigor as the academic publication process. There is thus arguably a need to encourage the formal publication of action research as another important way to promote “further engagement between researchers and practitioners” in the field of ELF (Dewey and Patsko 2018: 453).

thus a continuing need for such studies in order to work toward closing the gap between research-based implications derived from empirical ELF studies and the practical implementation of an ELF-oriented pedagogic approach in ELT.

1.4 Reevaluating the teaching of English for lingua franca communication: A comprehensive action research study

Following the call for pedagogic action research relating to the practical implementation of an ELF-oriented approach to language teaching in Jenkins et al. (2011) quoted above, the study presented and discussed in this dissertation adopted an action research methodology in order to investigate the following main research question:

How might emerging theories about ELF contribute to English courses that would better prepare students at a technical university for situations involving the uses of English which they are likely to encounter both as students and after graduation?

This main research question was further elaborated on through the exploration of three supporting questions:

- What theories and hypotheses have been developed so far as to what communicative practices and strategies English language learners need to develop to successfully communicate in ELF situations?
- How can these theories and hypotheses be turned into course content and materials that will help students acquire the communicative practices and strategies needed for success in such situations?
- What materials already exist and how well do they address these needs at the collegiate level?

At the heart of the study was a pilot course, designed and taught by the author of this dissertation as part of the language program offered through a technical university in Germany. Participants in the pilot course included students studying a range of subjects at the university, as well as two university employees who worked with incoming international students. Methodologically, the study combined an exploratory action research approach with a qualitative applied linguistic perspective. The primary instrument of data collection was a 185,000-word corpus recorded during the pilot course which comprised all of the spoken interactions that took place during the course sessions, as well as during the final oral exam. Supported by data drawn from additional research instruments, ‘telling’ moments in this spoken classroom discourse were identified and analyzed, primarily using an ethnographically-informed Conversation Analysis (CA) approach, in order to examine and evaluate the course in terms of the overarching research question.

As has been mentioned in 1.3 above, much conceptual literature regarding an ELF-oriented approach to language teaching has been published in the last decade, but publications reporting on classroom-based studies continue to be relatively rare. These pedagogical studies have tended to focus on one element or aspect of an ELF-oriented ELT. Thus, Rahimi and Ruzrohk (2016) reported on results from a classroom-based study in the area of pronunciation, while Baker (2012c, 2015a), Yu and van Maele (2018) and Abdzadeh and Baker (2020) all focused on classroom-based instruction in the area of culture and intercultural communication, and Dimoski et al. (2016) and Infantidou and Tzanne (2012) looked at the effects of explicit instruction in the areas of communication strategies and pragmatic competence respectively. To my knowledge, the study presented and discussed in this dissertation remains unique, in that it focused not on pedagogic implementation in one area of instruction, but on integrating different strands of instruction with each other into a more comprehensive, cohesive ELF-oriented course. While university language programs, for example, do sometimes offer courses aimed exclusively at a specific skill or aspect involved in using a language, much language teaching around the world involves the development of skills and knowledge across a number of areas within the same course. Thus, while studies covering specific aspects can certainly provide useful insights, there is also a need for studies like this one which consider not only how the principles and priorities of an emerging ELF-oriented approach to language teaching can be implemented in one particular area, but how different strands of instruction can be balanced and incorporated into a more comprehensive course in an actual classroom setting.

Before concluding this section, it is important to note that the findings from qualitative action research like the study presented and discussed in this dissertation are highly context-dependent and thus not readily replicable or generalizable to other contexts (cf. Banegas and Consoli 2020: 184).⁷ However, this does not mean that insights from this study and others like it cannot be useful, both to other practitioners and for the development of further pedagogic theory. Findings and insights may ‘resonate’ with the experiences and concerns of other practitioners in their own settings, especially settings which share significant contextual features with the study in question, potentially leading teachers to change aspects of their own practice (cf. Banegas and Consoli 2020: 184; Burns 2005: 67; McNiff and Whitehead 2011: 59, 242, 245). Equally, the insights generated from such studies may be taken back up into

⁷ Rather than trying to measure action research against “the traditional criteria of random selection, generalizability and replicability”, Burns (2005) has argued, with reference to Bailey (1998) and Checkland and Holwell (1998), that action research should be judged instead according to the concept of recoverability (Burns 2005: 76). To be considered recoverable, “the research ‘story’ must be plausible and the process by which the research was undertaken recoverable by an external audience in relation to the methodology, and the procedures of data collection and analysis” (Burns 2005: 67).

research, leading to the further development of theory at the conceptual level (cf. McNiff and Whitehead 2011: 55, 59, 245). In this sense, the findings generated through action research may help to “generate theory from within...practice” (cf. McNiff and Whitehead 2011: 76). It is thus hoped that the experience and insights gained from the current study will contribute toward a better understanding of the relationship between linguistic research and pedagogic practice, thereby helping to bridge the gap between implication and implementation in both directions.

1.5 *Outline of the dissertation*

This introductory chapter has served to introduce the research study presented and discussed in this dissertation, situating it within the applied sociolinguistic field of ELF studies, identifying and discussing the research problem which motivated its undertaking and providing an overview of the research questions and general methodology underpinning it. Chapter 2 presents a detailed discussion of the methodological design of the study, including the context in which it took place, the research participants, the conceptualization and planning of the pilot course and the research instruments used. Following that, Chapter 3 provides background information about three aspects of the pilot course which are relevant to understanding the analysis and discussion presented in the main body of the dissertation, but which nevertheless are treated as supporting elements, rather than main areas of investigation.

The main part of the dissertation is organized into three ‘strands’ around three central areas of instruction in the pilot course – pronunciation (Chapters 4-7), culture and intercultural communication (Chapters 8-14) and pragmatics and communication strategies (Chapters 15-22). The pronunciation strand of the pilot course covered two major areas. The first focused on developing the students’ ability to produce those specific features of pronunciation that have been identified as important for intelligibility in ELF settings, based upon Jenkins’ Lingua Franca Core (LFC). The second focused on the development of the students’ productive and receptive phonological accommodation skills. In the strand of the course on culture and intercultural communication, instruction centered around the development of skills, attitudes and knowledge that would help the students to cope with ELF as a form of intercultural communication, as presented in Baker’s Intercultural Awareness (ICA) framework. Finally, the pragmatics and communication strategies strand also comprised two major areas. The first aimed to raise the students’ meta-pragmatic awareness of some general pragmatic principles and processes while also helping them to extend their repertoire of potential linguistic realizations for a limited set of speech acts. The second, more substantial block aimed to

develop the students' strategic competence with a range of communication strategies (CSs) which have been identified as playing a significant role in ELF talk.

Each of these strands begins with a comprehensive literature review of current pedagogic approaches in ELT, as well as of empirical ELF research and its implications for an ELF-oriented approach in the respective area, culminating in a statement about the role of that particular area of instruction in the pilot course (Chapters 4, 8 and 15). The organization of the subsequent chapters in each strand reflects both the way that that particular area of the course was conceptualized and the nature of the findings that it generated. In general terms, these chapters describe the conceptualization and planning of classroom instruction in that strand, and present analysis and discussion of what happened during, and resulted from, the implementation of instruction in the pilot course classroom. The specific organization of each strand is detailed in 5.3, 9 and 15.5 respectively.

Finally, Chapter 23 provides a concluding discussion of the findings of the study in relationship to the pilot course as a whole, before considering the implications of these findings for further research and practice.

2 Methods

As has been stated in the introductory chapter, this dissertation represents a qualitative action research study within the general field of applied linguistics and the more specific field of ELF studies. Action research in educational contexts generally aims to support the development of informed classroom practice. As such, it exists at the crux between theory and practice, attempting to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding of phenomena and their implications for teaching and learning. It is by nature an interventionist methodology (cf. Burns 2005: 60) in which practitioners “identify an educational issue emerging from their unique context and navigate it as reflective insiders with access to their own classrooms” (Banegas and Consoli 2020: 177-178). Those engaging in action research “are usually referred to as teacher-researchers” in the action research paradigm “in order to highlight that their reflective practices and decisions are informed and supported by empirical data which they have generated and analyzed themselves” (Banegas and Consoli 2020: 178; cf. also Xerri 2017).

In keeping with the action research approach adopted as the underlying method, the heart of the current study was a pilot course, offered through a university language program, which was designed to integrate insights from the growing body of literature on ELF communication into an ELF-oriented approach to ELT. I was fully responsible for the processes of designing and holding this course as both researcher and course instructor. Data collected during the pilot course was used to explore and evaluate the course in terms of the research questions introduced in the previous chapter (cf. 1.4). In keeping with the applied linguistic focus of the study, the primary research instrument upon which analysis in this dissertation is based was a 185,000-word corpus comprising all of the spoken interactions which took place during the pilot course, as well as the final oral assessment.

The study was guided by an overarching research plan encompassing the following five steps:

1. Establish a theoretical basis
2. Collect and evaluate materials
3. Design and hold a pilot course and collect data
4. Transcribe the collected spoken data from the pilot course
5. Analyze the collected data

However, it should be noted from the outset that the methodology of this project was to a large extent open-ended and emergent, a typical characteristic of action research (cf. Banegas and Consoli 2020: 179-182, McNiff and Whitehead 2011: 35, Burns 2005: 59). As the study progressed, the details of each new step were informed by the results of previous ones. Accordingly, the specific methodology came into increasingly sharper focus as the project proceeded, making the study highly processual in nature (cf. Banegas and Consoli 2020: 180).

The succeeding sections of this chapter aim to provide a detailed account of the methodological design of the current study. The first two deal with aspects of the context in which this study was embedded that influenced its design. 2.1 describes the institutional context in which the pilot course took place, while 2.2 provides details about the participants who enrolled in the pilot course as students. 2.3 then briefly describes the process of gaining the informed consent of these participants regarding their participation in the study and the recording of classroom discourse. The process of designing the pilot course itself is discussed in 2.4. Section 2.4.1 describes the conceptualization phase of course design in which macro-level decisions regarding the overall structure of the course were established, while 2.4.2 describes the concrete planning phase in which the course sessions themselves were planned in detail. Next, 2.5 explains the methods used to collect and analyze data from the pilot course. 2.5.1 focuses specifically on the corpus which constituted the main research instrument. It provides information about the processes of recording and transcribing the classroom discourse which took place during the course, as well as the methods used in the analysis of the data from this corpus. 2.5.2 focuses on the collection of supporting data through the use of additional research instruments. Together, these five sections elaborate the process-oriented methodology which emerged from the five-step action research plan. Finally, 2.6 briefly summarizes key characteristics of the pilot course which make it a relevant object of study.

2.1 *The research context*

The pilot course was offered as part of the regular program of language courses at the *Technische Universität Kaiserslautern* (Technical University of Kaiserslautern) during the summer semester of 2013. Founded in 1970, the TU Kaiserslautern is the only technical university in the German state of Rheinland-Pfalz. It serves roughly 14,000 students and offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees in a range of technical majors, including architecture, engineering, the natural and physical sciences, the social sciences and economics. At the time of the pilot course, the university was completing a transition from the traditional German degree programs (*Diplom* and *Magister*) to the Bachelor and Master system in accordance with Germany's participation in the Bologna Reform. As part of this shift, many departments had begun to require their students to achieve a certain level of proficiency in English (often C1 according to the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR)) or to accrue a certain number of credits in English language courses before graduation. Some courses of study, particularly at the Masters level, had also switched to English-mediated instruction in order to attract more international students and facilitate other types of international academic

cooperation. These factors placed an increased demand on the English courses offered through the university.

At many German universities, practical language courses are not offered directly through an academic department, but rather through a language center. In keeping with this trend, the TU Kaiserslautern had established a non-profit registered association, the *Verein zur allgemeinen Förderung von Völkerverständigung, Kultur und Bildung an der TU Kaiserslautern e.V.* [Registered Association for the General Promotion of International Understanding, Culture and Education at the TU Kaiserslautern], generally referred to as the VKB. At the time of the pilot study, the VKB offered courses in ten languages as well as German as a foreign or second language (German: *Deutsch als Fremd- oder Zweitsprache (DaF/DaZ)*). A fee of €40 for university students and personnel and €70 for non-university-affiliated participants was charged for each course. All courses were offered for one semester. Most met weekly for ninety minutes during the fourteen-week lecture period, in parallel to regular degree-related course offerings; however, a few courses were held as block or intensive courses, or took place during the lecture-free periods of the semester. Regular attendance and participation were mandatory for successful completion of all courses. At the end of a course, those who required a formal grade for their course of study could participate in the final exam; all others who met the attendance requirements received a certificate documenting their successful participation in the course. The final exam could be offered in written or oral form at the discretion of the instructor. This exam was generally completed during the last regularly-scheduled course session, and grades were assigned according to an official grading scale developed by the language program coordinators.

Language instructors were largely employed by the VKB as freelancers on a course-by-course basis, also a common practice in the German university system. While the instructors were given a fair amount of latitude in terms of the content and the instructional methods used in their individual courses, they were generally expected to follow a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to language instruction. To facilitate this approach, courses were capped at twenty-two participants. All courses were also assigned a particular proficiency level according to the CEFR, and participants could take a written pre-test to help them determine what level of course they should enroll in.

At the time of the pilot course, I had been teaching English courses through the VKB for two semesters. During those semesters, I taught courses at the intermediate level (B1 and B2 on the CEFR), some of which focused on English for general purposes and some of which involved English for academic purposes. The former included both courses addressing a range of communicative competences and skills, and conversational English courses focused

specifically on speaking. The courses focused on English for academic purposes included courses on academic writing in English, as well as a course on English for presentations and speaking in academic contexts. During the semester in which the pilot course was held, I also continued to teach courses in these other areas.

While the overall aims and the content of the pilot course differed from the more traditionally EFL-oriented courses offered through the VKB, the pilot course still followed the same general format as the other language courses offered at the TU Kaiserslautern. It was offered as a one-semester course during the lecture period of the summer semester of 2013. It was scheduled for Thursday evenings at 5:15pm, as the language program coordinators, who were quite supportive of the course, felt that an evening timeslot would potentially attract more students because it was less likely to conflict directly with other academic courses. After some deliberation with the language program coordinators, it was also decided that the course should be offered at the CEFR level C1, since they were more comfortable offering a pilot course to more advanced learners. The course met eleven times between 24 April and 20 July, once per week excluding two state holidays which fell on Thursdays within that timeframe. Each course session was ninety minutes long, following the standard length of German university courses. Ten of the course sessions were devoted to course content; the final session was reserved for formal assessment. Due to the pilot course's focus on oral communication, final assessment took place as a paired oral exam rather than a written exam.

The registration process for the pilot course was no different than for any other language course offered through the VKB. The pilot course was advertised online through the VKB's language course catalogue under the title *English C1: English for International Communication*. A brief description of the content and aims of the course was also included. Any student who had achieved the necessary prerequisite level, as demonstrated either through a pre-test or through successful completion of previous courses at the B2 or C1 level, could sign up for the course. Thus, the participants self-selected to register for the course on the basis of the course description, without prior knowledge that they would also be participating in a research study. They were, however, informed at the beginning of the first session that the course was part of an action research study, and the written consent of each participant was obtained before instruction began, a process that will be discussed in more detail in 2.3 below.

The VKB did not have any designated classroom space of its own for language courses on the TU Kaiserslautern campus. Rather, language courses were assigned to classrooms around campus after classroom assignment for regular academic courses was complete. This meant that language courses generally took place during peripheral hours, often before 10am or after 5pm, since most classrooms were booked between these times. It also meant that language

courses took place in different types of classrooms all over campus. The pilot course was assigned to a small seminar room in a building largely housing offices and other seminar rooms near the center of campus. This seminar room was quite typical in terms of its setup. It featured a blackboard and a stretch of white-painted wall that was used as a projector screen, as well as a table for the teacher, at the front of the classroom. The students sat at two-person tables which were generally arranged in a U with several rows in the middle facing forward. In terms of technology, the room featured a tabletop overhead projector and a ceiling-mounted digital projector to which a laptop could be connected via an HDMI port in the wall near the instructor's table. The room had no audio equipment. A portable CD player had to be brought in to facilitate listening tasks during the pilot course. The room was often quite warm during the pilot course, making it desirable to keep the bank of windows along the side of the classroom open as much as possible, even though this sometimes meant that music from the university-sponsored outdoor parties that were often scheduled on campus on Thursday evenings in the summer semester was audible during instruction. However, this music was rarely loud enough to interfere with instruction to the point where it was necessary to close the windows.

In summary, with the exception of its ELF-oriented aims and content, the pilot course very much represented a typical language course as they are offered at many German universities. It took place within the established structures of the language program at the TU Kaiserslautern and was necessarily shaped in part by these structures and the parameters they imposed. The study set out to explore what was possible within this framework. It thus represents precisely the type of action research study called for in the quotation by Jenkins et al. (2011: 305, 306) introduced in the previous chapter (cf. 1.4): it was an attempt to explore how an ELF-oriented approach could be adopted “within the possibilities, affordances and resources available” (Bangeras and Consoli 2020: 180) in the specific, situated teaching context in which the study took place.

2.2 *The participants*

In all, eighteen participants signed up to take part as students in the pilot course. Of these participants, nine were female and nine were male, and all were between 18 and 25 years old. Thirteen of the participants were enrolled as students at the TU Kaiserslautern. Three more were exchange students from universities outside Germany who were studying at the TU Kaiserslautern for the semester. The students, both regularly enrolled and exchange, were

working toward degrees in a range of technical majors, including mechanical engineering, industrial engineering, sociology, architecture, biology, civil engineering, mathematics and physics, and electrical engineering and information technology. Two of the students were enrolled in Masters-level programs; most of the other eleven students were close to the end of their three-year Bachelor programs, with the exception of one student who was only in his second semester. The final two participants were employees of the TU Kaiserslautern who worked with incoming international students as part of the university administration.

Based upon the make-up of learning groups from previous courses I had taught at the TU Kaiserslautern, it seemed probable that the pilot course would attract a significant number of foreign and exchange students, creating a natural linguacultural diversity that would mirror authentic ELF interactions. However, the linguacultural backgrounds of the participants who signed up for the pilot course ultimately proved to be relatively homogeneous. Fifteen participants were German nationals who spoke German as L1. Of these fifteen, two came from families who had immigrated to Germany within the last two generations and spoke an additional L1 (Turkish and Romanian respectively). Nevertheless, they had both been raised in Germany and were fully integrated into German society. Even the three exchange students did not add much linguistic diversity to the group. Two were from the same Brazilian university and spoke Brazilian Portuguese as L1; the final student came from Portugal and spoke European Portuguese as L1. The Brazilian participants had only a basic knowledge of German, but the Portuguese participant spoke it fluently, having been to a German school in Portugal.

The relative linguacultural homogeneity of the learning group carried far-reaching implications for the pilot course. In contrast to linguistically heterogeneous learning groups, opportunities to engage in ELF interactions do not naturally arise – at least to the same extent – in learning groups where the participants come from a limited range of linguacultural backgrounds. As a result, learners are not naturally exposed to a range of accents or provided with as many opportunities to experience the process of negotiating meaning and accommodating to speakers of a range of L1s different from their own within the classroom. Rather, the teacher must look for other ways to provide exposure to ELF communication and accent variation, and must also find or create tasks and activities that allow and encourage the learners to practice the kinds of strategies that have been found to contribute to successful communication in lingua franca settings but do not manifest in the same ways in same-L1 talk.

While these challenges are recognized as significant in the literature, many have not yet been sufficiently addressed in terms of practical guidance for the classroom. Nevertheless, the current reality, as Jenkins (2000) pointed out early on in research into ELF communication, is that more ELT classrooms are linguaculturally homogeneous than heterogeneous, and effective

solutions are needed to meet the challenges that such classrooms present if ELF-oriented pedagogy is to be made accessible and feasible to English teachers (cf. Jenkins 2000: 191, 193). The linguaculturally homogeneous make-up of the pilot course learning group essentially forced me as the teacher-researcher to confront some of these issues. The practical solutions which were developed for and implemented in the pilot course thus represent an important area of analysis in this study, and it is hoped that they will contribute to the ELF knowledge base in ways that will ultimately help other teachers to cope with these challenges in their own contexts.

Since the participants were unaware when they signed up that *English C1: English for International Communication* involved participation in a research study, it can be inferred that this was not a factor in their decision to register for the course. The participants were asked to comment on why they chose to take part in the pilot course during one of their earliest assignments, an oral two-minute introduction of themselves prepared as homework and held at the beginning of course session 2⁸, and these responses shed some light on their motivations. One of the most pervasive themes in the students' introductions was the wish to improve or refresh their English skills. Moreover, of the nine students who touched on this theme, five specifically mentioned a desire to improve or reactivate their spoken English skills, suggesting that the emphasis of the course on spoken communication was part of their motivation for signing up for the pilot course. Most of the students also had academic or professional goals in mind. Four students mentioned signing up for the pilot course in preparation for an internship, two in the USA and two in the Pacific region. Two more were applying for Masters programs that were taught in English and required a certificate from a C1-level course for their applications. Several also mentioned that they hoped to work internationally after graduation. The two university employees both stated that they worked with incoming international students and often used English to communicate with those who were not fluent in German. In addition to English skills and professional goals, a number of students also mentioned the content of the course when speaking about their motivation. Three mentioned the importance of English as a global language that allows people from all over the world to communicate with each other, while two more mentioned their interest in learning about other cultures as a motivation for signing up for the course. Only one student alluded to a purely logistical reason for selecting the course, commenting that she needed to take an evening course because of her work schedule.

⁸ Cf. 3.1 for a more detailed description of this assignment, its role in needs-analysis in the early stages of the course and the kinds of data it generated about the participants.

The end-of-course evaluations filled out by the course participants directly after course session 10⁹ also supplied more concrete evidence regarding the participants' motivations for enrolling in the pilot course. The evaluation form distributed to the participants included the question, *Why did you decide to take this course?* It then provided eleven potential responses, and the participants were invited to tick all that applied. Some of the participants checked only one box, some up to four. The most frequent answer ticked was *to refresh my English skills* (eight responses), also a common response in the two-minute introductions. The second most frequent response, *to get a certificate* (five responses), indicates that more students may have seen this as a motivational factor than were willing to acknowledge it in front of the whole learning group at the beginning of the course. However, quite a few of the responses were also related more specifically to the content of the course and its perceived usefulness beyond the classroom, including *interest in the topics and/or skills covered* (four responses), *because the skills covered are important for my future job* (four responses) and *to prepare for a study / internship abroad* (four responses). It should also be noted that none of the participants indicated that they had signed up for the course *because the course fits into my schedule*, even though one student had mentioned this in her two-minute introduction. This supports the point that most students appear to have been less motivated by practical considerations such as conflicts with other commitments.

Of the eighteen participants who began the course, sixteen ultimately completed it successfully. Two participants, both students regularly enrolled at the TU Kaiserslautern who spoke German as their only L1, dropped the course within the first five course sessions, an occurrence which was not unusual in the language courses offered by the university. Of the sixteen who completed the entire course, thirteen participated in and passed the final exam, receiving graded certificates. The other three (including the two university employees) received ungraded certificates of participation.

Due to the focus of the study on classroom instruction, the primary role of the enrolled participants in this study was that of learner. Since all of the participants were adult learners enrolled in a university language program course, the word *students* is used to refer to the course participants enrolled in the pilot course throughout this dissertation, regardless of their status within the university. By contrast, the word *learner* is used to refer to learners more generally beyond the context of the study itself.

⁹ It should be noted that only the participants who were present at course session 10 filled out the end-of-course survey. Attendance records indicate that thirteen students were present at this course session. For a more detailed description of the end-of-course evaluations, see 2.5.2 below.

2.3 *Obtaining participants' consent*

Before course planning began, permission was obtained from the university language program coordinators to use data from the pilot course as part of an action research study. University policy at the TU Kaiserslautern required researchers to obtain explicit consent from participants for studies involving audio or video recording. The university ethics committee had developed a standard consent form for such studies. The researcher was required to provide a brief description of the research project which also stipulated how the recordings would be stored and who would have access to them, what the recordings would be used for and how personal data about the participants would be handled. The bottom half contained a standard statement of consent for the participant and the researcher to sign. This half was to be collected and kept by the researcher. A copy of the consent form for the pilot course appears in Appendix B of this dissertation.

The students who had registered for the course were informed that the course was also serving as a basis for research at the beginning of the first course session, before content-related instruction began. Permission to record the course sessions and to use anonymized data for the purposes of the study was readily obtained from all participating students without objection or discussion. Each returned a signed copy of the bottom half of the consent form. From this point on, the course was audio-recorded, including the students' performance on the oral final exam. A more detailed account of the process of recording the course and transcribing the resulting recordings is provided in 2.5.1 below.

2.4 *Designing the pilot course*

In the current study, considerable emphasis was placed on establishing a thorough foundational understanding of the underlying research informing the study before any action was taken. Thus, the first step of the action research plan focused on establishing from current research into ELF communication what skills and competences had been identified or hypothesized as necessary for successful communication through ELF at the time of the study, as well as which areas of ELT had been identified by ELF researchers as potentially in need of reevaluation and reconceptualization in light of these findings. In this sense, the current study aligns strongly with a more recent approach to action research, designated *exploratory action research*, “which seeks to encourage deeper reflection to explore teachers' puzzles or research questions before they set out to plan and act to generate transformative change” (Banegas and Consoli 2020: 182; cf. also Smith 2015, Smith and Rebolledo 2018). The theoretical knowledge accrued in

this step of the research plan served as the foundation for all of the subsequent research steps, in particular the design of the pilot course itself.

The process of designing the pilot course took place in two major phases, a conceptualization phase and a concrete planning phase. The conceptualization phase dealt primarily with the macro-organization of the course and was completed before the course was advertised to potential students. It involved using the insights gained from the first step of the research plan to establish the main priorities and aims of the course. It also involved identifying topics and task sequences from the materials evaluated in the second step that might facilitate these priorities and aims in the classroom. The concrete planning phase of pilot course design took place primarily after enrollment in the course was complete and involved detailed planning of the individual course sessions. In 2.4.1 and 2.4.2, these two phases of course planning will be described in more detail.

2.4.1 Conceptualizing the course

At the time at which the course was being designed, the vast majority of ELF studies which had been completed had focused on spoken interactions (cf. Seidlhofer 2004: 223, Jenkins et al. 2011: 286, Cogo and Dewey 2012: 2).¹⁰ Very few empirically-founded insights were available into the potential ramifications of ELF for the teaching of writing in the classroom.¹¹ Thus, it was decided early on in the conceptualization phase that the pilot course would focus

¹⁰ This focus on spoken interactions in studies of ELF stemmed from the general acknowledgment that it is primarily through such interactions that the dynamic processes which give rise to the variability and fluidity of language forms so often noted as a key aspect of ELF are most pronounced. In explaining why so much of ELF research has focused on spoken interactions, Seidlhofer (2011) stated that “the decision to focus on spoken interactions seemed imperative, as it is in speech that variability in language is most readily discernable. The interactants’ negotiation of meaning in real-time, spontaneous talk is relieved of the self-monitoring pressure of writing, and allows us to observe the use of what Labov refers to as the vernacular, where attention is paid to communicative content rather than to linguistic forms themselves (Labov 1984: 29). In addition, when the speech events are highly interactive, researchers can also gain some measure of insight into how mutual understanding among interlocutors is co-constructed” (Seidlhofer 2011: 23). By contrast, Seidlhofer (2004) noted that in traditional written forms of language, “there is no possibility of the overt reciprocal negotiation of meaning typical of spoken interaction”, leading to “more reliance on established norms [...] in the interests of maintaining global mutual intelligibility” (Seidlhofer 2004: 223). By and large, studies of ELF communication continue to focus predominantly on naturally-occurring spoken interactions, although limited attention has also been paid to written forms of ELF, particularly in academic contexts (cf. e.g. Horner 2011, Ingvarsdóttir and Arnbjörnsdóttir 2013, Lorés-Sanz 2016, Huh et al. 2020).

¹¹ In their state-of-the-art article, Jenkins et al. (2011) observed that “there has been a recent interest in exploring written ELF, although as yet not enough from which to draw implications” (Jenkins et al. 2011: 286). Likewise, Cogo and Dewey (2012) remarked parenthetically that “there is a growing interest in the study of writing from an ELF perspective, although there is still little data available to date” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 2).

primarily on oral communication. The primary objective of the course was therefore to help the participants improve their oral communication skills for ELF communication. Consequently, the pilot course was designed to maximize opportunities for the participants to actively develop and practice ELF-oriented listening and speaking skills. Given the overall focus on oral communication, it was also decided during this phase that the mode of the final assessment would be oral rather than written.

The first step of the research plan focused on identifying what should be prioritized in the ELF-oriented ELT classroom and how these priorities might require adjustments to aspects of current ELT practice. As has been mentioned in the introduction, ELF as a subfield of applied linguistic study was formed in part out of pedagogical concerns, and while researchers have been somewhat reluctant to prescribe what teachers ought to do in the classroom, a number of principles have crystalized out of this research which are now widely accepted in the field as what might be called underlying tenets of an emerging ELF-oriented approach to language teaching (cf. 1.2). In keeping with these principles, the course adopted the successful multilingual, multicultural ELF user as the primary model for instruction rather than the native speaker. Instruction generally prioritized effective and contextually appropriate language use over adherence to a predetermined set of linguistic norms. It also aimed to develop in the students the kind of communicative flexibility which would allow them to communicate successfully in ELF situations with interlocutors from potentially unfamiliar linguacultural backgrounds beyond the classroom.

Beyond these guiding principles, the first step of the research plan focused primarily on identifying those skills, capabilities and attitudes which had been posited in the literature as most important to successful ELF communication and which should thus be included as areas of focus in the pilot course. Based on the results of this step, three more specific supporting course objectives were formulated to guide further planning:

- Course participants will improve their command of those features of English which have been empirically established as important for successful ELF intelligibility. These primarily include certain features of pronunciation and lexis. For the most part, they do not include grammar, as the use of non-standard grammatical forms has generally been shown to have little impact on intelligibility in ELF communication.
- Course participants will improve their intercultural communicative competence through instruction in and practice of communication strategies which have been empirically shown to play a significant role in successful lingua franca communication, as well as tasks and activities to develop their intercultural awareness.

- Course participants will become more aware of the situation of the English language today: how it is used (roles, domains), where it is used, who uses it and with whom, etc. They will explore their own identity as L2 speakers of English and reflect on how they expect to use English in intercultural settings in future.

In keeping with these aims, four major areas were established as the main foci of instruction during the pilot course: pronunciation, culture and intercultural communication, pragmatics and communication strategies, and awareness-raising about the current sociolinguistic situation of English.

Once the overarching pedagogical principles, objectives and areas of focus of the pilot course had been established, the next step in the conceptualization phase of course design was to identify specific topics and task sequences in the materials evaluated in the second step of the research plan which might be used as the basis for more concrete lesson planning. In keeping with the focus on adopting an ELF-oriented approach to ELT in the specific, situated context in which the study was taking place, an exhaustive evaluation of existing ELT materials was not attempted as part of this study. Instead, the second step of the research plan focused primarily on evaluating materials for upper-intermediate and advanced adult learners which were then currently available in Germany. At this stage, the goal was to collect a pool of resources, rather than to set a fixed program for the course to follow. Detailed planning of the individual course sessions was reserved for the next phase of course design.

At the time the pilot course was being offered, most ELT materials continued to present English from the traditional EFL perspective underpinning mainstream ELT (cf. 1.2), despite frequent claims by publishers that their materials were meant to prepare learners for global forms of communication (cf. Tomlinson and Matsuhara 2013, Dewey 2015: 123-124, Baker 2015a: 180-181). ELF-informed ELT materials and resources were almost non-existent, with a few notable exceptions, particularly in the area of pronunciation (e.g. Walker 2010). Thus, it was hardly possible to draw exclusively upon such resources in the planning of an entire course. This lack of ELF-informed teaching materials was – and continues to be – widely acknowledged in the ELF literature related to pedagogy as a significant challenge to the widespread adoption of an ELF-oriented pedagogy. As Seidlhofer (2011) noted, published ELT materials offer teachers both “authority [and] security. They give them clear guidelines about what to teach” (Seidlhofer 2011: 201). Additionally, such materials represent an important practical resource for the teacher. They provide pre-selected linguistic input and ready-made task sequences which lighten the teacher’s planning load significantly. Without these resources, the process of selecting appropriate input and designing supporting tasks can become tremendously time-consuming, and also requires a certain amount of both knowledge

and skill on the teacher's part (cf. Gilmore 2007: 112 for a similar argument regarding the inclusion of authentic texts in the ELT classroom).

Nevertheless, Seidlhofer (2011) has argued that teachers need not wait for ELF-informed materials to become available to set about implementing an ELF-informed approach in the classroom:

The case for an ELF-informed pedagogy [...] is not invalidated by the current absence of teaching materials that would put it into practice. As I have already said, what matters is not the language content but how it is exploited for learning. What is crucial therefore is not *what* teaching materials are used but *how* they are used. If what we think about language teaching had to be determined by what textbooks are available there would be no possibility of adaptation to changing circumstances at all and pedagogy would petrify. Change always has to start somewhere. (Seidlhofer 2011: 201; emphasis original)

This argument suggests that mainstream ELT materials can still be used as the basis for ELF-oriented language teaching, provided that they are utilized in ways that reflect the pedagogical principles and support the objectives of an ELF-oriented approach to ELT. Thus, it will be particularly important that the teacher learn to approach existing materials critically, selecting, adapting, augmenting, replacing and omitting as necessary. While this still requires some degree of familiarity with the pedagogical implications of ELF research and the issues these raise for current ELT, it nevertheless has the potential to lighten the burden on the teacher considerably.

Following Seidlhofer's argumentation as the most practical suggestion available to teachers at the time, the second step of the research plan thus involved evaluation not only of materials developed specifically with ELF in mind, but of other types of ELT materials as well. These included some materials that were already being used in courses which were regularly offered through the university language program at the TU Kaiserslautern, such as the general coursebook series *English Unlimited*, which had been adopted the previous year as the basis for the general English courses offered through the VKB. It also included materials aimed at developing specific skills (e.g. pronunciation) and competences (e.g. intercultural competence). Finally, although the course was not aimed specifically at preparing participants for ELF communication in the business domain, some business ELT materials were also evaluated, since the ELF literature available at the time suggested that these materials were beginning to reflect some ELF-aware perspectives and practices (cf. Seidlhofer 2011: 206). Thus, the preliminary pool of topics and task sequences which were identified at this stage of course design as potentially able to contribute to the objectives of the pilot course came from a range of different types of materials, rather than drawing upon a single resource such as a textbook.

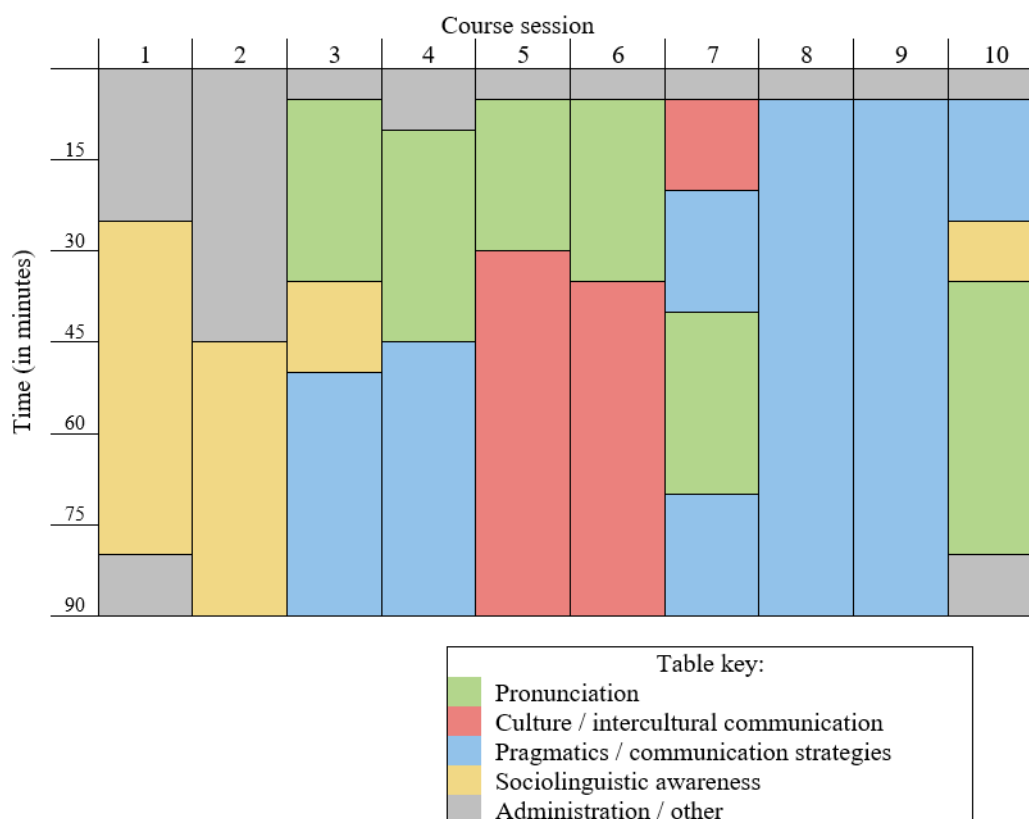
As the culmination of the conceptualization stage of course design, a course outline was developed and presented to the VKB language program coordinators and the doctoral supervisor. This outline provided a detailed overview of the organizational parameters of the course, the course objectives, the major areas of instructional focus, the pool of potential topics and supporting materials, and the decision to hold the final assessment as an oral exam. All parties agreed that the conceptual design of the course seemed sound and should proceed to the concrete planning and implementation phases.

2.4.2 Planning individual course sessions

In keeping with the emphasis placed on responding to the local context of teaching in literature relating to ELF pedagogy (cf. e.g. Seidlhofer 2011), as well as in literature on action research (cf. Banegas and Consoli 2020), a context-responsive approach was adopted to the concrete planning phase of pilot course design. This phase was thus informed not only by the insights gathered during the first two steps of the research plan, but also by the more specific needs and interests of the enrolled students and the overall make-up of the learning group. Tasks and activities serving the purpose of needs analysis were included in the earliest course sessions, and the results of this analysis were incorporated into further planning. Additionally, insights into the ongoing processes of teaching and learning taking place within the classroom (relating to, e.g., the effectiveness of instruction, the students' responses to specific tasks) were used to inform subsequent teaching, sometimes involving modification of the lesson plan during a course session.

The concrete planning phase of course design was thus an ongoing, emergent process which was completed only with the conclusion of the course itself. Table 1 provides an overview of the ten instructional course sessions which were the result of this process, according to the four strands which were the major focus of content-related instruction:

Table 1: Lesson sequences by content strand



In this table, the ten course sessions are listed across the horizontal axis. The timespan of each ninety-minute session is shown in fifteen-minute intervals on the vertical axis. Each strand of the course has been assigned a different color. Lesson segments focused on pronunciation appear in green, those focused on culture and intercultural communication appear in red, those featuring work on pragmatics and communication strategies appear in blue and those related to awareness-raising about the sociolinguistic situation of English in the world today appear in yellow.¹² Finally, some lesson segments appear in gray, denoting time periods in which administrative or other activities took place which were not directly related to the four main strands of content. These included segments such as the brief phase at the beginning of each lesson – usually about five minutes in length – in which I greeted the students, took attendance

¹² It should be noted that some segments of the course involved work in more than one area. For example, in the middle of course session 7, nuclear stress placement was addressed from both a pragmatic and a pronunciation perspective. However, for the sake of clarity, such segments have been marked in only one color according to the primary strand in which they will be discussed within the dissertation. Thus, the lesson segment on nuclear stress placement is shown in green in course session 7 and is primarily described in the chapters of the dissertation related to the pronunciation strand of the course, although specific aspects of this lesson sequence are also addressed in the strand of the dissertation related to the teaching of communication strategies.

and introduced the plan for that evening. It also included, for example, the initial 25-minute segment in course session 1 in which the students were informed about important organizational details of the course and about the action research study they would be taking part in, as well as the final ten-minute segment of course session 10 in which the students were asked to fill out course evaluations.

In this dissertation, the process of planning instruction is treated as an integral part of understanding and interpreting the data collected during each strand of the pilot course. Thus, the concrete lesson planning of the instructional phases which were part of each strand, including the theoretical underpinnings and methodological considerations which influenced pedagogic decision-making, will be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters in the body of the dissertation, and research findings will be related back to pedagogic decisions during analysis.

2.5 *Research instruments and data collection*

The third step of the research plan involved collection of data during the pilot course. The literature on action research in educational settings generally emphasizes that the data collected in such studies “must derive from the processes and outcomes involved in the whole teaching and learning enterprise. This means that our research instruments need to be a part of what already belongs to, and unfolds in, the educational context under investigation” (Banegas and Consoli 2020: 183). Additionally, such research has traditionally focused on the collection of data from multiple sources, since “the strength of educational research lies in its triangulation¹³, collecting information in many ways rather than relying solely on one” (Mills 2014: 104; cf. also Banegas and Consoli 2020: 183). Incorporating different types of data, as well as drawing upon multiple methods to analyze them, “allow[s] different facets of problems to be explored, increases scope, deepens understanding and encourages consistent (re)interpretation” (Tracy 2010: 843). In this study, with its qualitative, applied linguistic focus, transcribed audio recordings of each of the ten course sessions and the seven paired final oral exams constitutes

¹³ The concept of triangulation originally comes from the realist paradigm, a research paradigm “which assumes a single reality (or point of view) to be made known” (Tracy 2010: 843). However, subsequent research paradigms have come to question this assumption. In these perspectives, the point of using multiple sources of data “is not to provide researchers with a more valid singular truth, but to open up a more complex, in-depth, but still thoroughly partial, understanding of the issue” (Tracy 2010: 844). It is this conception of triangulation which underpins the current study.

the main source of data. The data from this corpus was supplemented and triangulated with data from a number of additional sources, the majority of which can be classified as ‘ordinary artifacts’ of classroom teaching (cf. McNiff and Whitehead 2011). The following sections provide a more detailed description of these research instruments and the kinds of data they contributed to this study. 2.5.1 focuses on the processes of recording, transcribing and analyzing the linguistic corpus. 2.5.2 introduces the supporting data sources and briefly outlines their contributions to the analysis presented in the study.

2.5.1 *The linguistic corpus: From recording to transcription to analysis*

As has already been mentioned in 2.4.1 above, the majority of studies of ELF talk have focused on spoken interactions through ELF. In researching such interactions, the field has placed particular emphasis on detailed qualitative linguistic analyses of corpora of naturally-occurring spoken data, either collected as part of a particular study or utilizing one of the major ELF corpora that have been established in the past two decades.¹⁴ Such studies have been recognized as contributing significantly to the current understanding of the communicative processes underlying successful communication through ELF. In keeping with this practice, the current study also involved the collection, transcription and detailed qualitative analysis of a corpus of spoken language as the primary research instrument. However, rather than focusing on the underlying communicative processes of naturally occurring talk-in-interaction through ELF, this study sought to explore spoken interactions in an ELF-oriented language course. Thus, the focus was on classroom discourse in an ELF-oriented classroom and what it uncovered about the processes of teaching and learning from an ELF-informed perspective.

A wide range of audio and video recording equipment is currently available to facilitate the collection of spoken data for linguistic study. However, the selection of recording equipment requires careful consideration, not only regarding the capacity of the equipment to capture the data the study seeks to generate in the context being examined, but also in light of what Labov termed the ‘observer’s paradox’ (cf. Labov 1970/1971: 171, 1972: 209). The presence of recording equipment may serve as a physical reminder to study participants that their talk is, in fact, being systematically observed, which may in turn affect the naturalness of their speech. The more elaborate or conspicuous the technological set-up, the more likely that it may

¹⁴ To date, there are three major ELF corpora: the *Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English* (VOICE), the *English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings* (ELFA) corpus and the *Asian Corpus of English* (ACE). Each of these corpora now comprises over one million words of transcribed spoken data and is openly accessible to researchers online.

inadvertently influence the spoken interactions which it seeks to capture. Additionally, a more elaborate set-up may require more of the researcher's time and attention to operate, to the point where this may impact the interactions being recorded. This is especially likely in action research, in which the researcher is also an active participant in the context being examined. In her year-long study of university-level small group project work, Hoffmann (2008), for example, chose to videotape project sessions at key points. In the interest of limiting the people in the room to those directly connected to the project, she took on the role of cameraperson herself. However, this proved to be very distracting to her students, particularly as operating the camera hindered her usual participation in the discourse as the groups' faculty advisor, and she noted that this had noticeable effects on some students' behavior during these sessions.

In the case of the current study, in which data was being collected and analyzed by a single researcher who was also actively involved as the course instructor in the interactions being recorded, the decision was made to make audio rather than video recordings of the course sessions using a single recording device. A single device could be set up quickly and required minimal intervention during the course sessions themselves. This meant that, during instruction, it was possible to focus primarily on my role as instructor. Additionally, it was felt that the use of video recording equipment might be perceived as more invasive by the students, potentially leading to more reluctance to take part in the course or to the reduced naturalness of classroom interactions. Nevertheless, the use of audio rather than video recordings meant that limited paralinguistic data was available to support the analysis of the spoken data collected. This was generally deemed to be unproblematic, considering the research aims of the study. However, the lack of supporting visual data will be noted at a few points in the analysis presented in subsequent chapters (cf. e.g. 7.1.2.2, 10.3, 19.3, 21.2).

Since recording would be taking place during classroom instruction, one of the primary criteria in the selection of a recording device was that it be able to produce high quality recordings in the context of a classroom setting. It needed to clearly capture utterances made by speakers located not only directly in front of the microphone, but also somewhat farther away and/or off to the side. Ultimately, an H2next Handy Recorder made by the Zoom Corporation was selected. This recording device featured a multi-directional, four-channel microphone that could record in a 360-degree arc and produced high-quality digital recordings which could be converted to .wav files via supporting software and uploaded to a computer. It could be mounted on a small tabletop tripod, standing only about 30 centimeters high. Placed on a table at the center of the front of the classroom, about two meters in front of the instructor's table, it was optimally positioned to capture whole-class interactions during the course sessions. Given its compact size, it remained unobtrusive in this context despite its central location, helping to limit its impact on the data collected.

However, not all of the pilot course took place in whole-class, teacher-led interactions. Significant portions of many course sessions also involved the students working in pairs or small groups. In such phases, there were thus multiple conversations taking place within the classroom in parallel. A single recording device certainly could not be expected to capture all of the spoken interactions occurring during group work phases.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the use of multiple recording devices during such phases was rejected in the planning phase of the study for two main reasons. First, it was anticipated that such a set-up would generate more data than could feasibly be analyzed in a single study, especially a study conducted by a single individual (cf. Schramm and Aguado 2010: 193). Second, distributing a recording device to each group would have significantly undermined the ‘normalcy’ of the course, drawing attention to the fact that these more intimate interactions were also being recorded as part of a study and potentially impacting the naturalness of the recorded discourse.

Instead of utilizing multiple recording devices, an attempt was made to record the learning group as evenly as possible during pair and group work phases over the duration of the course. Because the recording device used to record the pilot course was compact and cordless, it could easily be moved to other locations in the classroom without interrupting the recording process. During longer pair and group work phases, I often repositioned it closer to a particular group in order to facilitate clearer recording of the interactions taking place in that group. In an effort to avoid drawing too much attention to the fact that a particular group was being recorded, the recording device was normally placed off to one side of the group. While this helped to minimize the impact on the group, it often meant that the resulting recordings were more prone to issues involving background noise, making the transcription of these phases somewhat more challenging than the transcription of whole-class interactions.

Despite this drawback, the off-to-the-side placement of the recording device during group work phases created an unexpected effect which was only discovered during transcription. In several instances in the data, the recording device was able to pick up conversations in multiple groups clearly enough to allow for transcription of significant stretches of the discourse. These phases were rather challenging and time-consuming to transcribe, as it was necessary to sort out which utterances belonged to the discourse of a particular group, but it was ultimately manageable due to the field notes that had been taken about who had worked with whom during specific group work phases (cf. 2.5.2 below). This made it possible to generate a more complete picture of some group work phases than was originally anticipated without the disadvantages

¹⁵ For a more detailed discussion of the issues involved in recording pair and group work in the language learning classroom, cf. Heike (2016).

of using additional recording devices. For example, in a lesson segment on paraphrasing strategies from the pragmatics and communication strand of the course in which the students were playing a game of *Taboo* in three groups, the recording device captured the discourse not only of the group targeted for recording, but also of a second group in its entirety, as well as a significant portion of the third. It was thus possible to directly compare data regarding the use of paraphrasing strategies across all three groups in the analysis of this lesson phase (cf. 19.3). However, it should be noted that most group work phases were not captured so completely. The representativity of the data collected during pair and group work phases is therefore addressed directly at relevant points in the analysis presented in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

Overall, the data collected during the study suggests that the presence of the recording device initially had a minor impact on spoken interactions, but that the participants were largely able to overlook its presence as the course continued. In the journal entry written after course session 1 (cf. 2.5.2 below), I noted that I had overheard a brief exchange between two students about being recorded during the first groupwork phase after the recording device was turned on. However, the pair quickly moved on to the assigned task and showed no self-consciousness in sharing what they had discussed with the whole group during the subsequent whole-class phase of the lesson. After this point, there were very few overt indications that the participants were particularly attuned to the presence of the recording device during the course sessions, except at a few points where the recording device had just been moved to facilitate the recording of a particular small group (cf. e.g. T10: 274-277). Even at these points, the students appeared to adjust to the presence of the recording device quickly. And although the students were explicitly informed during the opening phase of the final exam that the exam was being recorded as well (cf. Appendix C), this fact did not seem to have a measurable effect on student performance, possibly because the students were well-accustomed to the presence of the recording device by this time.

During the pilot course, each of the ten course sessions and the seven paired final oral exams were recorded continuously, resulting in approximately fifteen hours of audio recordings. Given the open-ended and data-driven approach adopted in the study, determinations could not be made *a priori* as to which parts of the recordings might prove to be most salient for analysis. Therefore, as the fourth step in the research plan, each of the recordings from the pilot course was transcribed in its entirety by the researcher. This was also viewed as an important step in making sense of the data and identifying the ‘telling’ moments that should become the focus of analysis in the final research step. The transcription of the recorded data resulted in a corpus comprising roughly 185,000 words. In the dissertation, transcriptions are referred to by the course session or exam they belong to. Transcriptions of the course sessions are labeled T1

through T10. Transcriptions of the final exams are labeled TFE plus the speaker designations of the participants who were involved in the exam (e.g. TFE S6+S8, TFE S2+S3).

With the exception of the lesson phase in which the two-minute introductions were held (cf. 3.1), which was transcribed directly after it took place in order to facilitate needs analysis, most of the transcription was done after the completion of the pilot course. This meant that analysis of the transcripts of previous course sessions was not used to inform the concrete planning of subsequent instruction. Additionally, the time lapse between recording and transcription meant that it was not possible to hold post-recording interviews with the students.

The transcription of the spoken data from the pilot course largely followed the transcription conventions developed for the *Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English* (VOICE) (VOICE Project 2007). The conventions developed for the transcription of spoken data in this corpus were “specifically designed to reflect what seem to be the most significant features of ELF interactions”, including “a fairly detailed set of descriptors for pronunciation variations and coinages, for code-switching, for onomatopoeic sounds and for laughter, not only as such but as a prosodic feature of speech” (VOICE Project 2007). Since it was anticipated that these features might also be particularly pertinent for the analysis of spoken data from the pilot course, given the ELF orientation of the research project, these conventions were generally adopted as the basis for transcription of the pilot course recordings. However, some adaptations were made, the most significant being the use of American rather than British spelling conventions, in light of the linguacultural background of the teacher-researcher. A complete list of the transcription symbols used for the corpus appears in Appendix A.

As part of the anonymization of the data collected during the pilot course, each active course participant was assigned a speaker designation, which was then used consistently during transcription and in the dissertation itself to identify that speaker and to replace the use of his or her first name in the transcripts themselves. Rather than assigning pseudonyms, each of the students enrolled in the course was assigned a designation from S1 to S18, in the order in which they were registered for the course. The preceding S before their number indicates their role in the course as a student. Since I was also an active participant in the spoken interactions recorded during the course, I was also assigned a speaker designation in the transcripts. However, as my primary role in the classroom was that of instructor rather than learner, the speaker designation T (for teacher) has been used to label my own contributions to the discourse. This helps to highlight the different yet complementary nature of my role in the pilot course compared to that of the students. An overview of all the active participants involved in the pilot course and their speaker designations is presented in Table 2 below:

| Speaker designation | L1(s) | Nationality | Gender |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| S1 | German | German | male |
| S2 | German | German | female |
| S3 | German | German | male |
| S4 | German | German | male |
| S5 | German | German | female |
| S6 | German | German | female |
| S7 | German, Romanian | German, Moldovan | male |
| S8 | German | German | female |
| S9 | German | German | male |
| S10 | German | German | female |
| S11 | Portuguese | Brazilian | female |
| S12 | Portuguese | Brazilian | male |
| S13 | German, Turkish | German | male |
| S14 | German | German | female |
| S15 | German | German | female |
| S16 | Portuguese | Portuguese | male |
| S17 | German | German | male |
| S18 | German | German | female |
| T | English | American | female |

Table 2: Overview of course participants

This table provides an overview of some relevant background information about the course participants by speaker designation, including their first language(s), nationalit(ies) and gender. Further biographical information has not been included here in order to protect the participants' identities, although reference to additional relevant facts will be made at some points in the dissertation to support analysis and interpretation of the data.

The use of audio rather than video recordings meant that speakers had to be identified during the process of transcription without the benefit of supporting visual data. However, it proved possible to assign the vast majority of utterances on the recordings conclusively to specific speakers. This was mainly due to the fact that the learning group was comparatively small, and I as the teacher-researcher had become quite familiar with each student's voice during the course itself. Additionally, supplementary data sources were also used to facilitate this process, including the attendance sheet and field notes documenting where participants sat during each

course session and with whom they worked during specific pair and group work phases (cf. 2.5.2 below).

After transcription was complete, the final step in the research plan involved analyzing the spoken data in the linguistic corpus, as well as the other types of data that had been collected during the pilot course. Since the approach to analysis was open-ended, analysis of the spoken data involved identifying ‘telling’ moments in the corpus and then selecting appropriate methods to explore and interpret them. Ultimately, much of the analysis of the spoken data undertaken in this study involved the kind of ethnographically-informed, applied Conversation Analysis (CA) approach described in Cogo and Dewey (2012: 27-35). As a framework particularly suited to the detailed, qualitative study of naturally-occurring talk-in-interaction, CA has frequently been adopted in studies of ELF talk since before ELF was officially established as a field of applied linguistic study (cf. e.g. Firth 1990, 1996). Particularly since the shift in research aims from the description of forms to the description of underlying communicative functions in ELF talk (cf. 1.1), the CA approach has been used in many ELF studies to explore “how speakers of different first languages understand each other through the medium of English” (Kaur 2015b: 163). Through “fine-grained analysis of participants’ turns at talk”, these studies have used CA as a means “to uncover how understanding is locally negotiated and jointly accomplished” in ELF talk and “to identify the communication strategies and practices that speakers in ELF settings employ to arrive at shared understanding” (Kaur 2015b: 163). Such studies have “contributed significantly in uncovering some of the interactional features of successful ELF communication and in re-conceptualizing non-native speakers of English as interactionally competent users in their own right” (Kaur 2015b: 161).

While Cogo and Dewey (2012) acknowledged the advantages of both the detailed, turn-by-turn approach to discourse characteristic of CA, as well as its focus on “what is observable, describable and possible to account for” in the spoken data itself (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012: 34), they nevertheless expressed reservations about strong interpretations of CA, in which “the CA analyst should only pay attention to the wider context when this is signaled or oriented to by the speakers in the interaction” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 31). In their own study, they used an “adaptation of CA methods” which “mak[es] use of CA tools and techniques, but combin[es] these with a much more ethnographic perspective, which allows for more emic accounts of the communicative and cultural contexts as would be provided by the participants and the participants/researchers themselves” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 34). As such, they described their methodology as “adopting an ethnographic approach (cf. Green and Bloome 1997)” to CA, rather than as doing a form of ethnographic research *per se* (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 34-35).

All of the features which Cogo and Dewey (2012) specifically identified as deriving from an ethnographic approach to linguistic research are also typical features of the kind of action research perspective underpinning the current study. First, as in an ethnographic approach, action research typically focuses on exploring phenomena, rather than on experimental testing of hypotheses. Second, it often involves the collection of ‘unstructured’ data, “that is, data that has not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 35), which is then used to determine the direction of analysis and interpretation within the parameters of the overarching research questions. Thus, as in action research, the methods used to analyze data in an ethnographic approach can be classified as open-ended and emergent. Next, ethnographic analysis, like action research, acknowledges the context-dependent nature of any observations or findings in the data. Thus, both perspectives focus on providing ‘thick description’ (cf. Geertz 1973) of relevant aspects of the data as a key aspect of qualitative integrity. This kind of description “requires that the researcher account for the complex specificity and circumstantiality of their data” by providing “in-depth illustration that explicates culturally situated meanings (Geertz 1973) and abundant concrete detail (Bochner 2000)” (Tracy 2010: 843). In other words, thick description seeks “to provide a richness of detail not only of the phenomena studied but also of the surrounding context” in order to lend credibility to interpretations of these phenomena (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 35). This is possible in part due to the collection of data in multiple forms, but also to the ethnographic understanding of “the double role of the researcher as observer and participant” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 35), a position which harmonizes well with the concept of the teacher-researcher in action research. Thus, in both perspectives, the researcher is considered to be an insider with considerable knowledge of background contextual details that may contribute meaningfully to the interpretation of the data (cf. Banegas and Consoli 2020: 178). Finally, ethnographic studies generally focus on “the investigation of a small number of cases, or sometimes just one case, in detail” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 35). The focus lies not on “the discovery of universal, generalizable truths, but instead seek[s] to produce ‘telling’ (rather than typical) cases (cf. Mitchell 1984)” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 35). Likewise, in action research studies, “[f]indings are not expected to be generalizable or replicable, as they are context-bound”, yet such studies may nevertheless produce insights which “‘resonate’ with other settings” (Banegas and Consoli 2020: 184). Given these marked similarities in research perspective, the type of ethnographically-informed approach to CA described and adopted in Cogo and Dewey (2012) thus appeared particularly appropriate for the analysis of the spoken data collected during the pilot course.

There is one significant difference between the research perspective adopted in Cogo and Dewey (2012) and the current study which deserves a few words here. In their study, Cogo and

Dewey sought to uncover the pragmatic and lexicogrammatical processes underlying ‘ordinary’ ELF talk. Although they noted that much intercultural research has been done in classroom settings, they explicitly rejected the language learning classroom as a suitable context in which to collect their data, since the classroom setting represents a distinctive type of communicative setting governed by social and institutional factors that may not necessarily apply in other types of setting (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012: 27-30). Instead, their corpus largely featured conversations which “[arose] completely naturally and [were] recorded in the contexts of the everyday lives of the participants” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 30-31). By contrast, the current study did not seek to explore the nature of ELF talk *per se*, but rather to support the development of ELF-informed classroom practice by examining how insights from empirical ELF studies could be applied in the ELF-oriented language classroom in order to better prepare the students to encounter and successfully engage in ELF talk beyond the classroom. Thus, it was precisely the kinds of interactions generated in the classroom setting that were particularly relevant to this study. Like Cogo and Dewey (2012), the current study uses an ethnographically-informed approach to CA to explore underlying communicative processes, but in this case, the focus was on the processes involved in developing specific aspects of an ELF-oriented communicative capacity through classroom instruction with the aim of contributing to an ELF-informed theory of pedagogic practice.

It should also be noted at this point that, while an ethnographically-informed adaptation of CA was most often used as the primary method for analyzing salient moments in the spoken data collected during the course, other types of linguistic analysis were also used where it was felt to be appropriate, in keeping with the open and data-driven character of the study. Thus, content-oriented analysis of participant talk was often used at points aimed at exploring the development of certain types of awareness which have been identified as central to the kind of communicative competence required for successful communication through ELF (cf. e.g. 7.2.2, 21.4.6). By contrast, analysis of the spoken data collected during communicative practice or assessment tasks in the strand of the course focused on pragmatics and communication strategies often involved coding of the participants’ use of specific communication strategies (cf. 19.3, 19.6, 21.2.5, 21.4.1-21.4.4). The flexible, data-driven use of multiple methods of linguistic analysis was seen as an important aspect of both triangulation and of the generation of a ‘thick description’ of the phenomena examined, thus contributing to the credibility of the study (cf. Tracy 2010: 842-844).

2.5.2 *Additional research instruments*

The spoken data collected from the transcribed recordings of classroom interactions during the course sessions and the final exams was supplemented and triangulated with data from the following additional sources:

- *Annotated lesson plans:*

Prior to each course session, a written lesson plan was developed for that session. Each lesson plan provided a detailed, chronological outline of the phases of that lesson, including the progression of tasks and subtasks, the materials and other resources to be used, the kinds of interaction (e.g. whole class, pairs, small group) involved and the anticipated duration of each phase. During the course sessions themselves, these lesson plans were used to guide classroom instruction. In the context of the current study, they also provided a record of the planned sequential organization of each course session which could then be compared with data from the audio recordings to ascertain, for example, how the planned structure of a lesson segment compared with its actual structure in practice (cf. e.g. Chapter 12, 16.2, 20.5). Field notes were also made directly on the original copies of the lesson plans during and/or directly after the course sessions, indicating, for example, where a lesson segment had run over time or where part of a phase was modified or omitted during the course session itself.

- *Explanatory statements:*

In addition to the lesson plan, an accompanying explanatory statement, generally between two and four pages in length, was prepared for each course session. This statement provided further context for the pedagogical decision-making processes behind the lesson plan. This included relevant theoretical and pedagogic insights from the literature on ELF and ELF-informed language teaching which had influenced both the inclusion of a particular topic and the way in which it was approached in the classroom. Each statement also provided details about the specific tasks and materials which were selected or developed for use in the lesson, including background information about the sources of any preexisting tasks or materials and how these tasks and materials had been modified to fit the context of the pilot course. Finally, the statements also highlighted connections to previous lesson segments, including content-related connections between different lesson segments belonging to the same strand of instruction, as well as relevant observations from previous course sessions that had influenced pedagogical decision-making related to the current lesson plan. Thus, the explanatory statements provided a detailed account of the theoretical and methodological considerations that informed pedagogic decision-making in the concrete planning of each course session. These statements

were largely used to inform those sections of the dissertation which describe the concrete planning of the specific lesson segments making up a particular strand of instruction. The annotated lesson plans and the accompanying explanatory statements were also regularly shared and discussed with the doctoral supervisor as the course progressed. This was seen as one way to enhance the methodological quality of the study.

- *Reflective journal entries*

Journaling provides teachers with the opportunity to record “a narrative account of their perspectives of what is happening in their classrooms” (Mills 2014: 95). It allows the teacher an opportunity “to step back from the action in order to make sense of it” (McNiff and Whitehead 2010: 146). A journal gives the teacher a space to “write observations and reflect on their teaching”, including the implications of these observations “for future teaching episodes” (Mills 2014: 95; cf. also Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1993: 26, 27). Thus, journaling not only documents post-instruction reflection, but may also serve as a useful resource in subsequent lesson planning.

In the pilot course, a written journal entry was thus made about each course session no more than twenty-four hours after that session ended. These journal entries were used to record my impressions of each session as the teacher-researcher, including observations about the students’ responses to particular tasks and activities, the effectiveness of specific lesson points or materials, anything unexpected about the lesson, etc. Generally, each entry was between two and four typed pages long. The reflections recorded in these journal entries were used to inform the concrete planning of the next lesson, as part of the context responsive approach adopted towards planning in the pilot course (cf. 2.4.2 above) . In analyzing and interpreting data generated during the course, observations and impressions recorded in the journal entries were sometimes used to supplement spoken data, e.g. during groupwork sessions where not every interaction was picked up by the recording device (cf. e.g. cf. 18.3). These observations and impressions were also compared with the spoken data from the course, e.g. to confirm whether or not they were actually consistent with recorded data (cf. e.g. 7.2.2 in regard to impressions of student attitudes towards the need to develop a native-like competence during course session 10). Like the annotated lesson plans and explanatory statements, the journal entries were regularly shared and discussed with the doctoral supervisor.

- *Copies of teaching materials*

In addition to lesson plans, explanatory statements and journal entries, copies of the teaching and learning materials which were used in each course session were also collected as another artifact of teaching. For the most part, these materials were shared directly with the students, either as handouts or in the form of overhead projections. Some of the materials were used directly from sources such as textbooks or other language teaching resources. Others represented adapted versions of preexisting tasks or exercises. Still others were created specifically for the pilot course. As has been alluded to in 2.4.2 above, the selection or creation of specific tasks and materials is addressed in more detail in those chapters dealing with the concrete planning of specific lesson segments. Excerpts from relevant materials are included in the discussion of this process.

- *Assessment rubrics*

Assessment rubrics were developed both for the two diagnostic tasks aimed at needs analysis from the beginning of the course and for the final oral exam. These rubrics and the data they generated are presented and discussed in more detail in relevant sections of the dissertation (cf. 3.1, 3.3, 5.1).

- *Course evaluations*

At the end of each language course offered through the VKB, instructors were required to give the students the opportunity to fill out a standard course evaluation form. In the pilot course, this took place during the last ten minutes of course session 10, after the recording device had been turned off. Following VKB policy, the evaluations were filled out anonymously, without the instructor present. After they were completed, the forms were collected by one of the students and placed in a large envelope, and this envelope was then returned to the instructor. Permission was obtained to copy the evaluation forms before submitting them to the VKB for institutional analysis.

Since this evaluation took place during a course session, only those students who were present for that session turned in an evaluation form. In the pilot course, attendance records indicate that thirteen students were present at course session 10, and this number matches the number of evaluations which were collected. By this point, two students (S9 and S10) had dropped the course. Three other students were absent. Thus, of the sixteen students who ultimately completed the course, the majority submitted a written evaluation of the course. In this study, data from these evaluations was used to triangulate the spoken data related to the

students' motivations for signing up for the pilot course that was collected during the two-minute introduction task (cf. 2.2 above), as well as to draw some overarching conclusions about the reception of the course by the students (cf. 2.6 below, 23.2).

- *Attendance list and seating maps*

As has been mentioned in 2.1 above, regular attendance was a mandatory condition for successful completion of the language courses offered through the VKB. Therefore, attendance lists were regularly kept for all language courses in order to ensure that enrolled students successfully met this requirement. In the pilot course, the attendance list was passed around at the beginning of each course session, and each student who was present initialed the box corresponding to that session's date. In the study, this attendance list was used primarily to confirm which students had been present at a particular session (cf. e.g. 12.3, 21.2). In addition to the attendance list, field notes were regularly made during the sessions as to who had sat where and who had worked together during pair or group work phases. This information was used to ensure that conversational turns were accurately assigned to the correct speaker during transcription (cf. 2.5.1 above).

2.6 *The pilot course as an object of study*

As the previous sections of this chapter help to illustrate, the pilot course represented the centerpiece of the research project presented and discussed in this dissertation. This course exhibited some specific characteristics which, it is argued here, make it deserving of closer study at the current stage of pedagogical ELF research. These characteristics, many of which have been introduced in previous sections above, will be briefly recapitulated here before moving on to the heart of the dissertation.

In many ways, the pilot course was representative of the kinds of language courses which are typically offered through the language programs at many German universities (cf. 2.1). This 'normalness' was in and of itself a valuable attribute of the course in light of the action research approach adopted in the study, since it increases the likelihood that findings from the study will 'resonate' with other practitioners who find themselves in a similar teaching context. These 'typical', institutionally-defined parameters of the course were combined with a systematic and rigorous methodological approach in order to ensure the quality of the research project as an empirical study. This began with the first step of the research plan, in which, following the notion of exploratory action research, emphasis was placed on building a

thorough foundational understanding of the ELF literature which had been published at the time at which the pilot course was being planned (cf. 2.4). It continued during the conceptualization, planning and implementation phases of the pilot course through the systematic collection of data via the research instruments detailed in 2.5 above. Overall, I as the teacher-researcher spent significantly more time and energy on the conceptualization and planning phases of the pilot course – both before and during the teaching semester – than most teachers, including myself, can generally be expected to have for one course. However, this was deemed necessary and appropriate given the fact that the course was part of an academic study, and it is hoped that the experience and insights generated through this research process will benefit other teachers who do not have the luxury of so much time. To facilitate this aim, and to enhance the overall validity of the methodological approach, this dissertation attempts to document these processes, and the analysis of the outcomes they produced, as transparently and meticulously as possible.

The pilot course also created opportunities for the examination of areas which continue to represent gaps in current pedagogical ELF research. As has been discussed in 1.3 and 1.4, published accounts of ELF-oriented action research remain rare, and most previously published classroom-based studies exploring the implementation of an ELF-oriented approach to ELT have focused on one specific area of instruction at a time. By contrast, the pilot course involved four central areas of instruction – pronunciation, culture and intercultural communication, pragmatics and communication strategies and the sociolinguistic situation of English in the world today. As such, it allowed for the examination not only of the implementation of an ELF-oriented approach in each of these areas individually, but also of how these different strands might be integrated into a more comprehensive, cohesive ELF-oriented course. Additionally, the make-up of the learning group created a natural opportunity to examine another under-researched area of ELF pedagogy. As has been described in 2.1 and 2.2 above, the learning group ultimately turned out to be linguaculturally rather homogenous. This linguacultural homogeneity is a typical characteristic of many ELT classrooms worldwide, yet it poses some significant challenges for an ELF-oriented approach to teaching to which few practical solutions have as yet been proposed (cf. 2.2 above). The make-up of the pilot course forced me as the teacher-researcher to confront some of these challenges and to look for practical solutions within the situated context of the study. It is thus hoped that the findings and insights relating to this aspect of the pilot course will contribute toward the development both of further pedagogic theory and of practical, classroom-oriented solutions which may benefit other practitioners.

Another significant aspect of the study is the approach to data collection adopted during the instructional phase of the pilot course. After obtaining the participants' written consent to

record the course, all of the course sessions and each of the paired oral final exams were recorded in their entirety (cf. 2.5.1). The resulting corpus thus covered the entire course, providing insights into the spoken discourse which took place in each phase of instruction, as well as during the final assessment. While other ELF-oriented action research studies have collected spoken classroom discourse from specific phases of instruction as one of their research instruments (cf. Dimoski et al. 2016, Abdzadeh and Baker 2020), to my knowledge, no other study has attempted to collect and examine the spoken discourse from an entire course. The spoken data collected during the pilot course included both teacher-fronted interactions and group and pair work phases in which the students were working together on a variety of task types. Thus, a wide range of classroom discourse types and speaker constellations was available for analysis, a process which was arguably enhanced by the ethnographically-informed, ‘experience-near’ perspective (cf. 1.3, 2.5.1 above) facilitated by the action research approach adopted in the study.

Finally, the overall reception of the course by the participating students, as well as the generally high performance on the final assessment, also represent reasons why this course merits closer study. On the evaluations filled out by the participants at the end of the course (cf. 2.5.2 above), the students overwhelmingly indicated that they found the course content relevant and valuable. Every student strongly agreed that the course instructor was knowledgeable and had consistently explained how the skills that were taught and practiced could be useful in actual communication. The vast majority also agreed or strongly agreed that they had improved their English communication skills during the course and indicated that the course’s level of difficulty had been ‘just right’. All of this shows that the students generally found the course to be well-planned and worthwhile. Furthermore, as will be discussed in 3.3, the students generally performed well on the oral final exam, which suggests that the course was in fact effective in helping them develop the skills and competences which were the aim of instruction. In the concluding chapter of this dissertation (cf. Chapter 23), this high level of performance is interpreted as evidence that it was in fact possible to design and hold a more comprehensive ELF-oriented course which led to successful learning outcomes. However, the fact that the course appears to have successfully facilitated the achievement of ELF-oriented learning aims also represents a reason why this course deserves closer examination as part of a research agenda which aspires to help bridge the gap between the implications of ELF research and the practical implementation of an ELF-oriented approach in the classroom.

3 Supporting areas of the pilot course

As a final preparatory step before arriving at the heart of the dissertation, this chapter will provide a brief overview of three elements of the pilot course which do not belong directly to the strands of instruction that constitute the foci of this study. These elements include: the two-minute introduction task used as part of needs analysis in course session 2 (3.1); the strand of the course dealing with awareness-raising about the sociolinguistic situation of English in the world today (3.2); and the final exam (3.3). While these elements will not be examined in their own right in the dissertation, they nevertheless contributed useful data to the analysis in one or more of the major strands of instruction which are examined in the heart of the dissertation. Each element will be briefly examined in order to facilitate an understanding of its role in the pilot course. This will include discussion of concrete planning, including theoretical and methodological considerations which underpinned pedagogical decision-making, as well as relevant aspects of actual classroom experience with each element. Particular attention will also be given to the kinds of data gleaned from these parts of the course and the ways in which this data was used to support and extend analysis in the three main areas of focus in the dissertation.

3.1 *Two-minute introductions (course session 2)*

Originally, I had developed the two-minute introduction task for use in the general conversational English courses I taught at the TU Kaiserslautern. The task was designed to help me get to know course participants quickly, to allow them to share with me relevant background knowledge and expectations for the course they had enrolled in and to give me an opportunity to listen to and diagnostically assess a relatively significant amount of their spoken English early on in the course. All of this information could then be used to tailor the course syllabus towards the needs and interests of the learning group. The task also served as an ice-breaker, giving each student an early opportunity to talk in front of the whole group and helping the group to get to know each other. As this task had proved to be an effective tool for initial information-gathering and needs-analysis in previous oral communication courses, it was included in the pilot course as well.

The two-minute introduction task was introduced at the end of the first course session as the second of two homework assignments to be prepared for the following week.¹⁶ The students were given an assignment sheet with the following instructions:

Materials excerpt 1:

Assignment 2: 2-Minute Introduction

Prepare a 2-minute talk introducing yourself to the group. Be sure to include personal information (name, where you are from, what you are studying and in what semester), as well as some information about yourself as an English learner and speaker:

- Why did you sign up for this course? What do you expect from a course called "English for International Communication"?
- What experiences have you already had communicating internationally in English?
- What do you think might be challenging about communicating internationally in English? What do you think you will need to improve about your English to communicate well internationally?
- How do you expect to use English in the future?

The rules:

- Your talk should be about 2 minutes long. If your talk is too short, I will ask you to do it again. If it is too long, I will ask you to stop after 2 minutes.
- You may make notes to help yourself remember what you want to say. However, please do not write out your talk and read it to the class.
- If you miss class next week, you will give your talk at the next class session.

The parameters of the task were almost identical to those used in previous courses. The participants were asked to prepare to introduce themselves to the group. They were informed that they should talk for roughly two minutes. They were invited to use notes during their talk, but told not to write down their whole talk and read it to the class. However, this version of the task also included guiding questions which were specifically tailored to the content of the pilot course. They were designed to elicit information about the students' background knowledge of, and previous experiences with, English in lingua franca contexts, as well as information about what they expected from the course and how they thought they might use English in the future.

The assessment rubric for this task was based on the rubric I had used in other courses where I had given this assignment in past semesters. The rubric provided space for the student's name and some personal information at the top. The body of the rubric consisted of three large boxes labeled *Pronunciation*, *Language* and *Other comments* where details about the student's

¹⁶ The first assignment was specifically aimed at diagnostic assessment of the participants' pronunciation and is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

performance could be recorded, as well as relevant information regarding the questions the students were asked to answer. In previous courses, I had filled in this rubric as the student spoke; this time, however, since each course session was recorded, it was also possible to go back and listen to the recording again and add to my notes. It was thus not necessary to try to take notes on both language and content simultaneously.

In practice, fifteen of the eighteen students who registered for the pilot course ultimately completed the assignment and held a two-minute talk at the beginning of course session 2. Of the three students who did not complete the assignment, two (S9 and S10) ultimately dropped the course within the first few sessions. The last student, S17, registered late for the course and was not present when the task was assigned. Although he was present for the other participants' talks in course session 2 and was tasked with preparing his own introduction for the next course session, he never held his talk in front of the learning group. Thus, a two-minute introduction was available for fifteen of the sixteen students who completed the course.

Given their importance for further course planning, the lesson segment in which the two-minute introductions took place was transcribed immediately after the course session to allow for needs analysis (cf. T2: 77-609). The transcript of the two-minute introductions was then coded in terms of recurrent themes. These included biographical information about each student, as well as their answers to prompts included in the task. Insights from this analysis were summarized as part of the reflective journal entry (cf. 2.5.2) for course session 2. The two-minute introductions generated several different kinds of information which were used to inform the concrete planning of the course sessions, but also to support claims made in the analysis phase of the research project. Thus, a number of the chapters in this dissertation draw upon data from this task, in addition to other sources. First of all, the introductions were the source of much of the biographical information about the students which has already been presented in 2.2, including information about the students' ages, degree programs or jobs at the TU Kaiserslautern, nationalities and first languages. They also provided insights into the students' motivations for signing up for the course. Beyond this, the two-minute introductions provided information about the students' previous experiences communicating through English, both in ELF and EFL settings, as well as their current beliefs about what aspects of communication might be either particularly challenging or particularly important in intercultural contexts. This information allowed me both to gauge how much experience in intercultural communication the participants brought with them to the course and to establish a baseline impression of the students' familiarity with and attitudes toward phenomena related to ELF. The content of some of the students' answers to the guiding questions of the task has therefore been used in later chapters of the dissertation to support the analysis and interpretation of specific aspects of classroom discourse or claims about learning during the course (cf. e.g.

7.1.2.3, 13.3, 19, 20.1). Finally, the introductions served as a source of data for linguistic assessment, especially in the area of pronunciation. In combination with another task, the introductions provided useful data about which features of pronunciation specific members of the learning group might benefit from instruction in, thus playing an important role in needs analysis in this area of the course (cf. Chapter 5). Later on, this same data was compared with similar data from the final exam to assess how much progress the students had made in learning to produce more target-like pronunciation of key features during the course (cf. 6.2.4).

3.2 *Awareness-raising about the current sociolinguistic situation of English in the world today (course sessions 1, 2, 3 and 10)*

Many learners of English still profess a desire to acquire a native-like competence in English, and “this desire is not necessarily restricted to those students who use, or anticipate using English primarily with native speakers” (Timmis 2002: 248). ELF researchers have argued that this is hardly surprising, considering that “the assumption of the superior status of standard English is deeply ingrained, and taken as self-evident in linguistics and language pedagogy” (Seidlhofer 2011: 200). This has led in turn to a pedagogical culture in ELT in which “teachers and learners have been well-schooled in the assumption that anything that does not conform to standard [native speaker English] is by definition defective, incorrect, undesirable” (Seidlhofer 2011: 200). This longstanding and uncritical orientation towards a standard English ideology in both SLA and ELT may thus help to explain “the professed desire of many [non-native speakers] of English to sound as ‘native-like’ as possible” (Jenkins 2006a: 154), even if they are more likely to find themselves using their English in lingua franca situations beyond the classroom. It may also help to explain some of the resistance by learners and teachers alike toward an ELF-informed approach to ELT, since it calls into question “a popular assumption that by and large holds sway for most languages [...] that native speaker-like proficiency and conformity to native speaker norms, is the truest measure of achievement in second language learning” (Ferguson 2006: 177).

Rather than asking learners to give up their aspirations of attaining a native-like competence in English out of hand, ELF researchers have instead argued that learners need to be given a basis on which to make an informed decision about the type of English they wish to learn. In Jenkins’ words,

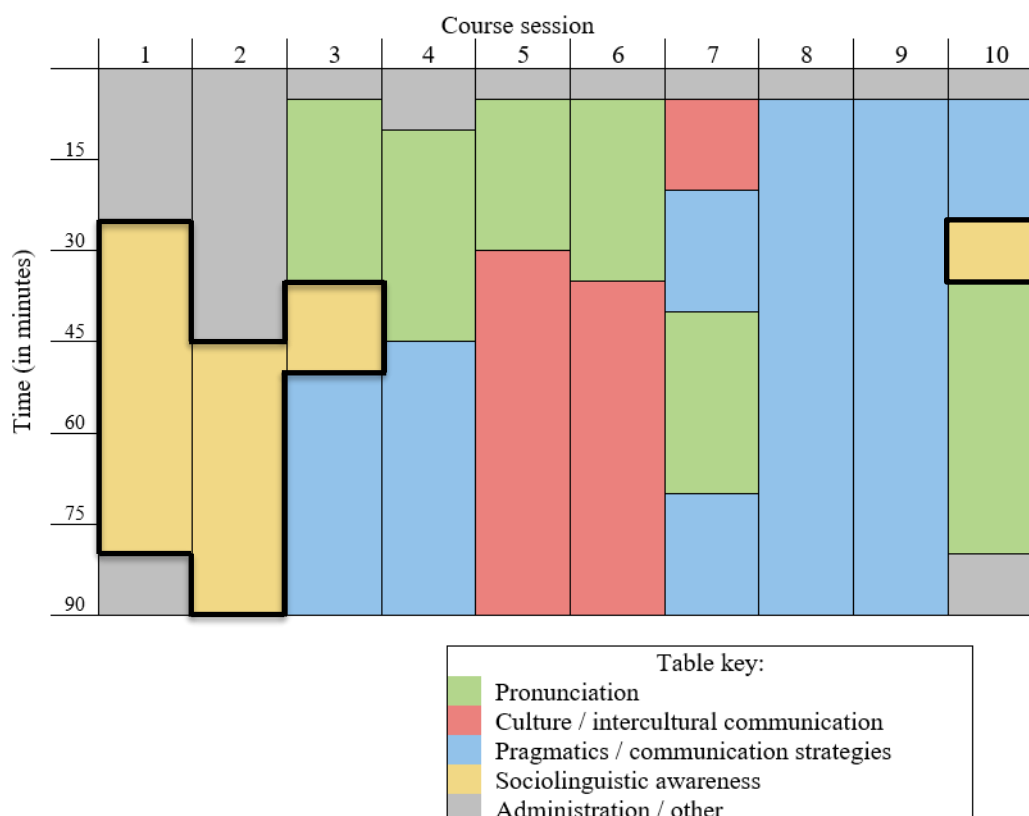
ELF researchers...have always argued in favor of learner choice as to which kind of English to aim for (a choice which, it has to be said, often *is not* available in traditional EFL classrooms). All they ask is that learners are presented with the

sociolinguistic facts of the spread of English around the world before they make their choice. (Jenkins 2012: 492, emphasis original)

This has led the few pedagogically-oriented monographs on ELF that have been published to date, including Walker (2010) and, more recently, Kiczkowiak and Lowe (2018), to advocate for the inclusion of awareness-raising regarding the sociolinguistic situation of English in the world today and its effects on how English is now actually used by those who have learned it as a ‘foreign’ language as an important component of ELF-oriented teaching. Helping learners to understand more about the current sociolinguistic role of English and the nature of English in ELF communication is seen as an important step toward helping learners to accept the shift in priorities that an ELF-oriented approach to ELT entails.

In keeping with this recommendation, lesson segments focused on raising sociolinguistic awareness were included as one strand of course content in the pilot course. Table 3 provides an overview of the placement of these lesson segments within the overall pilot course:

Table 3: *The sociolinguistic awareness strand in the context of the pilot course*



As becomes apparent in Table 3, the majority of instruction belonging to this strand took place early on in the course, in the hopes that this awareness would positively influence the course participants' attitudes towards the ELF-oriented approach to ELT adopted in the pilot course. Thus, about half of course sessions 1 and 2 were spent on this strand of content. After course session 2, the focus of the pilot course largely shifted from awareness-raising of the sociolinguistic situation of English to developing the students' skills and competences in the other three areas which comprised the main focus of the course. However, we returned briefly to issues related to sociolinguistic awareness at the end of course session 10, shortly before the conclusion of the pilot course. Thus, this strand essentially framed the instructional content of the course.

Walker (2010) has argued that “[m]any learners will only have a vague notion of the concept of English as a Lingua Franca, and very few will have any idea as to the size of the different native-speaker [sic] and non-native speaker populations” (Walker 2010: 72). He thus proposed beginning any work on raising awareness with a series of short activities aimed at illustrating for the learners how many speakers of English there are, as well as where English is spoken in the world and in what roles or functions (Walker 2010: 72-74). Walker is very clear that the main purpose of the activities he proposed is not to learn facts, but to create opportunities for discussion (cf. Walker 2010: 74). The activities are meant to raise the learners' awareness of issues related to the unique sociolinguistic situation which English now finds itself in as a global language and to help them understand why a change in the status quo in ELT might be indicated in light of these issues. This activity series was adapted for use in the second half of course session 1 of the pilot course, after the organizational details of the course had been clarified with the students, and thus represented the first content-related lesson segment in the course.

The first task proposed in Walker involves presenting learners with several different groups of English speakers and asking them to guess the approximate number of people in the world who belong to each group (Walker 2010: 73). For the pilot course, the following worksheet based on Walker's original task was distributed to the students:

Materials excerpt 2:

| <i>Speaker group</i> | <i>Population (your guess)</i> | <i>Actual population (official estimate)</i> |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| American English | | |
| British English | | |
| BBC English (RP) | | |
| Indian English | | |
| Native speakers | | |
| Non-native speakers | | |

(Adapted from Walker, Robin (2010) *Teaching the Pronunciation of English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford University Press, p. 73.)

Possible populations: 1.2 billion, 400 million, 230 million, 200 million, 57 million, 1 million

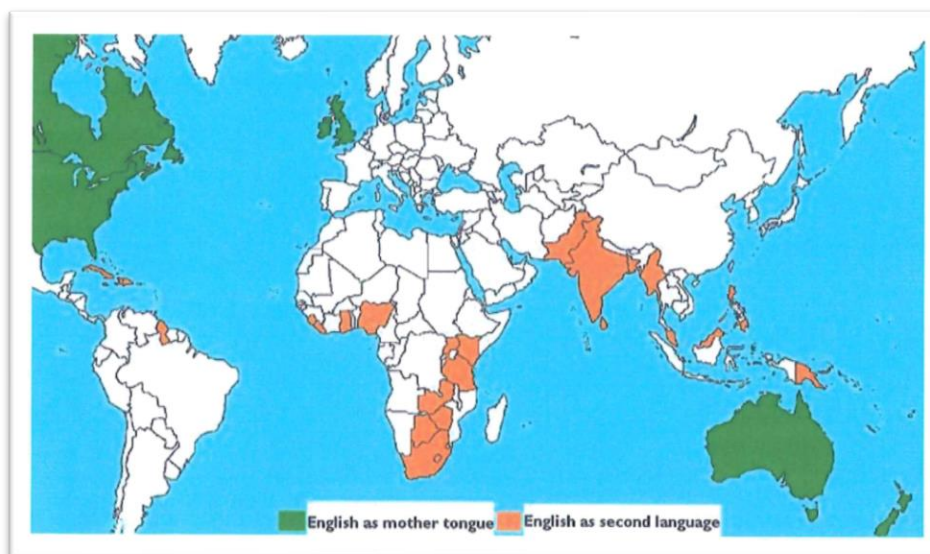
As in Walker's original task, the worksheet features a table listing the different speaker groups and then provides blanks for the students' guesses, as well as for the official estimates. Rather than requiring a blind guess regarding the size of each speaker group, it also includes an answer bank listing the possible populations, based upon Crystal (2003). Following Walker's suggestion, this task was begun in pairs. After each pair had had the chance to guess a population for each category, one pair presented their answers, which were recorded on the blackboard, and their proposed solution was used as a basis for further discussion with the group.

The task includes a number of different kinds of speaker groups, including groups from the Inner Circle at both the national (American English, British English) and sub-national (RP accent) levels. It also includes a population from an Outer Circle country (Indian English), in which it is left unclear whether the estimated number includes only native or native and non-native English speakers. Finally, it also asks the learners to consider the total number of native and non-native speakers around the world. The speaker populations are estimates, since it has proven difficult to accurately establish how many speakers actually belong to a particular group (cf. Crystal 2003: 68-69, Jenkins 2015a: 2-5). The estimates are also relatively old. However, the purpose of the task is not to teach learners the exact population size of each group, but rather to help them appreciate the relative sizes of the groups, especially the disproportion between the population of native speakers (estimated to be 400 million in 2003) and non-native speakers (conservatively estimated to be 1.2 billion in 2003, with a rising tendency). Walker suggested that this might naturally lead to a discussion of "the chances of [non-native speaker

– non-native speaker] interactions (i.e. ELF) taking place around the world, as opposed to [native speaker – non-native speaker] interactions (EFL)” (Walker 2010: 72).

Building upon this first task, Walker then suggests presenting learners with a map of the world illustrating the role that English plays in different countries. The following map was used in the pilot course:

Materials excerpt 3:



Map of the English-speaking world
(https://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/elltankw/history/Global_files/image002.jpg)

On this map, countries in which English is generally acquired as the primary native language appear in green. Countries in which English plays an official, intranational role as a second language appear in orange. The remaining countries, in which English often has no official intranational role but is frequently learned as a foreign language, appear in white. In the pilot course, the students were asked what the colors on the map might represent. In keeping with Walker’s suggestions (cf. Walker 2010: 73), this discussion was then augmented by a basic, non-technical explanation of Kachru’s three circles model of World Englishes¹⁷ (cf. Kachru

¹⁷ This model is not uncontroversial. Since its conception, researchers in the World Englishes paradigm have raised a number of issues and limitations (cf. Jenkins 2015a: 15-16 for a succinct overview). However, it has nevertheless remained an extremely influential model for thinking about “the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition and the functional allocation of English in diverse cultural contexts” (Kachru 1992: 356). Jenkins (2015a), for example, noted in her textbook entitled *Global Englishes* that “many scholars, myself included, use it to this day because it still offers the most convenient framework we have for thinking about different kinds of English use” (Jenkins 2015a: 15). As such, it was used in

1992: 356), in which the notions of the Inner, Outer and Expanding Circles and the role which English generally plays in each were briefly introduced and connected to the colors on the map. Finally, the students were asked to locate their own country of origin in terms of the circle it belongs to. The students were quick to recognize that they all came from countries in the Expanding Circle.

The next task proposed by Walker focuses on the different roles that English may play in different communicative contexts. In this task, the learners are presented with the acronyms often used to describe these roles and asked to fill in gaps in both the full name behind the acronym and a basic definition of each role. Here, the focus is primarily on speaker constellations – hinging in particular on the distinction between native and non-native speakers – rather than on geographical location (cf. Walker 2010: 74). The adaptation of this task used in the pilot course appears below:

Materials excerpt 4:

| Roles of English | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Acronym | Full name | Meaning |
| EFL | English as a (1) _____ language | English when it is used by (2) _____ speakers to communicate with native speakers |
| ELF | English as a (3) _____ franca | English when it is used as a contact language among speakers from different (4) _____ |
| ENL | English as a (5) _____ language | English when it is used between two or more (6) _____ speakers |
| ESL | English as a (7) _____ language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - English when it is used in countries that were once colonized by (8) _____ - English when it is used by immigrants to countries where (9) _____ is the native language (USA, UK, Australia, etc.) |

(Adapted from Walker, Robin (2010) *Teaching the Pronunciation of English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford University Press, p. 74.)

The purpose of this task was to raise awareness of the different ways in which English functions, in particular the distinction between English as a foreign language (EFL) and English

the pilot course to provide the students with another perspective which might help them to become more aware of the sociolinguistic situation of English in the world today.

as a lingua franca (ELF), since the orientation toward the latter rather than the former most likely differentiated the pilot course from the kinds of English courses the students had previously experienced. As in the first task, the students in the pilot course were first given the opportunity to attempt this task in pairs. Then the answers to the task were discussed with the whole group. In practice, most of the pairs were able to come up with the correct answer for each blank on their own (cf. T1: 718-914), despite the fact that no answer bank was provided. Thus, the whole group phase was relatively brief and mainly involved confirming the students' answers.

As a closing activity to this task sequence, the students were asked to form small groups to discuss their own experiences using English and whether these could be classified as taking place in EFL or ELF settings. After five minutes, the groups were asked to share with the class what patterns had emerged in terms of their experiences as English speakers. Most groups reported a mix of roles, a claim that was confirmed by individual students' descriptions of their own experiences with English in the two-minute introductions held at the beginning of course session 2 (cf. 3.1 above). All of the groups stated that at least some of their members had used English as a lingua franca, either in the context of their work or studies (cf. T1: 1078-1082), or during travel to other countries belonging to the Expanding Circle (cf. T1: 960-962). Some students had also visited Inner Circle countries for short stretches as tourists, where they used English primarily as a foreign language with native English speakers (cf. T1: 938-943, 949-951, 963-1021, 1048-1050; 1117-1118; cf. also T2: 290-293, 589-592). However, two students had spent longer stretches in an ENL country. One student had done a seven-month work-study trip to New Zealand after graduating from secondary school (cf. T2: 179-181, 198-220). The other student had lived in the USA with her family for two years as a child, where she attended an American school (cf. T2: 227). Her group seemed to classify this experience as belonging to a different category than the ELF and EFL interactions experienced by the other group members. However, they stopped short of labeling it with one of the other acronyms presented in the third task. Thus, the group member who spoke for this group during the whole class discussion reported that *we had ah:: three kinds of English [...] we had English as a lingua franca [...] one of us used English as a foreign language [...] and one of us is a native speaker of English almost...ALMOST (.) almost a native speaker* (T1: 1038-1056). A few students also reported using English with members of the large population of Americans living in and around Kaiserslautern due to the American military bases close by (cf. T1: 938-941, 949-958, 1095-1101), another form of EFL interaction. Most groups also acknowledged that their members had primarily learned English in school, as could be expected since they were all from countries in the Expanding Circle.

In general, the students demonstrated a relatively solid understanding of the different roles of English, in particular EFL versus ELF, as well as the basic distinction between native and non-native speakers, thus indicating that the previous tasks had been able to successfully raise their awareness of these sociolinguistic categories. This impression was further supported by the accurate use of these terms by a number of different students in their two-minute introductions in the following course session (cf. T2: 90, 158, 186-187, 232-235, 417, 473-479, 485, 557-562, 585-587). In addition to the data collected during the two-minute introductions held in course session 2, the discussion at the end of course session 1 also provided valuable insights into the students' previous experiences with English which were used to inform further course planning.

To complement the task sequence from Walker (2010), a second task sequence addressing underlying attitudes and beliefs about English was incorporated into the second half of course session 2. This task sequence was taken from Unit 6.7 of the *Intercultural Resource Pack* (Utley 2004). This book belongs to the Cambridge Copy Collection of photocopiable teaching materials and was designed to aid “teachers, trainers and others responsible for personnel development” in helping learners to develop intercultural competence (Utley 2004: 6). While the book is primarily aimed at business contexts, many of the units are more general in nature or can be modified in this direction, and the units were designed to be used independently of one another, making it possible to choose those which best fit the overall aims of the pilot course.

Unit 6.7 presents the learners with a set of statements about English as a global language. According to the photocopiable handout, these statements “all have their supporters” (Utley 2004: 99), though the task does not provide any indication of how widely supported each statement is, or whether it represents a folk belief or an insight from sociolinguistic research. A reproduction of the worksheet appears below:

Materials excerpt 5:

6.7 Which language?

English is the world's main business language, and for at least part of the 21st century it is bound to be the *lingua franca* of international business transactions. But there is evidence that it will become less prevalent as the 21st century progresses.

The following statements about English as an international language all have their supporters.

Read the statements.

- 1 Say whether you agree with each statement or not.
- 2 Say whether you think each statement is an advantage or a disadvantage for international communication in general.

It is spoken by a large proportion of the developed world.

It is the language of the internet.

It has a relatively simple grammar.

It is considered to be a complex language.

It has a wide range of vocabulary.

A lot of people feel uneasy using it.

People from other language 'families' are disadvantaged.

You can make a difficult request very politely in English.

It is an old language, with many literary references.

It is the language of science and technology.

It is the international language of political, economic and cultural imperialism.

It is the language of international business.

It is being overtaken by Spanish in the USA.

There are more non-native than native speakers of English in the world today.

It will no longer be the dominant world language in 10 or 20 years' time.

It is a flexible language, adjusting rapidly to the demands of international use.

It is the language of the world's greatest economic power – the USA.

Other languages, such as Chinese, Spanish and Hindi, are growing rapidly in global importance.

English is used widely in all continents.

6 Culture and communication

Intercultural Resource Pack © Cambridge University Press 2004 Photocopiable

99

(Utley 2004: 99)

The learners are asked to read through the statements and indicate whether they agree or disagree with each one. In a second step, they are then asked to indicate whether they think each statement represents an advantage or a disadvantage for English as a global language.

In the pilot course, the students were asked to form groups of four students and complete the first part of the task as a group. They were instructed to discuss each statement and try to come to a group consensus as to whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement. After this part of the task was complete, the class was surveyed as to their opinions on each statement. The students were asked to indicate with a thumbs up or thumbs down whether their group had agreed or disagreed with each statement. Where responses were mixed or there were

indications that a group had had trouble deciding whether they agreed or disagreed, we stopped to discuss that point more closely.

Because the discussion of the first part of the task ran somewhat longer than anticipated, the final part of the task was postponed until course session 3. This was seen as unproblematic, as the tasks from Unit 6.7 connected smoothly to another task sequence that had been selected as the basis for initial work in the strand of the course focused on pragmatics and communication strategies (cf. Chapter 16). During course session 3, the students were asked to meet in their groups from the previous session and choose one statement from the worksheet which they felt represented the main advantage of English as a global language and one which they felt represented the main disadvantage in their group's opinion. They then presented these statements to the whole class. Interestingly, the groups all chose different advantages (although two of the three centered on the theme of English as a language spoken by many people for different purposes around the globe; cf. T3: 1248-1259, 1264-1279, 1286-1293), but all the groups chose the same disadvantage, that the use of English as a global *lingua franca* disadvantages those from other language backgrounds (cf. T3: 1299-1328). The students then agreed that, while the spread of English is unique to English as a language, the disadvantage to speakers of other language families would still be true no matter which language was used as a global *lingua franca* (cf. T3: 1330-1374).

Again, the primary purpose of these tasks was not to impart knowledge, but rather to elicit discussion about issues related to English and its current roles in communication, particularly as a global *lingua franca*. Through discussion and the process of negotiating a group position for each part of the task, the students were provided with the opportunity to critically reflect on their own attitudes and beliefs about English in light of what they had learned about the sociolinguistic situation of English in the world during the previous session. The task also helped me as the instructor to gauge the students' beliefs about English at the beginning of the course, giving some indication as to where more input might be necessary to help the students change their attitudes in light of findings from ELF research.

As has been mentioned above, instruction returned briefly to issues related to sociolinguistic awareness at the very end of the pilot course. The main focus of instruction in the second half of course session 10 was on developing the students' receptive phonological awareness through work with two recordings included in Walker (2010) (cf. 7.2). However, in addition to providing examples of authentic L2 accents and language use in support of the aims of the pronunciation strand of the course, the content of both recordings focused on ELF as a sociolinguistic phenomenon and the recorded speakers' knowledge of, experiences with and attitudes towards ELF. Thus, these recordings also provided an opportunity to return to issues

related to the role of English as a lingua franca, allowing me to assess the students' awareness of and attitudes towards ELF at the close of the course.

The first listening text, entitled *ELF and identity* (Track 2), begins with a brief discussion between the two recorded speakers of what the acronym ELF stands for and how they understand its meaning. This provided a natural opportunity to return to the concept of ELF and see what the students remembered from earlier in the course. Thus, as a pre-listening task, the students discussed in small groups whether they could recall what the acronym ELF stood for. Because this phase of the lesson focused primarily on sociolinguistic knowledge, it has been color-coded as part of the sociolinguistic awareness strand of the course in overviews of course content (cf. Table 3 above). The recording of this phase of the task indicates that many students were no longer confident about the phrase behind the acronym, although some still demonstrated a fairly solid grasp of the kinds of communicative contexts subsumed by this term (cf. T10: 1027-1028, 1038-1045). The students were then asked to listen to the beginning of *ELF and identity* and to take note of what ELF stood for and what the speakers said about its meaning. They then reported on what they had heard, and their answers were used to reestablish the meaning of the term with the learning group. Thus, this part of the lesson segment served to refresh the students' awareness of ELF as a sociolinguistic phenomenon.

The rest of the lesson segment focused primarily on issues related to accent. Since the focus of this part of the lesson was largely on issues related to pronunciation, and specifically to receptive phonological accommodation, this lesson segment has been color-coded as belonging to the pronunciation strand of the course (cf. Table 3 above). However, it also involved discussion of the content of the recordings related to issues of accent and identity, including the question of whether or not it is necessary or even desirable for successful ELF users to achieve a native-like competence in English. These discussion phases provided some important insights into the students' beliefs and attitudes regarding ELF at the end of the course. These insights, which will be discussed in more detail as part of the pronunciation strand of the course in 7.2.2, suggest that the students had become more aware of ELF as a sociolinguistic phenomenon during the course and that, at least for some students, this awareness had contributed both to a better understanding of which aspects of communicative competence actually contribute to successful communication through ELF, as well as to a more positive view of ELF and ELF users. Thus, this strand of instruction seems to have been successful in helping course participants to become more receptive to both the approach and the content of the pilot course, upholding the importance ascribed to such instruction in pedagogically-oriented resources such as Walker (2010) and Kiczowski and Lowe (2018).

3.3 *The final exam*

As has already been mentioned in 2.1, every language course which was offered through the VKB at the TU Kaiserslautern ended with a final exam for those students who required a grade for their course of study. These exams were generally held during the last regularly scheduled course session. The final exam in the pilot course therefore took place on Thursday, July 18, 2013, during what would have been the eleventh course session. As has also been mentioned in 2.4.1, the pilot course focused primarily on developing the skills and competences which have thus far been identified as particularly salient for successful spoken interaction in ELF contexts. Thus, it was decided early on in the conceptualization phase of course design that the final exam should take place as an oral rather than a written exam. However, the exact format of the exam was left open at this stage of planning. Detailed planning of the final exam took place early in the second half of the course and was completed by the time the students received more detailed information about the exam in course session 9.

Oral exams may take any number of forms. However, Weir (2005) has argued that “clearly, if we want to test spoken interaction, a valid test must include reciprocity conditions” (Weir 2005: 72) – i.e. conditions in which the responsibility for successful communication is shared between two or more participants, requiring these participants to engage in interactive processes such as negotiation of meaning, accommodation, etc. While this could take the form of an individual exam featuring interaction between a single learner and the examiner, it was decided to use a paired format for the final exam in the pilot course. Several arguments have been put forward that suggest that a paired format, “in which there is peer-peer interaction rather than or as well as examiner-test taker interaction” (Taylor and Wigglesworth 2009: 328), may be more appropriate as an assessment tool in ELF-oriented contexts. The paired format has been shown to lead to “more complex interaction between the participants, including negotiation of meaning and consideration of the interlocutor [i.e. accommodation]” (Taylor and Wigglesworth 2009: 330), both processes that are considered centrally important for successful ELF communication (cf. 2.1, 15). Thus, peer-peer interactions are more likely to provide opportunities to assess the learners’ ability to use the kinds of skills and strategies that have been shown to facilitate these processes in actual ELF talk. It also opens up the possibility to include a wider variety of task types and interactional patterns within the exam itself (cf. Skehan 2001: 169, Saville and Hargreaves 1999: 44), thus giving the examinees “the opportunity to demonstrate their interactive skills in ways not generally available in more traditional [individual exam] formats” (Taylor and Wigglesworth 2009: 326). This “supports the validity of the test”, since it allows for the assessment of “more types of talk in paired tests” and thus “broadens the evidence” that can be “gathered about the examinees [sic] skills” (Galaczi 2010: 4).

The paired exam format also creates parameters for interaction in which “the conversational rights and responsibilities of the participants are more balanced” (Galaczi 2010: 4). This is significant, as “studies of test taker interaction with an examiner have highlighted the extent to which the resultant discourse structure can be significantly asymmetric” in individual exams, “since it is the interlocutor who leads and controls the interaction” (Taylor and Wigglesworth 2009: 328). Thus, examinees may, for example, be more willing to express disagreement with a peer’s opinion than with an examiner’s. In addition to this more general consideration, in the specific case of the pilot course, the examiner was also a native English speaker. Although native English speakers are not excluded from ELF interactions by definition (cf. 1.1), there is emphasis in the literature that, in true ELF situations, the status of native English speaker does not automatically confer a linguistic or conversational advantage over other participants. Given the inherent inequality between the roles of examiner and examinee, it was felt that asking the participants to communicate primarily with a native English speaker in a role they likely perceived as more powerful than their own might also have significant effects on the discourse produced during the exam. Thus, the decision to include peer-peer interactions was considered particularly important for the validity of the oral exam, given the ELF orientation of the pilot course.

While these construct-related arguments were the primary factors in the decision for a paired exam format in the pilot course, some practical considerations also played a supporting role. Proponents claim that paired exams “offer a practical, time-efficient option for directly assessing a large number of learners” in a limited amount of time (Taylor and Wigglesworth 2009: 328). This was a salient factor in the institutional context of the pilot course, where course instructors were given 90 minutes’ paid time for final assessment. Using fifteen-minute paired exams rather than ten-minute individual exams thus made it possible to hold all the pilot course exams within the official 90-minute time limit.

Despite the advantages of the paired exam format, several potential issues have also been raised in the literature that needed to be addressed in planning the final exam for the pilot course. The first issue regards whether enough input can be collected during a paired exam to facilitate a valid assessment of each examinee. Foot (1999) calculated that, during a fifteen-minute paired exam, the average examinee will have only 5 minutes and 50 seconds of speaking time, leading him to question whether a valid assessment of the participant’s competence would be possible on the basis of such limited data (Foot 1999: 40). However, one of the primary arguments for using a paired exam in the pilot course was that such exams facilitate the assessment of a learner’s ability to successfully engage in processes of spoken interaction with an interlocutor. Thus, the concern about the *quantity* of input that could be collected from each student was in part balanced out by the *kind* of input that could be collected.

One of Foot's biggest misgivings regarding "the discrepancy between the length of the examination and the amount of time the candidates actually spend talking" appeared to be the amount of time which had to be spent introducing tasks and giving instructions (Foot 1999: 41). While this concern would seem to obtain to any task-based exam, rather than specifically to paired oral exams, this might be a more salient concern in paired exams than in more traditional, interview-style individual exams, given the claim introduced above that it is possible to utilize a wider range of task types in paired exams. Nevertheless, Galaczi (2010) has argued that, in a task-based exam, the paired format actually "reduces the amount of examiner talk needed for conducting the tests" since instructions and organizational details are given to two examinees simultaneously, rather than individually to each in a separate exam (Galaczi 2010: 4).

Nevertheless, in order to address concerns related to the amount of time that would be spent giving instructions, an examiner scaffold was developed for the pilot course final exam. This scaffold appears in Appendix C of this dissertation. In addition to specifying the amount of time that each phase of the exam should last, the scaffold provided a script for the instruction-giving phase of each task, as well as for the opening and closing of the exam itself. Scripting these phases in advance allowed for careful consideration as to how best to explain the exam tasks clearly and concisely, thus helping to reduce examiner speaking time. Following the script during the exams also had the added advantage of ensuring that all participants received instructions in largely the same way¹⁸, so that the impact of variation in examiner input could be controlled for as a factor in the exam's overall reliability (cf. Taylor 2006: 55).

Another issue which has received considerable attention in studies of the paired oral exam format is the impact of interlocutor variables such as relative proficiency level, degree of acquaintanceship and even personality on exam results. Whereas these variables would remain constant in an individual exam format in which a single examiner also functioned as the interlocutor for each exam, the paired exam opens up the possibility of significant variation across an exam set, making an understanding of potential effects on exam scores an important consideration in exam design. In terms of proficiency, the majority of studies suggest that

¹⁸ It should be noted that, while this script provided a structure for the examiner talk during the exam, it was not adhered to inflexibly. Given the general rapport that had developed between the students and myself during the course, as well as the interactional focus of the course itself, it would have felt affected and overly formal to completely limit my own talk to reading from the exam script. While I attempted to present instructions in the same way for each pair of students, I also allowed myself to respond to non-verbal cues as to the students' level of understanding of the tasks, as well as any questions they posed about a particular aspect of the exam. Thus, the pre-scripted instructions provided a guiding frame rather than a rigid script.

paired exams can still be effective “even when proficiency levels within pairs differ to some extent” (Galaczi 2010: 7). Most studies have found little to no significant differences between pairs with the same proficiency level versus pairs with differing levels of proficiency, either in resulting exam scores or in the kinds of talk produced, so long as proficiency levels did not diverge too widely (cf. Iwashita 1996, Csépes 2002, Nakatsuhara 2006, Davis 2009). By contrast, at least one study examining degree of acquaintanceship as a variable has found “evidence of an ‘acquaintanceship’ effect, with subjects achieving higher scores when working with a friend” than when paired with a complete stranger (O’Sullivan 2002: 277). Finally, in studies exploring personality as a variable, the focus has largely been on the difference between introvert versus extrovert personality types. Here, studies suggest that each of these personality types may perform better on certain kinds of tasks than on others, an effect which may be heightened depending on whether the examinee is paired with someone of the same or the contrasting personality type (cf. Berry 1993, 2007; Nakatsuhara 2009). Nevertheless, despite the effects which individual interlocutor variables have been shown to have in specific empirical studies, the general consensus among researchers studying paired oral assessment appears to be that research findings, when taken as a whole, suggest that the relationship between interlocutor variables is complex. As such, “interlocutor effects between peers are likely to be indirect and unpredictable rather than simple and consistent” (Taylor and Wigglesworth 2009: 332; cf. also Norton 2005: 294, Lazaraton 2006: 289, Galaczi 2010: 4).

In the pilot course exam, significant differences in proficiency level were not expected to be an issue, since all the students had qualified to take a C1-level course and all those who completed the course had demonstrated their ability to participate in the course at an appropriate level during the semester.¹⁹ In terms of acquaintanceship, all of the students had been enrolled in the course together for the semester, although it was also apparent that a few knew each other outside the course and, in some cases, were close friends. Since the course was relatively small, all the students had had the chance to interact with one another in various constellations during the course. However, most of the students had fallen into a pattern of sitting in the same place each week and working with the same peers – generally those sitting nearby – during tasks in which they were allowed to choose their own partners or small groups. Since research into paired exams suggests that examinees may do better when they know each

¹⁹ This is not to suggest that differences in proficiency level did not exist between course participants. In fact, at least two later sections of the dissertation will discuss data from the final exam tasks in terms of what it implies about the relative proficiency of the students in different areas (cf. 6.2.4 and 21.4.6). However, these differences were deemed minor enough to preclude consideration when forming pairs for the final exam.

other better, it was decided to allow the students to select their own partners for the exam, in order to enable them to choose someone with whom they were comfortable.

One final interlocutor variable which has not received particular attention in studies of the paired oral format to date, but which is highly relevant in light of insights from ELF research, is whether or not the examinees in a paired exam share an L1. Jenkins (2000, 2006b) has demonstrated that this issue is highly relevant in ELF-oriented contexts because of its effects on the products of accommodation in different-L1 versus same-L1 pairs, particularly in the area of pronunciation (cf. 4.3). Whereas speakers in different-L1 pairs are more likely to converge on more target-like pronunciation of key features in order to promote communicative efficiency, speakers in same-L1 pairs are more likely to converge on shared L1-influenced features of pronunciation, since these pose no disadvantage to mutual intelligibility and are also likely to be easier for the speakers to produce. The latter is seen as a disadvantage for the ELF-oriented classroom, since learners need to develop the ability to adjust their pronunciation toward the target in order to be able to accommodate flexibly to a wide range of potential interlocutors beyond the classroom. Likewise, they also need to develop the ability to deal with unfamiliar accents receptively. Since both of these abilities are salient aspects of ELF communication that have been identified as potentially requiring pedagogical intervention (cf. Chapter 4), they need to be accounted for in ELF-oriented assessment.

As has been discussed in 2.2, the linguistic backgrounds of the students who enrolled in the pilot course turned out to be relatively limited. In the end, all of the students were either L1 speakers of German or of Portuguese. Additionally, these two groups were far from balanced, since only three of the students spoke Portuguese as L1. Because it was impossible to organize enough pairs featuring speakers of different L1s, it was decided not to raise the issue of same-L1 versus different-L1 pairings with the students when deciding who should take the exam with whom. Instead, an individual task (to be discussed in detail further below) was included in the exam in order to facilitate the assessment of the students' ability to produce more target-like pronunciation of specific features which had been the focus of instruction during the pilot course. During the communicative exam tasks, students were not penalized for the use of non-target-like forms, since it would have been unfair to include this grading criterion while failing to control for an interlocutor factor which was known to influence this aspect of language use. Instead, pronunciation in these tasks was assessed as part of a holistic, interlocutor-oriented criterion which addressed the effect that the student's use of language, including pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, had on their overall intelligibility for their co-examinee during the task. For research purposes only, the students' pronunciation during one of the communicative tasks was compared with their pronunciation during the two-minute introduction (cf. 3.1 above)

in order to ascertain to what extent the students had developed more target-like pronunciation habits of specific features in their spontaneous speech (cf. 6.2.4).

In terms of content, the final exam focused primarily on two of the four major strands of the course, pragmatics and communication strategies and pronunciation. Because of the difficulties associated with trying to measure learning in less directly observable areas such as attitudes in an exam setting (cf. Chapter 9), it was decided not to include tasks aimed at formally assessing the students' level of intercultural awareness or sociolinguistic awareness. In all, three tasks were selected, the first two communicative tasks aimed primarily at assessing the students' pragmatic and strategic competences and the final task an individual task for assessing the students' pronunciation of specific features. The three tasks appear in the context of the examiner scaffold in Appendix C. To facilitate assessment, a three-page assessment rubric was developed for the final exam. This rubric appears in Appendix D. Assessment criteria were developed for each task and rated on a simple three-point scale (+ o -). These ratings were then used to assign points for each task. The communicative tasks were worth a total of twelve points each, while the pronunciation task was worth eight, for a total of thirty-two points on the complete exam. The total number of points achieved by a particular student was translated into a percentage, and this percentage was used to assign a mark according to the grading scale developed by the language program coordinators of the VKB. Space for more individualized comments was also provided after each task in order to make the assessment both more transparent and more useful as feedback for continued learning.

The first task, entitled *Transportation for a touring holiday*, featured four pictures of different kinds of transport: a rental car, a bicycle, a train and a tour bus. Each pair of students was asked to imagine that they were planning a one-week tour around Germany together where they wanted to see as much as they could without spending too much money on transportation. They were instructed to first discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each form of transport together, then try to decide which form of transportation would be best for their tour. Each pair had a maximum of four minutes to discuss the scenario presented in the task. There was, however, no penalty for failing to reach a mutual solution in the four minutes allotted. The goal of the task was for the students to discuss their options and work toward a solution together. As long as this process was well underway, they were considered to have successfully completed the task. In practice, all of the pairs were able to agree on a preferred form of transportation within the time limit of four minutes.

The task was designed to elicit a set of speech acts that had been the focus of pragmatics instruction during the third and fourth course sessions: giving opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, and negotiating a solution to a problem (cf. Chapter 16). However, because of its

communicative nature, it also allowed for the observation of the students' ability to use communication strategies in the process of negotiating their solution to the task, an area which had been the focus of pragmatics instruction in the second half of the course (cf. Chapter 17). The grading criteria for this task thus focused primarily on two specific areas. The first area was the appropriate use of language to express and rationalize opinions and to agree and disagree with one's partner's opinions. In keeping with the ELF-informed approach to teaching pragmatics adopted in the pilot course (cf. Chapter 15), the students were not graded on the linguistic accuracy or idiomatic 'correctness' of their utterances compared to a standard linguistic norm, but rather on the appropriateness of their language use in the context of the task. The second area was the ability to use communication strategies to advance the aims of communication during the task. On the one hand, this included the use of cooperative strategies to engage the other student in the negotiation process (e.g. asking the interlocutor for his or her opinion, adjusting one's position in response to input from one's interlocutor). On the other hand, it included communication strategies aimed at managing turn-taking (e.g. signaling the end of a turn by asking a question) and ensuring that mutual understanding was being achieved between the interlocutors (e.g. comprehension checks, clarification requests). In keeping with an ELF-informed approach, students were not necessarily penalized if communicative problems occurred during the task; it was considered much more important that the students showed that they were engaged in trying to understand one another, and that they were able to successfully address and resolve any misunderstandings that did arise. Finally, as indicated above, the grading rubric also included a criterion that addressed the overall impact of the student's pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar on the intelligibility of their talk during the task. In keeping with the ELF-informed approach adopted in the course, an emic perspective was adopted to this criterion; the student received full marks in this category if there was no evidence that these aspects of language caused problems of understanding for the other examinee, rather than because they were judged to be 'correct' according to an external standard. In total, the task was worth twelve points, or three-eighths of the final exam.

The second task, an adapted version of the task *Keep the conversation flowing* from the intercultural business English coursebook *Communicating Across Cultures* (Dignen 2011: 23), was also a communicative task aimed at assessing the students' performance in areas related to the pragmatics and communication strategies strand of the course. However, while the first task had allocated each of the students a balanced, symmetrical role in the conversation, this second task focused primarily on the students' ability to actively use communication strategies in the specific conversational roles of listener and speaker. Thus, in each round of the task, one student was assigned the role of speaker. He or she chose a topic from a short list and then attempted to talk about that topic for two minutes. The other student was assigned the role of

the listener, whose primary job it was to support the speaker and keep him or her talking. After two minutes, the students reversed roles. The new speaker chose a topic, and the task was repeated. Thus, by doing two rounds of the task during the exam, it was possible to assess each student in each role.

The students were already familiar with the task *Keep the conversation flowing*, as it had been used in course session 10 to practice the communication strategies that had been the focus of instruction in the preceding course sessions (cf. Chapter 21). The decision to reuse the task as part of the final exam was made for a number of reasons. First of all, the particular focus of the task on the role of the listener in actively supporting the speaker fit well with previous instructional emphasis on the responsibility of both speaker and listener (rather than just the speaker) for conversational success (cf. Chapter 20). Second, the format of the task suited the paired format of the exam, and the two-minute time limit for each round of the task fit ideally into the overall 15-minute timeframe. Third, while the task was designed specifically to elicit preemptive strategy use, in particular from the listener (cf. Chapter 21), it had proved its ability to elicit other types of strategy use as well, such as the signaling and resolution of communicative problems (cf. 21.2.5), making it a useful tool for assessing a wide range of the communication strategies that had been the focus of previous instruction. And finally, the students' familiarity with the task meant that it would take less time to explain the task and there would be a lesser chance that a student would misunderstand the instructions in a way that negatively impacted his or her performance on the task. The students would be able to devote more of their processing capacity during the task to enacting their roles since they would not need to monitor and negotiate wholly unfamiliar task parameters, meaning that they would be more likely to demonstrate their actual level of ability to use communication strategies during the task.

Only a few minor modifications were necessary to adapt *Keep the conversation flowing* for assessment rather than practice (cf. Chapter 21 for a full description of the in-class task). The most significant modification involved creating a new set of topics for the speakers to choose from, so that no one would be able to choose a topic that he or she had already "rehearsed" in the in-class version of the task. Rather than including topics relating to the students' personal plans or academic work, as had been the case in the in-class version of the task, all of the topics for the final exam were related to course content (cf. Appendix C). One reason for this was the observation during the in-class version of the task that some of the topics provided for the in-class version of the task had proved easier for the students to discuss than others (cf. 21.2). By providing a set of topics that were all derived from the content of the course, the intention was to even out the level of demand that the topics themselves placed upon the students in order to facilitate fair assessment. Additionally, because the students had had the same access to the

content of the course over the ten course sessions prior to the exam, asking them to talk about these topics was fairer than asking them to talk about, e.g., current events. However, the specific questions were also selected because the students' answers would provide insights into their perspectives on ELF which could be valuable from a research perspective. Indeed, the content of some of these answers will be cited as evidence of the students' developing receptive phonological accommodation skills (cf. 7.2.2), as well as their level of awareness of the role of communication strategies in ELF communication (cf. 21.4.6) at the end of the course. In order to encourage the students to give their real opinions, rather than opinions they thought I as the examiner wanted to hear, the students were explicitly informed during the instruction-giving phase of the task that they would not be assessed on the content of their opinions regarding their chosen topic during their turn as speaker.

Given the differences in communicative responsibility allocated to the roles of listener and speaker in the task *Keep the conversation flowing*, the students were assessed on their performance in each role separately. Although the total number of criteria for each role differed slightly (five for the speaker, four for the listener), the two roles were weighted equally, so that each was worth six points for a total of twelve points on the task as a whole. In both roles, the students were assessed on their ability to use communication strategies to facilitate effective communication, but the types of strategy they were rated on differed somewhat. Thus, speakers were rated on their ability to use proactive strategies such as comprehension checks to ensure mutual understanding, as well as their ability to respond appropriately to communication strategies used by the listener. Listeners, whose conversational role was primarily supportive, were rated on the use of strategies to signal interest and keep the speaker talking about the selected topic. They were also rated on their ability to use communication strategies related to their level of understanding of the current talk, either to signal (ongoing) understanding (e.g. through summarizing paraphrase or positive backchannels) or to signal a lack of understanding (e.g. through requests for repetition or clarification). As with the previous task, it was considered less important that the conversation ran perfectly smoothly than that the students could cope with any problems of understanding that did arise.

In addition to their use of communication strategies, speakers were also assessed in part on criteria relating to their productive use of language, including their ability to formulate their opinions on their chosen topic, as well as their ability to maintain a long turn without relying disproportionately on the listener to help them find enough to say. In keeping with the ELF-informed approach adopted in the pilot course, however, they were not rated on the accuracy or idiomaticity of their use of linguistic forms. In the role of the listener, participants were assessed on their receptive ability to understand their partner's talk as demonstrated, for example, by the relevance of their follow-up questions. Finally, in the roles of both the speaker

and the listener, the same holistic criterion regarding the impact of the student's pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar on the overall intelligibility of their talk for their interlocutor was also assessed.

Whereas the first two tasks of the final exam were designed for the assessment of learning related to the pragmatics and communication strategies strand of the pilot course, the last task focused on the area of pronunciation. The aim of this task was to assess the students' ability to produce target-like pronunciation of the specific pronunciation features which had been the focus of instruction during the course itself (cf. Chapter 6). Since all of these features were already present in the pronunciation paragraph which had been used for diagnostic testing at the beginning of the course (cf. Chapter 5), it was decided to use this paragraph again for the final exam. From a research perspective, this had the added advantage of ensuring direct comparability between the data from diagnostic assessment and the data from post-instruction assessment (cf. 6.2.4). However, since the aim was to specifically assess those features of pronunciation which had been directly addressed in the course, a new assessment rubric was designed for this exam task which focused exclusively on those areas (cf. Appendix D). This rubric was modeled on the rubric for progressive achievement testing provided in Walker (2010: 155). Each of the words representing a particular feature was listed in a table, and a specific number of points was assigned to each area. In total, the pronunciation task was worth eight points, representing one quarter of the total points possible on the exam.

For the diagnostic pronunciation task at the beginning of the course (cf. 5.1), the students had been required to record the pronunciation paragraph on their own and submit it via email. Those who had no access to a recording device of their own were invited to record their paragraph before or after the second course session on the recording device being used to record the pilot course. This had proved to be an efficient way to collect diagnostic data from all the course participants, and the quality of the recordings was generally more than adequate to facilitate assessment of the students' pronunciation. Since this process had worked well for diagnostic assessment, it was decided that the students would be required to record and submit the pronunciation paragraph for the final exam before their scheduled exam slot, rather than reading it in person as part of the paired exam itself. On the one hand, this had the advantage of saving a bit of time during the exam itself, allowing more time for the other two communicative tasks. On the other hand, Walker (2010) has suggested a number of other advantages to having learners independently record this type of achievement test (cf. Walker 2010: 152). First, learners can prepare for the task "in their own time and at their own speed" (Walker 2010: 152). Second, learners can record the paragraph more than once, allowing them to hand in a sample of what they consider to be their best work. Walker has even suggested that the process of rehearsing and re-recording a pronunciation paragraph may help to establish

automatic pronunciation habits (Walker 2010: 94). Finally, the assessor has the option to listen to the recording more than once, allowing for a more nuanced assessment of each learner's performance.

The students were informed about the pronunciation task in course session 9, at the same time that they received more detailed information about the format of the communicative parts of the exam and signed up for a paired timeslot. As in the diagnostic assessment task, the students were given a copy of the pronunciation paragraph. They were also provided with an overview of the pronunciation topics from the course and informed that assessment would focus specifically on the features of pronunciation which had been addressed during the course. Finally, they were informed about the two options for recording the task. They could either make a recording on their own and submit it via email before their exam timeslot began, or they could record the task on the recording device used to record the pilot course at the end of course session 10. In practice, all of the students who took the final exam recorded their pronunciation paragraph on a personal device and submitted it via email. All submissions were received on time.

Overall, the format of the pronunciation task represented a discrete item test of the type Walker (2010) described in his chapter on assessing pronunciation under the heading of progressive achievement testing (Walker 2010: 152-156). According to Walker, such tests are best used during a course "to monitor progress" and facilitate remediation as necessary (Walker 2010: 152). By contrast, he argued that in the context of final achievement testing, "[a] holistic test based on some type of communication task" would make a more appropriate assessment tool "because at this stage what we are interested in is not so much a learner's pronunciation in itself, but the impact this has on their intelligibility" (Walker 2010: 156). Thus, he recommended the use of broad criteria which attempted to capture how well the interlocutor (whether examiner or co-examinee) was actually able to understand the examinee's pronunciation. However, in the context of the pilot course, two factors led to the decision to include a discrete item test on the final exam. First, the course was a short course, and there had been no time for progressive achievement testing and subsequent remediation during the course itself. Second, as has already been discussed above, it proved impossible to organize enough different-L1 pairs for each exam so as to naturally encourage accommodation towards more target-like rather than more L1-influenced pronunciation during communicative tasks. However, in addition to the discrete item task, and in keeping with Walker's emphasis on the need to take intelligibility from the perspective of the interlocutor into account (cf. Walker 2010: 156), a holistic criterion addressing the impact of pronunciation, as well as vocabulary and grammar, on overall intelligibility was also included for the two communicative tasks on the final exam, as has already been discussed above.

In practice, thirteen students took part in the final exam. Three students who completed the full course – the two university employees (S14 and S15) and one student (S18) – opted for a certificate of participation rather than a graded certificate and thus were not required to take the exam. Additionally, the two students who dropped the course (S9 and S10) did not take part in the final exam either. The odd number of students who signed up to take the exam posed a brief challenge, since the exam was meant to be done in pairs. Possible solutions might have been to hold one exam in a group of three or to ask a student to participate in two exams. As it happened, however, one student, S12, was leaving for a trip on the day of the exam and needed to complete his exam early. To accommodate this, he and I agreed that I would act as his partner for the communicative tasks myself, rather than ask another student to take the exam early. Thus, although he completed the same tasks as his peers, his exam took place as an individual rather than a paired exam. This was possible in part because the exam was being recorded; I could concentrate on my communicative role in each task during the exam and then focus on marking S12's performance while listening to the recording later. However, this meant that, rather than a peer-peer constellation, this exam featured an asymmetrical relationship between interlocutors, a factor which may well have influenced the interaction to some extent. For this reason, data from the communicative tasks of S12's exam has been excluded from closer analysis of these tasks in later sections in the dissertation (cf. 21.4). The third task, involving the pronunciation paragraph, was not affected, as it was completed individually by each student, and was thus included in analysis of student performance on this task (cf. 6.2.4).

The other twelve students signed up for a 15-minute exam slot with the partner of their choice at the beginning of course session 9, two weeks before the exam date. This resulted in the following pairings (in chronological order by exam timeslot):

S6 and S8

S4 and S7

S11 and S17

S1 and S5

S2 and S3

S13 and S16

For the most part, the members of each pair had tended to sit together and generally chose to work together during small group lesson phases in which the students were allowed to choose their own partners or group members. The exception was the pairing S11 and S17, who were essentially the 'odd ones out' after the others had chosen their partners. However, they still knew each other somewhat through the course and had worked together on occasion in small group tasks with randomly-assigned or teacher-assigned group members, and they were generally amenable to the idea of doing the exam together. On the evening of the exam, all of

the pairs of students were punctual and the exams themselves generally ran smoothly. On average, each exam lasted 15 minutes and 6 seconds.

An overview of the individual students' marks on the final exam is presented in Table 4:

| Participant | Task 1 (/12 pts) | Task 2 (/12 pts) | Task 3 (/8 pts) | TOTAL (/32 pts) | % | Mark |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|------|
| S16 | 12 | 12 | 8 | 32 | 100% | 1,0 |
| S1 | 12 | 11 | 8 | 31 | 97% | 1,0 |
| S5 | 12 | 11 | 7 | 30 | 94% | 1,3 |
| S6 | 10.5 | 11 | 7.5 | 29 | 91% | 1,3 |
| S8 | 10.5 | 11 | 7.5 | 29 | 91% | 1,3 |
| S7 | 9.5 | 11 | 8 | 28.5 | 89% | 1,7 |
| S13 | 10 | 11 | 7.5 | 28.5 | 89% | 1,7 |
| S17 | 9.5 | 11.5 | 7.5 | 28.5 | 89% | 1,7 |
| S3 | 10 | 10.5 | 7 | 27.5 | 86% | 2,0 |
| S12 | 10 | 11 | 6.5 | 27.5 | 86% | 2,0 |
| S2 | 10 | 9.5 | 7 | 26.5 | 83% | 2,0 |
| S11 | 9 | 10 | 6.5 | 25.5 | 80% | 2,3 |
| S4 | 10 | 7 | 7 | 24 | 75% | 3,0 |
| Ø | 10.38 | 10.58 | 7.30 | 28.27 | 88.34% | 1,7 |

Table 4: Final exam scores

In this table, the students' performance is arranged from the highest overall score (100%) to the lowest (75%). The number of points a student received on each task is recorded in the first three columns, followed by the total number of points achieved, the percentage this total represented and the mark assigned according to the VKB grading scale. Average scores on each task, as well as on the exam as a whole, are provided in the last row of the column.

Ultimately, each of the students who participated in the final exam achieved a passing grade, and the marks were generally quite high. Five students received a grade of 90% or higher, correlating to a mark of 'very good' (German: *sehr gut*; 1,0 or 1,3). Another nine scored between 80% and 89%, resulting in a rating of 'good' (German: *gut*; 1,7, 2,0 or 2,3). Only one student scored below 80%, achieving a mark of 'satisfactory' (German: *befriedigend*; 3,0). As a group, then, the students who took part in the final exam demonstrated that they could meet the aims of the pilot course in an exam situation quite successfully.

As has been alluded to in the descriptions of the individual tasks above, data from the final exam was used in a number of ways to support the analysis of the main areas of instruction examined in the dissertation. First, data from the second and third tasks was compared with data from the diagnostic pronunciation assessment tasks collected at the beginning of the course

to provide evidence of learning in the area of pronunciation (cf. 6.4.2). Additionally, the students' use of communication strategies in the second task, *Keep the conversation flowing*, was extensively analyzed and compared to strategy use in the recorded rounds of the in-class version of the task (cf. 21.4). Finally, the content of some of the pairs' discussions in the second task was analyzed for evidence of shifts in the students' attitudes, e.g. regarding the need to acquire a native-like accent (cf. 7.2.2), as well as evidence of their developing awareness of the kinds of competence required for successful ELF talk, e.g. the importance of the ability to use communication strategies to negotiate mutual understanding with one's interlocutor(s) (cf. 21.4.6).

Strand 1:

Pronunciation

4 In search of priorities for teaching pronunciation in the ELF-oriented classroom

Pronunciation was one of the first areas to be explored in terms of how empirical research might inform a more ELF-oriented pedagogy. Jennifer Jenkins published what is still considered to be the seminal work in this area in 2000, a year before Seidlhofer's (2001) call for a concerted research effort into ELF²⁰. In light of the shift in role from foreign language to lingua franca that English has undergone for most L2 learners beyond the classroom, Jenkins (2000) used empirical research into which features of pronunciation seem to have a significant impact on intelligibility in ELF situations to propose a new syllabus for ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching in the ELT classroom.

4.1 Intelligibility: Tensions between traditional ELT approaches and empirical research into ELF communication

Traditionally, the goal of pronunciation teaching in ELT was that learners learn to approximate a standard native speaker accent as closely as possible. Up until the 1960s, when research began to emerge showing that attaining a native-like accent appeared to be possible only if a learner began learning a language before adolescence, a native-like accent was considered to be both achievable and advantageous for the learner (Levis 2005: 370). Since that time, the goal of pronunciation teaching in ELT has shifted toward intelligibility. Here, the focus is on achieving an accent that is easily understandable, rather than trying to sound exactly like a native speaker

²⁰ The fact that Jenkins (2000) was published before ELF was even established as a field of applied linguistic study accounts for Jenkins' use of somewhat unusual terminology. She refers to English used primarily by non-native speakers in lingua franca situations as English as an International Language (EIL), which at one time was a competing term for what has come to be known as ELF (cf. Jenkins 2000: 7, 11). She also distinguishes between native English speakers (NESs), bilingual English speakers (BESs) and non-bilingual English speakers (NBESs), rather than native speakers and non-native speakers (cf. Jenkins 2000: 8-10). This distinction is particularly important for Jenkins' work, since the focus of her research is on the phonological behavior of speakers who have not reached full bilingual proficiency in English. She also labels talk between NBESs as interlanguage talk (ILT), a term from SLA research with connotations of L1 interference and incomplete or fossilized learning (cf. Jenkins 2000: 19). These terms are not common in subsequent ELF literature, as the field has come to reject the notion of ELF talk as learner English, even when it takes place between less proficient speakers, preferring to view such speakers as English users rather than English learners. In subsequent publications, Jenkins has aligned herself firmly with the ELF research community and its terminology (cf. Jenkins 2012); in fact, she remains one of the driving forces in this field. Therefore, it seems appropriate to interpret the somewhat unusual terminology here in terms of current terminology from the ELF field.

(Levis 2005: 370). This shift in goal is reflected in current ELT handbooks such as Harmer (2015) and Rogerson-Revell (2011). However, it is not as apparent in current pronunciation teaching materials, which have tended to retain a focus on developing a native-like accent (Levis 2005: 371).

If the goal of pronunciation teaching is intelligibility, then the question becomes, to whom must the learner be intelligible? By and large, the native speaker has remained the yardstick for intelligibility in pronunciation research and pedagogy (Levis 2005: 371, Walker 2010: 26), despite the fact that L2 English learners today are more likely to find themselves using English primarily with other non-native speakers in lingua franca situations. Jenkins became concerned that research and pedagogy for pronunciation teaching in ELT was “based on intelligibility for [native speaker] receivers without any suggestion that intelligibility for [non-native speaker] receivers might make different demands” (Jenkins 2002: 84). She consequently set out to investigate which features of pronunciation seemed to play a decisive role in intelligibility in ELF situations as the basis for establishing what kind of pronunciation teaching would best ensure that L2 users of English from different language backgrounds would be mutually intelligible to one another.

The question of how to teach pronunciation in the ELF-oriented classroom becomes even more pressing in light of the empirical evidence from one of Jenkins’ studies, in which she analyzed the causes of misunderstanding in recorded conversations between pairs of graduate-level students who were working on information-sharing tasks in both same-L1 and different-L1 pairings in preparation for the Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) Speaking examination (cf. Jenkins 2000: 58, 84). In all, Jenkins collected 40 instances of misunderstanding in which “a receiver was unable to understand the intended meaning of his or her interlocutor” (Jenkins 2000: 84). Interestingly, all of these misunderstandings came from conversations in different-L1 pairs; none occurred in pairs where the speakers shared an L1 (Jenkins 2000: 84). Jenkins then analyzed each instance of misunderstanding in terms of the root cause of the misunderstanding. Of the 40 instances, she ultimately attributed 27 to pronunciation, well over half of the total instances and more than three times the number attributed to any other single category²¹ (Jenkins 2000: 85-86). From this data, Jenkins concluded that in ELF situations “pronunciation is possibly the greatest single barrier to successful communication. And this seems to be the case well beyond the beginner and elementary learner levels [...] it is still much in evidence when learners are at upper-

²¹ Other categories of cause included lexis (eight instances), grammar (one instance), world knowledge (one instance) and ambiguous or miscellaneous causes (three instances) (Jenkins 2000: 86-87).

intermediate level and beyond” (Jenkins 2000: 83). In other words, pronunciation is still likely to be problematic for intelligibility between L2 speakers from different L1 backgrounds who have otherwise reached a high level of proficiency in the English language, and this suggests that pedagogical intervention will be necessary even for learners enrolled in upper-intermediate and advanced courses.

The results of Jenkins’ rather small study have been corroborated by Deterding (2013), who examined 183 tokens of misunderstanding from the Asian Corpus of English (ACE) and identified pronunciation as the primary cause of misunderstanding in over 86% of them (Deterding 2013: 32, 33). A later study by Ishamina and Deterding (2018) investigating 321 instances of misunderstanding in ACE, including the examples collected and analyzed in Deterding (2013), identified pronunciation as a leading cause in 73.8% of cases (Ishamina and Deterding 2018: 227). This led the authors to observe that “[c]learly, pronunciation is the biggest factor in causing misunderstandings to occur” in their data, “confirming the claims of Jenkins (2000) that pronunciation is crucial in international interactions in English” (Ishamina and Deterding 2018: 227). Likewise, Cogo and Dewey (2012), whose combined corpora comprise more than 50 hours of naturally-occurring data, also indicated that “features of phonological difference” accounted for the majority of communication problems in their data alongside auditory problems (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 77).

At first glance, it might seem that the best way to promote mutual intelligibility between L2 speakers from different L1 backgrounds would be to continue to teach all language learners to approximate a standard native speaker accent as closely as possible. After all, if everyone speaks with the same accent, one might argue, then everyone should be able to understand each other²². However, this solution is generally considered to be problematic in the ELF community. One of the primary arguments against it is that a truly native-like accent is virtually unachievable for all but a few language learners. As Jenkins points out, “[l]earners who in all other respects achieve a very high degree of proficiency in English frequently retain a number of L1 phonological features” (Jenkins 2000: 16). Adult learners in particular are less likely to achieve a native-like accent, since studies have shown that “nativeness in pronunciation appears to be biologically conditioned to occur before adulthood” (Levis 2005: 370). While this is undoubtedly due in part to issues of motor control (Jenkins 2000: 16), Jenkins and many of her peers identify issues of identity as possibly being the more significant factor (cf.

²² In presenting this argument, I am glossing over a major point of contention: which accent should be selected as the accent that all L2 learners should strive to learn? It seems unlikely that the world would ever agree on which standard accent to teach, since this decision is so closely tied to issues of power and prestige.

Widdowson 1982, Dalton and Seidlhofer 1994, Daniels 1995, Eckert and Barry 2002, Crystal 2003, Levis 2005, Jenkins 2007, Walker 2010, Seidlhofer 2011). “Accent is particularly closely bound up with both personal and group identity, the group in this case being those sharing the learner’s mother tongue” (Jenkins 2000: 16). Requiring learners to give up their L1 accent in the L2 may equate with “forcing them to reject their own identity” (Dalton and Seidlhofer 1994: 7). Learners are therefore likely to resist these attempts, at least on a subconscious level, further complicating the acquisition of a native-like accent.

On the receptive side, other researchers, most notably Smith (1992), have found that a native-like accent may not be the easiest for non-native listeners to understand. After collecting speech samples from speakers of nine different nationalities (including both L2 speakers of English and L1 speakers from the US and the UK) and using them as tests for intelligibility with both native and non-native English speaker listeners, Smith concluded that

[n]ative speakers were not found to be the most easily understood, nor were they, as subjects, found to be the best able to understand the different varieties of English. Being a native speaker does not seem to be as important as being fluent in English and familiar with several different national varieties. (Smith 1992: 88)

Although Smith does not comment specifically on whether the native speakers in his study spoke with standard or more regional accents, House (2003: 567), Shaw et al. (2009: 192) and Walker (2010: 16-17) all provide further, if somewhat anecdotal, evidence that native speakers speaking with a standard native accent can be less readily intelligible to non-native listeners than speakers with a non-native accent. More recently, Ishamina and Deterding (2018) highlighted an example from their data in which a native-like pronunciation of the initial cluster <tr> as [tʃr], as is common in some UK accents, resulted in miscommunication, leading them to comment that “[i]t seems that mimicking native patterns of speech is not necessarily effective in maintaining intelligibility in ELF talk” (Ishamina and Deterding 2018: 230).

4.2 The Lingua Franca Core (LFC): An empirically-researched pronunciation syllabus for international intelligibility

Given that a native-like accent is rarely achievable for learners and that such an accent does not appear to best facilitate intelligibility in ELF situations even where it is achieved, Jenkins rejected a native-like accent as the ideal target for ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching. Instead, she set out to identify new priorities for pronunciation teaching in the ELF-oriented classroom with the primary goal of facilitating intelligibility among the widest possible range of speakers. To do this, she attempted to establish empirically which areas of pronunciation

appeared to be critical for mutual understanding between speakers from different L1 backgrounds and which did not. She used data she had collected in several forms, including field notes documenting “examples of miscommunication and communication breakdown in both multilingual classrooms and multilingual social contexts”, recordings featuring “different-L1 pairs and groups of students engaged in communication tasks” and data from an experiment investigating her learners’ “production and reception of nuclear stress” (Jenkins 2000: 132)²³. She focused her attention on instances in this data set in which pronunciation caused miscommunication or communication breakdown and attempted to identify and describe precisely which features of pronunciation were responsible for the problematic intelligibility, as well as “the relative contribution of speaker and hearer(s) to the problem” (Jenkins 2000: 132). Based on her findings, Jenkins concluded that four areas of pronunciation seemed to be vital to mutual intelligibility in ELF situations:

- 1 Most consonant sounds
- 2 Appropriate consonant cluster simplification
- 3 Vowel length distinctions
- 4 Nuclear stress

(Jenkins 2000: 132)

Because of their apparent importance for mutual intelligibility in ELF communication, Jenkins designated these areas as core areas in her Lingua Franca Core (LFC). These are the areas that she concludes should be prioritized in pronunciation teaching in the ELF-oriented classroom. She designated all other areas as non-core; they do not represent priorities for ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching, since they do not appear to have a significant impact on mutual intelligibility in ELF.

One of Jenkins’ most significant findings in terms of its ramifications for pedagogy has to do with the relative importance of segmental versus suprasegmental features of pronunciation for intelligibility in her data. Since the 1980s, greater emphasis has tended to be placed on the teaching of suprasegmental features such as rhythm, intonation, stress and features of connected speech, as these were deemed to be more important for carrying a speaker’s message than individual sounds (Levis 2005: 369, Walker 2010: 25-26; cf. also Field 2005, Dalton and Seidlhofer 2004). However, Jenkins found that nearly all of the instances of problematic discourse due to pronunciation in her data were caused by issues at the segmental level. In the data taken from her recordings of graduate students working on information-sharing tasks in

²³ Jenkins noted that “[b]ecause of the dearth of research into phonology in [ELF] contexts, the LFC is based entirely on my own data. Before I began collecting that data, however, I carried out an exploratory study, followed by a more formal pilot study, to ascertain whether, in principle, speakers of English from different L1 backgrounds did indeed find one another’s accents difficult to understand. Both studies were conclusive” (Jenkins 2000: 131-132).

preparation for the CAE Speaking exam, Jenkins established that all 27 instances of pronunciation-based miscommunication were due to phonological transfer, or the substitution of sounds from the speaker's L1 for L2 sounds (Jenkins 2000: 87-88). On the other hand, she found that "some...suprasegmental features – particularly those involving reduction – actually obstruct intelligibility" for listeners in ELF situations, "whereas 'speech is intelligible – although it might sound slow, over-careful, etc. – without any reductions' (Adam Brown, personal communication)" (Jenkins 2000: 135). Jenkins therefore concluded that, at least in terms of ELF communication, segmental features appear to play a more vital role in mutual intelligibility than suprasegmental features; in fact, some suprasegmental features may actually work against mutual intelligibility in ELF situations. Therefore, the focus of most classroom work on pronunciation should be on segmental rather than suprasegmental features.

4.2.1 Core and non-core segmental features

The LFC does not treat all segmental features equally. It includes as core sounds only those sounds which Jenkins identified in her data as important for mutual intelligibility in ELF situations and labels as non-core those sounds which do not appear to play a definitive role. Thus, all consonant phonemes of English are labeled as core sounds, except for the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ and the phonetic allophone dark l [ɫ]. In these cases, Jenkins established that approximations of these sounds generally did not result in problematic intelligibility in her data²⁴ and therefore do not represent areas of pronunciation which should be prioritized in the ELF-oriented classroom (Jenkins 2000: 137-139). Similarly, specific vowel qualities, including both pure vowels and diphthongs, are not considered to be core sounds. Rather, L2 variations of specific vowel qualities are considered acceptable as long as speakers use them consistently (Jenkins 2000: 144-145). The exception here is the phoneme /ɜ:/, which Jenkins found to cause problems in her data set (Jenkins 2000: 145-146). Vowel length distinctions, on the other hand, are considered core features. These include the distinction between the length of long vowels and diphthongs versus short vowels, as well as the relative length of vowels preceding voiced versus unvoiced consonants (Jenkins 2000: 140-141, 144-145).

²⁴ Though approximations of the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ are generally considered acceptable, Jenkins did mention that the use of [z] in place of /ð/ in her data occasionally caused problems (Jenkins 2000: 138). However, she did not include any caveats about acceptable approximations in the LFC. Further studies in this area have come to contradictory conclusions about which approximations may be potentially problematic for ELF intelligibility. Rajadurai (2006) found that [f] and [v] were less intelligible than [t] and [d], while Osimk (2009) concluded that [f] and [v] were unproblematic, but that [s] and [z] sometimes resulted in reduced intelligibility.

Thus far, the individual sounds included in Jenkins' LFC could be considered 'standard-neutral' in the sense that they all occur in both of the two current major world standard accents of English, Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA). However, a few of the consonant sounds included as core features of the LFC come from only one variety or the other. In terms of the pronunciation of the phoneme /r/, the LFC expresses preference for the rhotic retroflex approximant [ɹ] of GA over non-rhotic post-alveolar approximant [ɻ] of RP (Jenkins 2000: 139-140). Conversely, the medial [t] of RP is preferred over the voiced flap [ɾ] of GA in words like *matter* (Jenkins 2000: 140). In both these cases, Jenkins argued for the inclusion of these variations as core features because they are more readily intelligible in ELF situations²⁵ (Jenkins 2000: 139-140). In this way, the LFC prioritizes mutual intelligibility over adherence to a particular standard variety.

Jenkins also included the appropriate simplification of consonant clusters as a core feature in the LFC. English permits clusters of up to three sounds in word-initial and word-medial position, and up to four sounds in word-final position. Clusters are also possible across word boundaries (Walker 2010: 32). Speakers of L1s that do not feature such complex clusters generally deal with clusters in English by simplifying them in one of two ways. They either delete some of the sounds, or they insert vowel sounds between the consonants in the cluster, a process known as epenthesis (Jenkins 2000: 37). Of these two tactics, Jenkins concluded that epenthesis is generally unproblematic for ELF intelligibility, unless the insertion results in a homonym in English or the speaker stresses one of the epenthetic syllables (Jenkins 2000: 38, 142). Consonant deletion, on the other hand, can be highly problematic (Jenkins 2000: 37-38, 142). While English does allow elision of certain sounds within consonant clusters, this elision is strictly rule-governed. Consonant sounds in initial clusters can never be elided (Jenkins 2000: 142). In medial and final position, /t/ and /d/ are often elided, though elision of these sounds in word-final position is only allowed if the next word also begins with a consonant (Jenkins 2000: 142-143). Where L2 speakers delete consonant sounds in clusters in ways that violate the rules of elision for English, intelligibility often suffers. In the area of consonant clusters, Jenkins therefore recommended that

pronunciation pedagogy should prioritize what is important for [ELF] intelligibility: that addition is preferable to deletion; that sounds in initial clusters should never be deleted; that where elision occurs in a final cluster, it is preferable to opt for a /t/ or /d/ where this is possible; and that although it is permissible to elide a final /t/ or /d/ where these occur in word-final clusters and the next word

²⁵ It is worth noting here, however, that while Jenkins presents evidence to support her decision not to include [ə], [ð] or [ʔ] as core sounds in the LFC, her preference for rhotic [ɹ], medial [t] and aspiration of initial fortis consonants seem to be based more on intuition than on actual empirical data.

begins with a consonant sound...this is not so if the next word begins with a vowel sound. (Jenkins 2000: 143)

4.2.2 *Core and non-core suprasegmental features*

Whereas a relatively extensive list of segmental features including most consonant sounds, vowel length distinctions and appropriate consonant cluster simplification are all included as core features of the LFC because they appear to be important for mutual intelligibility in ELF situations, the LFC does not include most suprasegmental features of pronunciation as core features on the grounds that they either have little impact on pronunciation in ELF situations or are even potentially harmful to it. Stress-timing and pitch movement belong to the latter category. So far, no research has shown that non-standard usage in either of these areas causes increased unintelligibility in ELF communication (Jenkins 2000: 149-153; Walker 2010: 38-41).

Word stress is a bit more complicated. Jenkins referred to it as a “gray area” (Jenkins 2000: 150), claiming that it hardly ever caused intelligibility problems in her data unless non-standard word stress coincided with a problematic segmental transfer. Additionally, she described the rules governing word stress as “so complex as to be unteachable” (Jenkins 2000: 150). However, she acknowledged links between word stress and nuclear stress, the only suprasegmental feature actually included as a core feature of the LFC. Jenkins focused on the “corresponding effect” of word stress on nuclear stress placement, whereby incorrect word stress within a word selected for nuclear stress placement may lead to unintelligibility (Jenkins 2000: 150). She concluded that it is probably neither practical nor necessary to teach all the rules governing word stress, but suggested that learners at least be taught some “general guidelines” about word stress in English, as well as how to recognize which syllable in a word is stressed in dictionary entries (Jenkins 2000: 151). Ultimately, she did not include it as a core feature in the LFC.

Walker (2010), however, cited a pair of studies (Field 2005, Rajadurai 2006) that suggest that nonstandard word stress may cause difficulties for non-native as well as native speaker listeners. He concluded that “[t]he exact role of word stress in ELF is not yet fully understood” and therefore cannot be dismissed out of hand (Walker 2010: 40). He focused more pragmatically on the potential of work with word stress for preparing learners for work with nuclear stress placement, since “the mechanisms for perceiving and placing stress at the level of whole utterances is the same as the mechanisms for perceiving and placing stress at word level” (Walker 2010: 40). However, he agreed with Jenkins that “the full set of rules that govern

word stress in English is probably unteachable because of its complexity” (Walker 2010: 40) and did not suggest revising the LFC in favor of including word stress as a core feature.

More recently, the claim that non-standard word stress has little impact on intelligibility in ELF talk unless it coincides with other core sound substitutions has been corroborated by Deterding (2013). Of the 183 instances of misunderstanding due to issues of pronunciation which he identified in his corpus, Deterding (2013) found that only six involved non-standard word stress, and at least two of these also involved non-standard pronunciation of other core features within the same word (Deterding 2013: 75). Deterding also cited many more examples of non-standard word stress that apparently caused no problems in his data (Deterding 2013: 76). He concluded that “variable or unclear word stress rarely causes misunderstandings in ELF settings”, a finding which “is consistent with LFC proposals” (Deterding 2013: 76). In a further study, Lewis and Deterding (2018) identified just seven further examples in their corpus in which non-standard word stress had a negative effect on intelligibility (Lewis and Deterding 2018: 169-170) compared to six examples in which non-standard stress did not appear to cause problems (Lewis and Deterding 2018: 171). Nonetheless, like Walker, they concluded that it is “premature to exclude [word stress] from English teaching” until more research regarding both “how frequent such problems are and under what contexts they occur” becomes available (Lewis and Deterding 2018: 172). They saw “no benefit in removing word stress from the classroom” (Lewis and Deterding 2018: 174); however, they did not offer any consideration of the teachability issues raised by Jenkins and Walker.

In contrast to the suprasegmental features discussed so far, all of which appear to have little to no impact on ELF intelligibility, suprasegmental features that involve reduction have been found to be more likely to cause problems for ELF intelligibility (Jenkins 2000: 135). Chief among these are the use of vowel reduction and weak forms. Use of these features of English can actually make it more difficult for non-native listeners to understand a speaker’s message. This may be, as Walker suggested, because listeners fail to recognize the weakened syllables (Walker 2010: 42). It may also be that weakened forms complicate the recoverability of the message, increasing the work listeners must do to decode what has been said (cf. Jenkins 2000: 116-117). Jenkins pointed out that native speakers themselves routinely reduce the amount of vowel reduction and weak forms they use in contexts where they perceive an increased need to be understood (Jenkins 2000: 147). Therefore, in the interest of intelligibility, rather than teaching vowel reduction and weak forms in the ELF-aware classroom, Jenkins suggested that learners be taught at most to reduce the duration of a vowel while retaining its quality (Jenkins 2000: 148). This recommendation was later upheld in Deterding (2012), who found that the use of full vowel qualities rather than reduced ones enhanced intelligibility rather than impeding it in the ELF interactions examined in his study.

Similarly, Jenkins identified problems with certain other characteristics of connected speech, particularly assimilatory processes such as “elision (the omission of sounds), catenation (the linking of sounds across words), and assimilation (the replacing of sounds to make them in some way closer to neighboring sounds)” (Jenkins 2000: 72), as well as “linking of /r/, and intrusion of /j/, /w/, and, in RP, also /r/” (Jenkins 2000: 148). These processes are speaker-focused in that they primarily “aid the speaker’s pronounceability by making articulation easier” (Jenkins 2000: 148). Jenkins argued that in ELF communication, in which mutual intelligibility is the overarching goal, “it makes better sense to prioritize the [listener’s] ease of perception over the speaker’s ease of production” (Jenkins 2000: 148). Additionally, these processes are associated with rapid speech in which speakers are speaking at a rate of 350 syllables per minute or more. Most non-native speakers in ELF situations never reach these speeds, and research has shown that “applying connected speech changes at lower speeds can make a message completely unintelligible” (Walker 2010: 42; cf. also Jenkins 2000: 72-73, 148-149). For these two reasons, these features are not included as core features in the LFC.

Jenkins did identify one suprasegmental feature, nuclear stress placement, as being of critical importance for intelligibility in ELF communication (Jenkins 2000: 153). When speaking, speakers organize their utterances into groups of words, known as thought groups or tone units. This chunking appears to help both speaker and listener in that it allows time for planning and processing speech respectively (Rogerson-Revell 2011: 181). A thought group may contain several stressed syllables, and nuclear stress placement refers to the tendency of speakers to select one of these syllables, known as the nucleus or tonic syllable, for particular emphasis (Rogerson-Revell 2011: 185). In unmarked cases, nuclear stress generally falls on the stressed syllable in the last content word in the thought group (Rogerson-Revell 2011: 185). However, the speaker can also draw attention to a particular part of his or her message by moving nuclear stress to a different syllable within the thought group (Rogerson-Revell 2011: 155), allowing him or her “to contrast, correct or emphasize some information” (Rogerson-Revell 2011: 185). This is known as contrastive stress. For example, the sentence *I’ve rented a FLAT* (unmarked stress) would be perceived as a more neutral statement of fact, while the sentence *I’ve RENTED a flat* (contrastive stress) draws attention to the fact that the flat has been rented rather than purchased and the sentence *I’VE rented a flat* (contrastive stress) emphasizes the fact that it is the speaker and not someone else who has rented it (cf. Walker 2010: 37).

Though most of the intelligibility problems in Jenkins’ data were caused by sound substitution, a significant minority involved improperly placed nuclear stress (Jenkins 2000: 153). In her data set, Jenkins found that “the greatest phonological obstacles to mutual intelligibility appear to be deviant core sounds in combination with misplaced and/or

misproduced nuclear stress” (Jenkins 2000: 155; cf. also Jenkins 2002: 89). Such errors tended to be the most difficult to resolve. She attributed this difficulty to the fact that, while learners seemed more readily able to acquire nuclear stress placement as a receptive strategy upon which they then relied to make sense of others’ utterances, their ability to use nuclear stress placement productively in their own speech lagged behind (Jenkins 2000: 153). She therefore included nuclear stress placement in the LFC as a core feature in need of attention in the ELF-oriented classroom (Jenkins 2000: 154).

4.2.3 *The LFC in summary*

Jenkins (2000) summarized the core features of the Lingua Franca Core as follows:

The Lingua Franca Core

...

- 1 The consonant inventory with the following provisos:
 - rhotic [ɹ] rather than other varieties of /r/
 - intervocalic /t/ rather than [ɾ]
 - most substitutions of /ə/, /ð/ and [ɪ] permissible
 - close approximations to core consonant sounds generally permissible
 - certain approximations not permissible (i.e. where there is a risk that they will be heard as a different consonant sound from that intended)²⁶
- 2 Phonetic requirements:
 - aspiration following the fortis plosives /p/, /t/, and /k/
 - fortis/lenis differential effect on preceding vowel length
- 3 Consonant clusters:
 - initial clusters not simplified
 - medial and final clusters simplified only according to L1²⁷ rules of elision²⁸
- 4 Vowel sounds:
 - maintenance of vowel length contrasts
 - L2 regional qualities²⁹ permissible if consistent, but /ɜ:/ to be preserved
- 5 Nuclear stress placement and placement and division of speech stream into word groups.

Jenkins 2000: 158-159

²⁶ Jenkins (2002) summarized these last two points slightly differently in a similar overview of the LFC: “allophonic variation within phonemes permissible as long as the pronunciation does not overlap with another phoneme” (Jenkins 2002: 96).

²⁷ i.e., Standard English

²⁸ The summary in Jenkins (2002) also includes the caveat that “addition is acceptable [...] whereas omission was not”, emphasizing Jenkins’ finding that, of the two strategies commonly employed by L2 speakers to ease the production of consonant clusters in English, the deletion of sounds within a cluster had a much more negative impact on ELF intelligibility than epenthesis, i.e. the addition of a neutral vowel sound between consonant sounds within a cluster (Jenkins 2002: 97).

²⁹ i.e., vowel qualities influenced by transfer from an L2 English speaker’s L1

Based on her empirical findings, these then are the pronunciation features that Jenkins recommended teachers prioritize with their students in the ELF-oriented classroom, since they are the features which appear to be critical for mutual intelligibility in ELF talk. All other areas are considered non-core, meaning that they are not areas of priority for ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching. Variation in these areas is considered acceptable, since it is unlikely to negatively affect mutual intelligibility.

4.3 *Phonological accommodation: Adjusting to the needs of the interlocutor*

The LFC represents an inventory of those features which Jenkins (2000, 2002) identified as generally necessary for mutual intelligibility in ELF communication. However, Jenkins has consistently emphasized that for speakers in specific ELF situations, using target-like pronunciation of core features absolutely consistently “is less important...than having an item within their repertoire and being able to respond to a specific interlocutor’s needs as and when they arise” (Jenkins 2002: 99; cf. also Jenkins 2009). In terms of intelligibility, the use of target-like pronunciation of core features may not be necessary in every communicative situation, particularly where interactants come from similar linguistic backgrounds. Jenkins’ data illustrated that

when interlocutors share alternative variants for core features (e.g. they might prefer to use /v/ rather than /w/) then there would be no advantage, intelligibility-wise, for each of them to replace their mutually preferred use simply because /w/ would be correct in NS English pronunciation. On the other hand, it would be important for them to have /w/ in their phonetic repertoires so that it is available for use with ELF interlocutors for whom /v/ might cause intelligibility problems. (Jenkins 2009: 12-13)

Deterding and Kirkpatrick (2006) found a similar trend in their study of interactions between speakers of nine different first languages from Southeast Asian countries. In their study, only non-shared non-standard features led to intelligibility problems, while shared non-standard features were actually found to enhance mutual intelligibility (Deterding and Kirkpatrick 2006: 406). These findings suggest that non-target-like pronunciation only becomes problematic if it is not shared between interlocutors. Where interlocutors share a common non-core pronunciation of a core feature, the use of this pronunciation might actually be more likely to ensure mutual intelligibility and would also probably be easier for the speakers to produce. In this context, speakers would not need to expend the extra effort to produce a target-like pronunciation of the core sound in order to ensure mutual intelligibility. However, where two interlocutors do not share a non-core pronunciation, the use of the non-core pronunciation is much more likely to cause problems of understanding. In such a setting, the ability to recognize

this issue and to produce a target-like pronunciation of the sound in question becomes crucially important for mutual intelligibility.

In addition to instruction in the LFC, then, Jenkins maintained that learners also need to learn how to accommodate, or make adjustments, in the area of pronunciation, both productively when their own L1 transfer causes communicative problems and receptively when they encounter speakers whose pronunciation they find difficult to understand. As Jenkins herself put it, speakers in ELF situations “must be prepared both to cope with major pronunciation differences in the speech of their different-L1 partners and to adjust their own pronunciation radically for the benefit of their different-L1 hearers. And this sort of preparation can only be achieved through pedagogy” (Jenkins 2000: 194).

Phonological accommodation as it relates to Jenkins’ proposals for ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching has its roots in Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). CAT attempts to describe and explain the adjustments speakers make when speaking with various interlocutors, not only at the phonological level but at other linguistic levels as well. In particular, CAT attempts to provide an explanation for the cognitive and affective processes which motivate these adjustments (Giles et al. 1991b: 6). Originally, the theory focused on two types of adjustment, convergence (making one’s speech more like that of one’s interlocutor) and divergence (making one’s speech less like that of one’s interlocutor), though it has more recently been extended to include other types of adjustments, including non-verbal ones (Giles et al. 1991a: 63, Giles et al. 1991b: 6-9). Jenkins’ proposals for ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching draw particularly on research into convergence. Researchers have posited that convergence is generally motivated by two factors, the desire to be liked and accepted by one’s interlocutor and the desire for communicative efficiency. Although earlier studies of convergence focused on the latter motivation (cf. Giles 1973, Giles et al. 1991b: 18-19), more recent research has indicated that communicative efficiency may be more salient, at least in some situations (cf. Thakerar et al. 1982, Takahashi 1989, Giles et al. 1991b: 38). Takahashi (1989) in particular found evidence in her data that convergence between L2 speakers is motivated by the desire to increase intelligibility and thus improve communicative efficiency. On the basis of these studies, as well as her own observations, Jenkins argued that communicative efficiency is likely the primary motivation for convergence in ELF interactions, particularly in the area of pronunciation:

Speakers who find themselves together in an attempt to accomplish a particular task, the successful accomplishment of which is to their mutual advantage, will be instrumentally motivated to facilitate communication in order to achieve a successful outcome. If these speakers come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, then accommodation processes will have a far greater role in enhancing mutual comprehension than they would in communication between speakers from similar backgrounds. In particular, when widely differing accents

come into contact in such speech situations, their users will probably feel strong internal pressure to converge phonologically in some way, in order to promote their own intelligibility. (Jenkins 2000: 170-171)

While phonological convergence is recognized as a phenomenon that may arise in all types of naturally occurring speech, it appears to operate slightly differently in ELF interactions between speakers of different L1 backgrounds than in situations featuring speakers who share an L1. The major difference is the target of convergence. Whereas CAT research has demonstrated that native speakers of the same L1 tend to converge on features of each other's speech (cf. Holmes 2008: 241, 242), Jenkins' data showed speakers of different L1s in ELF situations converging instead on more target-like pronunciation of features they perceived to be potentially problematic for intelligibility. She found that when her students were engaged in information exchange activities in different-L1 pairs, they produced significantly fewer instances of L1 transfer of sounds she had identified as important for mutual intelligibility in ELF than when they worked in same-L1 pairs (Jenkins 2000: 61). These students appeared to be "making considerable effort to replace L1 phonological transfer" with more target-like sounds when they were engaged in communication in which they felt that differences in pronunciation were likely to pose a threat to mutual intelligibility (Jenkins 2000: 63). Jenkins found that "accommodation in the traditional sense (i.e. speakers converging on their interlocutors' pronunciations) rarely occurs" when speakers came from different-L1 backgrounds (Jenkins 2000: 181). In fact, "[f]ar from acquiring their different-L1 partner's errors, the chief influence of this partner was to cause them to make fewer of their own typical transfer errors" (Jenkins 2000: 186). This should thus assuage

the fear, frequently expressed by teachers and learners alike in linguistically diverse classrooms, that learners will somehow acquire one another's pronunciation errors. Research in this area suggests that the fear is unfounded (see, for example, Porter 1986; Lightbown and Spada 1999). My own findings lead to the same conclusions. (Jenkins 2000: 182)

Given this difference in the target of convergence in ELF interactions featuring speakers of different L1s, the question becomes whether this type of convergence can really be considered accommodation in the sense of CAT. Jenkins acknowledged that "convergence in [ELF] manifests itself in non-traditional ways", but argued that it is "fully explicable within the accommodation framework" since it stems from the same motivations as convergence in same-L1 talk (Jenkins 2000: 179). This is generally in line with findings in other areas of ELF research such as pragmatics, which claim that ELF talk is subject to the same processes as other types of natural talk, but that these processes often manifest themselves differently than in native speaker talk. The ELF field at least has accepted the extension of the term *phonological accommodation* to include the phenomenon of convergence on more target-like pronunciation between speakers of different L1s in ELF situations (cf. Jenkins et al. 2011: 287-288).

However, this extension of the term *phonological accommodation* has the potential to create confusion within the discussion of ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching. The type of convergence described above, in which speakers converge on a more target-like pronunciation of high-stakes items from a desire for communicative efficiency, only occurs between speakers from different L1 backgrounds. The process looks somewhat different between speakers of the same L1, as the following figure summarizes:

Figure 1:

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Different-L1 talk | → Desire to communicate effectively | → Convergence on common pronunciation: Replacement of unintelligible pronunciation with target-like pronunciation | → Increased intelligibility → Reinforcement of target-like pronunciation of core items |
| Same-L1 talk | → Desire to communicate effectively | → Convergence on common pronunciation: Convergence on L1-influenced pronunciation | → Increased intelligibility → Reinforcement of mother-tongue accent |

Phonological accommodation in different-L1 vs. same-L1 talk
Adapted from Jenkins 2000: 192 and Walker 2010: 93

Where speakers come from the same L1 background, they will also be motivated to engage in the process of convergence out of the desire for communicative efficiency. However, they have two potential sources of shared pronunciation repertoire, the target-like pronunciation they are learning in the classroom and their L1-influenced pronunciation. Jenkins' research showed that students in same-L1 groups tended to converge on their common L1-influenced pronunciation of words in the L2, since this pronunciation was more comfortable for them while still increasing, rather than hindering, mutual intelligibility (Jenkins 2000: 58-63, 192; Walker 2010: 92). In other words, speakers of the same L1 appear to engage in phonological convergence in the traditional sense of CAT, in which speakers converge on features of each other's speech. However, this type of phonological convergence is considered undesirable in the ELF-oriented classroom, since it reinforces non-target pronunciation of core items and thus undermines the development of target-like pronunciation habits that can lead to increased intelligibility in ELF situations (Jenkins 2000: 192, Walker 2010: 92-93).

When Jenkins stated that she was interested in teaching phonological accommodation in the ELF-oriented classroom, she only meant phonological convergence in the extended sense of the term as it occurs between speakers of different L1s. Particularly in classrooms where the majority of learners come from the same linguistic background, though, steps will actually need

to be taken to avoid phonological convergence toward L1-influenced pronunciation between learners who share an L1. In discussing the teaching of accommodation in Chapter 7, I will therefore differentiate between convergence toward the target and convergence toward L1-influenced pronunciation in order to avoid the terminological confusion that arises from referring to both phenomena simply as instances of phonological accommodation.

While the desire of speakers in ELF situations to converge on target-like pronunciation of high-stakes features in order to ensure mutual intelligibility with different-L1 interlocutors seems to be relatively natural, they will only be able to do so if target-like pronunciation of these features is within their repertoire (Jenkins 2000: 183). Thus, work on the features of pronunciation identified as vital for international intelligibility is an “essential prerequisite to classroom work on accommodation skills” (Jenkins 2000: 188). Where features have not yet entered a speaker’s automatic repertoire, “but are producible by means of great conscious effort, learners will need pedagogic input to enable them to appreciate both why it is sometimes necessary for them to make this effort, and precisely what is involved” (Jenkins 2000: 166). Beyond this, they will also require pedagogic intervention to make them “more aware of the importance of making adjustments for specific interlocutors and more able to identify the occasions when this is necessary” (Jenkins 2002: 96). Generally, this will involve creating classroom situations in which learners are able to notice for themselves where their pronunciation is problematic for interlocutors from other L1 backgrounds and to practice replacing these features with more target-like pronunciation³⁰ (Jenkins 2000: 189-190). This is a relatively straightforward process in classrooms where learners speak a range of L1s, but becomes much more difficult to organize where a learning group comes overwhelmingly from the same L1 background, an issue I will return to in depth in Chapter 7.

In addition to developing the ability to adjust their own speech consciously toward the target where necessary in order to ensure mutual intelligibility, learners preparing to engage in ELF must also develop awareness and flexibility in dealing with the wide variety of L2 accents which they may encounter. Thus, learners must develop not only their productive accommodation skills, but also their receptive ones. Studies such as Smith (1992), Derwing and Munro (1997) and Field (2003) have shown that a listener’s familiarity with an accent strongly influences that listener’s ability to understand the accent. However, as Jenkins pointed out, “few people, if any, are guaranteed to be exposed pedagogically to every single accent that

³⁰ In this way, work on accommodation can actually support the development of new automatic pronunciation habits for core items in that it gives learners the chance both to become more aware of the areas of pronunciation in which they need to improve and to practice more target-like pronunciation of those items.

they are likely to encounter. Flexibility is therefore the key” (Jenkins 2000: 22). Listeners must become more flexible both in terms of “their expectations and [their] interpretations of what they hear” when dealing with L2 accents of English (Walker 2010: 72). This flexibility can best be achieved “through exposure to a wide range of varieties of accent” supported by classroom tasks and discussions that help learners to engage actively with unfamiliar or difficult aspects of pronunciation they encounter (Jenkins 2000: 190).

4.4 *A pronunciation teaching program for ELF communication and beyond*

According to Jenkins, then, there are two areas that should be prioritized in pronunciation teaching in the ELF-oriented classroom: those features identified as core features of pronunciation for mutual intelligibility in ELF talk (as summarized in the LFC) and phonological accommodation skills. This represents a significant departure from the traditional pronunciation syllabus in ELT. Nevertheless, Jenkins argued that, from an ELF-oriented perspective,

[n]ow that we have empirical evidence demonstrating that many L1 phonological features are irrelevant to [ELF] intelligibility, there is no good reason to expect learners to acquire these features and, by implication, in the process to obliterate as much as possible of their L1 accents and, along with these, their L1 identities. (Jenkins 2000: 211).

Jenkins acknowledged that her proposal of the LFC as the basis for ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching “involves recommendation and, to an extent, prescription in the discussion of specific new goals for pronunciation teaching” (Jenkins 2000: 2). Rather than viewing the LFC as reduced language, however, she viewed it as

an attempt – with [ELF] primarily in mind – to scale down the phonological task for the majority of learners, by leaving to the individual learner’s discretion and to later acquisition outside the classroom the learning of peripheral details [i.e., non-core features], and focusing pedagogical attention on those items which are essential in terms of intelligible pronunciation [i.e., core features]. This kind of prioritizing seems to me not only to be far more relevant to [ELF] communication, but also to be far more realistic in its likelihood of meeting with classroom success. (Jenkins 2000: 123)

Thus, focusing on the acquisition of the core features of the LFC represents a more reasonable goal, both for learners to learn and for teachers to teach, in the language learning classroom.

Augmented by training in both productive and receptive phonological accommodation skills, acquisition of the features included in the LFC is sufficient to equip learners for communication in ELF situations, the scenario in which learners currently learning English in expanding circle countries are most likely to find themselves outside the classroom. Jenkins

emphasized, however, that should a learner decide that he or she is more likely to engage with native speakers in an EFL or ESL context, it is possible to build upon the foundation of the LFC and add non-core features. Beginning with the LFC is not a disadvantage in such situations, since

even when a learner's goal is a [native speaker] accent, nothing in the LFC is 'unnecessary' or constitutes an 'obstacle' for the learner. That is to say, nothing needs 'unlearning'. The opposite is not true; speakers competent in a standard [native speaker] accent such as RP, need to avoid using certain features of their accent, especially certain suprasegmental features, in order to be intelligible in ELF settings. (Walker 2008: 9)

Thus, Jenkins and others such as Walker have argued that the LFC could legitimately serve as the basis for pronunciation teaching in expanding circle contexts, even for learners who might eventually wish to use their English in other ways than as a lingua franca.

To encompass the varying needs of learners for ELF intelligibility and beyond, Jenkins proposed a five-level program for pronunciation teaching and learning, in which acquisition of the core features of the LFC is only the first step:

- 1 Addition of core items to the learner's productive and receptive repertoire
 - 2 Addition of a range of L2 English accents to the learner's receptive repertoire
 - 3 Addition of accommodation skills
 - 4 Addition of non-core items to the learner's receptive repertoire³¹
 - 5 Addition of a range of L1 English accents to the learner's receptive repertoire
- Jenkins 2000: 209-210

The first three levels encompass the areas of pronunciation necessary for lingua franca communication and would form the basis for pronunciation teaching within the ELF-oriented classroom³². The final two prepare learners for communication in a wider range of communicative settings, including EFL and ESL settings, and would therefore only be necessary for learners who expected to use their English in such contexts³³.

³¹ The focus on the learners' receptive repertoire at this level of the program is in line with recommendations from Rogerson-Revell (2011) and Low (2015), who advocate in particular that learners who wish to communicate with native speakers will need to acquire suprasegmental features such as weak forms, elision and assimilation "for the purpose of comprehension of native English speech but not for the purpose of production" (Low 2015: 85).

³² Interestingly, Jenkins considered only the first level compulsory for ELF-oriented pedagogy. This may be related to the difficulties she identified, and largely left unsolved, involving teaching accommodation in learning groups in which the majority of the learners come from the same linguacultural background. She also hastened to remind her readers that this level is a "goal rather than [a] guaranteed outcome" (Jenkins 2000: 209). Those wishing to teach English, however, would need to achieve competence in at least the first four levels.

³³ It seems to me that particularly those learners who expect to find themselves in ESL contexts, especially if they intend to immigrate permanently to an ENL country, would probably wish to engage in one final level: Addition of non-core items to the learner's productive repertoire.

Jenkins noted that the program she proposed “is very far removed from notions of accent reduction” prevalent in traditional ELT (Jenkins 2000: 210). Rather than aiming to reduce one’s accent, Jenkins preferred to view pronunciation teaching as a process “of adding the L2 as far as is necessary for mutual phonological intelligibility: in other words, the concept of ‘accent’ addition”³⁴ (Jenkins 2000: 209). The extent to which addition may be necessary will depend on the context in which the learner anticipates using English. The emphasis on core vs. non-core features and processes of accommodation in Jenkins’ proposed program is thus meant to engender a more positive stance toward notions of phonological transfer and accent in the L2 than has typically been the case in traditional ELT (cf. Jenkins 2000: 211).

4.5 *Responses to Jenkins (2000) and the LFC*

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Jenkins (2000) has remained the seminal work in the area of ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching more than two decades after its initial publication. Despite Jenkins’ call for more research “from different international groupings to confirm (or not) the detailed claims of the LFC” (Jenkins 2000: 235), there have been relatively few studies which have attempted to replicate her work. Those that have been undertaken have generally upheld Jenkins’ conclusions (e.g. da Silva 1999; Deterding and Kirkpatrick 2006; Rajadurai 2006, 2007; Osimk 2009; Pickering 2009; Deterding 2012, 2013; O’Neal 2015; Deterding and Mohamad 2016; Ishamina and Deterding 2018; Lewis and Deterding 2018), though these studies have also suggested that the LFC may require refinement in some areas. Rajadurai (2006) and Osimk (2009), for example, upheld the importance of aspiration of fortis consonants but called into question whether rhotic /r/ is actually preferable to non-rhotic /r/ for intelligibility in ELF contexts. As noted in 4.2.2 above, Field (2005) and Rajadurai (2006) provided evidence that the placement of word stress may have a more significant impact on ELF intelligibility than Jenkins claimed, suggesting the need to reexamine its status as a non-core feature. Likewise, although Deterding (2013) and Lewis and Deterding (2018) each identified only a handful of instances in their corpora in which non-standard word stress placement caused problems with intelligibility compared to an equal or greater number of cases

³⁴ Much of Jenkins’ argument in favor of viewing the goal of pronunciation instruction as accent addition rather than accent reduction hinges on notions of speaker identity (cf. Jenkins 2000: 208-212). Regarding ELF communication, Jenkins argued that focusing on accent addition rather than reduction would allow L2 learners to retain “many features of L1 pronunciation transfer (in non-core areas)”, thus allowing these speakers to “preserve their own L1 identities even as they identify with other L2 speakers in international settings through the use of core features and accommodation” (Jenkins 2000: 210-211).

in which it caused no problems, the latter study still recommended “that word stress continue to be taught in the ELF classroom until further research can firmly determine its importance” (Lewis and Deterding 2018: 174). Deterding (2013) confirmed that consonant substitutions seem to cause more problems than variations in vowel quality, but identified very few instances in which the absence of vowel length distinctions caused problems in his data. O’Neal (2015), on the other hand, presented evidence supporting the inclusion of additional vowel qualities in the LFC. Regarding initial consonant clusters, Ishamina and Deterding (2018) upheld Jenkins’ finding that deleting sounds from initial clusters caused intelligibility problems in a significant number of cases in their data, but found that the substitution of the second sound in an initial cluster caused fewer problems than its omission, leading them to propose that “maintaining the full number of consonants in initial clusters” may be more important than the quality of the second consonant sound (Ishamina and Deterding 2018: 231).

The initial reaction to the LFC in the wider ELT community was quite mixed. Some scholars, such as Gilbert and Levis (2001) and Hewings (2001), welcomed the LFC’s empirical approach to the issue of non-native speaker intelligibility in ELF settings. Others, such as Scheuer (2005), Sobkowiak (2005) and Trudgill (2005), rejected the LFC as unsuitable or even potentially harmful for learners. At times, those most volubly negative toward the LFC appear to misinterpret its aims and purpose. Trudgill (2005), for example, claimed that Jenkins “is not interested in” helping learners to develop a receptive competence in features of native speaker English which are outside the LFC, but rather “wants to engineer a situation where [ELF] users never have to encounter ENL because native speakers will no longer speak it in international contexts” (Trudgill 2005: 94). While it is true that Jenkins discussed the need for native speakers of English who regularly find themselves in ELF settings to learn how to adjust their speech for the benefit of their non-native interlocutors (cf. Jenkins 2000: 227-229), Trudgill’s assertion that she had no interest in preparing learners to deal receptively with native-like use of non-core features stands in direct contrast to remarks she made in her discussion of non-core features of connected speech (cf. Jenkins 2000: 148, 149), as well as her inclusion of exactly this type of competence as the fourth level of her five-level program for ELF-informed pronunciation teaching (cf. Jenkins 2000: 209-210).

More recently, however, Jenkins’ principles and the LFC itself have increasingly found their way into major handbooks for English teachers such as Harmer (2015) and Rogerson-Revell (2011). In his chapter on pronunciation, Harmer, for example, acknowledged the potential importance of ELF for current learners of English and considered the LFC (as presented in Walker (2010)) as one possible way to prioritize those features of pronunciation which actually appear to contribute to intelligibility in ELF situations (Harmer 2015: 15-17). Additionally, some materials for teaching pronunciation, such as Maurer Smolder (2012), have

begun to incorporate an ELF orientation that takes into account the empirical findings from Jenkins (2000) and subsequent studies on which features of pronunciation should be prioritized in order to support ELF intelligibility.

To date, empirical research on the effectiveness of LFC-based pronunciation teaching in terms of its actual impact on learners' intelligibility in ELF situations has been very limited. One small-scale quantitative study has been done with Iranian secondary school learners (Rahimi and Ruzrohk 2016). The findings of this study indicate that instruction based upon the LFC was more effective in helping learners to improve their intelligibility, and in particular their ability to discern targeted features receptively, than instruction based upon a more traditional RP syllabus with a focus on the accurate, target-like reproduction of all features of this accent (Rahimi and Ruzrohk 2016: 152). Although the results of this study are far from generalizable or conclusive, Kiczkowiak (2021) maintained that "it is nevertheless an important finding further supporting basing pronunciation teaching on LFC features" (Kiczkowiak 2021: 56).

Jenkins' focus on the role and importance of phonological accommodation for intelligibility in ELF situations was ground-breaking at the time. It has since become generally accepted within the field of ELF, and "scholars working in ELF pronunciation have begun prioritizing accommodation over pronunciation features in their conceptual frameworks" (Jenkins et al. 2011: 288). At the same time, a significant number of empirical studies have begun to provide evidence that accommodation plays a crucial role in other areas besides pronunciation (cf. Seidlhofer 2004: 222; Mauranten 2003: 520; Cogo and Dewey 2006, 2012; Mauranten 2007; Hülmbauer et al. 2008; Cogo 2009; Hülmbauer 2009; Kaur 2009a; Dewey 2011). Together, these studies indicate "that processes of accommodation in fact appear to be especially characteristic of talk that takes place in lingua franca settings" (Dewey 2011: 206-207). This may help to explain how ELF talk is generally able to be successful, despite both the prevalence and the fluidity of non-standard lexicogrammatical forms which has been observed in ELF talk (cf. 15.3). Thus, accommodation is currently viewed as "a key pragmatic strategy in the successful accomplishment of lingua franca communication" (Dewey 2011: 208).

Possibly the most important publication since Jenkins (2000) in terms of an ELF-oriented pedagogy is Robin Walker's book *Teaching the Pronunciation of English as Lingua Franca*

(2010)³⁵. As the title suggests, Walker (2010) is a resource for teachers to help them with the practical implementation of Jenkins' ideas in the classroom. It includes a brief overview of the sociolinguistic issues behind Jenkins' proposals before introducing the LFC and giving an overview of both core and non-core features. However, the heart of the book consists of the three chapters aimed at helping teachers to implement an ELF-oriented approach to pronunciation teaching in the classroom. Chapter 4, entitled *Techniques and materials for teaching ELF pronunciation*, offers sample drills and tasks for teaching both the LFC and accommodation skills, as well as raising learner awareness of the sociolinguistic situation of English in the world today. Chapter 5 offers an overview of the features of pronunciation from ten major L2 accents of English in terms of their general positive or negative effects on intelligibility in ELF. In particular, it identifies which features of the LFC learners from each L2 background typically struggle with and attempts to offer "suggestions...on features of L1 accents and variants that can be used in class to achieve competence in the LFC" (Walker 2010: 101). Chapter 6 offers discussion and potential solutions in two other areas of practical importance for teachers, curriculum planning and learner assessment. The book also includes a CD featuring recordings of L2 speakers of English from fifteen different L1 backgrounds. On the first twenty tracks of the CD, pairs or small groups of these speakers engage in conversation with each other on a variety of topics. The last ten tracks feature ten speakers, each from a different L1 background, reading a standard text. The main purpose of this CD is to provide teachers with a resource to help them begin to expose their learners to a range of L2 accents of English (Walker 2010: xv). Overall, the book provides a fairly comprehensive set of guidelines for the teaching of ELF-oriented pronunciation, though it remains largely general. It is left up to the teacher to develop or find materials and teaching sequences suitable to his or her specific teaching situation.

4.6 *The role of pronunciation instruction in the pilot course*

Based on the literature presented in this section, two foundational conclusions were reached during the earliest phases of course planning about the role that pronunciation teaching should take in the pilot course. First, since pronunciation plays such a significant role for intelligibility

³⁵ Walker (2010) is still cited as the primary source for practical guidance on how to implement pronunciation teaching based on the LFC more than ten years after its publication (cf. e.g. Kiczowski 2021: 65).

in ELF situations, even where speakers have otherwise attained a high level of proficiency in English, pronunciation would need to be an area of priority within the course syllabus, despite the fact that the course was being offered at an advanced learner level (CEFR C1). Second, in keeping with the ELF orientation of the course, pronunciation instruction would focus on the first three levels of Jenkins' five-level program. Since the ability to produce core features in a target-like way, at least with conscious effort, is a prerequisite for successful work on accommodation, the features of the LFC would be the primary area of focus during the first half of the course. This part of the course would also begin to expose the students to a range of L2 accents of English through the use of recordings, both in pronunciation lesson segments and in other areas of the course. During the second half of the course, the focus of pronunciation instruction would then shift toward work on accommodation skills.

One of the greatest challenges in the pilot course was the issue of time. The course met only once a week for eleven weeks. Obviously, it would not be possible to cover every aspect of pronunciation important for international intelligibility exhaustively. Additionally, pronunciation was only one aspect of the syllabus being developed; time spent on pronunciation would need to be balanced against time spent on other areas. It would thus be necessary to prioritize and find ways to work as efficiently as possible. The next chapter, Chapter 5, details the process of diagnostic assessment used to establish which specific features of pronunciation to address during the first half of the course (5.1 and 5.2) and how the information gleaned from this assessment, in combination with insights from the literature reviewed in this chapter, informed the final pronunciation syllabus for the pilot course (5.3).

5 Diagnostic assessment

As has been established at the end of the previous chapter, it had been determined that pronunciation work during the first half of the pilot course should focus on those individual features of English that were likely to contribute to problematic intelligibility in international situations for the students enrolled. Especially in light of the limited amount of teaching time available in the pilot course, it was necessary to establish which specific features of the LFC it would be most worthwhile to address during lesson segments devoted to pronunciation. One way to do this would have been to assume that the students enrolled in the course would have problems typical of speakers from their L1 backgrounds and to build the pronunciation syllabus around those problematic items. Walker (2010) provides a useful basis for an approach like this in his fifth chapter, in which he describes those features of the LFC with which speakers of ten different L1s characteristically have difficulty (Walker 2010: 97-135). Having identified the students' linguistic backgrounds in the first course session, features to work on could have been selected based on these lists. However, I was reluctant to adopt this approach out of hand, especially considering that the students were relatively advanced learners of English who had presumably had previous instruction in English pronunciation, albeit most likely from an EFL perspective. It was possible that I would select features that were in fact non-issues for this particular set of students, or fail to recognize the need to address something atypical but important. Additionally, I was interested in identifying pronunciation issues for each student in the hopes of tailoring pronunciation work in the course more individually and thus increasing efficiency. I opted, therefore, to use diagnostic testing instead of assumptions based on linguistic background as the basis for the pronunciation syllabus for the pilot course. This chapter will first examine how tools for diagnostic assessment were designed and implemented for the pilot course (5.1). The next section will then provide an analysis of the students' performance on this diagnostic testing (5.2). The final section will discuss how these results informed the final pronunciation syllabus used in the pilot course (5.3).

5.1 *Designing and implementing tools for diagnostic assessment*

Walker (2010) suggested using diagnostic pronunciation testing at the beginning of ELF-oriented courses as a way to ascertain which discrete features of pronunciation will require classroom attention. To accomplish this, he proposed recording students reading a standard text that covers the features of the LFC (Walker 2010: 149). He provided a text he developed for this purpose in the first appendix of his book (Walker 2010: 191), as well as referring his

readers to similar texts by Hewings (2004) and Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) (Walker 2010: 149). Walker's text "covers a wide range of sounds and sound combinations" (Walker 2010: 191), though it focuses primarily on consonants and consonant clusters (Walker 2010: 149). It generally includes words that feature the selected consonant sounds and clusters in word-initial, word-medial and word-final position. Walker provided tables in the second and third appendices of his book that list which words included in the text contain which consonant sounds or clusters and in which positions (Walker 2010: 194-195).

Walker developed his text to broadly cover differences in pronunciation between speakers with different L1 accents. However, he suggested that where a teacher is familiar with the linguistic background of a particular learning group, i.e. where a learning group comes primarily from one or perhaps a small set of language backgrounds, it would be possible to develop one's own text focusing on the assessment of those features which have been identified as problematic for speakers from that background (Walker 2010: 149-150).

While I hoped for students from a range of L1 backgrounds in the pilot course, I was aware that most of the students were likely to be L1 speakers of German. Although Walker's text addresses the sounds with which speakers of German typically struggle, such as the distinction between the phonemes /v/ and /w/ or the absence of the devoicing of final voiced consonants in English, his text seemed overly long and quite contrived. Therefore, I decided to design my own text focusing primarily on those features of the LFC identified as often problematic for speakers of German, but also including other features (e.g., consonant clusters) that would allow me to assess common problematic areas for speakers from other linguistic backgrounds as well. This is the text:

Materials excerpt 6:

Hi Christie, it's [your name here]. Listen, are you available to work on Thursday? I'm supposed to work from five to ten, but I have a small problem. I just got an invitation to see my favorite band in concert. For free! Usually, I only watch them on television, so it's a big chance for me. Can you take my shift? Please call me and let me know. Thanks!

Taking my cue from Walker (2010: xvi), I attempted to make the assignment feel more natural by conceiving the text as a voice message that the students were leaving for me on my phone. The situation was one with which I felt my students would be familiar. Many of them had jobs in addition to their studies to help them finance their education. In the voicemail message, they were calling to ask me, a co-worker, if we could switch shifts so that they could take advantage of an opportunity to see a favorite band in concert.

In keeping with the intention to address segmental features of pronunciation first in the pilot course, the text focuses much of its attention on those consonant phonemes which are most likely to cause pronunciation problems for L1 speakers of German, including /v/, /w/, /ʒ/ and /dʒ/. The non-core phonemes /ø/ and /ð/ were included as well, as there has been some suggestion that, while these sounds need not be pronounced as a native speaker would pronounce them in order to be intelligible in lingua franca settings, the choice of approximation may affect intelligibility (cf. Jenkins 2000: 138). I wished to investigate which approximations the students used and whether this seemed to have an effect on intelligibility. Additionally, the text specifically includes some instances of voiced consonants in word-final position in words such as *five*, *have*, *band* and *big*, since L1 speakers of German often transfer the devoicing of final voiced consonants from their native German. Because Walker (2010: 108-109) identified aspiration of initial unvoiced plosives as potentially problematic for L1 speakers of some varieties of German, words containing these sounds were included as well, such as *television*, *can* and *call*. Words containing the phoneme /ɜ:/, the only vowel quality Jenkins (2000, 2002) identifies as crucial for ELF intelligibility, were also included, although there was no discussion in Walker (2010) or elsewhere of whether or not this vowel quality generally causes problems for L1 speakers of German.

As mentioned above, though I anticipated that the majority of the students enrolled in the pilot course would have German as their L1, I had reason to be hopeful that some students with other L1s would also register. In previous courses at the same university, I had had students with other L1 backgrounds who were either enrolled at the university, often as graduate students, or who were on an exchange semester to the university, generally through the ERASMUS program. Most of these students came from European (rather than Asian or African) language backgrounds and spoke L1s such as Russian, Spanish or French. Therefore, consonant clusters were included in the diagnostic text even though Walker (2010: 109) identifies these as relatively unproblematic for L1 speakers of German, as these can cause problems for speakers of other L1s, including speakers of Romance languages (cf. Walker 2010: 126, 133). Many of the other sounds listed above, including all the consonants, aspiration of initial unvoiced consonants and devoicing of final consonants, were also listed for other languages which were anticipated as L1s of potential students. With the addition of consonant clusters, I therefore felt that the diagnostic text would be sufficient to assess not only L1 German speakers, but also speakers of other L1s who might enroll in the course.

Based on suggestions from Walker (2010: 150-151), I designed an assessment rubric to accompany the diagnostic text:

Materials excerpt 7:

| PRONUNCIATION PARAGRAPH | | | | | |
|---|---|---|----|---|----------|
| Name: | | | | | |
| Sound | Examples | ✓ | ok | x | Comments |
| /v/ | available invitation favourite television five have | | | | |
| /w/ | work watch | | | | |
| /ʒ/ | usually television | | | | |
| /dʒ/ | just | | | | |
| /ə/ | Thursday thanks | | | | |
| /ð/ | them | | | | |
| voiced final consonants | five have band big | | | | |
| /p ^h /, /t ^h /, /k ^h / | supposed ten television take call | | | | |
| /ɜ:/ | work Thursday | | | | |
| initial clusters | Christie from small problem free please | | | | |
| medial clusters | Christie invitation concert Thursday problem | | | | |
| final clusters | thanks just band shift | | | | |
| clusters over word boundaries | work from small problem just got big chance call me let me | | | | |
| Other | | | | | |

The rubric listed each pronunciation feature targeted by the assessment, along with the words in the text containing this feature. For each feature, the rubric provided a set of three boxes to check. A tick in the first box, headed by a check mark, meant that pronunciation of that feature was unproblematic. A tick in the second box, headed by the word *ok*, denoted minor or inconsistent difficulties. A tick in the final box, headed with an x, represented serious

difficulties in pronouncing that feature. Space was provided at the end of each line for comments, as well as a space at the end of the table for other noteworthy features which were not otherwise listed in the rubric.

To save precious course time, the recording of the diagnostic text was assigned as homework, to be completed by the students before the beginning of the second course session. Students were given an assignment sheet including the text they were to read:

Materials excerpt 8:

Assignment 1: Please leave a message...

In order to help me decide on what areas of pronunciation we will cover in this course, you are going to record yourself reading a short text. Practice reading the following text several times:

Hi Christie, it's [your name here]. Listen, are you available to work on Thursday? I'm supposed to work from five to ten, but I have a small problem. I just got an invitation to see my favourite band in concert. For free! Usually, I only watch them on television, so it's a big chance for me. Can you take my shift? Please call me and let me know. Thanks!

In the instructions to the assignment, both on the assignment sheet and those given orally during the course session, I was quite open with the students that the purpose of this assignment was to assess their pronunciation in order to help me determine what aspects of pronunciation we needed to address during the course. The students were invited to practice reading the text before they recorded it and to re-record the text if they were unhappy with their performance on their first take. However, orally, I encouraged them not to drive themselves crazy striving for perfection, but to record no more than two or three attempts at most.

One of the problems that was anticipated with this assignment was student access to recording devices. I was unsure whether all or even most of the students would have access to a recording device, and as far as I was aware, there were no campus facilities in which recording devices would be available to students for the purpose of completing the assignment. I myself had one portable recording device with which I was recording each course session as part of data collection, but trying to give each of the students access to that device outside of class time would have required a lot of organization and extra time. I therefore decided to offer the students three options for making their recordings. First, they could make the recording using the microphone on their personal computer or laptop. They could then send me this recording via email as an .mp3 or .wav file. Second, they could call my home phone and leave a message on the answering machine. Finally, they could come to class early the following week and use my recording device to record their text.

Ultimately, all the students who completed the assignment³⁶ chose either the first or the third option. Nine students sent their texts via email during the week. This allowed me to analyze those texts even before the second session began. The other seven recorded themselves on my recording device in the fifteen minutes before the second session. This number was manageable because so many students had been able to make their recordings on their own devices and submit them electronically. No one chose to call my house and leave a message.

To assess pronunciation in the standard text, I listened to each student's recording several times with a copy of the text and a copy of the assessment rubric in front of me. As the student read, I first marked words on the text where I noticed that pronunciation was an issue. I then filled in the assessment rubric, always attempting to provide a rendering of problematic items using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in the column reserved for comments. This process was somewhat time-consuming, but was well worth the effort in terms of the valuable data it provided early enough in the course to allow me to plan pronunciation activities accordingly. The data collected from these recordings will be discussed in 5.2 below.

In addition to the recording of a standard text, Walker (2010) suggested collecting two to three minutes of spontaneous or natural speech from students. His rationale was that students who know they are reading a text for the purpose of assessing their pronunciation will focus considerable attention on their pronunciation as they read. When they are speaking freely, they will concentrate more on what they are saying and less on their pronunciation, which may result in more noticeable pronunciation issues (Walker 2010: 150). Therefore, I decided to add a pronunciation element to the second task which was assigned to the students at the end of the first course session, a two-minute introduction to be given by each student in front of the group at the beginning of the following course session (cf. 3.1). For this task, the students were not informed that their pronunciation would be assessed as they spoke, as they were in the standard text assignment. In this way, I hoped to capture a picture of their pronunciation in more spontaneous speech when their focus was fixed more on content than on pronunciation.

The focus of the two-minute introduction was much wider than pronunciation alone. However, since pronunciation was a significant area of focus in the course, space was provided on the diagnostic rubric specifically for comments on pronunciation. In assessing the students' pronunciation, I sometimes recorded individual words, notating non-standard pronunciation in

³⁶ Two students, S9 and S10, did not complete either this assignment or the two-minute talk discussed further down in this section (cf. also 3.1). However, both of these students ultimately dropped the course within the first few sessions. A recorded text is therefore available for each student who participated in the entire course.

IPA. I also wrote down more general comments about pronunciation of particular sounds. These notes were then compared with the assessment rubrics from the standard text assignment, and the results of both tasks were used to identify those areas on the standard text assessment rubric where the student in question appeared to require pronunciation instruction.

It is important to note that in assessing the students' pronunciation during the two-minute introduction task, my attention was primarily on the same features of pronunciation as in the standard text assignment, i.e. primarily consonant sounds and consonant clusters. Though I did make note of any other pronunciation issues which seemed likely to affect intelligibility, I did not specifically listen for the other two areas of the LFC, vowel length distinctions and nuclear stress placement, although I did intend to include these topics as part of the course.

The two assignments complemented each other nicely. The standard text allowed for more direct comparison of student performance on individual items while showing what the students were capable of when their attention was more focused on pronunciation. The two-minute talk, in which students were speaking rather than reading, helped to draw attention to those features of pronunciation which were still problematic under the processing load of managing content as well as form while speaking. The next section offers discussion of the students' performance on these diagnostic tasks.

5.2 *Analysis of student performance on the diagnostic tasks*

Nine areas of pronunciation requiring classroom attention crystallized out of the analysis of student performance on the standard text and two-minute introduction assignments:

- /v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/
- Voicing final voiced consonants
- /dʒ/ vs. /tʃ/
- Final and medial consonant clusters
- /s/ vs. /z/
- Unvoiced consonants in initial clusters
- /ʃ/ vs. /tʃ/
- /l/
- /ə/ and /ɔ̃/

The first four were areas I had anticipated as needing work based on Walker's (2010) analysis of common areas of pronunciation difficulty for speakers of particular L1s, especially L1 speakers of German (cf. Walker 2010: 99-136). The next four were more unexpected, but fairly widespread across the group. The final area, the pronunciation of the interdental fricatives /ə/ and /ɔ̃/, is actually considered to be a non-core feature in Jenkins' LFC, but nevertheless

seemed to cause significant problems for several speakers. Each of these areas is analyzed in more detail below. Table 5 provides an overview of these nine areas and indicates which students demonstrated difficulties in each area:

Table 5: *Areas of pronunciation difficulty by speaker*

| Area of pronunciation difficulty | Students exhibiting difficulty | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Σ |
|---|--------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---|--|---|
| | S 1 | S 2 | S 3 | S 4 | S 5 | S 6 | S 7 | S ³⁷ 8 | S 11 | S 12 | S 13 | S 14 | S 15 | S 16 | S 17 | S 18 | | | |
| /v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | | | | ■ | | | | | ■ | | ■ | ■ | 7 | | |
| Voicing final voiced consonants | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | ○ | | | | | ■ | ■ | 8 | | |
| /dʒ/ vs. /tʃ/ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | 5 | | |
| Final and medial consonant clusters | | | | | | ○ | | ○ | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | | | 5 | | |
| /s/ vs. /z/ | | | | ■ | ○ | | | | | ■ | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | 7 | | |
| Unvoiced consonants in initial clusters | | | | | ■ | | | | ■ | | | | ■ | | | | 3 | | |
| /ʃ/ vs. /tʃ/ | | | ■ | | ○ | ■ | | | | | ■ | | | | | | 4 | | |
| /l/ | | | | | ■ | ■ | | ○ | ■ | | | ■ | | ○ | | | 6 | | |
| [ə] and [ð] | | ■ | | | | | | | ■ | | ■ | | | | | | 3 | | |
| Σ | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | | | |

■= marked difficulty, ○= tendency toward difficulty

As the table illustrates, the number of students who exhibited difficulty in a particular area varied from three to eight students. Nowhere did a clear majority of students exhibit difficulty in a particular area. Most students exhibited difficulties in between two and four different areas.

³⁷ Because S9 and S10 dropped the course before completing the diagnostic pronunciation assignments, their results could not be included in Table 1.

Only one student, S5, showed difficulties in more than four areas, and in her case, she showed only a tendency toward difficulty in two of these areas.

Interestingly, one student, S7, had no noticeable difficulties in any area assessed by the diagnostic tools employed. This is not to say that his pronunciation was closest to that of a native speaker. On the contrary, he spoke with a noticeable accent. However, the areas in which he retained vestiges of his L1 are areas which have not been identified as problematic for international intelligibility. S6, on the other hand, had lived for several years in the United States with her family as a child and had attended school in the American public school system during that time. She had achieved a high level of fluency in English, and in many ways sounded like a native speaker of American English. Yet there were areas of her pronunciation that were potentially problematic for international communication, particularly her tendency to reduce or elide sounds. For example, she produced the sequence *you available* in the standard text task as [ju:veɪbl], eliding both the initial /ə/ and the medial syllable /lə/ in the word *available*. These tendencies were most likely related to pronunciation habits she had acquired during her time in the United States, but they are considered potentially threatening to mutual intelligibility in international situations and therefore needed to be addressed.

The rest of this section will consider each of the nine problematic areas of pronunciation listed above, as well as some areas which, contrary to expectations, did not prove to be problematic.

- /v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/

Seven students, all with German as L1³⁸, had problems distinguishing between at least two of the three phonemes /v/, /w/ and /f/. It was originally anticipated that students would potentially struggle with the difference between the voiced labiodental fricative /v/ and voiced labio-velar glide /w/, since German does not have the phoneme /w/ (Walker 2010: 109). The grapheme <w> in German generally corresponds to the phoneme /v/, so that it was anticipated that students would be most likely to substitute /v/ for /w/. A few students did pronounce the /w/ in words such as *work* or *watch* as [v]. However, more of them tended to confuse /v/ and /w/ in the opposite direction, pronouncing the /v/ in words like *very*, *village*, *available* and *television* as [w]. Additionally, nearly as many students confused the labiodental fricatives /v/ and /f/, pronouncing the voiced /v/ in words such as *available* and *television* as the voiceless [f].

³⁸ For an overview of the linguistic backgrounds of the course participants, cf. Table 2 in 2.5.

Although the standard text included two words with /v/ in word-final position which some students devoiced to [f], those words were included in the category of voiced final consonants, so that the students in this category mispronounced /v/ or /w/ in at least one word where these phonemes occurred in either word-initial or word-medial position.

- *Voicing final voiced consonants*

In German, final voiced consonants are devoiced, a tendency many L1 speakers of German carry over into English (Walker 2010: 107). Therefore, it was no surprise that seven students with German as L1 devoiced some final voiced consonants. Additionally, one L1 speaker of Brazilian Portuguese also showed a tendency in this direction. As a group, these students most often devoiced word-final fricative /v/ in words such as *have*, *five* and *of*. However, a few students also devoiced other sounds, such as the plosives /b/ in *job* or /d/ in *old*. For some students, this tendency was more apparent in their two-minute introductions than in their standard text recordings. This indicated that some students were aware of this phenomenon in English at some level and were able to correctly produce voiced final consonants when they focused on their pronunciation, but had more trouble doing so when their focus was directed toward content while speaking.

- */dʒ/ vs. /tʃ/*

Five students, all of them with German as L1, had difficulty producing the voiced palatal affricate /dʒ/ in words such as *just*, *job* and *engineering*. For the most part, they replaced /dʒ/ with the unvoiced palatal affricate /tʃ/, indicating that they would probably benefit from tasks presenting /dʒ/ and /tʃ/ as contrasting phonemes, such as minimal pair exercises.

- *Final and medial consonant clusters*

Three students had significant difficulties with consonant clusters in word-final and word-medial position, while two others showed a tendency toward difficulty in this area. The three who showed significant difficulty were all L1 speakers of Portuguese. This was surprising since, according to Walker (2010: 125-126), consonant clusters are not usually problematic for L1 speakers of Portuguese.

As has been discussed in 4.2.1, speakers generally adopt one of two strategies to deal with consonant clusters they find it difficult to produce. They either insert vowel sounds between the consonant sounds in the cluster (epenthesis), or they omit some of the consonant sounds.

While the first strategy is considered unproblematic for ELF intelligibility, the second can be highly detrimental where the deletion deviates from the rules of elision in Standard English (cf. Jenkins 2000: 142-143). All three students who demonstrated significant difficulty with final and medial consonant clusters showed a tendency toward the consonant deletion strategy. All three omitted the alveolar liquid /l/ in the word-medial cluster in *problem*. Two of the speakers also omitted the alveolar nasal /n/ in the word-medial cluster in *concert*, though they did nasalize the preceding /a/. Both these deletions are considered potentially problematic for ELF intelligibility. All three students showed a tendency to delete the alveolar stops /t/ and /d/ in word-final clusters in words such as *concert*, *shift* and *band*. This would generally be considered unproblematic for ELF intelligibility, since the rules of consonant elision for consonant clusters in Standard English generally allow the elision of alveolar stops, except that the word *band* is followed directly by a word beginning with a vowel in the text. Pronunciation of the phoneme /d/ is therefore required (cf. Jenkins 2000: 143).

Typically, speakers of German do not struggle with consonant clusters either (Walker 2010: 109), but two L1 speakers of German also showed some tendency to delete consonant sounds in ways that are considered potentially problematic for ELF intelligibility. Generally, both these students tended to elide alveolar stops in word-final consonant clusters, which is generally considered unproblematic for ELF intelligibility. However, like the Portuguese students described above, both omitted the /d/ in *band*, despite the fact that the next word began with a vowel sound. Additionally, they both omitted the /l/ in the consonant cluster which arises across the words *call me*. As both these deletions would be considered potentially problematic for ELF intelligibility, both of these students were rated as demonstrating a tendency toward difficulty in this area.

Interestingly, both these students had spent significant stretches of time in countries where English is spoken as a native language. As discussed above, one of these students, S6, had lived in the United States for several years and had acquired a near-native speaker accent. The second student, S8, had spent seven months in New Zealand in a work-travel program after completing her secondary education. Her English was characterized by features of pronunciation and lexis typical of native English speakers from New Zealand, and she had the accent probably second-closest to that of a native speaker, although she retained significantly more vestiges of her L1 in her pronunciation than did S6. It is quite possible that both had picked up a near-native use of consonant elision during their time abroad. Yet some of their elisions do not appear to coincide with Jenkins' (2000: 143) recommendations for teaching consonant clusters in the ELF-oriented classroom, although she claims these are based on the rules of elision from Standard English. More thorough analysis would be required to ascertain whether the students'

pronunciation of the clusters identified as potentially problematic for ELF intelligibility really paralleled those of native speakers from the regions where the students had resided.

- /s/ vs. /z/

Seven speakers (five L1 speakers of German and two L1 speakers of Portuguese) tended to replace the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ with the voiced alveolar fricative /z/. This happened most often when /s/ occurred in word-initial position, especially where it was part of an initial consonant cluster, as in the word *small*. Though Walker (2010) identifies the distinction between /s/ and /z/ as problematic for L1 speakers of both German and Portuguese, this had been somewhat overlooked in designing the assessment rubric for the standard text assignment. Interestingly, Walker (2010) predicts that L1 speakers of German will substitute /z/ for /s/ in word-initial position, a tendency supported by the data collected from the pilot course, but that L1 speakers of Portuguese are more likely to make this substitution when /s/ occurs in word-medial position between two vowels in words such as *basic* or *buses* (Walker 2010: 109, 125). However, in the data from the pilot course, the two Portuguese L1 speakers also tended to replace /s/ with /z/ in word-initial position in words like *small* and *supposed*. Possibly this could be attributed to the fact that both were learning German as an additional language and were encountering the German language daily as exchange students at a German university. They may have unconsciously transferred the German pronunciation of <s> as /z/ in word-initial position to their English pronunciation.

- *Unvoiced consonants in initial clusters*

Three speakers (two L1 speakers of German and one L1 speaker of Portuguese) showed a more general tendency to voice initial unvoiced phonemes in word-initial consonant clusters. In addition to pronouncing the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ in *small* as [z], they also pronounced the voiceless bilabial stop /p/ in the words *problem* and *please* as voiced bilabial stop [b].

- /ʃ/ vs. /tʃ/

Four students (three L1 speakers of German and one L1 speaker of German and Turkish) confused the voiceless palatal fricative /ʃ/ and the voiceless palatal affricate /tʃ/. In three cases, this involved pronouncing /tʃ/ as /ʃ/, so that *watch* sounded like *wash*. In one case, however, the speaker confused the sounds in the opposite direction, so that /ʃ/ was produced as /tʃ/.

Interestingly, this replacement occurred in her production of her own name³⁹, even though she pronounced it with /ʃ/ in her L1.

- /l/

As has been mentioned in 4.2.1 above, the LFC differentiates between two allophones of the alveolar liquid /l/. Clear [l] is included as a core feature which speakers must learn to produce in a target-like way to ensure mutual intelligibility; dark [ɫ] is considered a non-core feature, and approximations of this sound are therefore considered unproblematic.

Surprisingly, a number of students struggled with clear [l] on the standard paragraph task. As many students had difficulties with the first /l/ in *available* as with the /v/. According to Walker (2010: 108), /l/ is regarded as unproblematic for L1 German speakers regardless of environment. For L1 speakers of Portuguese, it sometimes causes problems in word-final position where it is immediately followed by another word beginning with a vowel (Walker 2010: 125). However, of the six students who struggled with /l/, five of them were L1 speakers of German. Just one was an L1 speaker of Portuguese, and he showed only a tendency towards difficulty.

As a group, these students demonstrated particular difficulty where /l/ appeared in word-medial position between two vowel sounds (e.g. *television*, the first /l/ in *available*), as well as where /l/ constituted part of a consonant cluster (e.g. *please*, *problem*). They tended to omit the /l/, rather than replacing it with another sound. In the word *television* and *available*, this led to the elision of an entire syllable.

- /θ/ and /ð/

The interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ are not included as core pronunciation features vital to international intelligibility in the LFC. Approximations of these sounds, for example pronouncing them as [t] and [d] respectively, are considered perfectly adequate as long as they are used consistently. However, there is some discussion in the literature that certain approximations may be preferable to others in terms of their effects on intelligibility (cf. 4.2.1). Although a large number of students produced /θ/ and /ð/ with standard pronunciation fairly consistently, there were also quite a number of instances of approximation. In three cases (one

³⁹ In accordance with the conditions of anonymity for students involved in this study (cf. Appendix B), the student's name cannot be included here.

L1 speaker of German, one L1 speaker of German and Turkish and one L1 speaker of Brazilian Portuguese), intelligibility was actually inhibited by the way in which the students approximated these sounds. In the first case, approximation resulted in other standard words of English on several occasions (e.g. *three* pronounced as *tree*). In the other two, production of these phonemes simply seemed to cause so much processing and mechanical difficulty that it inhibited the intelligibility of surrounding talk. It was thus decided that these students would probably benefit from some instruction in which we would examine how they were approximating these sounds and encourage either standard pronunciation or a more comfortable approximation.

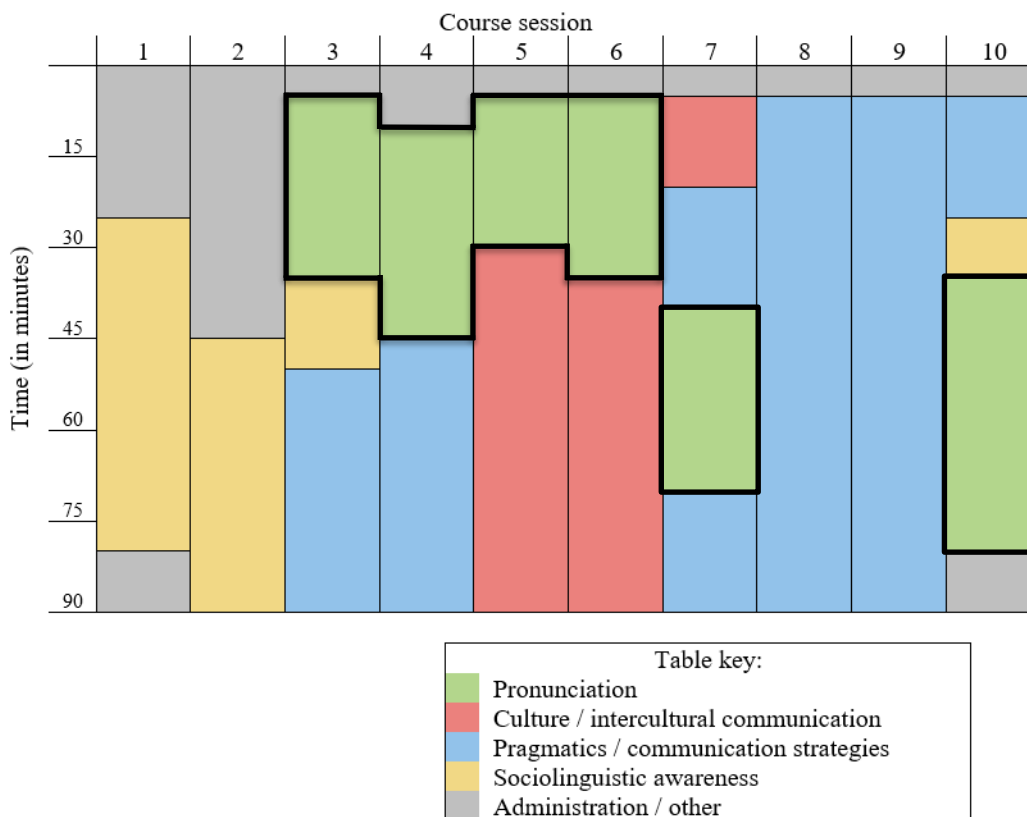
- *Non-problematic sounds*

Interestingly, several sounds that were expected to cause problems based on the students' L1s and relevant literature on international intelligibility were in fact unproblematic for the students in the pilot course. These sounds included the voiced palatal fricative /ʒ/ and the aspirated initial plosives [p^h], [t^h] and [k^h]. These were included on the basis that they sometimes cause problems for L1 speakers of German, as well as for speakers of several other European languages I thought might be represented in the pilot course (cf. Walker 2010: 99-136). The vowel /ɜ:/, the only vowel quality included in the LFC, also did not appear to be problematic.

5.3 *Setting the pronunciation syllabus for the course*

Equipped with the results of the diagnostic testing described in 5.2, I was ready to set the pronunciation syllabus for the pilot course between the second and third course sessions. As mentioned in 4.6, time was one of the most significant elements determining the approach to the teaching of pronunciation in the pilot course. The course met a total of eleven times during the semester. The last session was devoted to the final exam. In the first two sessions, data was being gathered through diagnostic testing. This left eight sessions for focused work on pronunciation. Table 6 below provides an overview of how the lesson segments devoted to pronunciation fit into the pilot course:

Table 6: Pronunciation lesson segments



Following Jenkins' five-phase program for the teaching of pronunciation in ELF-informed courses, the most course time would be devoted to the first phase, 'Addition of core items to the learner's productive and receptive repertoire', since this is the phase Jenkins regards as mandatory for ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching (Jenkins 2000: 209-210). Portions of course sessions 3 through 6 were thus designated for work on the specific segmental pronunciation issues identified through diagnostic testing as described in the previous sections of Chapter 5 above. Additionally, vowel length distinctions and nuclear stress placement would also be addressed in course sessions 6 and 7 respectively.

Concurrently, work would begin on Jenkins' second phase, 'Addition of a range of L2 English accents to the learner's receptive repertoire', by exposing students to listening texts featuring non-native English speakers from a variety of L1 backgrounds. At first, this would be a fairly passive process in which these texts would be used in the context of activities both inside and outside the area of pronunciation without explicit attention to phonological features or issues. However, toward the end of the course, increasingly authentic listening texts would be used to begin working on the students' receptive phonological accommodation skills, part

of Jenkins' third phase for ELF-aware pronunciation teaching, 'Addition of accommodation skills'. This would culminate in a lesson segment devoted to issues of accent and identity in course session 10.

Given the limited number of linguistic backgrounds represented in the learning group enrolled in the pilot course, I had originally intended to exclude any work on the other side of Jenkins' third phase, the development of productive phonological accommodation skills, since teaching productive phonological accommodation is inherently more problematic in linguistically homogenous classes than in linguistically heterogeneous ones (cf. Chapter 7). However, during the process of planning lesson segments addressing specific features of pronunciation, I reached the conclusion that communicative tasks in which the focus was placed on practicing a specific set of pronunciation features might also provide at least some opportunities for students to develop their ability to adjust their pronunciation toward the target in response to peer feedback. These opportunities were integrated into communicative practice with specific pronunciation features in course sessions 3 through 7. Thus, the final plan for the pronunciation strand of the pilot course ultimately included work on aspects of all of the first three levels of Jenkins' five-phase pronunciation teaching program.

On the basis of the literature reviewed in Chapter 4 and the results of diagnostic testing presented in 5.2, 5.3 has outlined the pronunciation syllabus for the pilot course in broad strokes. The following two chapters will first examine in more detail the planning process for the pronunciation lesson segments in the course and then present analysis of actual classroom work with the selected tasks and materials. In Chapter 6, the focus is on lesson segments aimed at teaching specific pronunciation features, while Chapter 7 focuses on the development of the students' accommodation skills, both productive (7.1) and receptive (7.2).

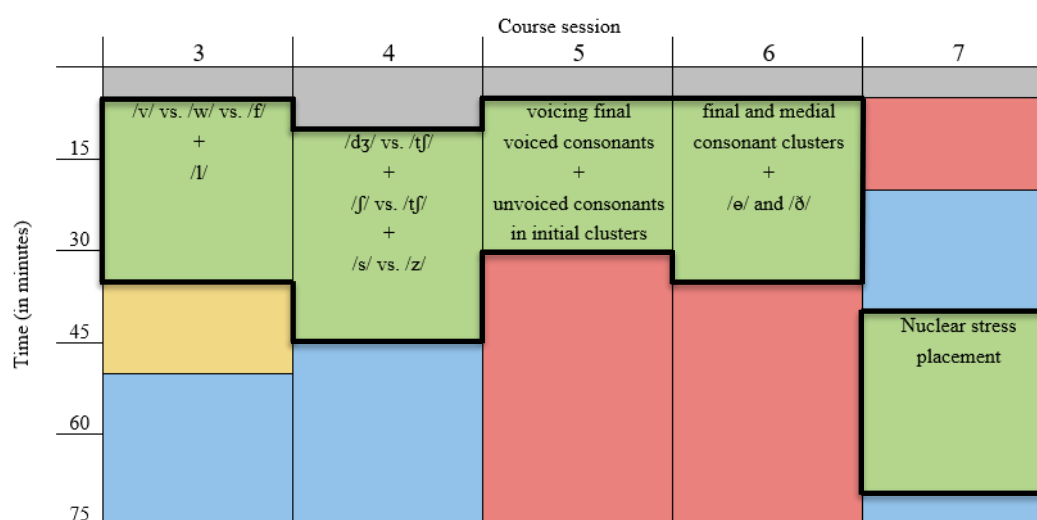
6 Teaching specific pronunciation features

During pronunciation lesson segments in course sessions 3 through 7, the primary focus of pronunciation instruction was on core features of the LFC, particularly those segmental features that had been identified as problematic for students in the learning group during diagnostic testing (cf. Chapter 5). Since not all students had exhibited difficulties with the same aspects of pronunciation, it was determined that up to three topics could be offered concurrently during the first four of these course sessions, arranged so that students with like issues could work together on a particular topic without missing out on another topic identified as important for them. Based on the data collected during diagnostic testing, the following topics could be offered at the same time:

- /v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/ + /l/
- /dʒ/ vs. /tʃ/ + /ʃ/ vs. /tʃ/ + /s/ vs. /z/
- voicing final voiced consonants + unvoiced consonants in initial clusters
- final and medial consonant clusters + /ə/ and /ð/

Each of these sets became the focus of pronunciation instruction in one of the course sessions designated for work on specific features of pronunciation. The distribution of these topics appears in Table 7, which provides an overview of all of the lesson segments featuring work on specific pronunciation features during the pilot course:

Table 7: Pronunciation lesson segments focusing on addition of specific features



| Table key: | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ■ | Pronunciation |
| ■ | Culture / intercultural communication |
| ■ | Pragmatics / communication strategies |
| ■ | Sociocultural aspects of English |
| ■ | Administration / other |

Offering more than one pronunciation topic concurrently allowed us to make more efficient use of very limited course time while offering each student targeted work specifically on those areas of pronunciation in which he or she had exhibited difficulty. However, it also required some special organization for those lesson segments. First of all, while it was possible to find some materials that allowed us to combine topics and thus work with the whole class at once (e.g. in course session 4, cf. 6.1.2 below), at least some parts of these four lesson segments needed to be designed so as to allow small groups of students to work independently on a topic while I as the instructor played the role of advisor, rather than relying on teacher-led activities. Additionally, each student needed to be informed about which areas he or she should work on based on the results of the diagnostic testing. To address this latter issue, I created an index card for each student listing the areas of pronunciation indicated for him or her by the diagnostic testing. These cards were distributed to the students at the beginning of the third course session and they were informed that we would work on all of the topics over the next four weeks. Each week, I would tell them which topics we would address during that session. They should examine their card to see if any of those topics were listed on it and then participate in the appropriate group. If none of the topics to be discussed on a given day were on their card, they could choose to participate in the group for any topic on offer.

Initially, the cards caused some confusion. Lacking a better way to describe the problematic areas for the students, each was listed as it appears in Table 7 above. Most students were not very familiar either with the IPA or with the terminology linguists use to describe features of pronunciation (e.g. the distinction between voiced and voiceless sounds) and therefore could make little sense of the information on their cards. Rather than trying to explain the descriptors up front, I told the students not to worry if they were unsure how to interpret what was written on their cards at that point. I would write the topics we were addressing on the blackboard each week as we covered them, and they would learn what each descriptor meant as the semester progressed. This approach proved quite effective, and there was no residual confusion by the time we had covered all of the topics. The students even seemed to derive some amusement from learning what the symbols on their cards stood for.

Ultimately, the students bore the brunt of the responsibility for making sensible use of the pronunciation portions of these four lessons. Although I had records of which topics were indicated for which students, I did not formally check that students were actually participating in those groups indicated for them, nor did I ask them to account for their choices. This seemed an appropriate approach for this course, in that all the students were adults who were used to an adult level of autonomy over their own affairs. Had the pilot course involved younger learners, it might have been necessary to build in additional teacher overview or learner accountability measures.

In addition to the consonant sounds of English and consonant clusters, the LFC identifies two other core areas as important for international intelligibility: vowel length distinctions and nuclear stress placement. Although these areas were not assessed in the diagnostic testing described in Chapter 5, both were included in the final pronunciation syllabus for the course as areas to be addressed with all the students.

In the case of vowel length distinctions, the difference in vowel length before voiced versus voiceless consonants in English was incorporated into the lesson segment in course session 5 addressing the voicing of final voiced consonants (cf. Table 7 above). Research has established that in minimal pairs of English which differ from each other in terms of a voiced-voiceless distinction in the final consonant (e.g. *peas* – *peace*, *leave* – *leaf*, *eyes* – *ice*), speakers make a distinction not only in the pronunciation of the final sound as voiced or voiceless, but also in the length of the preceding vowel. The vowel before a voiced consonant is lengthened slightly compared to the vowel before a voiceless consonant. This phenomenon is known as *pre-lenis lengthening* (cf. Eckert and Barry 2002: 45). Research even suggests that this distinction in vowel length is more important than the actual voicing or non-voicing of the final consonant itself (cf. Eckert and Barry 2002: 45, Walker 2010: 35). Therefore, the course session in which we focused on voicing final voiced consonants would address the vowel length distinction as well and provide students with activities to both raise receptive awareness and practice the production of this distinction.

As discussed in 4.2.2, nuclear stress placement is the only suprasegmental feature of pronunciation included in the LFC. Jenkins considered it “crucial for intelligibility” in ELF (Jenkins 2000: 153), both because of the functional load it carries in English (cf. Jenkins 1997: 18) and because it caused some of the most serious and difficult to resolve instances of miscommunication in her data, especially where misplaced nuclear stress coincided with a consonant substitution (Jenkins 2000: 155, Jenkins 2002: 89). While Walker (2010) established that word grouping and nuclear stress placement in both German and Portuguese are sufficiently similar to English that L1 speakers of these languages generally do not have difficulty with this topic (Walker 2010: 110, 126-127), Jenkins still advocated teaching nuclear stress placement to learners whose L1 also has this feature. She maintained that “the L1-L2 similarity will need to be made explicit through instruction, as learners do not necessarily notice similarities between their L1 and an L2 without their attention being drawn towards them. This is especially so in the case of marked items like contrastive stress” (Jenkins 2000: 155). One lesson was therefore included in course session 7 which focused on raising the students’ awareness of the topic and giving them a chance to consciously practice using contrastive stress (cf. Table 7 above).

In the remainder of this chapter, 6.1 will first present a more general overview of issues relating to the selection of techniques and materials for teaching specific pronunciation features in the ELF-oriented classroom. This will be followed by a description of the process of selecting and designing the tasks and materials used for teaching the specific pronunciation features which constituted the focus of each of the pronunciation lesson segments in course sessions 3 through 7 (6.1.1-6.1.5). After that, 6.2 will present analysis of classroom work during lesson segments devoted to teaching specific pronunciation features.

6.1 Selecting and designing tasks and materials for teaching specific pronunciation features

At the beginning of his chapter on ‘Techniques and Materials for Teaching ELF Pronunciation’, Walker (2010) notes that the techniques and materials used for the teaching of specific pronunciation features in ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching are nothing particularly new; rather, they are techniques and materials which are generally already familiar to teachers who regularly teach pronunciation. Walker attributes this to the fact that “teaching pronunciation for ELF is primarily about re-thinking goals and re-defining error, as opposed to modifying classroom practice” (Walker 2010: 71). Adopting an ELF orientation in the classroom does not require a new method of teaching, but rather an adjustment in terms of which aspects of pronunciation should be the focus of classroom attention and which non-target-like pronunciations should be treated as errors.

However, the question of where to find appropriate tasks and materials is not necessarily straightforward. A number of studies have pointed to issues with the way that pronunciation is generally presented in textbooks, including widely used coursebook series. For one thing, textbooks often do not place enough emphasis on pronunciation, considering its importance for communicative success in ELF. Kiczkowiak (2021) found that, in the publishing of coursebooks, pronunciation is often treated as “an ‘afterthought’, decided upon after the grammar and lexis syllabus have been planned and defined” (Kiczkowiak 2021: 63-64). Kiczkowiak cautioned that “this can lead to an unbalanced syllabus where some features are given substantial prominence, while others are almost never practiced” (Kiczkowiak 2021: 65). The treatment of pronunciation as of secondary importance is also evident in the way that pronunciation activities are presented in the materials themselves. In looking at twelve

internationally-published general English coursebooks for adult learners⁴⁰, Levis and Sönsaat (2016) noted that pronunciation tasks were not allotted the same amount of space or emphasis on the pages of the books they examined as tasks focusing on grammar or vocabulary. This led them to comment that “pronunciation was presented like a garnish” rather than as one of the main components of the course (Levis and Sönsaat 2016: 114).

Beyond the lack of emphasis on pronunciation as a vital area of language learning, there are also problems regarding what aspects of pronunciation are selected as the focus of instruction. A number of studies have found that, where coursebook series address pronunciation, suprasegmental features such as intonation, features of connected speech, weak forms and nuclear stress receive most of the attention (Derwing et al. 2012: 33, Levis and Sönsaat 2016: 112, Kiczowski 2021: 64). In Levis and Sönsaat’s study, pronunciation activities focused on suprasegmental features outnumbered those dealing with segmental features by six to one (Levis and Sönsaat 2016: 112). This stands in sharp contrast to the LFC’s emphasis on segmental features as more salient for ELF intelligibility (cf. 4.2). Furthermore, with the exception of nuclear stress, none of the suprasegmental features listed above are included as core features of the LFC, and a number of them, including features of connected speech and the use of weak forms, have been found to have a negative impact on intelligibility in ELF (cf. 4.2.2). Thus, a large proportion of the pronunciation activities found in current coursebooks may not be useful for ELF-oriented language teaching. All of this means that teachers may need to expend some effort to find appropriate tasks and materials from other resources (e.g. specialized materials for pronunciation teaching) or to design their own.

The recommended shift of focus from suprasegmental back to segmental pronunciation features in ELF literature has triggered a corresponding recommendation to return to more traditional methods of drill and practice in the ELF-aware classroom. According to Jenkins (2000), ELF-aware pronunciation teaching should begin with “controlled teacher-led work [...] providing [learners] with models and practice opportunities of the features of the Lingua Franca Core” (Jenkins 2000: 188). She advocated “[a]n extensive focus on the LFC sounds, including drilling and tailor-made minimal pair work” (Jenkins 2000: 189), and this recommendation has been picked up and expanded upon in Walker (2010), as well as other guides and materials which incorporate an ELF orientation to pronunciation teaching. Such activities are necessary because the pronunciation of individual features

⁴⁰ These twelve coursebooks include the *English Unlimited* series, published by Cambridge University Press, that had been adopted in 2012 as the coursebook series for use in all general English courses offered at the TU Kaiserslautern where the pilot course was held.

involves developing automatic speech habits. For sounds or features that do not exist in the learner's mother tongue, these will be completely new habits. For features from the mother tongue that are not desirable in English, the learner's task is to modify existing habits. Whatever the situation, habit formation requires learners to be given multiple opportunities to practice articulating the new item so that its pronunciation becomes as automatic as possible. In this respect, the use of drills is openly encouraged in ELF, although their value may have been somewhat discredited by communicative approaches to language teaching. (Walker 2010: 77)

Where the focus is on discrete features of pronunciation, therefore, various types of drills will form the backbone of the teacher's technique repertoire.

Although her study of phonology for lingua franca communication in English has a decidedly pedagogic focus, Jenkins (2000) only briefly touches on classroom techniques for pronunciation teaching. Walker (2010) offers the first real – and, more than ten years later, still the definitive (cf. 4.5, 23.4) – exploration of how to put Jenkins' ideas into classroom practice. In Chapter 4, Walker presents techniques and materials suitable for teaching the features of the LFC. He begins with a general look at the kinds of drills which can be useful in teaching segmental pronunciation, then examines different features of the LFC more closely and suggests particular techniques that can be helpful in teaching those features (Walker 2010: 76-88). Though he offers examples of various types of drills, he continually stresses the importance of tailoring such activities to the specific needs of learners (Walker 2010: 76). Rather than trying to provide sets of materials and activities for particular topics, he offers general guidance and suggests further resources (cf. Walker 2010: 76). The expectation is that teachers will use his book to hand-tailor their own materials and activities to the pronunciation needs of their learners.

Walker's book was adopted as a basic guide for both designing and selecting materials and activities for the four lesson segments in the pilot course in which the focus was on individual sounds and consonant clusters (sessions 3-6), as well as for the lessons addressing vowel length distinctions (session 5) and nuclear stress (session 7). Where I designed tasks and activities specifically for the pilot course, these were based on Walker's suggestions and examples, also making use of resources he suggested to generate appropriate materials. Where other sources were used, they were compared with his ideas to ensure that they were appropriate for an ELF-oriented course.

According to Walker, work on individual sounds should begin with some instruction on how those sounds are produced. In the case of consonant sounds, for example, which constitute the majority of sounds considered essential for intelligibility in lingua franca situations, this means modeling the selected consonant sound or sounds for the learners and drawing their attention to distinctive features of these sounds (i.e., place of articulation, manner of articulation and voicing) in a practical and nontechnical way (Walker 2010: 78). After that,

teaching should continue with various drills aimed at giving the learners ample practice with the selected sounds to allow the development of a new automated pronunciation habit (Walker 2010: 77). As these new habits become established, the teacher can then introduce more communicative activities.

Although practice in the form of drills has often been criticized as “tedious and demotivating”, Walker stresses that this must not necessarily be the case (Walker 2010: 77). He argues for the use of more creative and playful forms of drill, noting that the “tongue-twister, for example, is a disguised drill. But as Mark Hancock points out, it is also a piece of language play (Hancock 2006), and language learners are just as likely to enjoy such play as native speakers” (Walker 2010: 77). He encourages teachers to make use of rhymes, chants and songs as well, though he notes that they will need to consider factors such as the age of the learners when contemplating the use of such materials (Walker 2010: 77).

Walker devotes particular attention to one category of drill, referred to by Jenkins as “tailor-made minimal pair work” (Jenkins 2000: 189), which is considered to be especially beneficial for the purpose of practicing individual sounds. This type of drill, in which the focus is on contrasting sounds using pairs of words that differ in only one sound located in the same place in each word, was quite common before the 1980s, but fell into disrepute with the advent of CLT (Walker 2010: 76). In calling specifically for the reintroduction of minimal pair drills, Jenkins recognized that it is not only sounds in isolation which often prove difficult for learners, but pairs of contrasting sounds which learners may confuse with each other. In calling for tailor-made drills, she highlighted “the need to generate minimal pair exercises that focus on contrasts that are difficult for learners from specific first-language backgrounds” (Walker 2010: 76).

Interestingly, the results of the diagnostic assessment in the pilot course were often best summarized as a contrasting pair or set of phonemes. Generally, the students struggled with the pronunciation of one of the phonemes, systematically replacing it with the other or others. For example, several of the students had difficulty with the voiced palatal affricate /dʒ/. They tended to replace it with /tʃ/, which is also a palatal affricate, but differs from /dʒ/ in the feature of voicing. Therefore, the students needed to become more aware not only of how to properly produce /dʒ/, but also of the contrast between the production of /dʒ/ and /tʃ/. This was also the case for the pair /ʃ/ and /tʃ/; the pair /s/ and /z/; the set /v/, /w/ and /f/; and all consonant phoneme pairs differing only in terms of their voicing. The diagnostic assessment data also suggested that many of these substitutions of contrasting phonemes only occurred in certain phonological environments. For example, while students who exhibited difficulty with /dʒ/ tended to replace it with /tʃ/ in all environments (e.g. in word-initial position in words like *job*, but also word-

medially in words like *engineering*), students who tended to replace /s/ with /z/ generally only did so where /s/ occurred in word-initial position and particularly where it was the first sound in a word-initial cluster, e.g. in the word *small*. Similarly, some students tended to replace voiced consonants with unvoiced counterparts where these consonants occurred in word-final position, e.g. in the words *have*, *band* and *job*, while others replaced unvoiced consonants with voiced ones where these occurred at the beginning of word-initial clusters, e.g. in the words *problem* and *please*.

In all these cases, it made a great deal of sense to first present students with instruction on how to produce the phoneme or phonemes which tended to be replaced and then to draw students' attention to the distinctive features which differentiated the problematic phoneme from the replacement phoneme or phonemes. After this, one of the most logical ways to practice was to use minimal pair drills. Such drills would give the students ample practice in producing the contrasting phonemes while drawing their attention to the importance of correct production in order to preserve the meaning-distinctiveness of these phonemes. Where there was evidence that the problematic phoneme tended to be replaced in a specific kind of environment, minimal pair work could be further tailored to focus on those environments.

Many of the drills Walker (2010) introduces in his section on minimal pairs involve interaction with a partner. Though he does not specifically discuss reasons for using pair work in this type of pronunciation teaching, I anticipated that drills in the form of paired interaction would be generally more motivating and less tedious for learners than drills meant to be done alone. Additionally, a well-designed task can help learners notice their own problematic pronunciation through the responses they receive from their peers. Completing drills in pairs would allow the students to receive more, and more immediate, feedback than they would receive if they were working on tasks individually.

In the case of the pilot course, finding or developing activities which allowed the students to receive feedback on their pronunciation from their peers had additional immediacy. As has already been mentioned in the opening of this chapter, I planned to have small groups of students working on different pronunciation topics in parallel to optimize the efficient use of instructional time. However, in these lesson segments, tasks and materials needed to be designed in such a way that small groups of students would be able to work independently on a particular topic. This included finding ways to enable students to receive feedback on their pronunciation at points in the lesson where I was busy with another group. Using activities that created opportunities for peer feedback would contribute greatly to addressing this challenge. Ultimately, this aspect of these tasks also made them useful for providing opportunities for the

students in the course to practice their productive phonological accommodation skills. This aspect of these tasks will be discussed in 7.1.

In addition to Walker's (2010) more general guide for teaching pronunciation in the ELF-oriented classroom, I uncovered only one other source of pronunciation materials which systematically took ELF into account. *Be Understood!*, written by Christina Maurer Smolder and published by Cambridge University Press in 2012, one year before the pilot course took place, is a resource pack for teachers aimed specifically at teaching pronunciation to adult and young adult learners (Maurer Smolder 2012: 8). The first section of the resource pack focuses on segmental features of pronunciation, often arranged around pairs or sets of contrasting sounds. The second and third sections deal with suprasegmental features. The units in each section include teachers' notes and materials for a complete pronunciation lesson. Each unit is contextualized around a different extra-linguistic theme (e.g. sports, free time activities, job applications) and follows the same general format. Each begins with a 'Warmer' phase introducing the extra-linguistic theme, followed by a 'Listen' phase presenting a listening text featuring the targeted pronunciation items. Then comes a 'Focus on form' phase including closed tasks to help students practice producing the features in question correctly and to train their receptive competence with those features. Finally, each unit ends with a 'Pronunciation practice' phase including less controlled activities to help learners practice what they have just learned in a communicative context. The units range in length from 30 to 50 minutes. They do not represent a continuous sequence, but can be used independently of each other and in any order the teacher sees fit (Maurer Smolder 2012: 8).

On the whole, I found the book to be a solid, if not perfect, resource for the ELF-oriented classroom. In her introduction, the author includes some basic information about ELF (Maurer Smolder 2012: 8), as well as how the resource pack can be used to incorporate an ELF-oriented approach to teaching pronunciation. While she stresses that this resource pack "is not an exclusively ELF book" (Maurer Smolder 2012: 8), in that it also includes topics considered unsuitable for ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching, Maurer Smolder maximizes transparency by providing a table indicating which topics are appropriate for the ELF-oriented classroom (Maurer Smolder 2012: 11). This gives the teacher adequate guidance as to where to direct classroom attention. Additionally, the resource pack includes listening texts featuring L2 speakers of English, as well as a variety of L1 accents of English. As mentioned in 4.3, exposure to a variety of accents, and particularly L2 accents, is considered vital to the development of receptive accommodative competence, an important area of competence for ELF users. Thus, the use of the listening texts from this resource had the potential to support classroom work in this area of the pilot course as well, a point which will be discussed further in 7.2.

Within the individual units of *Be Understood!*, the task types constituting the lessons are varied, engaging and often playful, even as they remain appropriate for adult learners. They provide both the instruction on how particular features are produced and the focused practice necessary for the creation of new phonological habits recommended by Walker (2010) and Jenkins (2000). While the lessons include some more traditional forms of drill (e.g. listen and repeat, which appears in nearly every lesson), the productive practice activities at the end of the lesson nearly always take the form of a communicative game. Like the tongue-twisters Walker (2010) mentioned, these games are each in essence a playful type of disguised drill. Each game is designed to elicit the production of the feature or features targeted in that unit as learners communicate with each other to play the game, either in paired, small group or whole class interaction. And like the minimal pair drills presented in Walker (2010), this interaction is carefully planned in such a way that it allows learners to notice and correct problematic pronunciation of targeted features for themselves with the help of peer feedback. Overall, I felt that students would find these games more motivating and less monotonous than other forms of drill while still receiving the same important type of feedback.

Each unit is also graded in terms of the minimal level of learner language competence required. These levels are given in CEFR designations and range from A2 to B2+. Mostly, this appears to designate the complexity of the vocabulary and grammatical structures learners will encounter in the listening texts and various drills, rather than the suitability of the pronunciation topic itself for a particular level. The pilot course was offered as a CEFR C1-level course, and thus the students who enrolled had already achieved the language competence necessary to approach any of the units in the book. At first, I was concerned that they would find some of the units too simple. However, of the units which were ultimately selected for use, all but one were of B1+ difficulty or higher. Additionally, even in the A2-level unit, the activities were not overly simple, even if the vocabulary and grammatical structures were. In particular, the communicative games in the 'Pronunciation practice' section were open enough to allow the students to employ vocabulary and structures at their own level. In some ways, a simpler topic may even have been an advantage, because it allowed the students to focus more completely on an aspect of pronunciation that had already proved challenging to them. In this way, the level of the unit constituted only a minimum requirement, but did not exclude using these units effectively with more advanced students.

Walker (2010) and Maurer Smolder (2012) were essentially the only resources available to me which really lent themselves to an ELF-oriented approach to teaching pronunciation, and they were therefore the sources from which most of the ideas and materials for the pronunciation lesson segments in the pilot course were drawn. However, a few other resources were also employed, many of them recommended by Walker (2010), particularly where I

developed my own drills for specific topics. One of these resources was the book *English Pronunciation in Use Elementary*⁴¹ by Jonathan Marks (2007). This book presents some useful sound contrasts in a structured way supported by a listening CD, though it also includes many topics considered unnecessary or even harmful for intelligibility in ELF situations. However, it is aimed at less advanced learners and generally employs more closed types of drills without couching them in communicative tasks, so that there is little opportunity to raise the level of the drills through learner input. Marks's presentation of new material is much more analytical and the practice drills are less engaging and motivating than those in Maurer Smolder (2012) or Walker (2010). For these reasons, this book was used only as a background resource, and no drills or activities were borrowed from it directly.

A number of web resources were also employed in designing my own drills. Generally, these websites were used for one of two purposes: to generate appropriate minimal pairs for particular sets of contrasting sounds or to search for tongue twisters featuring particular target sounds. Specific reference will be made to these resources in the relevant subsections of this chapter which discuss task and materials selection and development for specific course sessions and pronunciation topics.

The following subsections of this chapter (6.1.1 – 6.1.5) will each examine in more detail how tasks and materials were either selected or designed for the teaching of the specific topics that were the focus of each of the pronunciation lesson segments in course sessions 3 through 7.

6.1.1 Course session 3: '/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/' and '/l/'

In analyzing the results of diagnostic assessment at the beginning of the course, I had ascertained that it would be possible to present the topics '/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/' and '/l/' concurrently, since there were no students who had exhibited issues in both areas. Therefore, it was necessary to find or design teaching materials that would allow the two groups of students to work independently while I monitored their progress and acted as an advisor. As I was unable to find any ready-made resources which lent themselves to an ELF-oriented

⁴¹ This series includes two other books, *English Pronunciation in Use Intermediate* by Mark Hancock with Sylvie Donna (2012) and *English Pronunciation in Use Advanced* by Martin Hewings (2007). However, only *English Pronunciation in Use Elementary* addresses segmental sounds in a way cohesive with research on pronunciation for the ELF-oriented classroom. Therefore, although the students enrolled in the pilot course were more advanced learners, the more advanced pronunciation materials were not used in the course.

approach to the pronunciation of these particular sounds, I designed a worksheet for each group presenting a series of tasks focusing on the sounds in question. Both worksheets are reproduced in Appendix E. Each worksheet followed Walker's (2010) pattern of first drawing students' attention to important features of how a problematic sound is produced. For example, the first activity on the '/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/' worksheet asked students to read a list of words involving /v/, which had typically proved to be the problematic phoneme in the set most likely to be substituted with one of the other two. As they read, the students were instructed to pay special attention to the way they produced /v/: *Feel your top teeth on your bottom lip and your vibrating vocal chords*. This gave them something physical to pay attention to in order to ensure that they were producing the sound properly. Likewise, the '/l/' worksheet encouraged students to *[f]eel the tip of your tongue touch the roof of your mouth behind your front teeth as you say /l/. Exaggerate at first! Make each /l/ extra long*.

After drawing students' attention to the production of a particular phoneme, the worksheets continued with drills aimed at giving them the opportunity to practice this phoneme. On both worksheets, the exercises were graded, beginning with more closed drills and progressing to more open ones. In keeping with Walker's recommendations for drills, each drill was designed to be done with a partner. A number of drill types were included on both worksheets. These included reading a list of words while a partner ticked those in which he or she felt that the pronunciation of the target sound was not target-like; activities utilizing tongue twisters; and a conversational exercise in which students were asked to practice saying phrases or sentences involving multiple instances of the target phoneme or phonemes, then hold a conversation together in which they attempted to use as many of those phrases and sentences as possible within their conversation. In the case of '/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/', which involved a set of contrasting sounds, two practice tasks, */v/ or /w/?* and */v/ or /f/?*, were also included which focused on minimal pair work in which /v/ was contrasted with either /w/ or /f/ (cf. Appendix E).

In creating these worksheets, I drew on several sources beyond the drills suggested in Walker (2010). Two websites (Bowen 2012; Higgins 2001) were used to locate minimal pairs for the minimal pair drills on the '/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/' worksheet. Two other websites were used as a source of tongue-twisters: Vickery-Smith (1998), a source suggested in Walker (2010: 77), and Kraut (2010), a website devoted to tongue twisters involving the phonemes /v/ and /w/. A paired dictation task featuring tongue twisters from Christine Maurer Smolder's *Be Understood!* was also adapted for the '/l/' worksheet (Maurer Smolder 2012: 23). Finally, a link was included to one listening exercise from Davis (1998) aimed at training learners' receptive competence with the pair of contrasting phonemes /v/ and /f/, which the students could use for additional practice outside the classroom. The listening text was not particularly

ideal, however, as it presented a series of clips all featuring the same L1 American English speaker, rather than a variety of L2 accents⁴².

In all task types on each worksheet, the letters representing the targeted phonemes were highlighted in bold print in an attempt to draw the students' attention to each instance of the target sound (cf. Appendix E). This was particularly important because the students were working independently; in a teacher-led activity, I as the instructor would have had more opportunity to draw the students' attention to each instance of the target sound. In retrospect, it would have been wise to include alternative spellings, particularly for the phoneme /f/ on the 'v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/' worksheet. All of the words featuring this sound were spelled with the letter <f>. However, this sound is represented by other combinations of letters in common English words, such as <ph> in *philosophy* and *paragraph*, and <gh> in *tough*. Including a few more of these words would have helped to raise the students' awareness of the complexity of grapheme-phoneme correspondence in English.

Both worksheets contained more drills than time would allow the students to complete in class. The students were therefore encouraged to do the tongue twister and listening drills outside of class, as well as to continue to work on any drills they found difficult.

6.1.2 Course session 4: '/dʒ/ vs. /tʃ/', '/f/ vs. /tʃ/' and '/s/ vs. /z/'

Data from the diagnostic testing had indicated that different groups of students would benefit from work on the following pairs of contrasting sounds:

- /dʒ/ vs. /tʃ/
- /f/ vs. /tʃ/
- /s/ vs. /z/

Initially, I thought that it would be necessary to run separate sessions in parallel for each group of students. However, I discovered that all of these phonemes, plus the phoneme /ʒ/, are addressed in Unit 6 of *Be Understood!* (Maurer Smolder 2012: 24-25). Using this unit would allow us to address all three topics in course session 4 with the entire group. I would simply need to draw each student's attention to the specific sound contrast(s) listed on his or her card as particularly important for his or her pronunciation.

⁴² Issues surrounding the selection of appropriate listening texts for ELF-oriented teaching will be discussed in more detail in 7.2.

Unit 6, which is graded at level B1+, uses food words to focus on the target phonemes /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/ and /ʒ/. Following the general format of each lesson in *Be Understood!*, the ‘Listen’ phase of the lesson presents a short listening text in which two speakers, an American and a Brit, discuss different words for the same foods in American and British English. Based upon what they hear, the learners are asked to find the pairs of synonyms in a word box and enter them into a table:

Materials excerpt 9:

Listen
 Listen and complete the table with words from the box.

| UK English | US English |
|------------|------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

jelly/jam crisps
 eggplant zucchini
 chips shrimp
 aubergine prawn
 courgette jam

Maurer Smolder 2012: 25

Though this activity is not strictly necessary to the pronunciation part of the lesson, I felt that it would make a good ice breaker and perhaps give us the opportunity to discuss cultural differences in vocabulary and accent (albeit of native speakers) that arise in the text and might have a bearing on intercultural communication. The unit then segues into the ‘Focus on form’ phase in which the learners are first asked to sort the food words introduced in the ‘Listen’ activity into columns according to the target sound they contain:

Materials excerpt 10:

A Listen and tick ✓ the sound of the underlined letters.

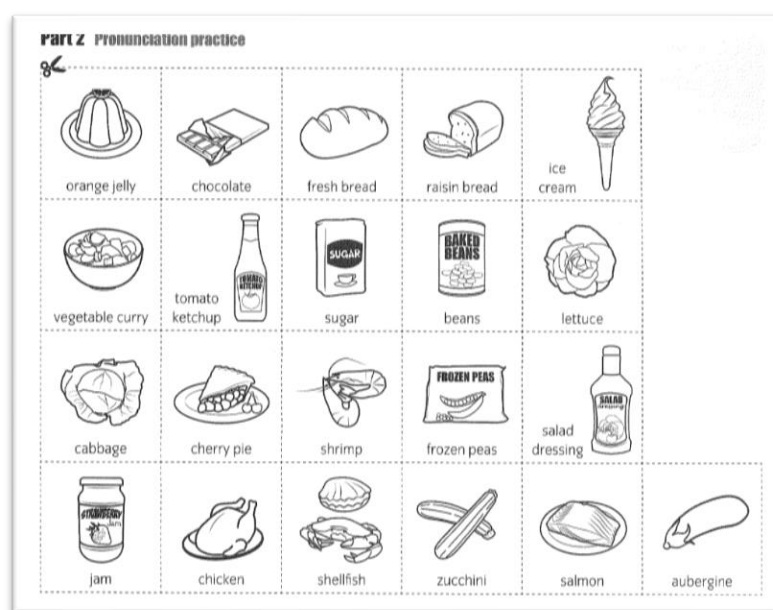
| | /s/ | /z/ | /ʃ/ | /ʒ/ | /tʃ/ | /dʒ/ |
|-------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
| 1 crisp | | | | | | |
| 2 jam | | | | | | |
| 3 zucchini | | | | | | |
| 4 chip | | | | | | |
| 5 courgette | | | | | | |
| 6 shrimp | | | | | | |

B Listen and repeat.

Maurer Smolder 2012: 25

They are also given the opportunity to listen to each word on CD and repeat. Finally, the ‘Pronunciation practice’ phase features a matching game for students to play in small groups of three or four. Each group of learners is provided with the following set of cards to cut out:

Materials excerpt 11:



Maurer Smolder 2012: 25

The game is similar to Old Maid, except that instead of trying to acquire identical pairs of cards, players must match cards containing different words according to whether they contain the same target phoneme. For example, *frozen peas* and *raisin bread* constitute a pair because they both contain the target phoneme /z/. This makes the game somewhat more difficult than the traditional version of Old Maid, since the players have to consider pronunciation of different items carefully to find pairs. The card featuring *aubergine* is the old maid card, the only one containing the phoneme /ʒ/. Whoever is left holding this card at the end of a round loses the game. I was aware that this game could potentially seem silly to university students, but decided to try it, as the students had generally proved themselves to be open to different activity types and to enjoy a good laugh by that point in the course.

Additionally, I designed a worksheet including extra practice explicitly aimed at each pair of contrasting sounds listed above, to be handed out at the end of the lesson for extra practice. This would allow students to tailor their practice outside class specifically to those areas indicated for them on their cards. Each extra practice section began with tips and reminders about the pronunciation of the target sounds. The exercises that followed were very similar to those that were designed for the lesson on ‘/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/’ and ‘/l/’. They included lists of words featuring a particular target phoneme (e.g. the unvoiced alveolar fricative /s/ in word-initial position or the voiced palatal affricate /dʒ/), as well as sentences to read aloud involving minimal pairs featuring the targeted phonemes. The websites by Bowen (2012) and Higgins (2001) (cf. 6.1.1 above) were again utilized to generate appropriate minimal pairs. A drill called

Odd one out was also adapted from exercise 18.2 of *English Pronunciation in Use Elementary* by Jonathan Marks (2007: 18), in which learners have to decide which one of four words does not contain a particular target sound despite similar spelling. Since the students would be working independently at home without direct recourse to me as the teacher, I took care to formulate instructions carefully. Although the worksheets were designed for extra practice outside the classroom, they included paired activities. The students were encouraged to practice with someone from the course or with someone else as they continued to work on those areas of pronunciation that were difficult for them. They were also encouraged to use recording devices as a means of enabling them to assess their own pronunciation.

6.1.3 Course session 5: 'Voicing final voiced consonants' and 'unvoiced consonants in initial clusters'

Materials from *Be Understood!* also allowed us to maximize whole-class instruction on the topics 'voicing final voiced consonants' and 'unvoiced consonants in initial clusters' in course session 5. Both topics draw upon the phonemic distinction between voiced and unvoiced consonants, a distinction Maurer Smolder addresses in the 'Focus on form' section of her lesson on final consonant voicing in Unit 12 (Maurer Smolder 2012: 37-39). The activities from this phase of her unit could be used to generally make the students aware of voicing and its importance as a contrastive feature of English consonants. Additionally, Maurer Smolder also directly addresses the vowel length distinction in English before voiced versus unvoiced final consonants, which is considered to be a vital aspect of intelligible pronunciation for ELF (cf. 4.2.1).

Maurer Smolder offers little explanation of the concept of voicing as a contrastive feature of English consonants in Unit 12, so I planned to preface her activities by introducing this concept more directly. I would write the minimal pair *back* – *bag* on the blackboard, then model the words for the students. I would then explain that the final phonemes /k/ and /g/ in these words are produced identically, except for the feature of voicing. I would demonstrate how to feel the vocal chords vibrating during the voiced sound by placing two fingers on the throat and explain that, in contrast to German, voiced consonants in word-final position are not devoiced in English, something which can be vital to intended meaning. Finally, I would help the students to identify other pairs of consonant phonemes differing only in voicing and practice feeling the difference in the pronunciation of each with regard to the vocal chords.

Then we would proceed to the exercises presented in the 'Focus on form' section of the unit:

Materials excerpt 12:

Focus on form

A Make pairs of words. Write the words from the box in the correct column.

back eyes peas half bat peace ~~bag~~ bad ice halve

| Words ending with an unvoiced consonant | Words ending with a voiced consonant |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| back _____ | bag _____ |
| p _____ | p _____ |
| h _____ | h _____ |
| b _____ | b _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

B Listen and check.

C How are the vowels in the first column different from those in the second? Fill in the gap with the word *shorter* or *longer*.
Vowels before unvoiced consonants (e.g. back) are pronounced _____ than vowels before voiced consonants (e.g. bag).

D Listen and repeat.

E Listen and tick ✓ the sentences you hear.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 a He can't write. | b He can't ride. | 4 a Her toast was cold. | b Her toes were cold. |
| 2 a She raced three boys. | b She raised three boys. | 5 a I'm locked out. | b I've logged out. |
| 3 a Halve it. | b half of it | | |

Maurer Smolder 2012: 38

This section begins by asking the learners to sort a list of ten words into two halves of a table, depending on whether the final sound is voiced or voiceless. The table is constructed such that the result is a list of five minimal pairs. The students are then asked to check their work by listening to a speaker on CD read the word list. Next, they are asked to consider the question of vowel length before a voiced versus a voiceless final consonant and fill in the blank in a pronunciation rule. To check their answer, they are asked to listen to the same track on the CD, this time focusing on the feature of vowel length. Finally, they are presented with five pairs of sentences. Each pair is identical except for one word, which is half of a minimal pair contrasting in the voicing of the word-final consonant phoneme. The learners are asked to listen to the CD and tick the sentence they hear. This minimal pair drill thus further trains their receptive competence.

Finally, we would move on to the 'Pronunciation practice' section of the lesson. This section involves a multi-round game for the whole class called *Pronunciation round-up*, which is essentially a disguised minimal pair drill⁴³. I planned to explain the game and run the first round, then turn the role of game master over to one of the students once the group generally understood how to play. The game would then continue while I pulled aside the small group of

⁴³ Cf. 7.2.1 for a complete explanation of how the game is played.

students who had demonstrated difficulty with unvoiced consonants in initial clusters to work on some drills hand-tailored for them. As I had not found any suitable ready-made materials on ‘unvoiced consonants in initial clusters’ elsewhere, I designed a worksheet for this topic (cf. Appendix E). The worksheet was largely similar to those created for ‘/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/’ and ‘/l/’. It began by introducing a minimal pair featuring a voiced-voiceless contrast in a word-initial cluster (*class* - *glass*) and asking the students to listen for the difference. I planned to model this pair for them, then guide them through the next task, reading a list of words featuring voiceless phonemes at the beginning of initial clusters. Finally, the students would work together on the final task, in which they were asked to write sentences using as many words from the word list as possible and then practice reading them to each other. This would allow me to monitor the end of the other group’s game.

I also designed a worksheet including drills for further practice outside the classroom for the ‘voicing final voiced consonants’ group. This worksheet included the exact same sequence of activities as the worksheet for the ‘unvoiced consonants in initial clusters’ group, but featured words with voiced final consonants instead of words with unvoiced initial consonants. It also included a link to a video on voicing final consonants from Bo (2008). The video would provide some additional guidance and practice with these sounds. However, like the listening text for the ‘/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/’ worksheet, it was not ideal for an ELF-oriented course, as it had an explicit native speaker orientation (cf. 7.2.2). The distinction between voiced and voiceless final consonants was presented as important because it could cause problems for native speaker listeners. I felt that this might send the unwanted message that native speaker recipients matter more than non-native speaker recipients, but decided that the opportunity for extra listening practice outweighed these concerns.

6.1.4 Course session 6: ‘Final and medial consonant clusters’ and ‘/ə/ and /ð/’

Course session 6 again involved running two separate pronunciation topics in parallel. This time, however, instead of designing materials, materials from *Be Understood!* Unit 8 (Maurer Smolder 2012: 28-29) were used to address final and medial consonant clusters with one group of students while another group worked on the interdental fricatives /ə/ and /ð/ using materials from Unit 2 of the same book (Maurer Smolder 2012: 16-17).

Each group received the photocopies of the ‘Listen’ and ‘Focus on form’ activities from the relevant unit to work through together. Here, the instructions were clear enough that the students could complete the tasks without explicit guidance. The progression of tasks led them through activities to help them notice the targeted pronunciation features, guide them in

producing these features and provide them with practice in receptively discriminating between contrasting sounds. Each group was given an answer key so that they could compare their answers to the correct ones where problems arose. After each group had completed these activities, I introduced the communicative game from the ‘Pronunciation practice’ phase of the lesson and provided the students with the necessary materials. Here, the materials did not include an explanation aimed at the students. It would have been possible to write out a game sheet detailing the instructions, but I felt that the students would benefit from a verbal explanation in which I could demonstrate the game and immediately address anything that the students seemed to find unclear. As soon as the students grasped the instructions for the game, they could then carry it out on their own while I returned to my function as observer and advisor to both groups.

The organization of the lesson was a bit complicated, as the materials required that each group have access to a CD player and a copy of the appropriate tracks on CD, as well as the photocopies necessary to complete the tasks. The two groups needed to be arranged in the classroom so that they could work on listening tasks and communicative games at the same time without disturbing each other too greatly. My role during the lesson segment would also be quite challenging. I would need to monitor the progress of two groups, stepping in where a group needed more guidance. I felt, however, that the effort would be worth it, as the both units seemed well designed and likely to be highly motivating for the students.

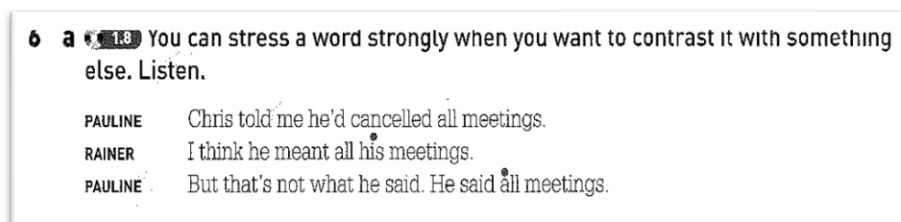
6.1.5 Course session 7: Nuclear stress placement

As part of the pragmatics and communication strategies strand of the course, a large portion of course session 7 was devoted to instruction on communication strategies for dealing with misunderstandings (cf. Chapter 18). As it happens, nuclear stress is addressed as part of a lesson segment on this topic in Unit 2.1 of the textbook *English Unlimited B2* (Tilbury et al. 2011: 14-15). Thus, this was the only lesson segment dealing with a specific pronunciation feature in which tasks and materials were obtained from a general English coursebook series⁴⁴. Selecting these materials for work on pragmatic strategies created a nice bridge to talking about nuclear stress placement on the same day, a decision that fit well into the syllabus, since we had

⁴⁴ The fact that contrastive stress was the only topic in which tasks and materials could be found in a general English coursebook, especially at an advanced intermediate level, appears to be typical. In his study of pronunciation in general English coursebook series for adult learners, Kiczowskiak (2021) found that “nuclear and contrastive stress occupy the vast majority of LFC pronunciation slots” in such textbooks (Kiczowskiak 2021: 64).

concluded work on the pronunciation topics identified through diagnostic assessment the week before. The unit begins with a listening comprehension task in which the students are asked to identify what has caused misunderstandings in two everyday situations. It then presents contrastive stress using the following excerpt from the listening text, presented both visually and on CD:

Materials excerpt 13:



6 a 1:8 You can stress a word strongly when you want to contrast it with something else. Listen.

PAULINE Chris told me he'd cancelled all meetings.

RAINER I think he meant all his meetings.

PAULINE But that's not what he said. He said all meetings.

Tilbury et al. 2011: 14

Finally, it provides the students with one short task to apply the concept and check their work against a solution presented on CD.

While this made for a natural introduction, I did not feel that *English Unlimited B2* dealt with nuclear stress thoroughly enough. It did not offer much explanation about the role of contrastive stress in communicating meaning, though its placement in a unit about misunderstanding can be interpreted as an implication of its potential role in avoiding or clarifying misunderstanding. Additionally, it provided only one practice task and did not offer any explanation of unmarked nuclear stress placement. However, this was not a topic where I expected the students to have particular problems, and I did not want to invest too much valuable course time in it if possible. *Be Understood!* also includes two units on nuclear stress placement (Maurer Smolder 2012: 93-98), but using these two units, each built around a different non-linguistic theme unrelated to the content of the rest of the course session, would take too much time to complete.

Instead, the activities from *English Unlimited B2* were supplemented with a worksheet featuring a series of drills gleaned from Walker (2010: 86-87) and Jenkins (2000: 153-154). Each of these drills is designed to be done with a partner. The first, presented in Walker (2010: 86), is simply a dialogue featuring instances of contrastive stress for learners to read aloud together:

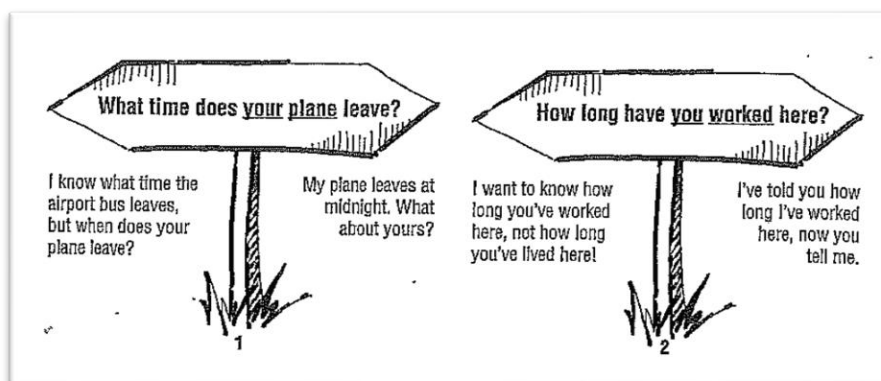
Materials excerpt 14:

Junior Receptionist: I've put Ms Hesse in Room two one SEven.
Head Receptionist: TWO one seven? She should be in THREE one seven.
Junior Receptionist: But that's where the Weinbergers are.
Head Receptionist: No, no. They're in three FIVE seven, remember?
Junior Receptionist: Oh yes. Sorry. I'll just update the room list then.

Walker 2010: 86

Stressed syllables are presented in capital letters so that learners can easily identify them. Reading the text aloud would give them a feel for how contrastive stress is used in English. The next two drills, also from Walker (2010: 86, 87), feature drill types in which students must match the beginning of a sentence to an appropriate continuation, based on which word in the first part of the sentence is stressed:

Materials excerpt 15:



Hancock 1995: 105 as reproduced in Walker 2010: 86

Materials excerpt 16:

| Match statement A with response B. | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Part A (what the speaker says) | Part B (what the speaker means) |
| 1 I like their new FLAT. | a But I'm not in love with it. |
| 2 I like their NEW flat. | b It's very nice. |
| 3 I like THEIR new flat. | c But Michel doesn't. |
| 4 I LIKE their new flat. | d I didn't like the one they were in before. |
| 5 I like their new flat. | e It's a pity I don't like ours. |

Walker 2010: 87

These drills can then be practiced orally in pairs. Here, the second student must respond appropriately from the set of options depending on the way the first places stress in the beginning of the sentence. These drills provide the second student with receptive practice with nuclear stress, while giving the first feedback as to whether his or her use of nuclear stress is appropriate and intelligible to the listener. Finally, the last drill, from Jenkins (2000: 153-154), requires the students to work together and think backwards to place stress appropriately in the first half of a question depending on how they intend the question to go on:

Materials excerpt 17:

Did you buy a tennis racket at the sports center this morning, or

- was it a squash racket?
- did you buy it yesterday?
- did you only borrow one?
- was it your friend who bought it?
- at the tennis club?

Jenkins 2000: 153-154

The worksheet concluded with a brief summary of the rules governing nuclear stress placement as they are presented in Walker (2010: 86). It was felt that these drills would be both sufficient and time efficient for addressing the topic of nuclear stress in the context of the pilot course.

6.2 *Analysis of classroom work on specific pronunciation features*

Several issues of interest crystalized out of the analysis of the lesson segments in course sessions 3 through 7 devoted to work on specific pronunciation features. These will be discussed in turn in the remainder of Chapter 6. First, 6.2.1 will examine student response to activities, particularly responses which showed that students found certain activities uncomfortable or difficult. Next, 6.2.2 will consider differences between lesson segments in which different groups of students worked independently on separate topics versus those in which the whole class worked together using the same materials. After that, 6.2.3 will explore differences between lessons using prepared lesson plans from teacher resources versus those drawing together materials from a number of sources or using newly created materials. Finally, 6.2.4 will investigate how much students appear to have learned in this area of the course by comparing student performance on the diagnostic tasks described in Chapter 5 with their performance on final exam tasks at the end of the course.

6.2.1 *Students' response to activities*

Across all pronunciation lesson segments in course sessions 3 through 7, the students appeared to take pronunciation work seriously. At no time was there any indication that they felt that work on pronunciation was unnecessary or a waste of time. They generally stayed on task and tried to do what was asked of them. This may have been at least partially in response to the fact that I informed them of the importance that research into ELF has ascribed to pronunciation for successful lingua franca communication toward the beginning of the course (T3: 55-66). The students' level of focus could also have been due to the diagnostic assessment they did at the beginning of the course. This gave the students hand-tailored feedback about issues with their pronunciation. Knowing which aspects of pronunciation were problematic for them may have increased their motivation to work on those topics and contributed to the level of focus students brought to these lesson segments. However, the students in this course generally worked willingly and hard on tasks throughout the entire course. Their level of focus and motivation in pronunciation lesson segments was not noticeably different compared to other types of lesson segment.

It is interesting to note that the format of the lesson did not seem to make a difference in terms of student motivation and focus. The students appeared as focused and willing to work on tasks during independent work on separate topics as in those lesson segments where the whole class was working on a particular topic together. There was also no noticeable difference in focus between those lessons taken from teacher resource materials and those I put together

myself. The general response to all activities was positive, even though it was apparent that the communicative games from Maurer Smolder's *Be Understood!* were the most fun for the students. These lesson segments were characterized by a particular energy and a lot of laughter.

This is not to say that the students found work on specific pronunciation features to be easy or comfortable. On the contrary, they often showed some hesitancy to try out pronunciation tips in those parts of a pronunciation lesson in which the focus was on how to produce a particular sound correctly. This was particularly apparent when students were asked to try something in a whole class setting. For example, at the beginning of the pronunciation lesson segment in course session 5, we were practicing the difference in the production of voiced versus unvoiced consonant sounds. I asked the students to put their fingers on their throats and notice the way their vocal chords vibrated when they said /g/ and the way their vocal chords were still when they said /k/ (T5: 110-118). The students showed some reluctance to do this at first, speaking quietly and glancing around furtively to see if their peers were participating. Later, though, I observed some of them putting their fingers on their throats during practice tasks, either to check whether a particular sound was voiced or unvoiced, or to check that they were indeed voicing a voiced sound. This shows that although the students were initially uncomfortable with the fingers-on-the-throat tip, they nevertheless found it useful.

Where I noticed that students felt uncomfortable about practicing individual sounds or using particular tricks to aid or check for proper pronunciation of a sound, I generally acknowledged these feelings while encouraging students to keep trying. For example, after the students demonstrated their reluctance to place their fingers on their throats to check for voicing in course session 5, I made the following comment to them:

and as always pronunciation is one of those things where (.) it feels a little weird at first but it's important that you know about this (.) yeah so then you can try out saying the words bag: and back: (.) and if you do it right with your fingers on your throat then you should feel the difference between the ends of the words (.) go ahead everybody loudly so that no one else can hear each other ready one two three (T5: 118-125)

This time, students responded more loudly and confidently, though it was apparent that their discomfort had not completely disappeared.

In addition to acknowledging the students' discomfort and offering encouragement, I also made sure to be a bold and confident model when presenting a tip. Of course, I as a native speaker have the advantage that the sounds of English are not challenging to me in the same way that they are to a non-native speaker unused to producing them. But by making my demonstrations of these tips seem normal, I hoped to lessen my students' discomfort. This discomfort also prompted me to share a personal anecdote about my own struggles with pronunciation in German in course session 3 (T3: 952-976). I decided quite spontaneously to

tell this humorous and self-deprecating story from my early teaching career, hoping to demonstrate to the students that pronunciation is something which can be a struggle for all users of additional languages.

In addition to showing hesitancy and discomfort when asked to try tips for producing particular sounds, the students also made comments throughout course sessions 3 through 6 expressing the difficulty they experienced with pronunciation in various tasks. These comments were made both to the whole class and to partners or group members during the tasks themselves. Most comments were recorded on days when groups were working independently on different topics. On those days, I usually invited feedback from the whole group on the day's experience at the end of the lesson segment. On days in which the whole group had been working on one topic together, I generally monitored students' expressions of difficulty during activities using indicators such as body language, facial expressions and minimal responses rather than inviting direct comment. Most comments expressing difficulty made from one student to another in a pair or group were also recorded on days when groups were working independently on different topics. One reason for this may have been that students had more and longer stretches of time to communicate with each other during these lesson segments. Lesson segments involving the whole class also included partner and group work tasks, but these tasks were shorter and were interspersed with whole class interactions. It is possible, too, that the fact that I was better able to respond immediately to difficulties that arose in whole group lesson segments kept students' feelings of difficulty lower than on days when they were working independently for longer stretches of time.

Student comments on difficulties during whole class feedback sessions tended to be rather general, as the following example from course session 3 illustrates:

Excerpt 1:

T3: 933-942 (00:37:23-00:37:34)

933 T: how was it
934 S15: difficult
935 Sf: @@ yeah
936 T: difficult okay
937 S15: DIFF:icult
938 Sxx: @@@
939 T: very nice @@@@
940 Sxx: @@@@
941 S15: @@@
942 T: yeah (1) i believe ...

This example is typical of the way in which I invited feedback after the class had been working independently in pairs or small groups on different pronunciation topics. After calling them back together and giving them the chance to find their seats and get themselves settled, I (T) make a request for feedback with the very general question *how was it* (line 933). S15's

response in line 934 is also quite typical. She self-selects and makes the very general statement *difficult*. This is met by both verbal and non-verbal tokens of approval from a large portion of the rest of the class. I accept this response by saying *difficult okay* in line 936. S15, who had been working on the contrasting sounds /v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/ during this lesson segment, then repeats *DIFF:icult* (line 937), overemphasizing her pronunciation the first syllable and lengthening the /f/, probably to demonstrate that she recognizes that this word contains an important sound from the lesson and that she is able to produce it correctly. This is met by laughter from her peers, from me and from herself (lines 938-941). After a short pause of one second, in which no one else offers a response, I move on and offer encouragement to the students to keep working on pronunciation despite the fact that they find it difficult (line 942).

It is typical of these exchanges that I did not ask the students to expound further on what they found difficult about the features of pronunciation they were working on. At the time, I assumed that they would not be aware of the difficulties they experienced in a way that would allow them to identify them more precisely. After all, they had no linguistic or teacher training in pronunciation that might facilitate a more detailed and precise description. However, student comments to each other during the tasks themselves show that students were actually able to identify areas of difficulty quite specifically at least some of the time. The student in the above example, S15, was involved in the following exchanges with her partner, S18, during the group work phase earlier in the same lesson segment:

Excerpt 2:

T3: 780-787 (00:30:39-00:30:47)⁴⁵

780 S18: face and vase
 781 S15: vase
 782 S18: vase (.) <10> <L1 ger> das ist ein
 783 unterschied ja {that's different yeah} <L1 ger> </10>
 784 S15: <10> <L1 ger> das ist klar x? {that's clear x?} </L1 ger> </10>
 785 S18: <L1 ger> aber irgendwie ist das ganz (.) am anfang ist es
 786 eigentlich leicht {aber somehow it's really (.) at the beginning
 787 it is actually easy} </L1 ger>

Excerpt 3:

T3: 815-823 (00:32:01-00:32:12)

815 S15: serve: <11> surf </11>
 816 S18: <11> serve </11> surf

⁴⁵ The conversation between S15 and S18 in session 3 is fairly unique in the data in that it is characterized by heavy use of the students' L1, German. S15 was most prone of everyone in the class to switch to German, both during whole-class lesson segments and during group or pair work. Generally, however, the students held their conversations in English during course sessions, even in group work phases in which everyone in the group spoke the same L1.

817 S15: mhm surf
 818 S18: <L1ger> nee na? {no huh} </L1ger>
 819 S15: <L1ger> das höre ich auch nicht {i don't hear that either}
 820 </L1ger>
 821 S18: <L1ger> das zum schluss kann ich nicht {i can't do it at the
 822 end} </L1ger>
 823 S15: <L1ger> nö {no} </L1Ger>

These examples show that S18 in particular was aware of the specific phonological environments in which it was easier or more difficult for her to distinguish between the phonemes /f/ and /v/. In the first excerpt, she mentions that she finds the difference between these two phonemes relatively easy to distinguish in word-initial position (lines 785-787), while in the second, she states that she cannot distinguish between the two when they occur in word-final position (lines 821-822).

Another example, in which three students (S2, S3 and S13) were working together independently on the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ in course session 6, is even more striking in terms of the specificity with which a student identifies an area of difficulty:

Excerpt 4:

T6: 824-835 (00:27:18-00:27:30)

824 S2: i think th- (.) for me the hardest is the (.) <spel> t h </spel> at
 825 the end
 826 S13: yeah
 827 S2: i don't <22> get this </22>
 828 S13: <22> also for </22> me yeah yeah
 829 S3: yeah nineteenth {namti:ŋs}
 830 S13: it's very difficult
 831 S2: nineteenth {namti:ŋs}
 832 S3: yeah
 833 S2: eh eh <@> i don't got the tongue there </@>
 834 S3: yeah yeah
 835 S2: <@> all the time </@>

Upon completing a listen-and-repeat task using a pre-recorded text on CD, S2 comments to her group that she finds pronouncing /θ/ to be most difficult when it occurs in word-final position (lines 824-825), an analysis her group agrees with whole-heartedly (lines 826, 828-830). Not only does S2 name the phonological context in which she finds it most difficult to produce this phoneme, but she also identifies a physical reason for this difficulty: she does not always achieve correct tongue placement (lines 833, 835). Noticing this physical difficulty helps the group to focus on tongue placement later in the session when they are trying to help S13 produce /θ/ correctly in the word *tenth* (T6: 1248-1264).

Because I was monitoring several groups at once in both course sessions 3 and 6, I was not always as aware of the specific nature of the problems the students were having as they seem to have been themselves. In course session 3, I noticed that the difference between the voiced /v/ and voiceless /f/ phonemes was most difficult for the majority of students working on that

topic when these sounds occurred in word-final position. I knew that we would address this distinction more specifically when we talked about voicing final voiced consonants in course session 5, so even as I gave them tips to help them monitor their production better, I also let them know that we would talk about this topic again (T3: 359-360, T3: 596-599). In course session 6, however, I never became aware of the specific nature of the difficulty the students were having with the interdental fricative /θ/. The students never asked for my help, but seemed to be satisfied with the solutions they worked out for themselves.

Had I realized how specifically students were often able to identify areas of difficulty, I might have pressed them to give more specific feedback about what they found difficult both in whole-class feedback rounds and when I checked in with each group during the group work phases. This probably would have resulted in more useful feedback than the general responses I usually received and would have allowed me to either address specific issues on the spot or to incorporate more work on these issues into another session. However, it is also possible that students would still have been reluctant to talk about difficulties in front of the whole class for fear of losing face.

I was not at all surprised that students found work on pronunciation in course sessions 3 through 6 to be quite challenging. In these sessions, each student was working on areas of pronunciation that had been identified as problematic for him or her. I acknowledged this to the class at the end of the pronunciation lesson segment in course session 3:

ah the reason that it was probably difficult a:hm for some of you is that i:
specifically asked you to work on something that i KNEW was going to be
difficult for you (T3: 942-945)

The short nature of the pilot course created the need to work as efficiently as possible on topics in pronunciation, e.g. by working on several different topics concurrently during one session, and made for quite intense lesson segments. I tried to counteract this by offering plenty of encouragement.

The lesson segment on nuclear stress placement in course session 7 represented a departure from this trend. Although speakers with the course participants' L1 backgrounds generally do not struggle with nuclear stress placement a lesson segment on this topic was included in response to Jenkins' claim that even such learners need instruction on marked topics like contrastive stress to raise their awareness of similarities between their L1 and English in these areas (cf. Jenkins 2000: 155, cf. also 5.3.2). It is quite apparent from the transcript of course session 7 that the students found this topic much easier than any other pronunciation topic that had been covered up to that point. When contrastive stress was first introduced, the students were easily able to answer questions about its purpose in English (T7: 1140-1151). They were less aware of neutral nuclear stress placement, however. In a listening example, they were

unable to identify the stressed word in a neutral utterance, although they had no trouble distinguishing which word was stressed where contrastive stress was present (T7: 1187-1197). This is one of the reasons I stand by the decision to teach this topic despite the fact that it was not particularly indicated either by diagnostic testing or by the literature. Once we had talked about where neutral stress usually falls in word groups in English, the students showed no further difficulties in this area.

The students generally had no trouble completing the various drills involving nuclear stress placement correctly during the practice phase. Toward the end of this part of the lesson, one student even remarked to his partner on how easy they had found these tasks, saying *eh this was too easy for us @@* (T7: 1606). However, even though the students recorded during the practice phase of the lesson always arrived at the correct solution to each drill, there was often a longer pause between input and answer that showed that the students still required a fair amount of processing time to arrive at the correct answer. This suggests that they were not particularly used to thinking about nuclear stress placement explicitly. At the end of the lesson, I felt the need to acknowledge the fact that this topic had not been particularly difficult for the class while explaining why I felt it was still worth practicing:

it's easy to: (.) when when we're emphasizing {partner/group conversations end}
 (.) REALLY emphasizing with our voices to make it pretty clear what we mean (.)
 but in ah: real conversation (.) ah especially in conversation that's moving quickly
 with someone sometimes it's much more subtle so (.) ah: i think it's good to
 practice and to be really clear about these things and i think that most of you found
 that this wasn't that difficult (.) a:hm (.) but eh: i think in real conversation
 especially a:hm with a partner that you don't know very well it can be (.) a bit more
 of a challenge (.) a:hm so (.) it is a good strategy (.) if you have a misunderstanding
 with someone to know okay emphasizing words can help me (T7: 1632-1643)

In retrospect, it would have been very beneficial to present the students with a recording demonstrating how improperly placed nuclear stress can lead to misunderstanding. This would have raised their awareness of the importance of the topic and perhaps helped them to understand that speakers with other L1 backgrounds are more likely to struggle with contrastive stress both productively and receptively. However, I have yet to discover an example of misunderstanding due to misplaced nuclear stress on a recording. Jenkins (2000, 2002) provides several examples from her data, but all of these are in written rather than recorded form. Walker (2010) does not include any examples in the texts on his CD, nor am I aware of any such texts from commercial teaching materials.

6.2.2 *Independent group work versus whole-class lesson segments*

As mentioned in Chapter 6.1, I had ascertained that it would be possible to have different groups of students working independently on different pronunciation topics during some of the lesson segments devoted to work on specific pronunciation features. This would help us to

maximize our limited instruction time while still ensuring that each student was able to work on those topics indicated for him or her in the diagnostic assessment. I was aware that these lesson segments would prove challenging to design and implement (cf. 6.1.1 and 6.1.4 above), and in practice, several drawbacks to this set-up did emerge.

First, these lesson segments involved an increased planning load for me as the instructor. In order to run two pronunciation topics concurrently, I essentially had to plan two separate lessons, including designing or selecting tasks and preparing materials for the students. Additionally, I had to ensure that the tasks were designed in such a way that the students could work on them independently without constant input from me, since I would also need to monitor both topics simultaneously.

Second, monitoring two groups working on two different topics at the same time was a complex task for me as the instructor. It was difficult to get a clear impression of each group and the problems they were having, since my attention was split between two topics. This led to a few cases where the transcript indicates that I missed some difficulties that particular pairs or groups were having. I have already mentioned one such example from course session 6, in which a group of students was able to specifically identify both a phonological context and a physical cause of difficulty in pronouncing the phoneme /ə/, a difficulty I was unaware they were having (cf. 6.2.1 above). In another example, from course session 3, two students (S15 and S18) misunderstood the use of bold print on the ‘/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/’ worksheet they were working on. It was used to highlight instances of the target sound in the various words the students were asked to practice, but S15 and S18 thought it indicated stressed syllables, and as a result began to stress the wrong syllables in certain words where the target phoneme /v/ occurred in an unstressed syllable (e.g. *heaVY* instead of *HEA*vy and *oVER* instead of *Over*) (T3: 408-430). Even though they themselves expressed some uncertainty about whether their interpretation of the bold print was correct, the issue was never resolved. They never asked me about it, and I did not notice it on my own.

There are many examples from the transcript where students working independently during one of these lesson segments asked for and received help, or where I was able to identify a problem and offer assistance. However, looking back over the course, it becomes apparent that I was more likely to miss issues students were having in the divided lessons. I found it easier to recognize and respond to difficulties which arose in whole group lesson segments. These lessons felt more flexible: I could slow the pace of the lesson, modify instructions, simplify steps or provide additional modeling for the students in the whole class lesson segments more easily than I was able to spontaneously modify the tasks assigned to the independent groups.

While these first two issues involved my role as the course instructor, the others were more student-focused. The third issue identified in the analysis of divided lesson segments was that students probably needed more modeling of target sounds to help them produce the sounds correctly. This was particularly true for the topics in course session 3, in which the students were working on materials I had designed myself. As I had been unable to find ELF-appropriate listening texts to support the pronunciation points in this course session, I had chosen not to incorporate listening tasks into these lessons. The students were therefore forced to rely heavily on each other for the correct production of sounds. This was a particular weakness of the lesson segments I designed myself, and it will be discussed again in 6.2.3 below. However, the need for more modeling of pronunciation features also applies to lesson segments using materials from Maurer Smolder's (2012) *Be Understood!* which did include listening tasks. In session 7, for example, the group working on the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ had difficulty with a short, written activity describing the physical production of these sounds (T6: 389-530). Ultimately, they were able to tick the correct answers, but the process was long, messy and characterized by a lot of uncertainty. Although the students were able to arrive at the correct answers, it is a bit unclear whether they really understood what those answers meant. They probably would have been able to come up with the correct answers more quickly if someone had modeled these sounds for them. Ideally, they would have been able to see the person modeling as well, which would have allowed them to observe directly the tongue placement and mouth shape described in the activity, helping them to better understand the written description of the production of /θ/ and /ð/ on the worksheet. Interestingly, they did ask me for help with one answer, but all I did was to confirm that the answer they were tending toward was correct (T6: 400-408). I did not use modeling to help them confirm their answer on their own. This same group probably would have benefited from more modeling of /θ/ and /ð/ in word-final position later on in the lesson segment, a difficulty they were able to identify for themselves, but of which I was unaware (cf. 6.2.1 above).

During lesson segments in which the whole class was working together, I could provide additional modeling from which the whole class benefitted at once when necessary. For example, in course session 7, although there were only a few brief examples of nuclear stress placement on CD, I also modeled correct stress placement for the students as we worked through the practice tasks. Particularly when we discussed the correct solutions to tasks where students had to match an instance of contrastive stress to an intended meaning, I modeled each sentence again as we discussed it, providing the students with additional aural reinforcement (T7: 1484-1505). Students checking answers on their own against a written answer sheet in independent group work in session 6, for example, did not have this opportunity.

Another issue with divided lessons was indirectly related to this one. In the divided lesson segments, most if not all of the students working on a particular topic had been identified as weak in that area. There were generally few, and possibly no, stronger students to help the weaker ones or to act as models. In essence, the blind were leading the blind. This is particularly apparent in the following example from course session 3:

Excerpt 5:

T3: 471-478 (00:27:18-00:27:30)

471 S15: <read> cave dive move {keɪf daɪf mu:f}</read> <L1ger> nee
 472 ich sag immer noch f {no i'm still saying f} </L1ger> <read>
 473 move {mu:f} </read> <L1ger> ich sag f {i'm saying f}
 474 </L1ger> move (.) move
 475 S18: <L1ger> aber da sich das für mich genauso richtig anhört <@>
 476 kann ich dich nett verbessern weil für mich ist es net falsch
 477 </@> {but since it sounds just as correct to me i can't correct
 478 you because it isn't wrong to me} <L1ger>

Here, S15 and S18 are practicing reading a list of words which end in the voiced phoneme /v/. S15 reads the list and remarks that she is still devoicing the final /v/ to [f] (lines 471-473). S18 then observes that she cannot tell the difference; both of them sound equally correct to her, so she is unable to offer correction (lines 475-478). This excerpt seems to illustrate the fact that learners sometimes have great difficulty hearing features of pronunciation that do not exist in their own languages, such as the voicing of voiced phonemes like /v/ in word-final position for L1 speakers of German (Harmer 2014: 278). It also appears to support Jenkins' observations that work in same-L1 pairs reinforces L1 transfer of sounds rather than replacement of L1 transfer with more target-like pronunciation (cf. Jenkins 2000: 192). In this case, the fact that S18 cannot receptively discern a difference between target-like and non-target-like pronunciation of /v/ in word-final position means that she cannot give S15 useful feedback which would point her toward more target-like production of this sound.

Finally, divided lessons did not make for an ideal climate for listening activities. The pilot course took place in the only classroom on a floor which was otherwise comprised of offices. There were no other nearby classrooms to use during divided lesson segments. Since I did not want to inconvenience anyone trying to work in those offices, I was reluctant to send groups out into the rather echo-prone hallway to work. Therefore, during divided lesson segments, multiple groups were forced to work in the same room. This was particularly challenging when two or more groups were trying to do listening tasks simultaneously, as was the case in course session 6. Though there is no evidence that either group was seriously impaired by this situation, I did comment on the less-than-ideal situation to one group as potentially contributing to why two of the three group members heard the wrong word in one listening text (T6: 380-382).

Efficient use of limited course time was the initial motivation for using a divided format for some pronunciation lesson segments. During planning of pronunciation lesson segments, though, it seemed wise to combine topics wherever combination was possible in order to work with the whole class together. In the pilot course, the similarities between two of the topics made combining them quite natural. Both ‘voicing final voiced consonants’ and ‘unvoiced consonants in initial clusters’ have at their heart the distinction between voiced and voiceless sounds. It was straightforward to conceive a lesson in which we could focus on this distinction with the whole class, then split up into two groups for only a very short time at the end. Maurer Smolder’s *Be Understood!* also provided materials that allowed us to combine the topics /dʒ/ vs. /tʃ/, /ʃ/ vs. /tʃ/ and /s/ vs. /z/ into one whole-class lesson segment. However, despite the fact that the whole class lesson format eliminated the challenges and drawbacks of the divided lesson format described in this section, there is some evidence that students showed more improvement on topics covered in the divided lessons than in the lessons in which we covered a wider range of topics with the whole class, as will be discussed in 6.2.4 below. This lends further support to the decision to use the divided lesson format and even suggests that this format may be preferable in some ways.

Nonetheless, there are still some things that could have been done to better facilitate the divided lesson segments. First, some time could have been incorporated into each segment in which I worked directly with each group and could therefore offer more guidance. In the case of the /ə/ and /ɔ̃/ group, this might have been the point in the lesson where the students were working on the task which provided a description of how to produce these sounds. This would have allowed me to act as a model for the students, giving them the opportunity to both hear and see how /ə/ and /ɔ̃/ are produced. This more direct contact might have allowed me to better identify and address some types of difficulty that arose. However, such an approach would need careful planning so that these points of direct contact occurred at different times in each group. Also, during direct contact with one group, it would not have been possible to monitor the progress of the other group. Second, more listening materials could have been incorporated into the lessons I created myself, thus providing more models of correct pronunciation for the students. This point will be addressed again later in the next section.

6.2.3 *Lesson plans from teacher resources versus custom-designed lessons*

In the analysis of the pronunciation lesson segments in course sessions 3 through 7, a number of differences emerged between those lesson segments using tasks and materials I designed myself (course sessions 3, 7 and the end of 5) and those utilizing the pre-prepared lesson plans

from Maurer Smolder's (2012) *Be Understood!* (course sessions 4, 6 and the beginning of 5). Both types of lesson had their strengths and weaknesses, which will be discussed in this section.

Practice of pronunciation features in both the lessons I designed myself and the lessons from Maurer Smolder (2012) were built around drills; however, the nature of these drills differed somewhat. One of the great strengths of Maurer Smolder's (2012) lesson plans is that she incorporates playful task types, generally including a communicative game at the end of each lesson. These games are also disguised forms of drills, but they demonstrate Walker's (2010) point that "[d]rills do not have to be tedious and demotivating, as is usually argued" (Walker 2010: 77). Indeed, they proved to be particularly motivating and fun for the students in the pilot course. As has already been noted in 6.2.1, these lesson segments were characterized by a particular energy and lots of laughter.

Although I also attempted to use varied and interesting drill types, the drills I created or selected for the lesson segments in which I developed my own materials were somewhat less disguised and tended to be a bit drier than the games featured in Maurer Smolder (2012). Nevertheless, this did not seem to affect student motivation too much. There were no overt complaints that the students found the tasks dull, and there was also no noticeable difference in students' focus or willingness to work on the tasks. One reason for this may have been the communicative format. All the in-class tasks I created, as well as some of the ones included on worksheets meant to be completed outside of class, were designed to be done with a partner or in a small group. Like the communicative games from Maurer Smolder's (2012) lessons, these lesson segments were characterized by plenty of discussion and negotiation between partners and group members.

Though the games from Maurer Smolder (2012) were particularly motivating and fun for students, they did have one major drawback for the course: they often took a lot of time to play. As mentioned throughout this thesis, time was one of the most valuable resources in the pilot course, since the course consisted of only ten 90-minute instruction sessions. The games in Maurer Smolder (2012) often featured complex rules, which the students had to grasp before they could really focus on the pronunciation features they were supposed to be practicing. This is apparent in the transcript of course session 4, in which the featured communicative game was a variation on the game Old Maid. My explanation of the rules to the whole class took a little over three and a half minutes (T4: 474-537, 00:23:14-00:26:55). However, there was still quite a bit of confusion among the students as to exactly what they were supposed to do. The group captured on the recording (comprised of S6, S8 and S16) required an additional four and a quarter minutes to check with each other that they understood the rules and to negotiate points of confusion before they even began to play (T4: 544-622, 00:27:15-00:31:30), a process which

included some intervention from me as the instructor. All told, the group needed nearly eight minutes out of what was supposed to be a 30-minute lesson segment to understand the game well enough to commence playing it.

Even after overtly negotiating their understanding of the rules, the students often needed to expend considerable energy on the rules during the first round of a game, so that they had little focus left over for the actual pronunciation features they were supposed to be practicing. This meant that they often needed to play more than one round of a particular game before it became an effective tool for practicing pronunciation. Between the time needed to introduce game rules and allow students to work them out, and the time needed for multiple rounds of a game, units from Maurer Smolder (2012) almost always took longer to complete than the author claimed that they would. By contrast, the tasks I designed were more straight-forward and therefore less time-consuming. It was generally easier to make accurate predictions about how much time they would take to complete in class.

Another aspect of the lessons in Maurer Smolder (2012) also cost quite a bit of time. These lessons make fairly heavy use of IPA symbols, and the students were not very familiar with phonetic transcription. This was particularly apparent in course session 4, which used a lesson plan from Maurer Smolder (2012) featuring the target phonemes /s/, /z/, /f/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/ and /ʒ/. The 'Focus on form' section of the lesson begins with a task in which students are asked to listen to a series of words and tick the IPA symbol for the sound featured in each (cf. Materials excerpt 10 in 6.1.2 above). Since the students were unfamiliar with these symbols, we had to spend some time discussing what each symbol represented. Even then, the students had a hard time remembering which symbol corresponded to which sound, so that the symbols failed to serve their purpose of helping the students keep track of which words contained which target sounds (T4: 387-396). This, plus the complexity of the game featured in this lesson, cost considerable time, so that the lesson segment took 40 minutes instead of the 30 minutes Maurer Smolder (2012) claimed it would take to complete (Maurer Smolder 2012: 6, 24).

While IPA can be a useful tool to help learners cope with pronunciation when learning a new language, the question is whether it is worth investing the time and effort to introduce IPA notation to learners who are unfamiliar with it in a short university course. I feel that in our course, it was not. The students found it more confusing than helpful, and since IPA was not widely used across the language courses offered by the university, the students would not have found much use for it elsewhere in their studies.

There was a trade-off, then, between the lessons from Maurer Smolder (2012) and those I designed myself. Maurer Smolder (2012) included task types which were highly motivating and fun for the students, but which took a lot of time to complete. By contrast, the task types I

selected were a bit drier, but were more time-efficient, a particularly salient point for a short university course.

Another difference between the lessons selected from Maurer Smolder (2012) and those I designed myself was the amount of listening material included in the lessons. The lessons from *Be Understood!* were well supported with listening texts, though these texts often featured native speaker accents, making them somewhat less than ideal for an ELF-oriented course (cf. 7.2.1). As I have already mentioned in 6.2.2 above, I generally did not incorporate listening tasks into those lesson segments I developed myself. As a result, students did not receive as much input modeling the pronunciation points they were working on as in the lessons taken from Maurer Smolder (2012). This was a particular problem in course session 3, in which the students were working independently in groups. I was better able to compensate for this in course sessions 5 and 7 where I was working directly with the students in teacher-led activities and could thus serve as the students' model myself as necessary.

The main reason listening texts were not included for the topics in course session 3 was that I was searching for texts couched in ELF situations in keeping with the nature and goals of the course (cf. 7.2.1), but I was unable to find any which supported the selected pronunciation topics. In retrospect, I should have included listening texts even if they featured native speakers as models, rather than let the students go without this important aural input. This would have been in keeping with Walker's (2010) position that "with certain precautions, there is nothing wrong with teachers continuing to use these standard accents in class until commercial courses are available that employ ELF accents" (Walker 2010: xv). Had I considered listening texts featuring native speaker accents for the pronunciation points in course session 3, I would very likely have found a variety of resources, since these pronunciation points are not unique to ELF-oriented teaching.

Finally, in those lessons I designed myself, the students tended to have more difficulty with vocabulary than in the lessons taken from Maurer Smolder (2012). There would appear to be three main reasons for this. First, I overestimated the students slightly because of the level of the course. Since the students were in a C1-level course, I expected them to be familiar with more of the words than they were. Secondly, words were often presented without supporting context. For example, the first task on both the '/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/' and the '/l/' worksheets asked students to read a list of words featuring a particular target phoneme (/v/ and /l/ respectively). These words were not presented in a sentence or with a picture, so that students had no contextual clues to help them figure out the meaning of any unfamiliar words. This is exemplified in the following excerpt in which S3, S6 and S13 are working on the '/l/' worksheet:

Excerpt 6:

T3: 322-345 (00:16:58 - 00:17:43)

322 S13: okay (.) ah um i will start with the first column (.) and if i say
323 something not that right you can correct me (.) okay <read>
324 lamp (.) loot {lo:t} (.) leopard {li:o:pa:rd} leave {li:f} lizard
325 </read> (2)
326 S3: wh- wh- what is the second word
327 S13: i- i- i don't kn- kn-
328 S6: i don't know
329 S13: i don't know it
330 S6: but (.) i
331 S13: wh- what is this
332 S3: what does the second word mean
333 T: loot? oh this is like
334 S3: loot
335 T: if you run if you go to a
336 bank and you rob them what you take away from the bank
337 S6: oh
338 T: what you steal from them is your loot
339 S13: ah
340 T: yeah or if
341 you go to someone's house and you take their <spel> d v d
342 </spel> player and their
343 S13: @ @ @
344 T: jewelry and all these things
345 that's your LOOT so (.) PIRATES collect loot

Here, S13 is taking his turn to read through a list of words featuring the target phoneme /l/ while his group members listen to his pronunciation (lines 322-325). Although S13 has invited his group to correct him, no one corrects his nonstandard pronunciation of *loot* in line 324. It quickly becomes apparent that no one in the group is familiar enough with this word to offer correction. S3 asks what *loot* means in line 326, seeming hesitant to try to say it aloud. This is met by general uncertainty from the rest of his group (lines 327-329). The group is unable to come up with the correct meaning until S3 asks me, again avoiding trying to pronounce the word (line 332). As I realize which word S3 is referring to, I model it for the group (line 333), and S3 repeats the model (line 334). I then provide them with an explanation (lines 333, 335-345).

This example stands in contrast to another excerpt from the same course session, in which two students (S15 and S18) are working on the phonemes /v/, /w/ and /f/:

Excerpt 7:

T3: 789-801 (00:30:55 - 00:31:33)

789 S18: <L1ger> spricht man das </L1ger> vast <L1ger> aus {does
790 one pronounce that vast} </L1ger> (3) <read> that's a vast
791 chan- (.) change (.) that's a vast change <L1ger> weiß ich xxx
792 (.) aber sonst müsste in dem sa- {but otherwise it would have
793 to be in that (sentence)} <L1ger>
794 S15: <read> it's a fast it's a vast change (.) vast </read> (.) <L1ger>
795 muss ja dann {it must be} </L1ger>
796 S18: <L1ger> dann ist quasi {then it's like} </L1ger> <read> that's
797 a fast change </read> is <read> yeah it went <11> quickly

798 </11> </read> (1) and <read> that's a vast change yeah it
 799 made a big difference </read>
 800 S15: <11> <read> quickly </read> </11>
 801 S15: yeah (2) <L1ger> genau {exactly} </L1ger>

Here, S15 and S18 are working on a minimal pair drill in which one partner inserts half of a minimal pair into a sentence or question and the other partner must then select and say the appropriate response (cf. Appendix E). S15 and S18 are unfamiliar with the word *vast* and are unsure of both its pronunciation and its meaning. However, they are able to use the two possible responses to work out that *vast* must begin with /v/ and must correlate to ‘make a big difference’, since they are sure that *fast* begins with /f/ and means ‘quickly’. This suggests that had the students in the first excerpt had some context to work with, they might have been better able to guess the meaning of the word *loot*.

Finally, I sometimes became so engrossed in generating enough words featuring a particular target sound that I neglected to consider their difficulty level or their commonness in current English. This was especially the case when I was developing minimal pair drills, since the set of minimal pairs of English featuring contrasts between particular sounds is quite limited compared to the set of all words featuring those sounds. Some of the words involved in the minimal pairs I found were neither common nor current. For example, one of the minimal pairs I found for /v/ vs. /w/ was *roving* – *rowing*. This pair was used in the following minimal pair drill:

Materials excerpt 18:

| | |
|--|--|
| 2. I tried to call my brother yesterday, but he was out rowing / roving . | a) Oh, does he have his own boat? b) Did he wander far? |
|--|--|

Despite the (albeit limited) context provided by this drill, at least two pairs of students were unable to determine the meaning of *roving*. While one pair (S1 and S17) was familiar with the word *rowing*, they still needed me to explain the meaning of the word *roving* to them (T3: 698-719). The other pair (S15 and S18) needed help understanding the meaning of both words (T3: 601-616). I included this pair of words because it featured the /v/-/w/ contrast in word-medial position, something it had proved difficult to find despite consulting two rather thorough websites featuring lists of minimal pairs. However, *roving* is not a common word in current English. Considering the difficulties that it caused the students, it should not have been included on the worksheet.

Generally, there were fewer vocabulary issues during the lessons taken from Maurer Smolder (2012). Her lessons had been leveled, so that the vocabulary and grammatical

structures used in each lesson fell between an A2+ and a B2+ level of difficulty (cf. 6.1 above). Since the students were enrolled in a C1-level course, it was to be expected that they would be familiar with most if not all of the vocabulary presented. Also, she built each lesson around a different non-linguistic theme, so that the vocabulary items which were used to demonstrate a particular pronunciation feature generally came from the same lexical field. For example, in the lesson plan used in course session 4, in which Maurer Smolder (2012) presented the phonemes /s/, /z/, /f/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/ and /ʒ/, all the words come from the lexical field of food. The unit also includes an introductory listening text presenting important food vocabulary (although featuring two native speakers; cf. 7.2.1) and provides corresponding pictures of the foods used in the communicative game (Maurer Smolder 2012: 24-25).

However, a few vocabulary issues did come up in course session 5 where a lesson from Maurer Smolder (2012) focusing on the voiced-voiceless distinction between pairs of consonants in word-final position in English was used. Here, both the ‘Focus on form’ activities and the communicative game rely heavily on minimal pairs to help students recognize and practice this distinction. This causes a breakdown in the link to the context of the unit. Most of the pairs have nothing to do with the opening listening text, which discusses health issues, but are rather random. Because the students had much less context to work with, they were sometimes unable to determine the meaning of a particular word, as the following excerpt exemplifies:

Excerpt 8:

T5: 569-577 (00:25:45-00:26:00)

| | | |
|-----|-----|---|
| 569 | S7: | yeah what was meant <read> she raced three boys </read> |
| 570 | T: | raced a:hm |
| 571 | S7: | yeah |
| 572 | T: | as in: she was running or riding a bike and |
| 573 | | she was trying to be faster |
| 574 | S7: | okay |
| 575 | T: | than they were yeah so a |
| 576 | | race (.) ah usually (.) trying to be faster than someone to get |
| 577 | | somewhere |

Here, S7 was unable to guess the meaning of the verb *race* from the context of the sentence *She raced three boys* and needed my help as the instructor to understand this word. This context is in fact more minimal than the context in which *rowing* and *roving* were presented in the minimal pair drill taken from course session 3 above, in that the students did not have possible responses to draw on to help them clarify the meaning of unknown words. The purpose of this drill was strictly receptive; students were meant to tick what they had heard on the CD.

This shows, then, that context has an important role to play in making sure that learners are able to both access familiar words in their mental lexicons and work out the meanings of unfamiliar ones they encounter in pronunciation drills. The worksheets I created myself, for

example for ‘/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/’ and ‘/l/’, could have been improved by providing more context for the example words used, either in the form of sentences or, in some cases, in the form of pictures. It would also have been helpful to try to choose words from the same or related lexical fields. However, minimal pair drills present a special challenge here, as the minimal pair tasks from Maurer Smolder’s (2012) lesson on voiced versus voiceless consonants used in course session 5 show. It is generally difficult to select minimal pairs such that the constituents are from related fields, so that the vocabulary used in these drills is often more random. Finally, it would have been prudent to reconsider the words used in the drills I created, weeding out those words which are out of common use or which have particularly specialized meanings.

Despite the drawbacks discussed above, both the lessons I designed myself and those taken from Maurer Smolder (2012) helped students to successfully work on their pronunciation in the course. In particular, drills from both types of lesson facilitated productive phonological accommodation toward the target pronunciation despite the linguistically homogenous make-up of the course, a point which will be discussed in detail in 7.2.1.

6.2.4 Evidence of learning

The opening to Chapter 5 described in detail how diagnostic tasks were designed and implemented to collect data on the course participants’ pronunciation and determine which specific pronunciation features we should work on during the course. These tasks included both a standard paragraph that the students recorded themselves reading and a sample of more natural speech in the form of a two-minute introduction that each student held in front of the class. In order to establish to what extent students were able to replace problematic pronunciation of specific features with more target-like pronunciation after instruction, the data collected during the diagnostic tasks at the beginning of the course was compared with data collected during similar tasks from the final exam.

Since work on specific features of pronunciation had figured so prominently as a component of the course, one task was included on the final exam which was devoted to assessing pronunciation of those specific features that had been the focus of instruction during course sessions 3 through 6 (cf. 3.3). This task involved the students recording themselves reading the standard text that had been developed for the diagnostic assessment at the beginning of the semester (cf. Materials excerpt 6 in 5.1). Using this task had the added advantage for this study of ensuring direct comparability between the data from the diagnostic assessment and the data from the post-instruction assessment. It also saved a bit of time during the exam itself, as the students were required to make and submit their recordings before the final exam began.

This time, however, instead of using this text to identify areas of difficulty, a new rubric was used to mark the students on how well they were able to pronounce words including the individual features of pronunciation that had been covered during the course, and the students received points for their performance which contributed to their overall grade for the course (cf. Appendix D.)

As in the standard text task used for diagnostic assessment, the students were aware that the focus of this task was on their pronunciation. They were further informed when this task was assigned in course session 9 that I would be paying particular attention to those areas of pronunciation that had been addressed during the course (T9: 144-147, 172-179). The students were provided with a list of these areas on the course summary sheet, which was handed out during the same course session. Therefore, this task measured student performance when their attention was focused on their pronunciation of those features. Students were also allowed and even encouraged to record the text multiple times until they were satisfied with their own performance, so that data from this task represents what they perceived as their best and most target-like pronunciation⁴⁶.

In addition to data from the standard paragraph task, in which the students' focus was squarely on pronunciation of target items, I also wished to assess to what extent students used more target-like pronunciation of these items in more natural, spontaneous speech. Since the focus of this type of speech is primarily on communicating a message rather than on pronunciation, this would allow me to assess the extent to which students had been able to achieve more target-like automatic pronunciation habits during the course. I therefore chose to assess each student's pronunciation during one half of exam task 2, entitled *Keep the conversation flowing* (cf. 3.3), as a representative sample of their pronunciation in more natural, spontaneous speech⁴⁷. The focus of this exam task was on using communication strategies, in particular strategies for active and supportive listening, as well as maintaining an extended turn at talk. Each student took a turn as the speaker, whose task it was to speak about a selected

⁴⁶ Walker (2010) points out that practicing and recording a standard text containing specific features of pronunciation over and over until the learner is satisfied with the result is a form of "[r]epeated, focused practice...[that] helps to make the production of individual pronunciation features automatic" (Walker 2010: 94). In Walker (2005), he writes that "[t]his repetition parallels the intensive practice that teacher-led drills provide in the classroom and is beneficial when trying to establish automatic pronunciation habits" (Walker 2005: 556). This task itself may thus have helped the students to solidify pronunciation habits they had been working to develop over the duration of the course.

⁴⁷ It should be noted that this assessment was done for analytical purposes only and was not included in the students' overall grade for the course. The students' pronunciation during this task was formally assessed only in terms of whether or not it inhibited their intelligibility for their exam partner (cf. 3.3, Appendix D).

topic for two minutes, and as the listener, whose job it was to use communication strategies to support the speaker⁴⁸. The students' pronunciation during their speaker turns were assessed as a parallel to their performances on the two-minute introduction task (cf. 3.1) from the beginning of the course.

As in the two-minute introduction task, the students' focus was on the message they were communicating rather than specifically on their pronunciation. For both tasks, the students were given guidance in the form of prompts to help them structure their talk. However, in the diagnostic task, the students were asked to talk primarily about themselves and were given time to prepare, whereas in the final exam, the provided prompts asked the students to comment on topics that had been discussed during the course and the students were not given time to prepare in advance. The two tasks were comparable in length, since the students were required to speak for about two minutes in each task. Additionally, they were similar in that they were likely more stressful for the students than other types of communication such as small group work or informal talk would have been, the diagnostic task because the students had to speak in front of the whole group and the final exam task because of the exam situation.

One other difference between the two tasks is particularly important in that it may have affected student performance in the area of pronunciation. While the two-minute introduction featured a monologue in front of the whole class, in the final exam the students were communicating with a partner, who was encouraged to participate in the conversation using supportive listener strategies they had learned during the course. This narrower focus on a specific listener may well have affected pronunciation in some ways, since the speaker most likely oriented to his or her listener subconsciously in terms of perceived intelligibility. Given the linguistically homogenous make-up of the course, most students took the exam in same-L1 pairs. This may have meant that their speech was characterized by more L1 transfer than if they had been speaking to someone from another L1 background, since this transfer was less likely to inhibit mutual intelligibility (cf. Jenkins 2002: 91-94). Therefore, performance in the area of pronunciation on this task may not be fully representative of performance in a more authentic ELF situation, though the students' knowledge that they were in an exam situation may have counteracted this to some extent. However, since the final exam was a paired oral exam featuring communicative tasks, with the exception of the standard text task which the students recorded on their own, this portion of the exam is the closest to what the students were asked to do in the two-minute introduction assignment and therefore the most comparable.

⁴⁸ Cf. Chapter 21 for a more detailed description of this task.

In analyzing the extent to which learning took place during the course in the area of the production of specific pronunciation features, I first compared the two recordings of the standard text that each student made, the first during diagnostic assessment at the beginning of the course and the second as part of the final exam. In addition to comparing the rubrics I had filled out in each case, I also listened to the recordings back-to-back while looking at a copy of the standard text in order to develop an auditory impression of student performance. I then rated the student's performance on the final exam recording in terms of improvement in the areas in which he or she had been identified as in need of work at the beginning of the course using a three-level system: + for significant improvement, o for some improvement and – for no improvement. After that, I listened to the student's performance on the two-minute introduction, reading along in the transcript from course session 2 as well as consulting the notes from the original rubric I had filled out during the student's talk. I then assessed his or her performance during the speaker turn of exam task 2 by listening to the recording of that part of the final exam while following along in a copy of the transcript of the final exams and marking deviations from standard pronunciation in the areas that had been covered in the course as they arose. Again, I rated student performance on this task in terms of improvement compared to the issues identified for them during diagnostic testing using the three-level system described above.

The results of this assessment are listed in Table 8 below. In each area in which a student was assessed as in need of work on a particular pronunciation feature, two marks appear. The upper mark in each box indicates the level of improvement on the standard text task on the final exam, representing performance when the student's attention was focused on pronunciation. The lower mark indicates the level of improvement apparent in the communicative task on the final exam, representing the student's performance in more natural, spontaneous speech where the focus was communicative rather than mainly on pronunciation.

In three areas, '/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/', '/l/' and '/ø/ and /ö/', students showed significant improvement across the board, with the exception of S17 during the communicative task, who exhibited only some improvement in producing target-like contrasts between /v/, /w/ and /f/. Interestingly, all of these areas were addressed in course sessions in which smaller groups of students were working independently on a particular topic. This suggests that despite concerns about some aspects of the lessons in which the students worked independently in small groups (cf. 6.2.2 above), these aspects do not appear to have impacted student learning negatively. It is even possible that the fact that students had to work out correct pronunciation more independently without as much teacher input actually assisted retention in these areas. In terms

Table 8: Level of improvement in areas of identified pronunciation difficulty post- instruction

| Area of pronunciation difficulty | Students ⁴⁹ | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|---|
| | S 1 | S 2 | S 3 | S 4 | S 5 | S 6 | S 7 | S 8 | S 11 | S 12 | S 13 | S 16 | S 17 | Σ |
| /v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/ | + | + | | + | | | | + | | | | | + | 6 |
| | + | + | | + | | | | + | | | | | o | |
| Voicing final voiced consonants | + | - | + | o | + | | | | | + | | | o | 7 |
| | + | + | o | - | + | | | | | + | | | - | |
| /dʒ/ vs. /tʃ/ | + | + | - | - | | + | | | | | | | | 5 |
| | + | + | - | - | | + | | | | | | | | |
| Final and medial consonant clusters | | | | | | o | | o | o | o | | + | | 5 |
| | | | | | | o | | + | + | o | | + | | |
| /s/ vs. /z/ | | | | - | + | | | | | - | | + | - | 5 |
| | | | | + | + | | | | | - | | + | - | |
| Unvoiced consonants in initial clusters | | | | | o | | | | - | | | | | 2 |
| | | | | | + | | | | + | | | | | |
| /f/ vs. /tʃ/ | | | + | | - | + | | | | | + | | | 4 |
| | | | + | | o | + | | | | | + | | | |
| /l/ | | | | | + | + | | + | + | | | + | | 5 |
| | | | | | + | + | | + | + | | | + | | |
| /ə/ and /ð/ | | + | | | | | | | + | | + | | | 3 |
| | | o | | | | | | | + | | + | | | |
| Σ | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | |

+ = significant improvement, o = some improvement, - = no improvement

of facilitating classroom learning, the divided lesson format would therefore appear to be viable for pronunciation teaching, though I stand by the improvements proposed at the end of 6.2.2. Additionally, ‘/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/’ and ‘/l/’ were both addressed using tasks and materials I had designed myself, suggesting that, though ‘drier’ than tasks taken from teacher resources like

⁴⁹ S9 and S10 dropped the course before completing the diagnostic assessment and also did not participate in the final exam. They are therefore not included in Table 8. Although S14, S15 and S18 participated in diagnostic testing, they opted not to take the final exam, so that no data was available as to their progress in pronunciation during the course. They are therefore also not included in Table 8.

Maurer Smolder (2012), these tasks and materials were nevertheless effective in helping students to improve their pronunciation.

The features /ə/ and /ð/ represent a bit of a special case in this analysis. As discussed in 5.2, they are not considered to be core features of pronunciation for ELF purposes. Target-like pronunciation is not deemed to be necessary, though speakers should use consistent approximations for these sounds. These sounds were addressed in the pilot course anyway because in one case, choice of approximation sometimes resulted in other words in English (e.g., *three* pronounced like *tree*) and in two others, the students appeared to have so much mechanical difficulty producing these sounds that it impacted the intelligibility of surrounding talk. Improvement was therefore measured here not as the ability to produce these sounds in a target-like way, but as the reduction of confusion and difficulty. Generally, at the end of the course, these students were able to produce these sounds in content words with an almost target-like pronunciation when their attention was sufficiently focused on those words. Even where approximation continued, it had moved closer to the target and seemed to cost less effort to produce. The students often continued to substitute other sounds for /ə/ and /ð/ in function words, though in ways that did not impact the intelligibility of what they were saying.

In contrast to the areas discussed so far, there are two areas, ‘/s/ vs. /z/’ and ‘/dʒ/ vs. /tʃ/’, in which some students made significant improvement, but others showed no improvement on either task type. Both of these areas were addressed in course session 4 in a whole-class lesson format using a lesson plan taken from Maurer Smolder (2012) and covering the set of phonemes /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/ and /ʒ/. Maurer Smolder’s tasks and materials offered instruction in, and practice of, the production and reception of this set of sounds without focusing on specific contrasts between pairs or subgroups of those sounds. Though the students were provided with a worksheet featuring pairs of sounds in contrast (/s/ vs. /z/, /dʒ/ vs. /tʃ/, /ʃ/ vs. /tʃ/) for additional practice outside of class, it would appear that this lesson probably did not draw enough attention to problematic contrasts to allow some of the students to change their pronunciation habits toward a more target-like pronunciation. These students may also have been overwhelmed by the number of different sounds presented in the lesson, which therefore kept them from being able to focus on the sounds that had been identified as problematic for them. This suggests that the choice to use these materials in order to be able to work efficiently on a combined set of topics with the whole class was not as effective as lessons using a divided format to accomplish the same goal, despite some of the advantages apparent in using the whole group format (cf. 6.2.2 above). It also suggests that some of the drill types used on the worksheets I designed myself, in which the focus was generally on a smaller set of sounds or sound contrasts, were in fact more effective than communicative drills covering a larger range of sounds, even if these communicative drills appeared to be more fun for the students.

The other areas, ‘voicing final voiced consonants’, ‘final and medial consonant clusters’, ‘unvoiced consonants in initial clusters’ and ‘/ʃ/ vs. /tʃ/’ all showed patchier improvement. Some students displayed more improvement on one task type in the areas of ‘voicing final voiced consonants’ and ‘unvoiced consonants in initial clusters’ than others, though all showed at least some improvement on at least one task type. Though all the students who had been identified as having trouble with final and medial consonant clusters improved, most only made some improvement. Many still tended to elide one of the sounds in the cluster or even whole syllables. In the area of ‘/ʃ/ vs. /tʃ/’, the only student who did not show improvement was still substituting /tʃ/ for /ʃ/ in her own name, despite the fact that she pronounced this phoneme as [ʃ] when speaking in her L1⁵⁰.

Interestingly, in several areas, some students showed less improvement on the standard paragraph task, where their focus was squarely on pronunciation, than on the communicative task from the final exam. This may imply that they overthought their pronunciation during the standard text task, causing them to produce less target-like pronunciation than they were actually capable of. In two cases, it seems likely that students had actually internalized a contrast the wrong way around during the course itself. In his recording of the standard paragraph for the final exam, S4 systematically replaced word-initial /s/ with /z/ in all possible words (*supposed*, *small*, *see*). He actually made more errors in this area on this second recording than on the first, in which he substituted /z/ for /s/ only in the word *supposed*, suggesting that he believed he needed to do the opposite of what had actually been practiced in class. However, this substitution seemed either to require conscious effort on his part or S4 was only temporarily confused about the rule, since he did not apply it in his spontaneous speech during the exam. S11 seemed to have had a similar difficulty with unvoiced consonants in initial clusters, an area of confusion possibly caused by the fact that we had spent most of that same lesson segment talking about voicing final voiced consonants.

Generally speaking, all the students showed at least some improvement in at least one area that had been identified as problematic for them at the beginning of the course. Several were able to improve significantly in all areas identified as problematic for them, meaning that their pronunciation at the end of the course was approaching automatic use of target-like pronunciation of the core features identified by Jenkins as crucial for intelligibility in ELF

⁵⁰ Given that introducing one’s self is one of the earliest lessons most learners learn in a foreign language, it seems likely that this student’s substitution of [tʃ] for the [ʃ] sound in her own name had fossilized early in her L2 acquisition and was therefore particularly difficult for her to replace.

situations. Considering the short duration of the course and the limited time available to work on developing students' pronunciation habits, these are encouraging results.

Additionally, the apparent correlation in this data between the learning constellations used to address certain features and the overall level of improvement of the pronunciation of those features is particularly interesting, since it lends support to the use of independent small group work in which each group focuses on a small, hand-tailored set of pronunciation features over trying to combine topics into larger sets so as to be able to work with the whole class at once. That said, it remains unclear whether a correlation truly existed or even which aspects of these different lesson formats played a more significant role, so that more research would be necessary to establish whether and to what extent these lesson formats contributed to the level of improvement in various areas.

7 Teaching phonological accommodation

As has been discussed in 4.3, Jenkins (2000, 2002) identified phonological accommodation as an important and necessary skill for speakers engaged in lingua franca communication, the development of which will require classroom attention. Since speakers from different L1 backgrounds appear to naturally converge on more target-like pronunciation of items they perceive as potentially challenging to mutual intelligibility, at least where they are able to produce the features in question (cf. 4.3), Jenkins suggested that the teaching of phonological accommodation in linguistically diverse learning groups should be a relatively straightforward process of creating classroom situations in which learners can engage in communicative exchanges with speakers of other L1s (Jenkins 2000: 188). This allows them to notice for themselves where their pronunciation causes problems for intelligibility and gives them opportunities to practice adjusting toward the target (Jenkins 2000: 189). Additionally, learners are naturally exposed to a range of L2 accents of English (Jenkins 2000: 190), helping them to add additional L2 accents to their receptive repertoires and to develop their receptive accommodation skills.

However, as has also been discussed in 4.3, the situation in classrooms in which the majority of learners come from the same L1 background looks very different. Whereas speakers from different L1s accommodate toward the target as their source of shared phonological repertoire, speakers from the same L1 background tend to converge on their shared L1 pronunciation, since it requires less conscious effort to produce while still increasing mutual intelligibility. However, this type of convergence reinforces learners' L1 accent rather than supporting the development of target-like pronunciation habits of core features necessary for international intelligibility (Jenkins 2000: 191-192, Walker 2010: 92-93). Therefore, pair and group work involving learners with a common L1 is likely to undermine both work on the production of target-like core features and the development of ELF-appropriate phonological accommodation skills (Jenkins 2000: 192).

I had hoped for a diverse group of L1 backgrounds among the students who registered for the pilot course. However, the group turned out to be overwhelmingly homogenous in this respect. As has been noted in 2.2, of the sixteen students who participated in the entire course, thirteen spoke German as L1 (though two of these students also had an additional L1), and the remaining three were all L1 speakers of Portuguese. This lack of linguistic diversity posed some interesting issues for teaching accommodation skills or even for reinforcing work on core features. Students would not be naturally exposed to a range of L2 English accents through classroom discourse, nor would they have many natural opportunities to notice which features of their own pronunciation caused difficulties for intelligibility during communicative tasks

with speakers from other L1s, thus encouraging them to replace their pronunciations of those features with more target-like pronunciations. Furthermore, using communicative tasks in pairs or small groups, even for purposes other than pronunciation practice, created the risk of actually reinforcing L1 pronunciation habits. In short, the linguistically homogenous make-up of the group was likely to complicate successful pronunciation teaching in the pilot course overall.

The lack of linguistic diversity I found myself facing in the pilot course is not at all unique; Jenkins acknowledged that “more English teaching is carried out around the world in monolingual than in multilingual⁵¹ classes” (Jenkins 2000: 191). However, she made disappointingly few suggestions on how to counteract the issues that arise for teaching ELF-aware pronunciation in the linguistically homogenous classroom. She observed that teachers will need “to spend some time initially on helping students to adjust their perceptions” in order to make them aware of the effect of pronunciation on international intelligibility, as well as which features are of particular importance (Jenkins 2000: 192). She suggested using recordings featuring a variety of L2 accents of English for this process, though she felt that this was “not ideal” (Jenkins 2000: 192), presumably because it fails to address the productive side of phonological accommodation, a side for which she offered no concrete suggestions. Ultimately, she left the question of how to teach phonological accommodation in linguistically homogenous classes open, while acknowledging its importance for ELF-oriented language teaching:

Obviously much thought will have to be given to the problem of accommodation in groups containing members of the same L1. This is a reasonably frequent situation internationally, and the [ELF] enterprise will to some degree be threatened

⁵¹ In the literature, learning groups in which most or all of the speakers come from the same L1 background are often referred to as *monolingual*, while learning groups comprised of speakers from a range of L1s are referred to as *multilingual* (cf. Jenkins 2000, Walker 2010, Harmer 2015). While these terms seem to be relatively well-established in the field, I find them problematic for two main reasons. First, although these labels refer to the overall linguistic make-up of an entire class, it is easy to confuse them with labels which might otherwise be used for individual speakers. A monolingual class may of course be made up of largely monolingual speakers (albeit speakers who are on their way to some level of proficiency in an additional language, which may or may not be considered bilingualism, depending on how one defines this term). However, a monolingual class could conceivably be made up of bi- or even multilingual speakers, so long as those speakers all share the same linguistic profile. In a Danish secondary school in Northern Germany, for example, a class is likely to be made up of learners who speak both German and Danish, even if not all of them can be considered balanced bilinguals. Equally possible is a multilingual classroom in which most speakers are essentially monolingual speakers, albeit in a range of different languages. Second, the term *monolingual learning group* does not accurately capture the situation I found myself teaching in. The students in the learning group came from two L1 backgrounds. However, the majority of students had the same L1, and the minority was not sufficient enough in number to balance this out. Therefore, for all intents and purposes, this group belongs to the category of monolingual learning groups described by the literature. For both these reasons, I prefer the terms *linguistically homogenous* rather than *monolingual*, and *linguistically diverse* rather than *multilingual*, as better able to describe the linguistic background of an entire learning group.

if research is unable to identify and pedagogy to implement a solution. (Jenkins 2000: 193)

Walker (2010), who also acknowledged the prevalence of linguistically homogenous classes in ELT, devoted a section of his book to teaching accommodation in linguistically homogenous groups (cf. Walker 2010: 92-96). While he described several activities in considerably more detail than Jenkins, most still revolve around awareness-raising and improving receptive competence in accommodation, rather than the development of productive accommodation skills. As of 2013, as I was designing and implementing the pilot course, I had not discovered any other resources for teaching productive convergence on target-like pronunciation in linguistically homogenous groups.

Given the paucity of both methods and materials for developing ELF-appropriate productive accommodation skills with linguistically homogenous groups, as well as the tight time constraints of the course, I initially planned to focus solely on the development of the students' receptive accommodation skills. By exposing the students to recordings involving a variety of L2 accents of English, the aim was to raise their consciousness of variation in pronunciation as a natural element of spoken English, as well as their tolerance for phonological differences among L2 English speakers. Additionally, targeted work with these recordings would help students begin to learn how to deal with unfamiliar accents. This approach would allow us to begin to address both Jenkins' second phase of ELF-informed pronunciation teaching, 'Addition of a range of L2 English accents to the learner's receptive repertoire', as well as the receptive side of the third, 'Addition of accommodation skills'.

Though instruction in productive phonological accommodation was not initially included in the syllabus for the pilot course because of the linguistically homogenous makeup of the learning group, I eventually concluded that a limited amount of work might nevertheless be possible through the use of carefully structured tasks. These tasks created parameters which helped students to focus on adjusting their pronunciation of a specific set of features toward the target in response to listener feedback, thus giving them some measure of practice in the productive side of Jenkins' third phase of ELF-informed pronunciation teaching. Thus, the course ultimately included work on both the productive and receptive sides of phonological accommodation.

The remaining sections of this chapter will look more closely at the teaching of these two sides of phonological accommodation in the pilot course. 7.1 will focus on the teaching of productive phonological accommodation, while 7.2 will address the teaching of receptive phonological accommodation.

7.1 Teaching productive phonological accommodation skills in a linguistically homogenous learning group

As was introduced in 4.3, productive phonological accommodation involves the ability to adjust one's pronunciation toward the target for the benefit of one's listener(s). This presupposes the ability to produce a more target-like pronunciation, which is why Jenkins (2000) and Walker (2010) recommend that instruction in productive phonological accommodation follow instruction in producing specific pronunciation features. It also necessarily encompasses the ability to recognize instances in which non-target-like pronunciation is actually impairing, or has the potential to impair, mutual intelligibility between speaker and listener, especially where the listener comes from a different L1 background. This in turn may involve a certain level of awareness on the speaker's part of which sounds he or she tends to replace with L1-influenced sounds, as well as a more general awareness of the importance of intelligible pronunciation for communicative success in ELF talk. Thus, the development of productive phonological accommodation skills involves a number of facets that will need to be attended to in the ELF-oriented classroom.

As has also been mentioned above in the opening section of this chapter, work on productive phonological accommodation had originally been excluded from the pronunciation syllabus for the pilot course due to the difficulties that arise for instruction in this area in linguistically homogenous groups. It was only during the process of selecting tasks and materials for practicing the pronunciation of specific features (cf. 6.1) that I began to hypothesize that these tasks might also provide at least some opportunities for the students to practice adjusting their pronunciation of specific features toward the target in response to peer feedback. Thus, the tasks and the linguistic data that will be examined in this section come from the same lesson segments discussed in Chapter 6. An overview of these lesson segments appears in Table 7 in the introductory section of Chapter 6. However, the focus of discussion in 7.1 is on the potential which the tasks comprising these lesson segments hold for facilitating the development of productive phonological accommodation skills in linguistically homogenous learning groups.

7.1.1 begins with an overview of the pedagogical recommendations for developing productive phonological accommodation skills in learners in linguistically diverse learning groups. It then examines in more detail the issues that complicate the teaching of productive phonological accommodation in linguistically homogenous learning groups and the limited suggestions that have previously been made as to how teachers might overcome these issues in practice. Finally, it discusses key aspects of task design which were identified as having the potential to facilitate the development of productive phonological accommodation skills with linguistically homogenous learning groups. 7.1.2 offers analysis demonstrating how carefully

designed practice tasks did in fact appear to elicit successful productive accommodation toward more target-like pronunciation in specific instances in the pilot course. This section closes with a discussion of the ramifications that these findings may have for the development of an ELF-oriented pronunciation pedagogy, as well as the limitations of such tasks and some suggestions for areas requiring further research.

7.1.1 Tasks and materials for developing productive phonological accommodation skills in a linguistically homogenous learning group

Productive phonological accommodation has not traditionally been a part of pronunciation teaching in ELT. While the LFC has begun to find its ways into some mainstream ELT handbooks and pronunciation teaching materials (cf. 4.5), Jenkins' suggestion that phonological accommodation should also receive classroom attention has received almost no mention. To date, there are no mainstream resources, even amongst literature and materials aimed specifically at the teaching of pronunciation, that offer teachers practical support for integrating the development of productive phonological accommodation skills into pronunciation teaching. Additionally, even literature regarding an ELF-oriented approach to pronunciation teaching offers very few suggestions for developing learners' productive accommodation skills in linguistically homogenous learning groups.

Jenkins (2000) described in some detail the conditions needed for tasks which will successfully help learners in linguistically diverse classes to acquire and develop their productive accommodation skills. One of the most crucial elements of such tasks is that they feature conversation between learners. According to Jenkins, learners will only be able to acquire accommodation skills through learner-learner interaction in which they can experience and respond to peer feedback (Jenkins 2000: 188). Additionally, only interactions between learners from different L1 backgrounds will ensure that the learners will converge on the target as their shared source of pronunciation (Jenkins 2000: 189, 191). This interaction should take place after sufficient teacher-led instruction and targeted practice of appropriate core features, since "learners will not be able to converge with one another on more target-like pronunciations if it is not within their capacity to produce them" (Jenkins 2000:188). However, activities aimed at developing accommodation skills should take the form of "[l]ess controlled pair and small group work, particularly involving information exchange" (Jenkins 2000: 189). Jenkins found that information exchange tasks with a measurable outcome were more likely to encourage accommodation toward the target than other types of tasks (Jenkins 2002: 94-95; Jenkins 2000: 189, 191). She expressed a preference for two-way exchange activities, in which both parties have information which the other party requires, over one-way exchanges "because they

involve more negotiation of meaning and thus more opportunities for learners to adjust their pronunciation, modify their receptive expectations, signal non-understanding, and the like” (Jenkins 2000: 189). On the basis of her personal experience, she also advocated pair work over group work for two reasons. First, Jenkins found that more convergence on target-like pronunciation took place when her learners were working in pairs and could thus focus all their attention on the needs of just one interlocutor. On the contrary, “[i]n [her] larger group data, [she] consistently found that speakers seemed to be unable to adjust their pronunciation. Quite possibly it seemed too difficult a task to approach and they did not even make the attempt” (Jenkins 2000: 193). Second, in a group interaction, it is possible that a group member may opt out of the conversation, allowing others to carry the burden of communication (Jenkins 2000:192-193).

Both Jenkins and Walker offer a variety of suggestions for communicative tasks appropriate for developing phonological accommodation in linguistically diverse groups. They include paired dictation exercises (Jenkins 2000: 189-190, Walker 2010: 89), as well as a range of information exchange activities common in communicative approaches to language teaching (Jenkins 2000: 92-93, 189; Walker 2010: 91-92). Combined with adequate instruction and practice of the appropriate core features beforehand, and room for appropriate feedback from both the teacher and the interlocutor(s), such activities allow learners to discover for themselves which aspects of their pronunciation lead to intelligibility problems in lingua franca communication and give them the opportunity to practice replacing these features with target-like pronunciation where communicative difficulty arises (Jenkins 2000: 190, Walker 2010: 91-92). Additionally, learners are naturally exposed to a range of L2 English accents, enabling them to train their receptive accommodation skills as well as their productive ones (Jenkins 2000: 189, 190).

By contrast, Jenkins (2000) offers no concrete suggestions for working on productive accommodation skills in linguistically homogenous classes. Walker (2010) proposes only one technique which he feels is suitable for the linguistically homogenous classroom: having learners record prepared texts (Walker 2010: 93-94). This is a technique Walker had developed in his university-level classroom some years before; he first published an article about it in *TESOL Quarterly* in 2005 (Walker 2005). In this technique, the recording phase is preceded by instruction and practice with a set of pronunciation features. Learners are then assigned a text including these features and asked to prepare it for recording. The recording phase itself takes place in small groups. This allows the learners to “listen to each other and offer feedback on the correctness of each other’s production of the target items” (Walker 2010: 94). They can then use this feedback to make improvements to their pronunciation in subsequent recordings

of the text until both learner and group are satisfied with the final product (Walker 2010: 94). The recording is then handed in to the teacher for assessment (Walker 2005: 553).

Walker's recording task shares many of the parameters that Jenkins (2000) proposes for successful work on phonological accommodation in linguistically diverse classes. It is prefaced by instruction and focused practice of core features; it involves learner-learner interaction, in which learners can gain practice in making adjustments to their pronunciation based on feedback from their peers; and it features a task with a measurable outcome (albeit not an information sharing task in the sense of Jenkins' and Walker's proposed tasks for linguistically diverse classes). However, the key parameter here appears to be the focus on a limited set of pronunciation features: "The students' focus on selected pronunciation features, as well as exposure to the models presented in class prior to the recording session, helps make peer feedback both constructive and supportive", ensuring that it will direct the learners to a more target-like pronunciation rather than toward their L1-influenced pronunciation of these features (Walker 2005: 554). Additionally, "[r]epeated, focused practice like this helps to make the production of individual pronunciation features automatic", further reinforcing the development of more target-like pronunciation (Walker 2010: 94).

This key parameter, the focus on a selected set of features, is in some ways also a key limitation of the learner recording technique: It can only be used to elicit adjustments toward the target for the set of features that constitute the focus of the activity. Walker stresses that "[e]ach recording must target only a few features, and the pronunciation focus of the assignment must be made clear. Doing so improves the effectiveness of the learner's efforts" (Walker 2005: 553). Where learners are asked to pay attention to too many features at once, they may become overwhelmed by the task. And danger remains that learners will adjust back toward more L1-influenced pronunciation of features that are not the focus of the recording. Walker stresses that success must therefore be measured in terms of the successful pronunciation of these features and that teachers must limit themselves to marking only those features that constitute the focus of the recording task (Walker 2005: 555).

The technique remains less than ideal for developing accommodation skills in several other ways. Walker himself calls it "a partial solution" (Walker 2010: 93) and points out that it "will not help [learners] develop accommodation skills" *per se* (Walker 2005: 552), since it does not put learners into situations in which they need to adjust toward the target to increase mutual intelligibility, as would be the case in pair and group work between speakers of different L1s in a linguistically diverse class. In fact, the technique is actually set up to work against the convergence on L1-influenced pronunciation that would naturally take place between speakers of the same L1 if they were left to themselves. However, it does allow learners to practice

adjusting their pronunciation toward the target in response to peer feedback, which could be considered an important pre-requisite for the development of ELF-appropriate phonological accommodation skills.

Additionally, the kind of feedback the learners receive from their peers is very different from the kind speakers receive from their interlocutors in actual ELF situations. First, the technique invites direct critique of pronunciation, which generally does not happen in naturally occurring ELF talk. ELF users usually avoid drawing attention to each others' non-standard language use unless it actually impedes understanding (cf. Firth 1996). Thus, Walker's technique encourages the use of a strategy that is not productive for actual ELF talk. Second, there is a certain temporal separation between phases of performance, feedback and adjustment which does not reflect what actually happens in ELF talk either. In this technique, the learner presumably records the entire text before receiving peer feedback and then goes back and attempts to implement that feedback in the next attempt at the recording. In actual ELF talk, an interlocutor signals a problem with intelligibility where it arises and the speaker has the chance to immediately adjust his or her pronunciation, a process that may involve active negotiation between the conversational participants. Performance, feedback and adjustment are intertwined with each other, rather than happening in discrete phases. Of course, one can argue that there is a difference between real language use and classroom language use, but ideally tasks for developing accommodation skills would mirror more closely the feedback that actually elicits accommodation in ELF talk.

Ultimately, I did not feel that Walker's recording technique would work well within the context of a short university course like the pilot course. In addition to the limitations of the technique discussed above, I was also concerned about how much time it would require to have each student practice and record a prepared text in groups during a course session. Furthermore, I felt that students would need more than one attempt at this type of activity in order to learn to use it optimally as a chance to work on adjusting their speech in response to peer feedback. This would mean devoting even more class time to a repetition of the activity. However, I saw great potential in having students record a prepared text as one element of the final exam (cf. 3.3 and 6.2.4).

Having rejected the only technique for teaching productive phonological accommodation I had come across in preparing for the pilot course, I originally planned to focus solely on developing the students' receptive phonological accommodation skills during the course. As I began to develop individual lessons around particular pronunciation features, however, I began to believe that the key principle behind Walker's recording task might apply to other kinds of tasks as well. As has been discussed in 6.1, most of the drills and games selected to help

students practice specific pronunciation features in course session 3 through 7 were designed to be completed in pairs or groups. The reasons for choosing interactive tasks were first, that it would increase student motivation and second, that it would allow students to receive some feedback even when I needed to split my attention between two topics taking place in parallel. However, such tasks also provide learners with the learner-learner interaction Jenkins describes as crucial for the development of phonological accommodation skills. They naturally involve an element of phonological accommodation in that they encourage learners to adjust their pronunciation based at least in part on the feedback of their interlocutors.

Generally, this would raise concerns in a linguistically homogenous group, since same-L1 speakers tend to converge on their shared L1 pronunciation rather than on target-like pronunciation. However, in these tasks, the learners' attention is focused on a limited number of pronunciation features, just as Walker (2010) suggests in his discussion of using learner recordings to practice accommodation. The learners have received instruction in how to produce these features, as well as which contrasts to pay attention to, and the tasks themselves provide focused practice of these features. Therefore, the learners should be able to give each other feedback on the correctness of their production of the selected features, which then leads them to adjust their pronunciation toward the target rather than toward an unwanted L1 pronunciation.

The selected practice tasks vary in terms of the directness of the feedback the learners receive from each other about their pronunciation. Like Walker's recording technique, some tasks elicit direct comment on a student's pronunciation compared to the target. For example, in one task type included on the '/l/' worksheet developed for course session 3, one learner is asked to read a list of words which contain a particular sound while another learner ticks those words in which he or she perceives the pronunciation of that sound to be non-target-like:

Materials excerpt 19:

Words with /l/
a) Practice saying each of the words with /l/. Feel the tip of your tongue touch the roof of your mouth behind your front teeth as you say /l/. Exaggerate at first! Make each /l/ extra long.
b) Ask a partner to listen to you read the list and to mark any words you had difficulties with. These are words you should continue to practice this week.

| word-initial | word-medial | word-final | multiple /l/ |
|--------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| lamp | problem | little | available |
| loot | television | small | little |
| leopard | alert | coral | lovely |
| leave | blurry | real | clearly |
| lizard | faulty | sail | skillful |
| | silent | travel | |
| | milk | | |
| | please | | |

In this task, the reader receives direct feedback from the listener about the accuracy of his or her pronunciation of the targeted sound in each word, as well as which words he or she should continue to practice. On the worksheet, this task immediately follows direct instruction on how to produce the target phoneme /l/, helping to ensure that the learners' attention is adequately focused on the correct production of the target sound. Similar practice tasks were also included in the task sequence addressing the topic '/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/' in course session 3 (cf. Appendix E) and the extra practice worksheets for 'voicing final consonants' and 'unvoiced consonants in initial clusters' in course session 5.

Most of the selected tasks, however, provide more indirect feedback by creating situations in which either mutual intelligibility or the successful completion of the task is threatened by non-target pronunciation. In tasks in which mutual intelligibility is threatened, the responses of another learner allow a learner to notice problematic pronunciation for himself or herself and create the need to adjust toward the target in order to resolve misunderstanding. Many of these tasks involve minimal pairs, in which substituting one sound for another results in a different word in English. For example, one drill adapted from Walker (2010: 77) involves one student reading a sentence and completing it with one half of a minimal pair. The listener is given two possible responses and must choose the appropriate one according to what he or she has heard the speaker say. I developed the following example of this drill for the contrasting phonemes /v/ and /f/ on the '/v/ vs. /w/ vs. /f/' worksheet for course session 3 (cf. also Appendix E):

Materials excerpt 20:

/v/ or /f/?
Listen and respond with a) or b).

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. That was some surf / serve!</p> | <p>a) I know! The ocean is so powerful after a storm. b) If she can keep it up, she'll win the tennis match!</p> |
| <p>2. Just look at that face / vase!</p> | <p>a) I've never seen such a cute smile. b) It looks like an antique.</p> |
| <p>3. That's a fast / vast change.</p> | <p>a) Yeah, it went quickly. b) Yeah, it made a big difference.</p> |

If the listener returns the wrong response, this shows the speaker that his or her pronunciation of the target sound has not been clear enough, signaling the need to further modify pronunciation of this sound toward the target. Several of the drills included in the task sequence addressing nuclear stress placement in course session 7 also presented opportunities for this kind of feedback (cf. 6.1.5). Rather than providing feedback about production of specific sounds, these tasks provided opportunities for learners to notice whether or not their attempts to use contrastive stress were able to communicate their intended meaning to their partners.

Drills in which mutual intelligibility is threatened by non-target-like pronunciation can also be quite playful. One good example is the game from the ‘Pronunciation practice’ section of Unit 12 of *Be Understood!* (Maurer Smolder 2012: 37, 39), which was used at the end of course session 5 for the group working on ‘voicing final voiced consonants’ (cf. 6.1.3). In this game, called *Pronunciation round-up*, each learner receives a small slip of paper with a sentence on it. The learners are instructed to memorize their sentences, then walk around the room and say their sentences to each other. The objective of the game is to find all the other learners who have the same sentence on their slips and stand with them in a group. Each set of slips consists of two sentences, identical except for one half of a minimal pair; therefore, the learners should form two distinct groups in each round of the game. For example, one half of the slips in round one of the game bear the sentence *She hit it*, while the others read *She hid it*. Once two groups have formed, the learners are asked to compare their slips and make sure they are in the right group. Since the learners have relied on their pronunciation of a particular phonemic contrast to make sure they attach themselves to the correct group, discovering that they are in fact in the wrong group signals to them the continued need to adjust their pronunciation toward the target⁵².

A similarly playful drill in which non-target-like pronunciation of key sounds potentially threatened mutual intelligibility is the tongue-twister dictation included in the task sequence on the ‘/l/’ worksheet from course session 3 (cf. also Appendix E):

Materials excerpt 21:

Tongue-Twister Dictation
a) Choose words from each column and write three tongue twisters.
b) Dictate your tongue twisters to a partner. Compare what he or she has written with what you said.
Did you speak clearly? (If you can, try this with someone who speaks a different first language than you do!)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----------|--------------|--------------|-------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| Glen | landed in | Kuala Lumpur | on/in | a little | blue | airplane |
| Gwen | left for | Lima | | a lovely | lime green | ambulance |
| A lamb | travelled to | Lisbon | | a small | lemon yellow | leopard |
| A lizard | sailed to | Wellington | | a ridiculous | bright purple | walrus |
| A wizard | woke up in | New Zealand | | a wonderful | blood red | whale |
| A pilot | ran away to | Malaysia | | an available | leather | motorcycle |
| A pirate | lurked to | Bangladesh | | a faulty | cloth | sloop |

Adapted from Smolder, Christina Maurer (2012) *Be Understood!* A pronunciation resource for every classroom. Cambridge University Press, p. 23.

In this drill, the learners are instructed to form sentences to dictate to each other by choosing one constituent from each of the seven columns providing linguistic input. While this drill

⁵² It may also signal that a learner’s receptive competence in distinguishing between phonemes requires more training. The learner may require teacher assistance in determining whether receptive or productive competence is the cause of the difficulty.

mostly focuses on the target sound /l/, there are a number of words, particularly in column 1, in which /l/ is contrasted with other sounds through the use of minimal pairs. These include the pair *Glen-Gwen* and *lizard-wizard*, in which /l/ is contrasted with /w/, and *pilot-pirate*, in which /l/ is contrasted with /r/. Thus, if what one learner intended to dictate does not match what the other learner has written down, this may indicate to the dictating learner that he or she may need to adjust his or her pronunciation of these key sounds toward the target.

In tasks in which successful completion is threatened by non-target pronunciation, the parameters of the task create the need for the learners to pay close attention to target-like pronunciation of key sounds in order to successfully complete the task. Tasks like these can also be quite playful. A good example is the game of Old Maid which was used to practice the sounds /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/ and /ʒ/ in course session 4 (cf. Materials excerpt 11 in 6.1.2). In this game, the learners have to match cards featuring different food words according to whether they contain the same target phoneme. In determining which words constitute a pair, the learners may need to negotiate the target-like pronunciation of key sounds, creating opportunities for more indirect forms of feedback about their own pronunciation of these sounds along the way. Other communicative practice tasks in which non-target-like pronunciation threatened the successful completion of the task were included in the task sequences addressing the topics ‘final and medial consonant clusters’ and ‘/ə/ and /ð/’ in course session 6 (cf. 6.1.4) and nuclear stress placement in course session 7 (cf. 6.1.5).

The tasks described in this section are similar to the tasks Jenkins (2000) and Walker (2010) describe as ideal for teaching phonological accommodation in linguistically diverse classes in several ways. First, they all feature the learner-learner interaction Jenkins calls crucial for the development of phonological accommodation. Second, they follow focused work on the production of specific pronunciation features, thus ensuring that students will have the capacity to produce a feature with target-like pronunciation where it is required. Third, they have measurable outcomes, thus placing a high premium on mutual intelligibility. Finally, they are less controlled in the sense that they are communicative tasks in which students must negotiate their own way to the desired outcome. However, all of these tasks generally involve more control than those recommended for linguistically diverse classes. They all include parameters which keep learners focused on a specific set of pronunciation features, since this appears to be the crucial factor which facilitates appropriate peer feedback toward the target, as well as the acquisition of more target-like pronunciation habits in general. In that sense, they are somewhat more limited than the kinds of tasks which have been recommended for use with linguistically diverse learning groups.

Overall, then, many of the tasks that were used to practice specific pronunciation features in the pilot course were also tasks that held the potential to help the students develop their productive phonological accommodation skills. Thus, work on productive phonological accommodation was not a discrete element of the pilot course, but was rather integrated into communicative practice phases of the pronunciation lesson segments in course sessions 3 through 7. The following section, 7.1.2, will now provide analysis of classroom work with these tasks and explore the extent to which they were actually able to elicit appropriate productive phonological accommodation from the students.

7.1.2 Analysis of classroom work on productive phonological accommodation skills

The previous section of this chapter discussed the problems generally attributed to teaching productive phonological accommodation in linguistically homogenous learning groups and posited the idea that it should be possible to overcome these problems, at least in part, through careful task design in which learner attention is focused squarely on selected pronunciation features for which learners have already received instruction in target-like production. This section will present evidence that such tasks did in fact lead to adjustments toward more target-like pronunciation during pronunciation lesson segments in the pilot course. Generally, this accommodation took one of two forms: negotiation of the correct pronunciation of an item or items within a pair or small group of students, or adjustments toward the target due to signaled non-understanding or misunderstanding from a communicative partner. Each of these forms of accommodation will now be considered in turn.

7.1.2.1 Accommodation as negotiation of correct pronunciation

Several tasks prompted students to engage in negotiation of the pronunciation of particular words involved in those tasks. The following example was taken from course session 4. The focus of the pronunciation lesson segment in this course session was the set of consonant phonemes /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/ and /ʒ/. The lesson segment ended with a game of Old Maid, played in small groups, in which the students had to make pairs by establishing that the words on two cards contained the same target sound. This is a twist on the original card game, in which players must collect pairs of cards that are identical, and it led to a lot of discussion among group members as they tried to establish which cards constituted a pair. In this example, S8 proposes the words *beans* and *frozen peas*, and she and her group (S6, S8, S16) try to decide if they really constitute a pair:

Excerpt 9:

T4: 625-633 (00:31:39-00:32:04)

625 S8: i got beans and frozen peas (5)
626 beans peas beans peas
627 S6: peas
628 S8: beans
629 S6: beans (.) beans and peas
630 S16: beans: and pea:s: (.) yeah
631 S6: beans: peas:
632 S8: @ @ @
633 S16: it's xxx beans: and peas:

S8's proposal of the potential pair *beans* and *frozen peas* is met with a five second pause (line 625). Though S8 pronounces *beans* with a definite [z] as the final sound, her pronunciation of the final sound in *peas* on the recording remains somewhere between /s/ and /z/. This seems to give her and her group pause, although the word *frozen* contains /z/ as well. When no one comments on her suggestion, she repeats both words twice more, still pronouncing the final sound in *peas* as something between /s/ and /z/ (line 626). S6 repeats *peas* in line 627 with a definite [z] as the final sound, then repeats the whole pair in line 629. S16 then tries both words himself, lengthening the /z/ at the end of each word, and, after a brief pause, is the first to signal his acceptance that they constitute a pair (line 630). S6 tests the words again in line 631, also lengthening the final /z/ in each word. Finally, S16 repeats his assertion that *beans* and *peas* constitute a pair (line 633). After a quick discussion in which the students realize that this was in fact the example that had been used when the game was explained to them (T4: 634-640), they move on to consider another pair.

S6, S8 and S16 were able to confirm that *beans* and *peas* did constitute a pair in the game by establishing that each word contained the phoneme /z/. They did this through a collaborative process in which they negotiated with each other the pronunciation of the final sound in *beans* and *peas*, ultimately arriving at the target pronunciation of /z/ at the end of each word. This can therefore be considered an example of successful adjustment toward target pronunciation, facilitated by the parameters of the task, which required the students to search for pairs of words containing sounds from a given set that constituted the focus of the lesson.

The next excerpt comes from the same group and is quite similar, except that the students ultimately decide that two words do not constitute a pair based on their negotiation of the sounds involved in each word:

Excerpt 10:

T4: 644-657 (00:32:29-00:32:55)

644 S8: jam and aubergine?
645 S6: aubergine and
646 S8: what about jam
647 S6: jam [dʒ] [dʒ] (.) and auberGINE
648 S8: so it's- okay i'm <13> not sure </13>
649 S6: <13> i don't </13> think it is

650 S8: okay do you think it's a pair
 651 S16: jam and auber- no
 652 S8: okay
 653 S6: xxxx @ @ @
 654 S16: no sorry
 655 S8: @@@ no it's- that's okay (1) oh well
 656 S16: i make different sounds
 657 S8: yeah okay me too

S8 suggests the pair *jam and aubergine*? (line 644), though she does so on rising intonation, suggesting that she herself is unsure if the pair is really correct. S6 begins to repeat the pair, saying *aubergine and* (line 645). When S6 does not continue, S8 asks *what about jam* (line 646). S6 says *jam* again, then emphasizes its initial phoneme /dʒ/ by repeating it twice. After a short pause, she then says *auberGINE*, emphasizing the /ʒ/ in the final syllable (line 647). S8 again expresses her uncertainty, this time more directly, even as S6 says that she does not believe the two words constitute a pair (lines 648-649). S8 then applies to S16 for his opinion (line 650). He begins to try out the words, then concludes rather abruptly that they are not a pair (line 651). S6 seems to feel that S16 has been too brusque and offers what is most likely a face-saving remark to S8 in line 653. This causes S16 to temper his rejection of S8's pair to *no sorry* (line 654), prompting laughter and the assurance *no it's- that's okay* from S8 (line 655). S16 then explains that he makes different sounds (line 656), finally causing S8 to concede that she does as well (line 657).

The negotiation of pronunciation in this exchange arrived successfully at the target-like pronunciation of the phonemes /dʒ/ in *jam* and /ʒ/ in *aubergine*. However, the students established that these two words could not constitute a pair, since they did not contain the same phoneme. As it turned out, *aubergine* had no pair; it was the so-called Old Maid card, containing a phoneme which did not occur in any other word in the game. While the students knew that one card was the Old Maid card, they did not know which card it was at the beginning of the game. They had to play one full round of the game before they discovered that *aubergine* was the card that had no match. S8 was eventually left holding this card after all the other cards had been paired off in the first round of the game, and her group was quick to identify her as the Old Maid and hence the loser of the game:

Excerpt 11:

T4: 716-722 (00:32:29-00:32:55)

716 S16: salad salmon (1) what do you have
 717 S6: shrimp (1) fresh fresh <15> shrimp </15>
 718 S8: <15> shrimp </15> yeah (.) great and i=
 719 S6: =have aubergine @@@@ xxx (.) you're the old maid
 720 S8: i'm the old maid
 721 S6: yay
 722 S16: yeah

The group then began a second round of the game.

Interestingly, although the *aubergine* card had already been established as the Old Maid card, it was again proposed as half of a potential pair in the second round of the game, this time by a different student, S16:

Excerpt 12:

T4: 852-871 (00:40:07-00:40:40)

852 S16: <@> vegetable curry </@>
 853 S6, S8: @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @
 854 S8: yeah but he has it (.) and vegetables
 855 S6: oh what?
 856 S8: that's a pair (.) cabbage and vegetable
 857 S16: okay what about cabbage and vegetable
 858 S6: yeah
 859 S16: i- i i'll give it to you
 860 S6: oh thank you
 861 S16: yeah but aubergine and vegetable (.) veg aubergine
 862 S6: no xx [ʒ:]
 863 S16: [ʒ:]
 864 S8: auberGINE and veg:
 865 S6: veg is more like a [dʒ] sound
 866 S16: VEGetable
 867 S6: [ʒ] and [dʒ]
 868 S16: yeah
 869 S6: all right?
 870 S16: yeah
 871 S6: thank you

Although the group agrees that *vegetable curry* and *cabbage* constitute an acceptable pair (lines 852-860), S16 still proposes *aubergine* and *vegetable curry* as a potential match (line 861). S6 is quick to point out that *aubergine* contains /ʒ/ (line 862). S16 then repeats this sound (line 863). S8 then says *auberGINE and veg:*, emphasizing the difference between the /ʒ/ in the middle of *aubergine* and the /dʒ/ in the middle of *vegetable* (line 864). S6 comments that *veg* contains the sound [dʒ] (line 865), prompting S16 to repeat *VEGetable*, this time emphasizing the /dʒ/ at the end of the first syllable (line 866). S6 repeats the two contrasting sounds back-to-back (line 867), finally prompting S16 to concede that they are not the same (line 868). S6 checks that S16 is really convinced (line 869), which he confirms (line 870), and the round continues.

S16 produced both *vegetable* and *aubergine* according to their target pronunciations, yet he seemed unaware that he had produced a different sound in each word until S6 and S8 demonstrated this for him. Then he was able to accept that these two words could not constitute a pair. It seems odd that S16 should propose *aubergine* as half of a pair at all, as he should have been aware from the previous round that it was the Old Maid card and had no match. It is equally interesting that his partners engaged in negotiation of the sounds involved in the words, rather than simply dismissing the pair on the grounds that they knew *aubergine* was the Old Maid card. Possibly they were still somewhat unsure whether they had reached the right

conclusion in the previous round, though they made some references to the *aubergine* card during the second round that suggest they were aware of its Old Maid status in the game (T4: 804-807, 833). However, this is again an example of successful negotiation of a more target-like pronunciation, facilitated by task design and the focus it placed on select sounds and sound contrasts.

Negotiation of pronunciation which ultimately led to successful adjustment toward the target also occurred in course session 6 in the small group of students (S2, S3, S13) working independently on the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/. The final task in this lesson segment was an information gap task in which each student was given a fictional name and birthdate, as well as a short list of other birthdates. Their task was to talk to one another and find out which fictional name belonged to each birthdate on their list. The students were unfamiliar with the English pronunciation of many of the names involved in the task. They stopped to negotiate the correct pronunciation of a name in several cases, one of which appears below:

Excerpt 13:

T6: 1006-1027 (00:31:39-00:32:14)

- 1006 S13: my name is keith {kett} (.) keith {kett} (.) keith {kett}
 1007 S3: yeah
 1008 S13: or keith {keiə} (.) keith {keiə}
 1009 S2: <L1ger> xxxx (.) als <L1ger> {kett}
 1010 S13: no that's not {kett} eh {keiə} {keiə} it's {keiə} (.) or?
 1011 S2: {kar} eh eh (.) keith {ki:ə}
 1012 S13: keith {ki:ə}?
 1013 S2: isn't it keith {ki:ə}?
 1014 S3: yeah:
 1015 S2: eh so i (.) know keith richards or something but i think it's
 1016 written same
 1017 S13: keith {ki:ə}?
 1018 S2: keith {ki:ə}
 1019 S13: who's keith richards
 1020 S2: isn't it a: actor? @@
 1021 S3: i don't know
 1022 S13: okay my name is keith {ki:ə}
 1023 S3: @@@
 1024 S13: richards
 1025 S2, S3: @@@@
 1026 S13: and my birthday is on the eleventh (.) eleventh {ilɛvnot} (.) of
 1027 (.) eh january

Here, S13 was assigned the name *Keith*. In his first attempt, he pronounces it [kett], pronouncing the final <th> as [t] in keeping with the phoneme-grapheme correspondence of his German L1. He seems unsatisfied with this, however, repeating the pronunciation twice more with increasing uncertainty in his tone (line 1006). Although S3 signals his agreement (line 1007), S13 changes his pronunciation to [keiə] (line 1008). S2 then appears to suggest that she would pronounce *Keith* as [kett], as S13 originally pronounced it, in German, though her remark is not entirely intelligible on the recording (line 1009). S13 rejects this

pronunciation and again proposes [keɪə], repeating this pronunciation three times for emphasis. However, after a short pause, he signals his uncertainty that his pronunciation is entirely correct by appealing to his group members for confirmation with *or?* on rising intonation, a tag question translated directly from his German L1 (line 1010). At this point, S2 is finally able to propose the correct pronunciation. She has heard the name Keith Richards and is fairly certain that his name is spelled the same as the name on the card (lines 1015-1016), though she identifies him incorrectly, if very hesitantly, as an actor rather than a rock star (line 1020). Though S13 signals that he is unfamiliar with Keith Richards (line 1019) and S3 is also unable to confirm whether Keith Richards is an actor, as S2 has proposed, (line 1021), S13 adopts S2's proposed pronunciation, saying *okay my name is keith {ki:ə}* (line 1022). He then jokingly adds *richards* (line 1024), picking up on S2's collocation that has helped the group arrive at the correct pronunciation of *Keith*, which is met with laughter from his group members (line 1025), and the task continues.

The interesting aspect of this exchange is that the focus of the lesson on the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ seems to have helped the students in this group negotiate toward the target pronunciation of names in English with which they were either completely unfamiliar or only familiar in their native L1 pronunciation. S13 arrived fairly quickly at the conclusion that the <th> in *Keith* must be pronounced as [θ] rather than [t], a conclusion he defended quite adamantly in line 1010, though he remained unsure of the pronunciation of the preceding vowel. He and his group had already successfully negotiated the pronunciation of the names *Elizabeth* (T6: 936-948) and *Martha* (T6: 989-1001), commenting on the fact that <th> is pronounced as [θ] in English but as [t] in German in those names, and they were able to negotiate the target English pronunciation of *Theo* shortly thereafter (T6: 1051-1056), despite the fact that it is also a common German name in which the initial <th> is pronounced as [t]. It would seem that the awareness of the correspondence between <th> and /θ/ in English which they had gained through previous instruction and practice was enough to allow them to arrive at the target pronunciation, even if this required active negotiation within the group rather than automatic production.

Though the students were ultimately able to arrive at correct pronunciations of names featuring /θ/ or /ð/ in nearly every case in this task, they still felt uncertain enough to check some of their pronunciations with me as the course instructor toward the end of the activity:

Excerpt 14:

T6: 1084-1096 (00:32:22-00:33:41)

- | | | |
|------|-----|--|
| 1084 | S2: | eh excuse me |
| 1085 | T: | yeah sorry |
| 1086 | S2: | is this really (.) <L1ger> theo {teio:} oder {or} </L1ger> (.) |
| 1087 | | th:eo |
| 1088 | T: | th:eo in english |

1089 S3: yeah
 1090 S2: also for (.) this is sound crazy (.) {keit} (.) <L1ger> oder {or}
 1091 </L1ger> {keiə}
 1092 T: k- ah:
 1093 S3: keith?
 1094 T: keith ah yeah keith
 1095 S2: okay so keith is with (.) okay
 1096 T: yeah keith (.) keith and theo

S2's use of her German L1 pronunciation of the <th> in both *Theo* and *Keith* in this excerpt shows that, although she is capable of producing the target pronunciation, its production is still far from automatic for her. In fact, although she was the one who ultimately supplied the target pronunciation of *Keith* in the first excerpt, she does not seem able to remember it here. She first signals her discomfort with a pause and the words *this is sound crazy*, then uses S13's suggestions of [keit] and [keiə] (lines 1090-1091). I am unable to understand which name S2 was referring to until S3 supplies the target pronunciation (lines 1092-1093). Then I confirm that the target pronunciation of *Keith* is [ki:ə] (line 1094).

This exchange suggests that even where the students were able to arrive at the target pronunciation through negotiation within the group, they still felt uncertain about their own conclusions. It also shows that the production of the target sound or sounds still required conscious effort after successful negotiation. However, as Excerpt 14 shows, the phoneme /ə/ was within the students' capacity to produce where they perceived it to be necessary. They therefore showed themselves capable of adjusting toward the target in regard to this sound.

In all of the examples discussed so far, negotiation of the 'correct' pronunciation of particular words containing target sounds seems to have arisen naturally in response to task parameters. In Excerpts 9, 10 and 12, the students appear to engage in negotiation of pronunciation because they needed to establish which words constituted pairs in the game they were playing. In Excerpts 13 and 14, the students were aware that each name in their information gap task contained the letter combination <th> and that this combination was generally pronounced as either /ə/ or /ð/ in English, causing them to negotiate until they arrived at a pronunciation which included one of these sounds. However, there are also exchanges in the data in which students in a pair or small group engaged in negotiation of the pronunciation of a particular sound in response to a direct request for feedback or correction by one of the group members. In the following exchange, also from the group working on /ə/ and /ð/ in course session 6, the group has finished playing the birthdate information gap game, but they still have a few minutes since the other group, which has been working independently on 'consonant clusters in final and medial position', has not yet finished their activities. The students in the '/ə/ and /ð/' group therefore decide to go back and repeat the listening drills

from earlier in the lesson. While working through a listen-and-repeat task also featuring dates, S13 applies directly to his group for feedback on his pronunciation of the word *tenth*:

Excerpt 15:

T6: 1203-1207 (00:36:02-00:36:13)

- 1203 S13: eh does it sound right (.) when i say tenth
1204 S3: tenth yeah eh i think this is good yeah
1205 S13: or seventh (1) seventh
1206 S3: seventh
1207 S13: seventh (.) tenth is all right yeah it sounds good

Though the group decides that S13's pronunciation of *tenth* here is unproblematic, the issue comes up again about a minute later:

Excerpt 16:

T6: 1248-1264 (00:37:10-00:37:30)

- 1248 S13: tenth
1249 S3: tenth
1250 S13: @ @ @
1251 S2: but (.) the [θ] (.) you don't have the tongue between
1252 S13: oh
1253 S2: the teeth
1254 S13: you're right you're right you got me
1255 S3: tenth
1256 S2: tenth
1257 S3: maybe you can say <spel> f </spel> but (.) do the tongue in
1258 front of your (.) teeth
1259 S2: [θ] [θ]
1260 S3: tenth (.) @
1261 S13: tenth
1262 S3: tenth
1263 S13: tenth
1264 S3: tenth

Upon completing the listen-and-repeat drill again, S13 immediately comes back to the word *tenth*, which he still seems to feel is problematic (line 1248). Though he makes no overt request for correction this time, his return to this word seems to be a renewed invitation to his group members to offer feedback. This time, however, they do find fault with his pronunciation. S3 models the word (line 1249), causing S13 to laugh somewhat ruefully (line 1250). S2 then points out that S13 has not placed his tongue between his teeth while pronouncing the /θ/ in *tenth* (lines 1251, 1253), an appraisal which seems to surprise S13 at first (line 1252), but with which he quickly agrees (line 1254). S2 appears to be referencing instruction in the production of the phonemes /θ/ and /ð/ from earlier in the lesson segment, in which tips were given about proper tongue placement. After S2 and S3 again model the word *tenth*, seemingly to consider what tips they might give S13 to help him improve his tongue placement (lines 1255-1256), S3 offers a suggestion, *maybe you can say <spel> f </spel> but (.) do the tongue in front of your (.) teeth* (lines 1257-1258), which S2 then appears to try out (line 1259). S3 and S13 then practice saying the word *tenth* several times, attempting to apply S3's suggestion as they do so

(lines 1260-1264). They appear to accept S3's suggestion as helpful in producing a target-like /ə/ in *tenth*, and move on to another word.

In the excerpts above, S13 receives feedback on his pronunciation in response to his own direct request for it. While a direct request for feedback is attested in other exchanges in the data, other requests for feedback seem to be more tacit. There appears to be an understanding, generally attributable to the task instructions, that the students will comment on each other's pronunciation and offer advice where they can.

For example, in the next excerpt, S15 and S18 are engaged in a task near the beginning of a pronunciation lesson segment in course session 3 in which they are asked to read a list of words featuring the target phoneme /v/ to a partner. The partner is instructed to make note of any problematic words. S18, who is reading, has arrived at the end of the list, a set of words in which /v/ is in word-final position:

Excerpt 17:

T3: 436-466 (00:37:10-00:37:30)

436 S18: cave {keif} c- ca-
 437 S15: <L1ger> nee {no} </L1ger>
 438 S18: <L1ger> nee {no} (.) das ist <2> falsch </2> {that's wrong}
 439 </L1ger>
 440 S15: <L1ger> <2> du hast es </2> FALSCH gesagt {you said it
 441 WRONG} </L1ger>
 442 S18: cave:
 443 S15: cave
 444 S18: yeah cave:
 445 S15: <L1ger> o gott {oh god} </L1ger> @@@
 446 S18: dive <3> @@ </3>
 447 S15: <3> @@ </3> dive (.) <L1ger> das ist echt schwer {that's
 448 really hard} </L1ger>
 449 S18: <L1ger> ja {yeah} </L1ger>
 450 S15: xxxxx (.) dive (.) dive
 451 S18: <L1ger> ja so ähnlich {yeah kind of like that} </L1ger>
 452 S15: move (.) move
 453 S18: <L1ger> und das dann automatisch jetzt immer anders machen
 454 {and then to do it automatically always the other way}
 455 </L1ger> (.) have (.) have
 456 S15: have
 457 S18: have: (3) five: <4> <L1Ger> das mit den lippen ist glaube ich
 458 net so verkehrt {the thing with the lips is not so far off i think}
 459 </L1ger> </4>
 460 S15: <4> <L1ger> xxxxxxxxx </L1ger> </4>
 461 S18: @@ (1) stimmt <L1ger> xxxxx so aussprechen </L1ger> (1)
 462 of (.) of (.) <L1ger> schwierig {difficult} </L1ger> (2)
 463 <L1ger> also {so} </L1ger> <read> cave dive move have five
 464 of </read>
 465 S15: <L1ger> ja machst du eigentlich ganz gut {yeah you're really
 466 doing pretty well} </L1Ger>

S18 attempts to pronounce the word *cave*, but devoices the final /v/ to [f] (line 436). Her partner indicates that this is a non-target pronunciation (lines 437, 440-441), an assessment with which

S18 herself agrees (line 438-439). She then says the word again, this time producing a distinct /v/, somewhat lengthened, as the final sound (line 442). S15 repeats this pronunciation without the lengthening on /v/, as though looking for confirmation herself (line 443), and S18 confirms the pronunciation by repeating it again (line 444). S18 continues with the list, interspersed with comments from both S15 and S18 on the difficulty of pronouncing /v/ in word-final position (lines 446-457). After the word *five*, S18 and S15 have a short exchange in which they establish that the tips given on the worksheet for producing /v/ are helpful here (lines 457-461). S18 is then able to repeat the entire list with target-like pronunciation of /v/ in word-final position (lines 463-464), prompting S15 to praise her: <L1Ger> *ja machst du eigentlich ganz gut {yeah you're really doing pretty well}* </L1Ger> (lines 465-466).

Both this exchange and the one before it feature students referencing tips given during the phase toward the beginning of the lesson segment, in which the focus was on target-like production of a particular sound or sounds. This is a typical pattern across such exchanges in the data. It shows that students were actively applying these tips in practice activities and generally found them to be helpful in arriving at target-like production of a phoneme they found difficult to produce.

What is also typical of exchanges like these, in which students offer direct feedback on each other's performance, is that they nearly always came up in less disguised practice drills in which the focus was squarely on pronunciation accuracy. These drills are generally more closed and more tightly controlled than the drills that Jenkins (2000) and Walker (2010) recommend for work on accommodation in linguistically diverse learning groups. And yet they elicited a type of accommodative behavior which Walker (2010) seems to encourage in the recording task he proposes for work on accommodation in linguistically homogenous groups. In keeping with Jenkins' (2000) emphasis on the importance of learner-learner interaction to promote the development of phonological accommodation (cf. Jenkins 2000: 188), Walker (2010) proposes that students who have received instruction in the production of a limited set of target sounds work in small groups as they record their texts so that "they can listen to each other and offer feedback on the correctness of each other's pronunciation of the target items. Using this feedback, speakers can make deliberate adjustments to their pronunciation and so gain practice in phonological accommodation" (Walker 2010: 94). This suggests that Walker expects peer feedback in his recording activity to be quite direct, but he views this as the only way to provide learners with some measure of feedback which will successfully push them toward more target-like pronunciation. As I have attempted to demonstrate, however, it appears to be possible to encourage peer feedback that leads to successful accommodation toward the target without inviting it so directly. A carefully designed task may also lead to negotiation of

a more target-like pronunciation simply because the task parameters focus the learners' attention squarely on the production of target sounds.

7.1.2.2 Accommodation as an adjustment in response to a signal of non- or misunderstanding

In the previous section, accommodative behavior in the excerpts presented took the form of negotiation of pronunciation or direct peer feedback due to design features of the tasks involved. All of these excerpts featured relatively overt discussion of pronunciation features, with the group coming to a consensus on a 'correct' pronunciation. However, another type of accommodative behavior was also observed in the data: adjustments toward target-like pronunciation where a speaker encountered a signal of non- or misunderstanding from another student. Unlike the examples in the preceding section, there was usually no negotiation between speakers as to the 'correct' pronunciation of an item, simply a phonological adjustment in response to the perception that pronunciation had likely caused the problem of understanding. Where these adjustments led to successful restoration of mutual intelligibility, the conversation generally continued without further comment on pronunciation.

In the following excerpt, S15 and S18 are working on a minimal pair task involving the phonemes /v/ and /w/ in which one of them must complete a sentence with one half of a minimal pair and the other must choose the correct response based on the word she has understood the speaker to choose:

Excerpt 18:

T3: 744-751 (00:29:16-00:29:33)

- 744 S18: <read> i ordered the VEAL </read>
745 S15: <L1ger> sag's nochmal {say it again} @ </L1ger>
746 S18: <read> i ordered the VEAL </read> (3) VEAL ve- veal? (2)
747 um
748 S15: eh: (.) <read> it was good wasn't it </read>
749 S15, S18: @@@@
750 S18: yeah
751 S15: yeah? okay

In her initial pronunciation of the word *veal*, S18 produces a sound that is somewhere between /v/ and /w/ (line 744). Her partner, S15, then asks her to repeat what she has said (line 745). In her repetition, S18 produces a much more target-like /v/. However, this is met with three seconds of silence from S15. S18 then repeats the word *veal*, again producing a target-like /v/. Her partner's unresponsiveness seems to undermine her confidence in her own pronunciation, and she then repeats *ve- veal?*, this time in questioning intonation, which is again met with two seconds of silence from S15 (line 746). Finally, after another brief *um* from S18 signaling her insecurity (line 747), S15 selects the correct response (line 748). This is greeted with laughter

from both students (line 749) and confirmation from S18 that this was the intended response (line 750).

Though S15's long silence before she offered a response seemed to cause S18 to question whether her adjusted pronunciation of *veal* in line 746 was in fact correct, this silence was likely due to S15's insecurity with the meaning of the word *veal* rather than continuing problems of phonological intelligibility. S18's original pronunciation, in which the initial sound in *veal* came out somewhere between /v/ and /w/, did not allow S15 to determine whether S18 meant to say *veal* or the other half of the minimal pair, *wheel*. The repetition, in which S18 produced *veal* with a distinct initial /v/, allowed S15 to rule out *wheel* as her partner's intended choice, but since she was uncertain about the meaning of the word *veal*, she required some time to carefully consider the possible responses, hence the long pauses in the recording in which she did not give any further signs that she had not understood her partner's pronunciation. She ultimately delivered the response her partner was looking for and the conversation continued without further comment on S18's pronunciation. Directly after this exchange, however, S15 and S18 admitted that they were unsure what *veal* was and negotiated the meaning together (T3: 752-758).

In this task, non-target pronunciation was particularly challenging for mutual intelligibility because the task was built around minimal pairs. Substitution of one phoneme for another, either /v/ for /w/ or vice versa, would have resulted in an entirely different word in English, one that could not be ruled out by context because of the nature of the task. Therefore, even within a pair such as S15 and S18 in which both students shared the same L1, the students had to take particular care to adjust their pronunciation toward the target or risk misunderstanding. The task design around minimal pairs therefore helped to create opportunities to practice adjusting pronunciation toward the target despite the linguistically homogenous make-up of the learning group.

Two more examples of this same accommodative behavior arose in another task built around minimal pairs, this one from the lesson segment on 'voicing final voiced consonants' in course session 5. Both came from the same task, a communicative game played at the end of the lesson segment. In this game, called *Pronunciation round-up*, each student was given a small slip of paper with a sentence written on it. The students were asked to memorize their sentences, then walk around the room repeating their sentences to each other. Wherever they came across another student who had the same sentence as they did, they were instructed to stay with that student. For each round of the game, the sentences distributed to the students were identical except for one word, which was one half of a minimal pair. Therefore, for each round of the game, the students ultimately formed two groups. The following excerpt comes

from round 3 of the game, in which the students were holding slips of paper which either read *Watch my back* or *Watch my bag*, and were trying to establish which group they belonged to:

Excerpt 19:

T5: 822-824 (00:35:44-00:35:48)

822 Sm: wait wait wait bag?
823 S1: ba:g:
824 Sm: ba:g:

In this excerpt, Sm⁵³ is trying to establish which group he should attach himself to, but he is uncertain whether he has heard someone in the group he is currently speaking to say *back* or *bag*. He therefore asks for confirmation, saying *wait wait wait bag?* with questioning intonation (line 822). S1 then says *ba:g:*, clearly overemphasizing two aspects of target pronunciation: the voicing of the final phoneme /g/ and the length of the vowel preceding it (line 823). Sm repeats this pronunciation in an intonation that suggests that this has cleared up the misunderstanding (line 824), though it remains unclear on the recording whether this is the group he was searching for or whether he ultimately decided he belonged to the other group.

The next excerpt takes place during the same round of the game, about 45 seconds later. By now, two discernable groups have formed, though a few students, including S12, are still trying to decide which group they belong to:

Excerpt 20:

T5: 848-850 (00:36:33-00:36:40)

848 S12: is it (.) back here (.) back
849 S16: ba:g (.) and back
850 S12: back x back okay

Here, S12 still seems unsure which group is which. He applies to a student in the nearest group for help, asking whether they are the group that has the word *back* on their paper slips (line 848). S16 appears to point to each group in turn⁵⁴, indicating which one is comprised of students who have the sentence containing *bag* on their paper slip and which one is comprised of students who have the sentence containing *back* (line 849). He takes care to emphasize the differences in pronunciation according to the target, lengthening the vowel in *bag* noticeably.

⁵³ Because the whole class was playing this game at the same time and were all talking at once to different people in constantly shifting constellations, discourse on the recording tended to be fragmented and it was sometimes difficult to establish exactly who was speaking. Here, it proved impossible to identify the first speaker any more accurately than to establish that he was male, that he spoke German has his L1 and that he took both the first and third turns in this exchange.

⁵⁴ Because the pilot course was audio- rather than video-recorded, it is impossible to be certain that S16 used gestures here to clarify his meaning, even though it appears quite likely.

This seems to help S12, who signals that he has understood where the group whose sentences contain the word *back* is by repeating *back x back okay* (line 850).

Again, the design of this task around minimal pairs creates a heightened need for target-like pronunciation lest mutual intelligibility be threatened. Both S1 and S16 use careful, target-like pronunciation to clarify difficulties signaled by their peers. Interestingly, they both make use of a particular tip presented earlier in the lesson segment during instruction on target-like production of voiced versus voiceless final consonant sounds. One activity in this instruction phase drew the students' attention to pre-lenis lengthening, in which the vowel sound preceding a voiced consonant is lengthened slightly in comparison to the vowel sound before an unvoiced consonant. Both S1 and S16 use pre-lenis lengthening, as well as the distinction in voicing between the final sounds in *back* and *bag*, to give extra clarity to their pronunciation, ultimately making themselves more intelligible to their conversational partners and helping these partners resolve signaled difficulties of understanding. This suggests that this task allowed the students to try this tip out for themselves and establish it as effective, thus heightening the chances that they would attempt to adopt its use, if not in all situations, then in those where they might feel the need to adjust their pronunciation further toward the target to promote mutual intelligibility.

Though communicative tasks built around minimal pairs seem to have created a particularly suitable environment for adjusting pronunciation toward the target in response to signaled difficulties with understanding in the pilot course, this behavior did come up in other types of tasks as well. For example, it came up in course session 6 during the birthday information exchange game in the small group of students who were working on the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/:

Excerpt 21:

T6: 978-985 (00:30:46-00:30:58)

- 978 S2: mine is anthony {æntəni} (1) and i'm born on the ninth of
979 october
980 S3: yup
981 S13: yeah yeah i've got you @@
982 S3: ah (.) what was your name?
983 S13: ah eh
984 S2: anthony {ænəni}
985 S3: i:'ve got you too

In her first attempt, S2 pronounces the <th> in the name *Anthony* as [t] in keeping with her German L1 (line 978). Though both S3 and S13 acknowledge that the birthdate she names is on their lists (lines 980-981), S3 was unable to catch the name S2 gave and asks her to repeat it (line 982). S13 appears to want to supply the name (line 983), but before he can say it, S2 repeats it, this time with target pronunciation (line 984). S3 then reconfirms that he has

Anthony's birthdate on his card (line 985), signaling simultaneously that he has understood the name this time.

Though it is possible that S3 would have understood the name *Anthony* even if S2 had simply repeated her L1 pronunciation a second time, S2 appears to feel the need to adjust her pronunciation toward the target to ensure mutual understanding in her repetition. This move requires additional effort on her part, since target-like pronunciation of <th> is not an automatic habit for her. Whether or not it was strictly necessary, the repetition with adjusted pronunciation achieves the desired effect, and S3 is able to understand the name S2 is trying to communicate. This is therefore an example of successful phonological accommodation toward the target, even if it may be an example in which this accommodation was not strictly necessary to ensure mutual intelligibility.

While Jenkins' data from accommodation tasks done in linguistically diverse learning groups included examples like the ones above in which speakers demonstrated accommodative behavior in the area of pronunciation in response to demonstrated non- or misunderstanding by their communicative partner or partners (cf. Jenkins 2002: 90), it is perhaps somewhat surprising to find this pattern in the data from the pilot course. According to the literature, one would not expect that L1 transfer would result in reduced mutual intelligibility in a linguistically homogenous group like this one. However, careful task design again was apparently able to create the parameters to facilitate even this sort of accommodation in a linguistically homogenous group. As has already been mentioned, the use of minimal pairs as the basis for communicative tasks created the necessity even for speakers of the same L1 to converge on target-like pronunciation or risk misunderstanding. Even in tasks which did not feature minimal pairs, drawing attention to target sounds seemed to be sufficient to encourage students to use more target-like pronunciation as a tool for resolving problems of understanding where they arose.

7.1.2.3 *Summary and discussion of findings*

The excerpts presented in 7.1.2.1 and 7.1.2.2 show that successful convergence on target-like pronunciation did take place in the pilot course. In fact, there is evidence that it took place in each of the course sessions 3 through 6⁵⁵, in which pronunciation work was devoted to work

⁵⁵ That no examples arise in course session 7 is probably due to the fact that the topic of that session, nuclear stress placement, was comparatively easy for the students in the pilot course (cf. 6.2.1). They

on specific segmental pronunciation features. It arose both in tasks I designed myself and in tasks taken from Maurer Smolder (2012). It occurred in paired and small group interactions, as well as communicative activities involving the entire class. The common thread between the tasks in which it took place seems to be careful task design around a limited set of pronunciation features and adequate preparation in the form of instruction and practice in how to produce those particular features.

It would appear, then, that it is possible to use communicative tasks to practice productive phonological accommodation skills in linguistically homogenous classes. This opens up new possibilities for ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching with linguistically homogenous groups. However, the situation remains more complicated than the teaching of productive phonological accommodation skills in linguistically diverse classes. At the end of the day, opportunities to converge on the target will not arise naturally in communicative activities done with linguistically homogenous groups, and communicative tasks that are not carefully designed still carry the danger that learners will converge on their L1 pronunciation instead of on the target. Therefore, teachers will have to create an environment that leads to adjustments toward the target through careful task design. Activities will generally require tighter parameters than in linguistically diverse classes, and these tasks will therefore always remain somewhat inauthentic and forced. Learners will require more input to keep them focused on relevant features of pronunciation, as well as to help them develop a sense of the importance of target-like pronunciation for successful communication.

In linguistically homogenous classes, focused instruction on the target-like production of selected features is a vital prerequisite for tasks aimed at teaching productive phonological accommodation for two reasons. First, it focuses learners' attention on that set of features, increasing the likelihood that they will adjust toward target pronunciation of these features in less controlled communicative tasks, despite the fact that non-standard pronunciation may not naturally cause problems for mutual intelligibility. This is apparent in examples such as Excerpt 13 in which the students likely adjusted and negotiated the pronunciation of English names involving the letter combination <th> toward the target pronunciation /θ/ or /ð/ because they were aware that these sounds were the focus of the lesson segment. Second, such preparation equips learners to successfully adjust toward the target by ensuring that target pronunciation is within their ability to produce, even if it still requires conscious effort. In most, if not all, of the excerpts presented in the previous sections, students seemed to be referencing the tips for

were already able to produce target-like nuclear stress placement automatically and therefore did not need to engage in accommodative behavior.

production they had learned and practiced earlier in the respective pronunciation lesson segment, both as they offered feedback to other students and as they adjusted their own pronunciation. It appears to be these tips that enabled them to adjust their pronunciation toward the target in more communicative tasks.

In all the tasks considered in 7.1.2, awareness-raising and instruction in the target pronunciation of selected features occurred earlier in the same lesson segment as the tasks eliciting productive phonological accommodation. It would be interesting to explore whether learners in linguistically homogenous groups are capable of converging on target-like pronunciation in tasks similar to those described above if these tasks do not occur directly after instruction and controlled practice, but rather in the next course session or even later. It seems likely that proximity between instruction and controlled practice of particular features and tasks focused on productive accommodation involving those features will be more important in linguistically homogenous than in linguistically diverse groups, in keeping with the higher level of external input learners in linguistically homogenous groups require to ensure convergence on the target rather than on L1 pronunciation.

Additionally, a certain level of motivation on the part of the learners to improve their pronunciation is probably necessary for tasks such as these to succeed in eliciting convergence on the target, since this generally involves extra effort. This motivation most likely derives, as Jenkins (2000) suggests, from an awareness of the importance of target-like pronunciation for successful international communication between speakers of different L1s (Jenkins 2000: 192). Since learners in a linguistically homogenous group will not be able to experience this for themselves in the classroom, teachers will have to provide other sources of input to help them appreciate the role of pronunciation in successful lingua franca communication. In the pilot course, I spoke openly with the students about the importance of pronunciation for mutual intelligibility in lingua franca situations, explaining to them that this was the reason why we would be spending a significant portion of our course time on pronunciation (cf. T1: 1146-1152, T3: 55-66). This, plus their own experiences with lingua franca communication outside the classroom, as evidenced by student utterances in their two-minute introductions (cf. 3.1) and the final exam (cf. 3.3) (cf. T2: 235-239 (S6), T2: 376-378 (S5), T2: 414-417 (S18), T2: 443-447 (S14), T2: 485-487 (S15), TFE S1+S5: 318-358 (S1), TFE S11+S17: 239-250 (S17)), seems to have been enough to produce the motivation the students needed to attempt to make changes to their pronunciation habits and to expend the necessary effort to produce target-like pronunciation where they had not yet achieved automatic target-like production of a particular feature. However, in other groups, e.g. those in which the learners have had less experience with lingua franca communication outside the classroom, additional input will probably be necessary.

Finally, I would like to offer one comment in regard to the ideal size of groups for communicative tasks aimed at practicing productive phonological accommodation skills. Jenkins (2000) preferred paired interactions in accommodation tasks. In her linguistically diverse courses, she noticed that where three or more learners were working together, they did not even seem to attempt to engage in phonological accommodation, most likely because the task of adjusting in response to the needs of multiple speakers was so much more complex than adjusting in response to one speaker (Jenkins 2000: 193). Additionally, she noted that “[i]n a larger group it is, of course, quite possible to abdicate all responsibility and leave others to do the speaking”, something she regularly observed with a small number of learners in her courses (Jenkins 2000: 193). In the pilot course data, there is certainly evidence of successful convergence on target pronunciation in paired interactions (cf. Excerpts 17, 18, 19 and 20). However, there are several excerpts which feature successful convergence on target pronunciation in groups of three, particularly in tasks which encouraged active negotiation of ‘correct’ pronunciation. In these tasks, the task parameters, rather than the L1 backgrounds of the interlocutors, created the need to adjust toward the target. This may help to explain why a third group member did not appear to complicate the conversation in the same way that one did in Jenkins’ tasks in linguistically diverse groups. Occasionally, this third group member even seemed to create a useful tie-breaking effect. Where two students were unsure about an issue of pronunciation, the third person’s opinion added weight to one side, generally helping the whole group to reach an agreement. This phenomenon is particularly evident in Excerpt 10, which was first discussed in 7.1.2.1 above:

Excerpt 10:

T4: 644-657 (00:32:29-00:32:55)

644 S8: jam and aubergine?
 645 S6: aubergine and
 646 S8: what about jam
 647 S6: jam [dʒ] [dʒ] (.) and auBERGINE
 648 S8: so it’s- okay i’m <13> not sure </13>
 649 S6: <13> i don’t </13> think it is
 650 S8: okay do you think it’s a pair
 651 S16: jam and auBER- no
 652 S8: okay
 653 S6: xxxx @ @ @
 654 S16: no sorry
 655 S8: @ @ @ no it’s- that’s okay (1) oh well
 656 S16: i make different sounds
 657 S8: yeah okay me too

Even after a discussion of several turns, S6 and S8 remain uncertain about whether or not *jam* and *aubergine* contain the same target sound and are therefore a pair in the game of Old Maid they are playing (lines 648-649). S8 feels that they might be; S6 tends to believe they are not. S8 then applies directly to their third group member, S16, asking *okay do you think it’s a pair*

(line 650). S16 does not think that the two feature the same sound (line 651), putting him in agreement with S6's tentative conclusion. This ultimately sways S8, who finally concedes that she also makes different sounds in the two words (line 657). S16's opinion has in effect broken the tie, helping the group to arrive at a firm decision about whether the target sounds involved in *jam* and *aubergine* are the same or different. This tie-breaking behavior appears to happen to a lesser extent in Excerpt 9 as well (cf. 7.1.2.1).

Interestingly, in both instances on the recordings from the pilot course in which a third group member offered a tie-breaking opinion, that person weighed in on the side of target-like pronunciation, ultimately leading the group to agree on that pronunciation. Given the size of the data set, this is hardly generalizable. It would be interesting to see whether tie-breaking behavior of this type arises in other linguistically homogenous groups working on similar tasks and, if so, whether it generally supports convergence on the target. If this were the case, it would constitute a reason to prefer groups of three for work on phonological accommodation skills in linguistically homogenous groups, at least in task types that encourage active negotiation of pronunciation.

It is certainly possible that a third group member might elect to keep out of the conversation and leave the talking to the other two members of the group, as Jenkins (2000) observed. However, at least in the tasks analyzed in this section, there is no evidence in the data of this happening. Rather, the students seemed more likely to actively engage a third group member who was currently uninvolved in the conversation, as S6 and S8 engage S16 in Excerpt 10 above. This may have had a lot to do with the personalities involved in this particular learning group. Alternatively, it is possible that the goal-oriented nature of the tasks helped to create a strong group dynamic. Generally, more research would be necessary to establish whether groups of three are in fact an ideal size at least for certain types of task which aim to develop productive phonological accommodation skills in learners in linguistically homogenous classes.

Ultimately, it will be important to establish whether practice of productive phonological accommodation skills in linguistically homogenous classes through tasks such as those described in the sections comprising 7.1 truly results in an increased ability to use such accommodation to promote mutual intelligibility in actual situations in which English is used as a lingua franca. This is, of course, the primary goal of classroom teaching in the area of productive phonological accommodation, and a study in this direction might also provide further impulses for task types and design in this area of pronunciation teaching.

7.2 Teaching receptive phonological accommodation skills in a linguistically homogenous learning group

The first half of Chapter 7 has illustrated that it appears to be possible to design communicative tasks which can elicit productive phonological accommodation towards more target-like pronunciation in linguistically homogenous learning groups, despite the natural tendency in such groups to default toward an L1-influenced pronunciation where mutual intelligibility is at stake. Nevertheless, no matter how carefully constructed, the use of communicative tasks to work on phonological accommodation skills with linguistically homogenous groups fails to address two aspects of receptive phonological accommodation that would naturally arise in linguistically diverse groups. First, learners do not have the opportunity to notice firsthand in the classroom the importance of target-like pronunciation for intelligibility with speakers of other L1s in ELF situations, an important prerequisite for developing the motivation necessary to lastingly modify pronunciation habits. The development of this kind of awareness is what Jenkins was referring to when she stated that teachers of linguistically homogenous classes would need “to spend some time initially on helping students to adjust their perceptions” (Jenkins 2000: 192). Second, learners are not naturally exposed to a range of L2 accents of English. They will therefore require additional input, generally in the form of listening texts, in order to develop their receptive accommodation skills.

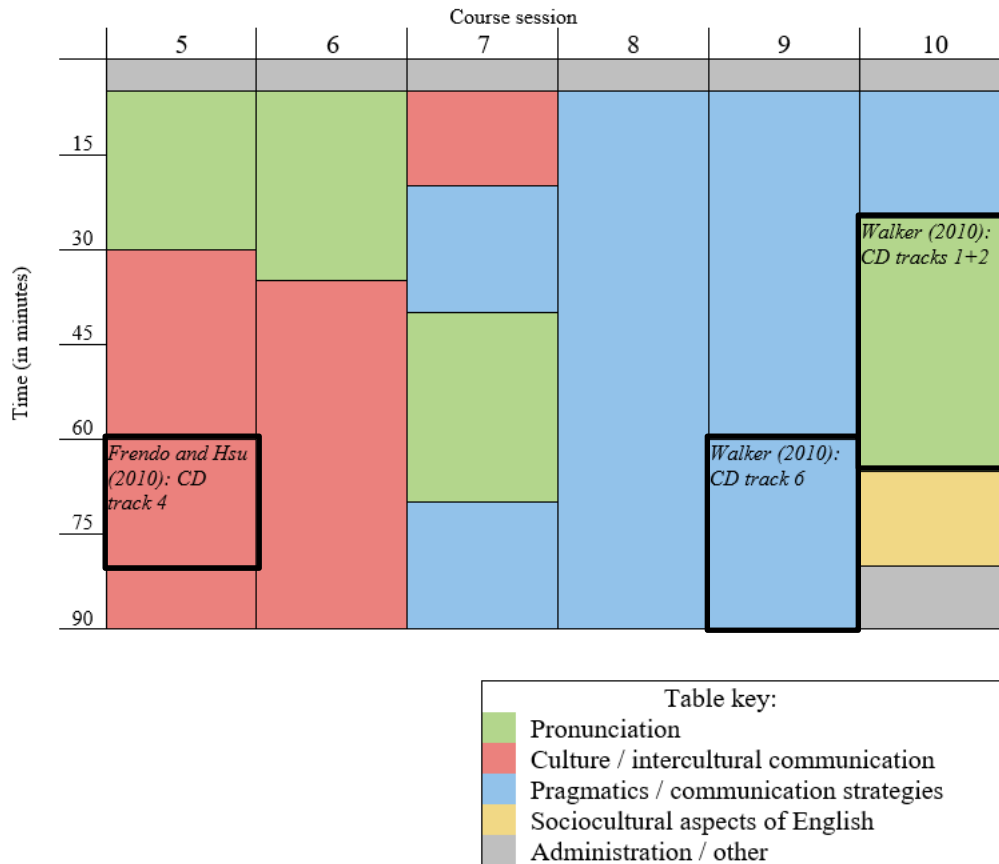
As has been mentioned in 4.3, receptive phonological accommodation involves skills which help listeners “to cope with major pronunciation differences in the speech of their different-L1 partners” (Jenkins 2000: 194). This involves listeners becoming more “flexible in their expectations and interpretations of what they hear” when dealing with L2 accents of English (Walker 2010: 72). Since it may be difficult to anticipate, let alone address through targeted classroom instruction, all of the accents with which learners may come into contact in their future use of English, learners will need to develop skills that will allow them to deal with less familiar accents as they encounter them in communicative situations (cf. Jenkins 2000: 22).

In order to develop the kind of receptive phonological accommodation skills required for ELF talk, learners will need to “be exposed to a wide variety of accents and be encouraged to develop positive attitudes towards a variety of non-native accents” (Low 2015: 145). In the linguistically homogenous classroom, this exposure will most likely need to take place through the use of recorded texts featuring speakers from a variety of different L1 backgrounds (cf. Walker 2010: 94-96, Jenkins 2000: 192). Over time, through work with recordings featuring a range of accents, “learners not only come to accept the reality of accent variation, but also equip themselves to deal with it better” (Walker 2010: 94), since “[t]he more listeners hear different accents, the better they become at dealing with them” (Walker 2010: 95).

In the pilot course, the process of exposing the students to a range of non-native accents of English through recordings began fairly passively, through the use of listening texts as part of lesson segments in the culture and intercultural communication and the pragmatics and communication strategies strands of the course, as well as in lesson segments from the pronunciation strand of the course which focused on specific pronunciation features. The majority of these listening texts were taken from more traditional ELT materials and featured scripted texts. However, in course sessions 5 and 9, more authentic listening texts featuring unscripted recordings of L2 speakers of English were also introduced in specific lesson segments on culture and communication strategies, thus exposing students to more authentic accents and pronunciations and also providing the opportunity to begin to working more explicitly on the students' receptive accommodation skills. These two lesson segments are indicated in Table 9 below, along with a reference to the recordings used. However, since the primary focus of these lesson segments was on topics in the areas of culture and communication strategies respectively, they appear in the colors for those strands of the course in the table. Instruction in the area of receptive phonological accommodation then culminated in a pronunciation lesson segment exploring issues of accent and identity in course session 10, again utilizing a set of two more authentic listening texts featuring a range of L2 accents of English. This lesson is also highlighted in Table 9 below. Because this lesson segment was primarily designated as a pronunciation lesson segment, it appears in green.

The remaining two sections of this chapter provide more detailed discussion of particularly salient aspects of instruction in the area of receptive phonological accommodation through the use of listening texts in the pilot course. 7.2.1 examines in more detail the issues involved in selecting appropriate listening texts for supporting the development of receptive phonological accommodation in the ELF-oriented classroom. It then describes the selection of the recordings used during the pilot course and the types of tasks which were used to support classroom work, particularly for working with the more authentic texts used in course sessions 5, 9 and 10. 7.2.2 presents analysis of classroom work with the listening texts used in the pilot course, in particular the more authentic texts, and proposes some ways in which the approach to these texts could have been improved.

Table 9: Lesson segments including targeted work on receptive accommodation skills



7.2.1 Tasks and materials for developing receptive phonological accommodation skills in a linguistically homogenous learning group

Expanding on Jenkins' (2000) rather insubstantial suggestions for teaching phonological accommodation in linguistically homogenous classes (cf. Jenkins 2000: 192), Walker (2010) proposed addressing both awareness of the importance of pronunciation for intelligibility and the development of receptive accommodative skills through the use of listening texts featuring non-native speakers of English (Walker 2010: 94-96). According to Walker, exposing learners to a variety of L2 accents through recordings can help them learn to "accept the reality of accent variation" while increasing their ability to "deal with it better" as they gain experience making sense of texts involving different accents (Walker 2010: 94). He offered a few examples of teaching sequences which could be used with listening texts featuring L2 English speakers (Walker 2010: 94-96). Some are designed to help learners notice variation in a more general

way, often through the use of a standard text recorded by several speakers, each from a different L1 background. Other sequences focus more narrowly on the pronunciation of specific features. Here, Walker suggested choosing texts which include features that are problematic for speakers from the learning group's L1 background. Texts for this type of lesson sequence may be scripted or unscripted and may feature a monologue by one speaker or a conversation between two or more speakers. These sequences encourage learners to notice how speakers from various L1s pronounce particular features and where problems arise.

The key to lessons focused on receptive phonological accommodation is the selection of appropriate listening texts. It is not enough simply to choose texts involving one or more L2 speakers of English; listening texts should be embedded in contexts where English is plausibly being used as a lingua franca. In assessing whether a text is truly embedded in an ELF context, Chan (2014) noted that it is important to consider “who uses English, who the interlocutors are, and in what situations English is used” (Chan 2014: 164). Of the materials he examined in his study, Chan bemoaned that often “it is difficult to determine whether some of their language-using contexts are truly ELF contexts because of their limited task description and uncertain identity of speakers” (Chan 2014: 164). Even materials that claim to feature L2 speakers may present them overwhelmingly in conversations with native English speakers that appear to take place in EFL rather than ELF settings. Chan (2014) also observed many instances of apparent mismatch between speaker identity and accent in the recordings he evaluated, e.g. where a purported L2 speaker speaks with a standard native speaker accent (Chan 2014: 167). It is therefore important to choose listening materials not only on the basis of the alleged identities of speakers involved in a particular recording, but also on the basis of the context in which the discourse takes place and the actual accents and language used by the speakers in the recorded text.

Here again, the paucity of appropriate existing materials becomes a primary challenge for lesson planning. Even as Jenkins acknowledged that recordings of L2 speakers of English in lingua franca interactions will necessarily replace firsthand experience of such interactions in the linguistically homogenous classroom, she lamented the fact that “as yet, there are, in any case, few recordings of [such interactions] available” (Jenkins 2000: 190). In 2012, she did not feel that the situation had changed significantly, writing in her article ‘English as a Lingua Franca from the classroom to the classroom’, that ELF-oriented listening materials were still “thin on the ground to date” (Jenkins 2012: 493). Traditional EFL-focused materials largely include listening texts that exclusively feature native speakers of English. Many limit themselves to one standard accent of English, either British or American, though in recent years some have begun to feature a range of native speaker accents. As of 2013, when I was planning the pilot course, some ELT materials were also slowly beginning to claim an ELF orientation,

as research into English used as a lingua franca gained foothold in the applied linguistic community. However, this orientation has often remained partial at best.

Several of the coursebook series examined during my general search for appropriate course materials claimed to include listening texts featuring L2 speakers of English. However, on closer inspection, these texts were often not particularly appropriate for ELF-oriented teaching. A survey review of coursebooks for adult learners by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013), who included as one of their categories the extent to which the six coursebooks they evaluated help learners to use ELF, sums up the situation quite succinctly. They found that where L2 speakers were featured at all, they most often appeared with native speakers in EFL contexts rather than ELF ones. Additionally, L2 speakers tended to use the same standard, middle-class, British English as the native speakers featured on the recordings, with the exception that they spoke with an (often subtle and stereotypical) L2 accent. Only two of the six coursebooks reviewed received more than the bottom score in this category (Tomlinson and Masuhara 2013: 244).

I found that listening texts from ELT pronunciation materials tended to exhibit many of the same flaws as those from coursebooks. Even in Maurer Smolder's (2012) *Be Understood!*, in which the author acknowledged in virtually unprecedented fashion both the importance of exposure to a variety of L2 accents and the legitimacy of proficient L2 speakers as pronunciation models for L2 learners (Maurer Smolder 2012: 10), the majority of speakers featured in the listening texts are native speakers, though they represent a variety of native speaker accents. Where L2 speakers are featured, they are often involved in conversation with native speakers in what would appear to be EFL contexts; only a handful of texts truly seem to feature non-native speakers communicating in ELF contexts. However, similarly to the texts examined by Chan (2014), context is often difficult to establish definitively due to the lack of contextualizing information given. Further, L2 accents are featured only in the introductory listening texts for each unit, before the pronunciation items constituting the focus of the lesson have been formally introduced. Texts meant specifically to serve as pronunciation models (e.g. where learners are asked to listen and repeat after the recording) and texts in which the focus is on learning to perceive phonetic contrasts all feature a standard Southern British accent.

In addition to considering listening texts from coursebooks and materials focused on pronunciation teaching, I also searched for potential listening texts in ELT materials focused specifically on teaching listening. However, I was unable to find any such materials that seemed appropriate for an ELF-oriented course. Jenkins (2012: 493) mentioned one series, *Real Lives, Real Listening*, which claims to be "carefully designed to include both native and near-fluent non-native English speakers, reflecting the fact that most of the English which is spoken these days is between non-native English speakers" (Thorn 2013: 1). Unfortunately,

this series did not become commercially available in Germany until September 2013, after the pilot course was complete.

On the other hand, the Business ELT coursebooks and materials examined more often included listening texts that were appropriate for ELF-oriented courses. Generally, Business ELT has gone further in accepting and implementing an ELF approach to pedagogy (cf. Seidlhofer 2011: 206-207), and this is often reflected in the more recent Business English materials to enter the market. However, most of the listening texts evaluated were thematically inappropriate for the pilot course. Most were too narrowly focused on business topics to be useful in a more general course. This is hardly surprising considering the importance of “domain specific knowledge” in the field of Business English (Jenkins et al. 2011: 298).

To counteract the lack of appropriate ELT listening materials currently available for the ELF-oriented classroom, Walker (2010) suggested that teachers use internet resources. He provided information about some websites devoted to audio collections of a wide range of L2 accented English (Walker 2010: 76). Some feature speakers of different L1s reading a standard text, while others include unscripted monologues and conversations featuring L2 speakers of English. He also suggested that teachers use other kinds of resources such as “[p]odcasts, YouTube, online news programmes, and similar Internet features”, noting that these sources “all provide relatively easy access to interviews with international figures from the world of sport, entertainment, business, and politics” (Walker 2010: 94).

Despite this claim, I found Walker’s suggestion to use the internet as a resource for appropriate listening texts to be quite daunting. Mostly, this was an issue of time, both course time and planning time. Generally, I needed to find listening texts that would advance course goals not only in pronunciation, but also in developing the students’ intercultural and pragmatic competences. Searching the internet for listening texts to further these aims proved to be quite time-consuming, since I had to sift through so much material that was inappropriate. I did not feel that anything I came across in the time I spent searching was worth building into the pilot course. If I had had more course time to work with, I might have considered selecting video clips or audio recordings featuring English used in lingua franca contexts, and then building lessons around the themes featured in them. However, the tight timeframe of the course did not allow this.

Walker (2010) also provided a second resource for the teacher in search of appropriate listening texts for ELF-oriented teaching. His book includes a set of recordings on CD, and he intended these to be a source of classroom listening material (Walker 2010: 94). These recordings feature twenty L2 speakers from fifteen different L1 backgrounds, all but two of which come from Expanding Circle countries. The first part of the CD features “unscripted

conversations about a range of topics that fall roughly into one of three topic areas: 1 English, ELF, and language learning (Tracks 1-8), 2 Cultures – differences and misconceptions (Tracks 9-15), 3 Work and studies (Tracks 16-20)” (Walker 2010: xv). The last ten recordings feature L2 speakers of ten different L1s each reading a standard text, allowing “students to compare the way that speakers from different L1s deal with different aspects of the pronunciation of ELF” (Walker 2010: xvi).

Ultimately, listening texts for the pilot course were selected from a variety of sources, some more exemplary as appropriate texts for an ELF-oriented course than others. The use of these materials was structured as a progression, so that early on in the course, as the students were still working on specific features of pronunciation, texts were used from more traditional ELT resources such as coursebooks and pronunciation teaching materials. These texts were primarily chosen for their contributions to topics we were discussing in the course in the areas of pragmatics, culture and intercultural communication and pronunciation. An attempt was always made to choose texts featuring L2 speakers from different L1 backgrounds, thus giving the students some exposure to a variety of L2 accents of English. This exposure at first remained rather passive. We did not discuss features of the accents involved per se, though we often discussed where each speaker was from. Contextually, many of these texts were less than ideal, as they featured situations that leaned more towards EFL than ELF. All of them were also rather scripted. As the course progressed, increasingly unscripted and authentic texts that took place in solidly ELF contexts were included, which we examined more closely in terms of pronunciation, language use, communication strategies and content. Whereas the focus in the pronunciation segments of earlier sessions had been on the pronunciation of discrete phonological features, the focus in the final sessions was squarely on raising student awareness of accent variation and issues surrounding the connections between accent and identity, as well as the development of competence in receptive phonological accommodation, goals which were better served by the more authentic and unscripted texts.

In all, twenty recorded listening texts were used in the pilot course. Of these twenty, half came from Maurer Smolder’s (2012) *Be Understood!* and were used in the context of pronunciation work on specific pronunciation features. Seven of these texts were from ‘Focus on form’ lesson segments, which featured short drills, generally in the form of listen-and-repeat exercises or drills meant to develop learners’ ability to discriminate receptively between contrasting phonemes. These texts all featured the same native English speaker speaking with a standard Southern British accent, and were therefore not ideal for an ELF-oriented course. However, lacking a better source to use as a classroom model, I felt that having a native speaker model would be better for the students than having no model at all. This decision is supported by Walker (2010), who states in the introduction to his book that “with certain precautions,

there is nothing wrong with teachers continuing to use these standard accents in class until commercial courses are available that employ ELF accents” (Walker 2010: xv).

The other three texts from *Be Understood!* came from the *Listen* sections of three of the units used in specific course sessions. Here, pronunciation features were presented in communicative context, and given Maurer Smolder’s stance towards the importance of exposing learners to a range of accents, including those of L2 English speakers, one might expect that these texts would feature English used in lingua franca contexts. However, only one of the texts, from Unit 8 on consonant clusters, really features L2 speakers of English in an ELF situation. The other two only involve native speakers, albeit native speakers from different varieties of English. In the case of Unit 2, which focuses on the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/, this is perhaps not so surprising, as the Standard English pronunciation of these phonemes is not considered to be vital for intelligibility in ELF talk. However, it was disappointing that the listening text from the ‘Listen’ section of Unit 6, which presented the phonemes /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/ and /ʒ/, also exclusively featured native speakers. After that lesson, I concluded this text probably should have been omitted, since it did not advance the receptive phonological accommodation aims of the course, and particularly since this lesson proved to be more time consuming than anticipated. This experience later led me to leave out the ‘Listen’ section of Unit 12 on voicing final voiced consonants.

A further six texts were selected from the coursebook *English Unlimited B2* (Tilbury et al. 2011). Two of these texts were also used for a pronunciation lesson segment, this one on nuclear stress placement in course session 7, and they were very similar in length and character to the ‘Focus on form’ texts from *Be Understood!*. However, one of them featured an L2 speaker of English in addition to a native speaker, albeit in a context which likely involved ESL rather than ELF. The other four texts were used in the context of lesson segments in which the focus was on developing intercultural competence or the use of communication strategies. Generally, these texts feature non-native as well as native English speakers. However, beyond slight accents, the L2 speakers use the same “educated, English, middle-class” language as their native speaker counterparts⁵⁶ (Tomlinson and Masuhara 2013: 244), a general failing in coursebook series which has already been noted above. The contexts, though often dubious due to lack of detailed description (cf. Chan 2014: 164), generally seem to lean toward EFL settings. For example, one text, which was used in course session 9 in a teaching sequence on listener strategies to support the negotiation of meaning in conversation (cf. also 20.4), features

⁵⁶ This is a criticism which Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) also levy at written texts attributed to non-native speaker characters in the *English Unlimited* series.

two speakers, a Russian man and an American woman. They are discussing candy making. The conversation casts the American speaker in the role of the expert, which also seems to put her at the conversational advantage. Though little context is provided in the coursebook, this makes the situation appear to belong to an EFL rather than a typical ELF setting. All the texts from this coursebook seem to be highly scripted, even though the authors have sometimes attempted to add features of natural speech such as backchannels, repetitions and false starts⁵⁷.

A text from a Business English coursebook, *Working in Asia* (Frendo and Hsu 2010: CD track 4), was included in a lesson segment on cultural norms in session 5 of the course (cf. also Chapter 11). This text features four speakers of four different Asian L1s who each present a brief description of a cultural norm in their home country (e.g. what constitutes a family, how much paid leave workers have each year). As has already been mentioned above, Business ELT materials have generally adopted an ELF perspective more readily than general ELT materials, and this text provides some highly authentic accents, two of which are quite challenging to understand. It is probably the most authentic text in terms of accent after the three texts from Walker (2010), which will be discussed below. It was unfortunate that it was not possible to use more texts from this source and others like it, due to the fact that most were thematically too narrowly business-focused for the pilot course.

Finally, toward the end of the course, three texts from Walker (2010) were used. Audio track 6, entitled “Problems with listening”, was used in course session 9 during a lesson segment on communication strategies for active listening as a way to talk with the students about supportive listener behavior in natural speech (cf. also 20.4). Because Walker’s recordings are unscripted, they include natural listener behavior such as backchanneling and agreement tokens that are difficult to replicate authentically in a scripted text. This text gave us the chance to look at these features in a successful ELF interaction, making it a good model for the students. Additionally, the text is about difficulties with listening in L2, so that we could also talk about the content of the text as part of the lesson segment.

I fully expected that ‘Problems with listening’ would prove quite challenging to the students, as it is a considerable departure from the kinds of scripted listening texts normally used in language courses. I therefore planned to begin this lesson segment by comparing this

⁵⁷ Leung and Lewkowicz (2018) are generally skeptical of materials writers’ attempts to reflect authentic features of spoken intercultural interactions in language learning materials: “Even when speakers of other cultures are introduced the language samples fail to capture the fluidity of real-time language use: the samples of language presented or indeed elicited from the learners appear sterile and far divorced from the type of interaction that occurs in spontaneous speech” (Leung and Lewkowicz 2018: 65).

text to another, more scripted text we had listened to in the same session. The aim was to allow the students to comment on aspects of the text they found different or challenging as they adjusted to listening to this new style of text, even before they began to listen for content. After we had listened to the text, which lasts for one minute and 54 seconds, we would then move on to talk about its content before honing in on the strategies that the listener in particular uses to support the negotiation of understanding. This is in accordance with a tenet of working with authentic texts that tasks should address content before looking more closely at form (Gilmore 2007: 111, Walker 2010: 95). Once learners have achieved a global understanding of the text, they will be better able to focus on linguistic or discourse features. When we began to consider specific listener strategies, I planned to provide a copy of the transcription of the text so that we could examine the discourse visually as well as aurally. Since some features of listener behavior, e.g. backchanneling, are things that interactants do not necessarily consciously notice in conversation, seeing them in written form would help to raise students' awareness of them as they listened. Finally, we would examine a point in the text in which a misunderstanding occurs and must be resolved by the two speakers. Here, we would focus our attention on how the speakers achieve this resolution.

In the final course session, session 10, I planned to discuss accent variation directly, using audio tracks 1 and 2, entitled 'Reactions to the concept of ELF' and 'ELF and identity' respectively, from Walker (2010). Like track 6, these texts also feature unscripted dialogues between pairs of L2 speakers in ELF contexts. In keeping with Walker's recommendations, each listening text would be introduced by posing a question designed to help the students focus on the global theme of the text. Then we would discuss where the speakers might be from and comment on aspects of their pronunciation that the students found interesting or challenging. In discussing aspects of the particular accents on the recordings, the students would receive some practice in receptive phonological accommodation. Finally, we would use a series of quotations from each text to discuss details of the content with the students. Both texts featured conversations about the connection between accent and identity when using English as a lingua franca, allowing us not only to consider and compare the accents on the recordings, but also to discuss the speakers' attitudes toward having an accent in L2 and to compare them to our own. I felt these attitudes could be highly relevant to the students because the speakers are non-native English speakers with experience using English in lingua franca contexts and because their remarks represent their own, unscripted thoughts on the subject. I planned to round off the lesson segment after listening to both texts by asking the students to discuss in groups whether they felt that it was necessary to sound as much like a native speaker as possible in order to be considered proficient in English.

This section has discussed issues surrounding the selection of appropriate listening texts for the teaching of receptive phonological accommodation in linguistically homogenous classes and then described the twenty listening texts selected for use in the pilot course in terms of their potential contributions to this area of the syllabus and the challenges they were expected to pose. The next section will discuss teaching and learning in the area of receptive accommodation over the entirety of the course and suggest some areas which could have been improved. It will also consider student response to the more authentic ELF texts used in course sessions 5, 9 and 10.

7.2.2 Analysis of classroom work on receptive phonological accommodation skills

Overall, the use of recordings featuring more authentic L2 accents successfully contributed toward raising the students' awareness of accent diversity and the importance of pronunciation in successful ELF communication, considering the relatively limited time available in the pilot course. The first text featuring more authentic L2 accents was introduced in course session 5, in which the focus of the lesson segment was on culture and intercultural communication. This recording came from Frendo and Hsu (2010) and featured four speakers of different Asian L1s. Similarly, an unscripted text from Walker (2010) was used in course session 9 in a lesson segment focused on communication strategies. In both these lesson segments, the focus of the listening activities was on content and the contributions that this content could make to discussion in the areas of culture and intercultural communication and pragmatics and communication strategies respectively, rather than on pronunciation per se. However, the students had to deal with the more authentic accents in order to access that content. This allowed us to begin preparing the students to talk more directly about issues surrounding accents in ELF communication in course session 10.

I expected that these texts would prove to be challenging for the students. In particular, the Walker (2010) text, 'Problems with listening', which features not only more authentic accents, but also more authentic language use and discourse features, constituted a considerable departure from the kinds of texts the students were accustomed to working with in language courses. This prompted my decision to ease the students into the listening process for this text slowly by asking them simply to listen to the text and comment on the differences they initially noticed between it and a more scripted text from a textbook series we had listened to in the same course session. The students immediately agreed that the text from Walker (2010) was more difficult to understand than the scripted text from the textbook series (T9: 1499-1505). They were also able to identify several reasons why this was the case, including the rapid rate of speech of the two speakers (T9: 1510-1512), the more pronounced accents (T9: 1514-1519),

and the overlaps in the speakers' turns (T9: 1555-1559). They also commented on the comparatively poor quality of the recording (T9: 1545). This particular track was considerably inferior in quality compared with the other tracks on the CD, which further complicated successful listening to some extent.

As we began to talk about the content of "Problems with listening", I had the impression that the students were quieter than usual, though the transcript shows that about half the class was actively involved in answering questions I posed during the listening tasks. The class at large seemed more uncertain about the answers to the questions they were asked to listen for. I offered more help and we relied more heavily on answers given by the few students who had understood a particular point, rather than listening to the text over and over until more of the class had grasped that point. This was a decision that arose largely out of the time constraints of the course. In all, we listened to the text four times – once to give the students an impression of the style of the text, twice while we worked through a series of questions about the content together, and once at the end of the lesson segment to allow the students to listen again for specific aspects of listener behavior we had identified as part of our work on communication strategies for preempting communicative problems and securing mutual understanding (cf. 20.4). In retrospect, the students probably would have learned more, in the areas of both content and receptive phonological accommodation, if they had had a few more chances to listen to at least some relevant segments of the recording during the lesson phase in which we were answering content-related questions.

Although the students were perhaps a bit quieter than usual during the whole-class discussion of 'Problems with listening' in course session 9, this did not stop them from appearing to try to understand the text, from expressing interest in hearing it again (despite the fact that doing so actually caused the course session to go slightly over time) or from showing interest in knowing more about transcription protocols when we were working with the written transcript as well as the recording. I feel that acknowledging openly that this text was different from typical ELT texts ultimately helped the students to be more open to such listening tasks, both during course session 9 itself and later in course session 10, despite the fact that they also found them more challenging.

It is interesting to note that this more authentic listening text seemed to make a lasting impression on at least some of the students. Independently of one another, two students specifically mentioned 'Problems with listening' during their final exams (TFE S4+S7: 374-377, 393-399; TFE S13+S16: 299-337). In each case, they alluded to something they had learned about English used for lingua franca communication from listening to this text. This shows that although the students were somewhat less responsive in class as we were discussing

this text and although I had the impression that they generally found the more authentic texts strange or were unimpressed by the linguistic competence of the speakers, at least some of them did seem to find these texts worthwhile and interesting.

Whereas the development of receptive phonological accommodation skills was a secondary goal in the lesson segments featuring more authentic listening texts in course sessions 5 and 9, the second half of course session 10 was devoted primarily to this topic. During this lesson segment, two further texts from Walker (2010) were used as the basis for discussion of some particular issues around the topic of accents in lingua franca communication. Track 2, “ELF and identity”, was used to discuss issues of accent and identity and to consider whether it is good to be recognized by our L2 accent as coming from a particular country. This text also facilitated discussion of whether it is necessary or even desirable to sound like a native speaker of English when communicating in intercultural situations. Track 1, ‘Reactions to the concept of ELF’, provided the basis for a discussion of whether native speaker accents are the easiest to understand in such communication and for consideration of the importance of prior exposure to a variety of accents for successful lingua franca communication.

The atmosphere in the classroom at the beginning of this lesson segment was similar to that of course session 9. The students still seemed more subdued, and it was difficult at first to get a discussion going. However, after a similar experience in the previous course session, I was ready for this response and had prepared some quotations from the text in written form to facilitate the discussion. This seemed to help the students to engage with the text, and discussion picked up so much that we ran a bit over the time which had been allotted for working with the listening texts and had to cut our final activity short.

For each of the discussion points relating to the listening texts, I had a fairly set agenda in terms of the impressions I hoped the students would take away from this lesson segment. In keeping with widely accepted positions held by researchers in the field of ELF, I hoped to impress upon the students that accent variation is a natural phenomenon (cf. Walker 2010: 9, 75) and that our L2 accent is a part of our identity that we may not want to give up entirely, at least on a subconscious level (cf. Jenkins 2000: 16, 172; Walker 2010: 13; Seidlhofer 2011: 50-51). Further, research has shown that native speaker accents, including standard accents such as RP, are not always the easiest to understand in intercultural situations, so that they may not be the best target accents to strive for as an L2 English learner preparing for ELF communication (cf. Smith 1992: 88; Walker 2010: 16; Jenkins 2000: 94-95). Finally, research has also shown that exposure to and familiarity with a range of accents is an important factor

in developing the ability to understand and cope with different accents (cf. Jenkins 2000: 20, 94, 183, 184, 190; Walker 2010: 94-95).

During the course session itself, I did not believe that the students were making much progress in accepting these insights. Rather, I had the impression that many of them felt that trying to achieve a near-native speaker accent should remain the goal for all language learners. However, the transcript of this session shows that my personal impression of the lesson was not really supported by the discourse recorded during the lesson segment itself. There is really only one exchange in which a student offered an opinion that ran entirely counter to points I was trying to make. During a whole-class discussion about the relationship between accent and identity, one student (S2) made the following comments:

Excerpt 21:

T10: 1474-1480 (01:03:16-01:03:34)

- 1474 S2: and if
1475 i speak perfect english this would be good and not
1476 T: okay
1477 S2: if i can avoid an accent it would be better
1478 T: okay- why why would it why do you think it would be better
1479 S2: because (.) your english is better if you have (.) no accent and
1480 you (.) know a lot of vocabulary

Here, S2 expresses the opinion that it would be preferable to *avoid an accent* (line 1477) and that *your english is better if you have (.) no accent* (line 1479). These comments run directly contrary to the linguistic perspective that there is no such thing as speaking a language without an accent. Even native speakers speak with an accent, a point I had also mentioned earlier in the same course session (T10: 935-937). S2's comment gave me the chance to return to this point and remind the students that everyone has an accent in every language that they speak, but that we consider some accents to be more neutral or more desirable and therefore perceive them as a non-accent (T10: 1481-1497).

Other than this interaction, however, student comments and discussion recorded during the lesson segment generally show students agreeing with ELF views on accent for lingua franca communication. For example, when asked whether students found it harder to understand native speakers or non-native speakers, students generally agreed that pronounced regional native speaker accents were most difficult to understand. Two students, S8 and S3, shared anecdotes from their own experiences (T10: 1778-1794, 1798-1814), which seemed to find resonance with the group. As the discussion continued, S3 and S17 also identified other aspects of native speaker speech such as fast rate of speech (T10: 1808) and the level of vocabulary used (T10: 1818-1823) as creating further difficulties for understanding native speakers with pronounced regional accents. I found these last two comments insightful because they showed

that at least a few of the students were aware that linguistic levels other than accent may also contribute to a speaker's understandability.

Students generally appeared to agree with ELF viewpoints on accent not only during teacher-led whole-class interactions, but also during small group discussions that took place after the listening tasks. When asked to discuss whether it would be better to sound like a native speaker than a non-native speaker, one group (S2, S3, S17) engaged in the following conversation:

Excerpt 22:

T10: 1958-1997 (01:25:59-01:26:48)

1958 S2: i think for vocabulary it's always=
 1959 S3: =better yeah
 1960 S2: better to have more than
 1961 S3: more is better yeah @
 1962 S2: it's always better
 1963 S3: so it's very important xxxx (2)
 1964 S2: yeah i think it's xx
 1965 S3: sound as much as a native speaker
 1966 S17: i think it's not so important
 1967 S2: maybe
 1968 S17: it's important that everybody can understand you
 1969 S3: yeah
 1970 S2: maybe then you have to choose an accent
 1971 S3: yeah
 1972 S2: for a
 1973 native speaker
 1974 S3: yeah
 1975 S2: to have to talk and now exactly this
 1976 accent
 1977 S3: ah it's better to have eh: yeah an german accent than to have
 1978 ah as you see a tennessee accent
 1979 S2: yeah
 1980 S3: or something like this @@
 1981 S17: yes yes (.) i think it's more important to (.) keep your (.)
 1982 accent that small that everybody
 1983 S3: yeah
 1984 S17: can
 1985 S3: yeah
 1986 S17: understand you
 1987 S3: yeah
 1988 S17: than to:
 1989 you know try to learn
 1990 S3: @ @ @ @
 1991 S17: an accent
 1992 S3: yeah
 1993 S17: just to
 1994 sound like
 1995 S3: yeah
 1996 S17: a native speaker
 1997 S3: yeah

Though the group concludes that having a native speaker-like command of vocabulary would be advantageous (lines 1958-1962), they also agree that it is better to have an accent that is

easy to understand than to speak with a native speaker accent that is difficult to understand simply for the sake of sounding like a native speaker (lines 1981-1997), an attitude fully in line with ELF viewpoints. However, as the recording device only captured one group at a time during this group discussion phase, it is possible that this discussion was not entirely typical of the discussions that took place in other groups. If I as the instructor happened to monitor groups that reached conclusions less in line with ELF viewpoints, this may help to explain why I felt uncertain about whether the points I was trying to make in this lesson had really made an impression on the students.

Excerpt 22 came from the final task of the final course session. The initial plan for this task had been to ask students to consider in small groups the question of whether it is necessary to sound as much like a native speaker as possible in order to be considered fully competent in English, then discuss as a whole class the conclusions the small groups had reached. The whole-class discussion would have been most interesting to analyze, since it might have shed light on where students fell in terms of their opinions and level of awareness of the issues surrounding accents at the end of the lesson. Most unfortunately, we ran short on time, so that the students only had time to engage in the small group discussions. I therefore decided to include a prompt on this topic in one of the final exam tasks, in hopes of capturing some student opinions this way. In the second exam task (cf. 3.3), the students engaged in a task called *Keep the conversation flowing*⁵⁸ in which one student, the designated speaker, was required to choose and talk about a topic for two minutes while his or her partner, the designated listener, used active listening strategies to support the speaker and help him or her to continue talking. Essentially, this task was designed to assess whether students could successfully use the communication strategies for both speakers and listeners that had been introduced and practiced during the course. However, I pre-selected a list of topics based on prevalent themes in the course. The third topic on this list was whether the speaker felt it was important to speak like a native speaker of English when using English for international communication.

At the beginning of the exam task, even before the students chose their topic, I informed them that I would not be grading what they chose to say about the topic. There would be no penalty for expressing opinions that did not conform to my own. Rather, I would be assessing their use of communication strategies and their ability to talk about one topic for two minutes. In this way, I hoped to encourage students to give their true opinions about the topics they chose, rather than telling me what they felt I wanted to hear.

⁵⁸ Cf. Chapter 21 for a more in-depth description of this task.

Three of the thirteen students who took the final exam chose to speak about this third topic. In all three cases, the students did not feel that it was important to sound like a native speaker, at least in an ELF context. However, their reasons for rejecting the need to speak like a native speaker varied. S6 stated that *it's more important to have (.) quality (.) in your communication so you're (.) eh voicing your opinion and not so much that you're perfect (.) in speaking english* (TFE S6+S8: 284-287). Though she felt that content was more important than formal accuracy, she still equated the English of native speakers with perfection, an opinion considered problematic in ELF research circles. She then expressed the opinion that *it's more interesting [when] someone (.) doesn't cover up their accent or (.) you can learn more about that person just by: finding out like where they're from i think* (TFE S6+S8: 289-292), following up this remark with *it's a conversation starter* (TFE S6+S8: 294). S6 saw accent as enriching conversation by providing a topic that could help to start a conversation between two relative strangers. S13, on the other hand, connected accent and culture, commenting that *mm it's good when somebody hears that you are not not⁵⁹ from england (.) kay somebody hears okay you're from china (.) then it's also a culture in it (.) and they know the culture and they know how to: respect or talk to you* (TFE S13+S16: 397-401). He saw value in recognizing that a speaker comes from a particular country by their accent because this helps a listener to adjust his or her cultural expectations for the conversation. In essence, he was also describing a type of accommodation, though the focus was on adjusting cultural norms rather than phonological expectations. Additionally, S13 valued a broad knowledge of vocabulary and of communication strategies for conversation more than the ability to use English like a native speaker (TFE S13+S16: 421-423). The final student to choose this question, S4, also valued pragmatic ability above native-like language use (TFE S4+S7: 505-509).

Interestingly, in addition to agreeing on the importance of pragmatic competence over native-like speech, both S4 and S13 commented independently of one another on another point which had not been addressed in the course, that speaking like a native speaker is generally considered to be a major goal in language learning. S13 observed that most non-native speakers believe they should strive to speak like a native speaker (TFE S13+S16: 428-430). He felt that this belief was misplaced, saying *that's in the mind of most people (.) and we must try to (.) mm change this thinking* (TFE S13+S16: 432-433). S4, on the other hand, focused more on the institutionalized expectations of ELT that language learners ought *in the end to speak like a native speaker* (TFE S4+S7: 493). He also seemed quite skeptical of this goal, continuing with

⁵⁹ This appears to be a repetition of the word *not* as S13 attempts to formulate the thought he wishes to communicate, rather than a double negative.

i think eh: language is eh something (.) that is dynamic and ahm (.) ahm (.) changes with the users (.) or the speakers...and...there is no (.) no goal (.) there (.) that in the end you have to speak like a native speaker (TFE S4+S7: 493-495, 497-499). Later, S4 also commented more specifically on the goal of attaining a native-like accent, saying *it's eh: quite difficult for for (.) eh (.) most people to to speak like a native speaker (.) eh (2) they: can't eh get away their their accent and (.) eh (.) get a pronunciation right and (.) it's too hard* (TFE S4+S7: 511-514). These statements generally show a level of awareness of linguistic issues considered foundational to the ELF research paradigm that goes well beyond what I had hoped to instill in the students during the course, and it is probable that the course itself was not wholly responsible for this awareness. Here, it seems likely that these students' experiences with English outside the classroom had led them to these insights, though the course may have helped them formulate their ideas more cogently.

While the third topic on the second exam task most directly asked students to comment on issues related to receptive phonological accommodation which had been discussed in course session 10, several of the other topics also elicited responses from students related to their awareness of accent varieties and the importance of pronunciation for international communication. When talking about the biggest challenges they perceived for communicating internationally in English, both S1 and S17 mentioned pronunciation as well as vocabulary as the two areas causing the most significant difficulties (TFE S1+S5: 280-282, 320-321; TFE S11+S17: 239-246). Another student, S5, acknowledged the importance of what she had learned in the area of pronunciation for her future English use (TFE S1+S5: 400-408). Generally speaking, then, students who commented on issues of accent or pronunciation in the final exam expressed views that were generally in line with ELF viewpoints on these issues.

Considering the very limited time available for work on receptive phonological accommodation, the attitudes expressed by students during course session 10 and the final exam show that they had generally achieved an acceptable level of awareness of issues related to accent and of the importance of pronunciation for international communication by the end of the course. In fact, some had gone well beyond what it was hoped they would achieve. Thus, this area of the course appears to have been successful in promoting the students' awareness of accent diversity and the importance of pronunciation for successful ELF communication. By contrast, this area of the course was less successful in helping students learn to cope with accents better. This was primarily due to the way that the lesson segments featuring more authentic listening texts were structured. These texts were chosen not only because they featured L2 speakers of English in relatively authentic ELF contexts, but also because the content of the recorded discourse supported course aims. The activities planned around these texts tended to focus on this content rather than on the speakers' performances. Beyond helping

the students to identify the L1 background of each speaker, these activities did not draw much attention to particular features of the speakers' pronunciation.

I was surprised at the amount of difficulty the students had in identifying which countries the speakers in these more authentic texts came from by their accents. For example, when listening to 'Reactions to the concept of ELF' in course session 10, the students were quite reluctant to offer any guesses as to where the speakers were from. One student correctly identified the first speaker as coming from Germany (T10: 1690). Her peers generally agreed with her, though they did this only through minimal responses and non-verbal cues (T10: 1691-1697). However, the only student willing to hazard a guess on the nationality of the second speaker, a female speaker from Malaysia, guessed that she was from Brazil, his own home country (T10: 1702). This was typical of most discussions we had about the nationality of speakers on the more authentic recordings. It suggests that the students were generally not familiar with very many L2 accents of English beyond their own. This further underscores the importance of instruction in the area of receptive phonological accommodation for them, since research suggests that familiarity with accents is important for developing an ability to understand them (cf. Jenkins 2000: 20, 94, 183, 184, 190; Walker 2010: 94-95).

There were several points in the course sessions featuring more authentic texts in which we could have spoken more specifically about pronunciation of particular features but did not. In course session 5, the first course session to include a text featuring more authentic accents, the selected text introduced a series of Asian speakers talking about cultural norms in their countries for part of a lesson segment in the area of culture (Frendo and Hsu 2010: CD Track 4). The first speaker described the typical family structure in her country:

Excerpt 23:

T5: 1964-1984 (01:22:13-01:22:51)

| | | |
|------|-------|--|
| 1964 | CDf2: | well in my country a family consists of three people (.) two |
| 1965 | | parents and one child {T pushes pause} |
| 1966 | | |
| 1967 | Sm: | one |
| 1968 | S15: | one <L1ger> was? {what?} <L1ger> |
| 1969 | T: | child |
| 1970 | S15: | ah |
| 1971 | Sxx: | {lots of background conversations erupt} child child child |
| 1972 | S3: | chinese |
| 1973 | Sxx: | china china |
| 1974 | S13: | yeah she even talks like it |
| 1975 | S15: | @ @ @ @ @ @ |
| 1976 | T: | yeah here you already ar- already making assumptions that |
| 1977 | | you know where is this person from? (.) we have some some |
| 1978 | | tips in ah from the pronunciation (.) a:hm but also what do |
| 1979 | | you think [S5] |
| 1980 | S5: | from china |
| 1981 | T: | from china yeah and wh- in china it happens to be the case |

| | |
|------|---|
| 1982 | that you're limited because they have SO: many people in |
| 1983 | china to just one child so for a chinese family two parents and |
| 1984 | one child is totally normal |

In this excerpt, the students are unable to understand the pivotal word *child* in the recorded speaker's description of the typical family structure in her country (line 1965). This word is quite challenging to understand on the recording. The speaker substitutes the dark [ɫ] in *child* for a sound closer to [ʊ]. This sound substitution for dark [ɫ] by itself is generally considered to be unproblematic for intelligibility in ELF communication (Jenkins 2000: 139; Walker 2010: 106). However, the speaker also devoices the final [d] in *child* to [t], a substitution considered much more problematic. Very likely, it is the combination of the two non-standard pronunciations in close proximity that made *child* so difficult for the students to understand. Two students hesitantly signal that they have not understood and appeal for assistance (lines 1967-1968). I then repeat the word for them (line 1969), causing a veritable eruption of smaller conversations between the students (lines 1970-1975). Though both S13 and I mention the speaker's pronunciation as one of the clues that might help us establish her as an L1 speaker of Chinese (lines 1974, 1977-1978), I do not elaborate further on the way she has pronounced *child*, even though we had just talked about the issue of devoicing final voiced consonants earlier in the same course session. This would have been an opportunity to show the students how devoicing consonants at the ends of words can contribute to problems of intelligibility, exacerbated in this instance by an additional sound substitution.

In course session 9, the first of the unscripted texts from Walker (2010), 'Problems with listening', was used as part of a lesson segment in the area of pragmatics and communication strategies focusing on listener strategies for supporting conversation. After we had listened to the recording twice and discussed where the speakers were from, I was preparing to move on to talk about the strategies the listener had used to support the speaker in the text when S7 raised his hand and asked a very telling question:

Excerpt 24:

T9: 1648-1660 (01:04:30-01:04:48)

| | | |
|------|------|---|
| 1648 | S7: | i just want i'm just curious |
| 1649 | T: | yeah |
| 1650 | S7: | to know does the |
| 1651 | T: | yeah |
| 1652 | S7: | girl from taiwan has a tooth (.) <L1ger> zahnspace oder so |
| 1653 | | was {braces or something like that} </L1ger> |
| 1654 | S15: | @ @ |
| 1655 | S7: | or <23> xxxxxxxxxx </23> |
| 1656 | T: | <23> i'm not sure i- it would be a good question i don't have |
| 1657 | | a note on that </23> i:: think that a:hm (.) i'm- i'm sure it's |
| 1658 | | possible but i don't know @@ |
| 1659 | S7: | <soft> okay </soft> |
| 1660 | T: | ahm (.) it may just be: the way that she speaks english |

After two hearings of the text, it is evident that S7 still finds one of the speakers, a female speaker from Taiwan, very difficult to understand. He searches for an explanation for this by asking whether the speaker wears braces on her teeth (lines 1648-1653). This question catches me off guard, and while I allow that this might be the case (line 1656-1658), I state that *it may just be: the way she speaks english* and then continue on to the next task (line 1660). Rather than making such a general statement and then moving on, it would have been interesting to ask S7 if the pronunciation of any words in particular had caused him to think the speaker might wear braces. We could then have looked more closely at the production of those words and tried to notice more specifically some of the features of pronunciation that make this speaker more difficult to understand.

Even in course session 10, in which the aim of the lesson segment was on developing students' receptive phonological accommodation skills through work with recorded authentic ELF conversations, listening focused much more on the content of what the speakers were saying than on how they said it. A series of quotations from the two listening texts were used to facilitate discussion with the students, and this discussion fell squarely into the area of the first goal for developing the students' receptive accommodation skills, raising the students' general awareness of accent diversity and the importance of pronunciation for successful ELF communication. While the students were asked to comment on the accents of the four speakers, these questions remained very general. After listening to the first text, I asked the students which speaker they had found easier to understand (T10: 1152-1154). Student responses were divided, with some favoring one speaker and some favoring the other. However, most of the comments the students offered were very general in nature and tended to include remarks on the content of what the speakers were saying, rather than focusing on more specific aspects of their pronunciation (T10: 1155-1206). The second text featured a speaker from Germany and a speaker from Malaysia, and it was clear here that the students found the Malaysian speaker more difficult to understand (T10: 1698-1701). When I asked them to elaborate on why, we came the closest to identifying specific features of her speech:

Excerpt 25:

T10: 1715-1741 (01:14:25-01:15:10)

- 1715 T: yeah what do you think makes (.) her (.) more
 1716 difficult to understand (.) than (.) the girl from germany for us
 1717 yeah [S2]?
 1718 S2: she's always pronouncing the same way she- eh- the voice
 1719 doesn't go up and down it stays
 1720 T: okay
 1721 S2: like this so
 1722 T: so there's less contour maybe
 1723 S2: mhm
 1724 T: to the way that she
 1725 speaks yeah
 1726 S1: she's talking way too fast

1727 T: <@> okay </@>
 1728 Sxx: @ @ @ @
 1729 T: so she speaks quickly (.) good (.) does she talk that much faster
 1730 than the girl from germany? do you think? (1) [S18]?
 1731 S18: she doesn't make that many breaks i guess
 1732 T: okay
 1733 S18: she talks
 1734 and talks and talks and
 1735 Sxx: @ @ @
 1736 T: and it sort of all flows together
 1737 S18: @@ in a quite fast way so you can't get it
 1738 T: okay (.) yeah what we were talking about contrastive stress
 1739 where we group words in english maybe she doesn't: (.) ahm
 1740 group them in as small a group as as we're used to
 1741 Sxx: @ @ @ @

The students identify several suprasegmental features of the Malaysian speaker's speech that they feel make her more difficult to understand: lack of pitch contour (lines 1718-1721), a quick rate of speech (line 1726) and lack of pauses or word grouping (lines 1731-1736). However, while the students are able to identify more specifically what they find difficult to understand about this speaker, I as the instructor do not direct them back to the text to support their observations with examples that we could then have examined more closely together.

The lesson sequences involving more authentic texts could have been planned in a way that better supported the development of the students' ability to cope with unfamiliar accents. In order to strengthen this ability, Scales et al. (2006) recommend that listening texts should be accompanied by tasks which allow learners to "hear, analyze and compare key features" of different accents (Scales et al. 2006: 735). Thus, tasks need to be constructed so as to lead learners to notice and engage with more specific features of pronunciation – what Kiczowskiak and Lowe (2018) refer to as 'bottom-up listening skills' (Kiczowskiak and Lowe 2018: 29). Walker (2010) also emphasized the importance of focusing learner attention on a limited number of pronunciation features, as listeners may otherwise become overwhelmed by the amount of input they must process (Walker 2010: 95). Instead of asking the students rather general questions, such as why they found an accent more difficult to understand, they could have been asked to listen and describe the pronunciation of a few specific features that deviate noticeably from target pronunciation. This might have given them more definite points to help them begin to deal with the accent better. Additionally, we could have talked about how the speakers on the recordings cope with the pronunciation of the features that the students had worked on during the pilot course (cf. Walker 2010: 95-96). Where these features were dealt with successfully, this would have illustrated that not all areas of a speaker's accent are equally problematic. It could have helped the students to latch on to aspects of a particular accent that are in fact target-like, again helping them to deal with the accent better. The recorded speakers could potentially even have become models for the students, at least in terms of the

pronunciation of specific features (cf. Walker 2010: 95). On the other hand, where pronunciations of specific features were problematic, the students might have gained an increased awareness of the importance of target-like pronunciation of those features for mutual intelligibility in lingua franca situations, as well as becoming more aware of specific ways in which speakers with other accents may produce certain features.

Rather than waiting until the end of the course to begin working on receptive phonological accommodation skills, this last kind of listening, in which the focus is on a feature or features on which the learners themselves have been working, could have been done during the lesson segments in which the students were working on those features. Here, Walker's suggestion of using a standard text recorded by non-native speakers from different L1 backgrounds might have been particularly useful (Walker 2010: 95). This way, the students would be exposed to how speakers from a range of backgrounds deal with a particular feature and would be able to compare it with their own pronunciation. In order to ensure that there would be enough material to work with, I would have needed to screen texts carefully to make sure that both target-like and non-standard pronunciations of a particular item were represented. Walker (2010) provides a text like this, recorded by ten L2 speakers with different L1s and includes some notes on specific features of their pronunciation (Walker 2010: 191-193). He also mentions some other resources which feature set texts recorded by non-native speakers from a variety of L1 backgrounds (Walker 2010: 76).

More recently, Kiczkowiak and Lowe (2018) have proposed some additional listening activities focusing on bottom-up listening skills in their handbook *Teaching English as a Lingua Franca: The journey from EFL to ELF*. These suggestions include systematic listening focusing on specific pronunciation features that make a recorded speaker difficult to understand (cf. Kiczkowiak and Lowe 2018: 57), as well as listening journals in which learners can keep a record of authentic texts they have listened to and any issues they had with understanding (cf. Kiczkowiak and Lowe 2018: 59). Kiczkowiak and Lowe (2018) also offer additional resources and guidelines for finding and selecting appropriate authentic recordings of non-native speakers through the internet. They thus offer further possibilities for helping learners learn to cope with particular features of the accents that they encounter.

In summary, while work with more authentic listening tasks did appear to help students adjust their perceptions of accent and the importance of pronunciation for successful ELF communication, learning did not progress far enough in helping students to deal with the accents they encountered, a shortcoming which could likely have been counteracted by focusing the students' attention on specific features of individual speakers' pronunciation. Working with a variety of accents in this way may have gone further toward "address[ing] both

intelligibility and listening comprehension, [thus] increasing communicative flexibility and respect for accent diversity” (Scales et al. 2006: 735), both important aspects of the ability to accommodate receptively in the area of pronunciation in ELF talk.

Strand 2:
Culture and intercultural communication

8 In search of priorities for teaching culture and its role in intercultural communication in the ELF-oriented classroom

Definitions of ELF such as those discussed in the introductory chapter of this dissertation generally emphasize the linguistic dimension of communication through ELF. They focus on the fact that speakers in ELF situations have different first languages and use English as their common linguistic resource for communication (cf. Seidlhofer 2011: 7). However, although the linguistic side of ELF has received more research attention, the intercultural nature of ELF has also been acknowledged since the earliest days of the field. ELF is viewed as a form of communication taking place between speakers of not only different first languages, but most often also from different linguacultural backgrounds (Mauranen 2012: 5, 243; Cogo and Dewey 2012: 26; Jenkins 2014: 26; Baker 2015a: 33, 43; Baker 2018: 33). Research into the intercultural nature of ELF communication has led researchers such as Jenkins to claim that “intercultural communication skills and strategies are paramount” for successful ELF communication to take place (Jenkins 2014: 26). And this has in turn led to a consideration of what these skills and strategies might entail and how they might be taught in the ELF-oriented classroom.

8.1 From communicative competence to Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC): Developing an intercultural framework for language teaching

ELF is certainly not the first field to take a pedagogic interest in what might constitute an intercultural competence for language learners. The cultural dimension of communication has received increasing conceptual attention in ELT since the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1980s⁶⁰. This attention grew out of Hymes’ (1972) concept of communicative competence, which goes beyond the grammatical competence described by Chomsky (1965) to look at how speakers use language appropriately in social contexts. In formulating his conception of communicative competence, Hymes drew attention to the

⁶⁰ While there has certainly been an increased focus in ELT on the cultural and intercultural dimensions in theory, this has not necessarily translated very well into actual classroom practice (cf. Risager 2007: 5, Baker 2015a: 176, Baker 2016: 72, McConachy 2018: 13). Researchers frequently bemoan that the cultural and intercultural dimensions of communication are often relegated to a ‘fifth skill’ that receives little attention in the classroom (cf. Kramsch 1993: 1, Vettorel 2010: 153, Baker 2015a: 179). Baker (2015a) attributes this to lack of teacher training in how to incorporate a more holistic approach to the cultural and intercultural dimensions of language in the classroom (Baker 2015a: 178-179).

relationship between language and culture, describing communicative competence as a type of cultural competence (Hymes 1972: 279, 286) and thus paving the way for increased attention to cultural aspects of communication, not only in linguistic research, but also in second language teaching and learning.

Hymes' conception of communicative competence has been quite influential in applied linguistics, "inform[ing] the majority of subsequent writings on communicative competence and intercultural communicative competence" (Baker 2015a: 135). His ideas were first incorporated into frameworks for foreign language teaching by Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983) and van Ek (1986). All of these frameworks drew on Hymes' original ideas, but also expanded them in light of second language learning and use. While these early frameworks largely focused on the linguistic and pragmatic dimensions of learning and using a second language⁶¹, they also drew increased attention to cultural and intercultural aspects of the language learning process which might need to be addressed in the classroom.

Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) broke communicative competence down into four areas: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence⁶² and strategic competence. In their descriptions of these different areas, they identified both knowledge and skills relating to cultural and intercultural aspects of communication which may need to be developed as part of communicative competence in the language being learned. For example, in describing sociolinguistic competence, these frameworks highlighted that, while "[t]here are no doubt universal aspects of appropriate language use that need not be relearned to communicate appropriately in a second language", there are also "culture-specific aspects" which will need to be addressed in the language classroom (Canale 1983: 8). In addition to knowledge of such culturally specific aspects of language, the frameworks also include specific kinds of skills which might be necessary for intercultural interactions through a foreign language. For instance, Canale and Swain's notion of strategic competence encompasses strategies for dealing with difficulties or breakdowns in communication, which "recognizes interactional features of communication which are related to intercultural communication and second language use" (Baker 2015a: 137).

⁶¹ The impact of Hymes (1972) and subsequent frameworks for language teaching derived from it, in particular Canale and Swain (1980), on the role and methods of pragmatics instruction in the language learning classroom will be discussed in more detail in 15.1.

⁶² In Canale and Swain (1980), sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence were treated as two corresponding parts of the same category, labeled sociolinguistic competence. Canale (1983), which represents a revision and expansion of the original framework presented in Canale and Swain (1980), later treated them as two distinct aspects of communicative competence (cf. also 15.1).

Like Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), van Ek's (1986) framework also included linguistic competence (comparable to Canale and Swain's notion of grammatical competence), sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence as four aspects of what he termed 'communicative ability' (van Ek 1986: 35). However, he also included two further elements with strong connections to cultural and intercultural dimensions of language learning: socio-cultural competence, involving "a certain degree of familiarity" with the cultural context in which an instance of communication is taking place (van Ek 1986: 35), and social competence, involving psychological factors such as "motivation, attitude, self-confidence, empathy and the ability to handle social situations" which may have an impact on a learner's ability to learn and use an additional language (van Ek 1986: 65). This latter element thus goes beyond a description of knowledge and skills to include attitudes as well.

These frameworks, aimed at adapting the notion of communicative competence for the language learning classroom, have had a considerable influence on the development of the CLT approach to language teaching which still largely informs language teaching practice today (cf. Leung 2005: 124, Baker 2015a: 137). However, beginning in the late 1990s, Michael Byram argued that successful communication in an additional language could not be accomplished through the development of communicative competence alone, but rather must be combined with intercultural competence:

The intercultural speaker needs intercultural communicative competence, i.e. both intercultural competence and linguistic/communicative competence, in any task of mediation where two distinct languacultures⁶³ are present, and this is something different from and not comparable with the competence of a native speaker. (Byram 2012a: 89)

Byram took particular issue with the emphasis that both Canale and Swain (1980) and van Ek (1986) placed on the native speaker as a model of communicative competence for the language learner. He argued that not only did this set up "an impossible target and consequently inevitable failure", but also that "it would create the wrong kind of competence" (Byram 1997: 11). A language learner who developed a fully native-like communicative competence in another language would be 'linguistically schizophrenic', bouncing back and forth between two linguistic and cultural environments without any acknowledgment of connection or relationship between the two (Byram 1997: 11-12). Instead, Byram proposed that the

⁶³ In this dissertation, I have chosen to refer to the intersection of culture and language as *linguaculture* rather than *languaculture*, in keeping with most ELF literature on culture and intercultural communication. However, both terms appear in the literature on intercultural communication. While many authors use the terms interchangeably (c.f. e.g. Risager 2006, 2007; Baker 2015a), other authors do employ them with contrasting meanings. Here, it is not entirely clear whether Byram (2012a) is using *languaculture* as synonymous with *linguaculture* or not.

intercultural speaker who possesses intercultural communicative competence (ICC) should become the model for the language classroom. In addition to the dimensions of linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competences, which he retained with minor revisions from van Ek's (1986) model of communicative ability (Byram 1997: 48), Byram proposed a framework to describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes constituting an additional dimension, intercultural competence. The components of this intercultural competence, as well as its relationships to the other three competences which make up ICC, are represented in Figure 2.

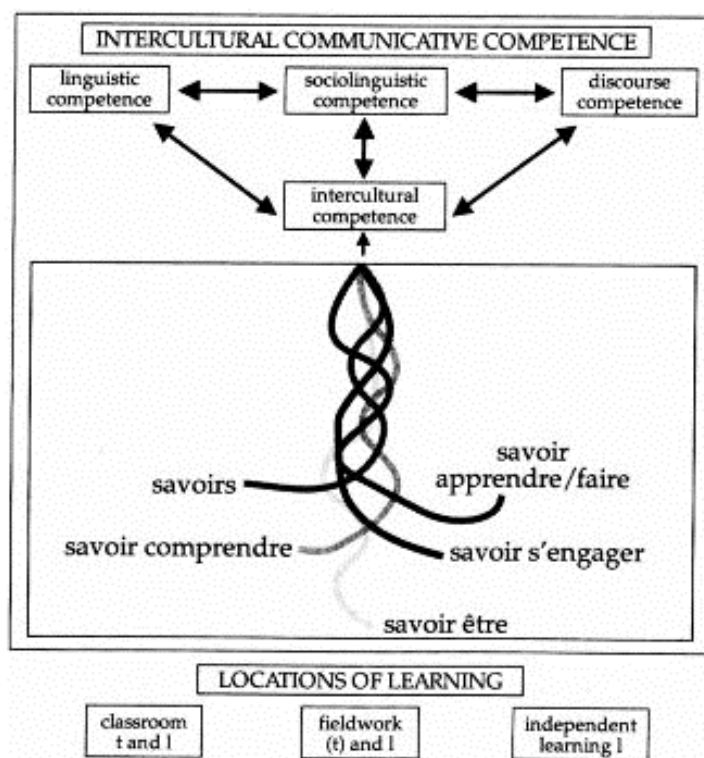


Figure 2: Intercultural Communicative Competence
(Byram 1997: 73)

Byram's intercultural competence consists of five partial competences, or *savoirs*, which Byram (1997) characterized as follows:

- **Attitudes** (*savoir être*): “Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own” (Byram 1997: 50); “relativizing self, valuing other” (Byram 1997: 34); “an ability to ‘decentre’” (Byram 1997: 34)
- **Knowledge** (*savoirs*): “of self and other” (Byram 1997: 34); “of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction” (Byram 1997: 51)
- **Skills of interpreting and relating** (*savoir comprendre*): “Ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one’s own culture” (Byram 1997: 52)

- **Skills of discovery and interaction** (*savoir apprendre/faire*): “Ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction” (Byram 1997: 52)
- **Critical cultural awareness** (*savoir s’engager*): “An ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (Byram 1997: 53).

Byram considered this final *savoir*, critical cultural awareness, to be particularly essential for intercultural competence (Byram 1997: 113; 2008: 162; 2012b). He maintained that it is this critical cultural awareness that, as Baker so eloquently put it,

enables the intercultural communicator to be aware of implicit values, perspectives and criteria in practices and products from their own and other cultures. Crucially it also enables the intercultural communicator to interact, mediate and negotiate in intercultural exchanges in a conscious manner drawing on the attitudes, knowledge and skills outlined in the rest of the ICC model. (Baker 2015a: 151; cf. Byram 1997: 53, 2008: 163)

As Figure 2 shows, the five *savoirs* listed above combine to form intercultural competence, which in turn combines with linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence to make up ICC. Byram clearly stated, however, that he intended to present a holistic and comprehensive model of ICC which is “analyzed into its components only in order to develop a better understanding of what is essentially one competence” (Byram 1997: 88). This analysis was meant to aid teachers in determining what to teach in their classrooms (Byram 1997: 88). Within the classroom, Byram also cautioned that the components of the framework should be handled holistically: “skills and attitudes have to develop holistically in relation to the cultural and linguistic content of a proposed course, i.e. it is not appropriate to cut the relationships and links between the different components” (Byram 1997: 81). Byram (1997) was always concerned with the pedagogical implications of his framework. He broke down each of the *savoirs* into a series of teaching objectives (Byram 1997: 56-64), though he was quick to point out that the final selection of teaching objectives for any classroom would depend on the context in which learners were likely to use the language in future (Byram 1997: 22-29, 56). He also explored in what type of learning environment each of the five *savoirs* was most likely to be acquired, which is represented at the bottom of Figure 2 (where ‘t’ stands for teachers and ‘l’ for learners) and discussed in detail in Byram (1997: 64-70). Finally, he considered at length how teachers might go about assessing the five *savoirs* (Byram 1997: 87-111).

Byram’s conception of ICC has probably been the most influential framework in ELT to date that incorporates an intercultural dimension of communication. As Pitzl (2015) pointed out, ICC is the framework “that primarily comes up whenever the term ‘intercultural’ is mentioned in ELT” (Pitzl 2015: 97). This is most likely due to the fact that Byram, like van

Ek, developed his conception of ICC while working on projects which fed into the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR) (2001). It "has had a strong impact on the CEFR and is a clear point of reference for the sections on intercultural awareness" (Pitzl 2015: 103; cf. also Pitzl 2015: 97). ICC has since found its way into other influential policy documents. In the German context, it is included as one of the key competences for foreign language learning in the *Bildungsstandards für die fortgeführte Fremdsprache (Englisch/Französisch) für die Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (KMK 2012), the national policy document outlining competences to be attained through foreign language learning in the German secondary school system (cf. Pitzl 2015: 103-104).

However, it becomes apparent in reading Byram (1997) that what he primarily had in mind in describing ICC was the 'classic EFL scenario' in which a learner is learning a language principally in order to interact with native speakers of that language in a country where the language is spoken as L1. The national culture of the native speaker of a particular language is treated as the default target for cultural learning, even where learners are unlikely ever to use this language in actual encounters with native speakers (cf. Byram 1997: 81-86, 114-115). Byram never explores the nature of the relationship between language and culture in lingua franca uses of language (cf. Risager 2007: 126). The question therefore becomes whether – or perhaps to what extent – Byram's model of ICC can be extended to fit ELF situations, in which potentially no native speakers are present and communication is most likely not taking place in an ENL country.

8.2 Empirical research into the role of culture and its relationship to language in ELF communication

In order to establish whether or not ICC can be extended to fit ELF situations, it will first be necessary to briefly explore the current state of research into the role of culture and its relationship to language in ELF communication. Researchers into ELF have generally agreed since the early days of the field that ELF communication does not rely on the cultural norms and practices of ENL communities simply because communication takes place in English (cf. Meierkord 2002, Pölzl and Seidlhofer 2006: 153, Baker 2009a, Ehrenreich 2009: 141, Baker 2012a: 63-64). This led a few early researchers studying the cultural dimension of ELF to claim that ELF is, at least at some level, a form of culture-free or culturally neutral communication (House 1999, 2003, 2014; Meierkord 2000, 2002: 128-129; Kirkpatrick 2007: 173, 2010:

139⁶⁴). However, this position has subsequently been rejected by the vast majority of ELF scholars. Instead, they generally accept the premise that “language, even used as a lingua franca, can never be culturally neutral” (Baker 2012a: 64)⁶⁵. Baker (2018) explained this position as follows:

To claim that there is such a thing as neutral communication is to misunderstand the nature of communication as a social practice. All communication, intercultural or otherwise, involves participants whose identities will be present in the interaction in one way or another. Furthermore, communication is a form of cultural practice and so will necessarily involve drawing on, constructing and negotiating culturally based forms of reference and communicative practices. (Baker 2018: 27)

Current empirical research suggests that both culture and identity can be expressed through ELF, despite the fact that there are no inherent links to the cultural norms and practices of ENL countries (cf. Jenkins 2007, Cogo 2012: 103, Baker 2015a: 90, Baker 2016: 74-75).

If ELF communication is neither culturally neutral nor intrinsically tied to the cultures of native English speakers, then how can the relationship between language and culture be accounted for? Risager (2006, 2007) offered a useful explanation in which she distinguished between different levels of the language-culture relationship. At the generic level, in which language and culture are considered as universal phenomena, “language and culture are under all circumstances inseparable: human language is always embedded in culture” (Risager 2007: 12). In other words, at the generic level, “language is always an enactment and embodiment of culture, and the two cannot be meaningfully separated” (Baker 2009a: 571). But at the differential level, at which we are examining specific languages and cultures, particular languages are not intrinsically linked to particular cultures. The relationship between a particular language and a particular culture becomes “an empirical question” in which “the question always has to be: What forms of culture actually go with the language in question?”, and this can only be established for each specific instance of communication (Risager 2007: 12). Finally, at the individual psychological level, language is again tied to culture within each individual speaker, in whom the linguistic and cultural systems develop concurrently in relation to the individual’s life experiences (Risager 2006: 171, Risager 2007: 177). In other words, every individual develops an individual linguaculture that is “tied to his or her personal life history under specific social, cultural and historical circumstances” (Risager 2016: 41).

⁶⁴ This position has also been espoused by some researchers from the field of intercultural communication such as Holliday (2011).

⁶⁵ This viewpoint is not unique to ELF scholars, but is also held by some researchers in the field of intercultural communication such as Risager (2006: 3-4; 2016: 33, 39, 47).

In international situations, language users “take their language resources with them – including the linguaculture they have developed” (Risager 2016: 40; cf. also Risager 2006: 134). The experience of intercultural communication may in turn impact an individual speaker’s linguaculture. For Risager, both possibilities provide evidence that “language and culture do not form a single universe; instead, a language can be disconnected from one cultural context and reconnected into a new one” (Risager 2016: 40). Risager argued that at the differential level, specific languages, and particularly those used internationally such as English, are therefore capable of taking on new cultural meanings, since “the link between language and culture is created in every new communicative event” (Risager 2006: 185), depending on the individual linguacultures of the interactants and the contexts in which communication takes place. Thus, Risager’s account of the relationship between language and culture allows us to explain how communication is never culturally neutral for the speakers involved, while also permitting English used in ELF communication to be separated from the cultures of ENL countries.

According to Risager, linguaculture is most heavily influenced by an individual’s first language or languages. Those who later learn other languages build on this linguacultural foundation, and this foundation influences their use of their other language(s)⁶⁶ (Risager 2016: 42). Given the range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds from which speakers in ELF situations can potentially come, “[l]ingua franca communication can therefore be expected to be, linguaculturally, quite diverse” (Risager 2016: 47). This in turn might lead to the expectation that ELF communication will often involve miscommunication or communication breakdown due to cultural mismatch or culturally-based misunderstanding. This has been the starting point for much research in the field of intercultural communication⁶⁷ (Kaur 2011: 112; Kaur 2016: 134-135, 147-148; Zhu 2015: 65-66), and much has been written on the problematic nature of intercultural talk in L1-L2 interactions (cf. Mauranten 2006: 131, Kaur 2016: 139).

In the case of ELF communication, ELF talk has often been presumed to be especially problematic because the speakers come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, in addition to the fact that many are non-native speakers of English (Mauranten 2006: 123, 124;

⁶⁶ Oddly, Risager does not seem to make allowance in the other direction, that knowledge of other languages may influence the use of one’s first language(s) (cf. also Risager 2006: 134).

⁶⁷ Both Kaur (2016) and Baker (2015a) note, however, that more recent studies in the field of intercultural communication have begun to shift their perspective away from the assumption that communicative problems in intercultural talk can necessarily be traced back to cultural differences between participants (Baker 2015a: 153, Kaur 2016: 135)

Kaur 2009a: 43). However, from the very beginning, studies have generally found that ELF talk actually exhibits surprisingly few overt misunderstandings (cf. Firth 1996; House 1999, 2002; Meierkord 2002; Mauranten 2006, 2007; Kaur 2011; Cogo and Dewey 2012). In the studies that specifically looked at the issue of culture as a potential cause of miscommunication, none found any instances in which cultural differences could definitively be identified as the cause of communicative problems. House (1999), who expressly tested the hypothesis that “misunderstandings in ELF interactions are largely caused by differences in L1-based cultural knowledge frames and interactional norms” (House 1999: 75), ultimately found no instances of misunderstanding in her data to support this claim. Similarly, Mauranten (2006, 2007), who looked more specifically at misunderstandings in academic settings, “found no clear evidence of culture-based problems, at least not in the traditional sense of ‘national culture’” in her data (Mauranten 2006: 144). Kaur (2011), who analyzed 15 hours of naturally-occurring ELF talk, also concluded that none of the 33 instances of misunderstanding in her data could be attributed to cultural differences (Kaur 2011: 113).

Kaur (2011, 2016) suggested that a possible explanation for the lack of problems relating to cultural differences in ELF talk is rooted in “a concern with achieving mutual understanding and accomplishing communicative goals in the lingua franca” (Kaur 2016: 149). This overriding concern “causes participants to put aside cultural difference and seek out or create common cultural forms and practices that can contribute to shared understanding and successful communicative outcomes” (Kaur 2016: 149). This position is supported by Meierkord (2002), who found that participants in the ELF talk she recorded used very few culture-specific practices; rather, “a large number of features that can be said to characterize lingua franca conversations in my corpus are not reflections of the participants’ mother tongues” (Meierkord 2002: 117). Instead of relying on their own culturally informed practices and references, her data showed participants using strategies such as laughter and pausing in novel ways, such as in place of verbal back-channels and as markers of topic or phrase boundaries. The avoidance of communicative norms and practices associated with particular cultures and the extension of commonly-held features to serve new functions seems to have helped her interactants to minimize communicative problems relating to cultural difference. Similarly, Bjørge (2012) reported that “no systematic correspondence between ELF speaker performance and national or regional culture could be found” in the data from her study on disagreement strategies in business negotiations (Bjørge 2012: 424). Some of the participants in Baker (2009a) also acknowledged in follow-up interviews that they had avoided practices and references associated with their native cultures in the ELF conversations recorded as part of the study.

Instead of assuming that existing cultural norms and practices they are familiar with will adhere or adopting cultural practices of ENL countries as default common ground, speakers in ELF interactions generally appear to suspend cultural expectations in favor of mediating and negotiating cultural norms and references *in situ* for each individual instance of communication. This may involve adopting or adapting existing norms and references. Pözl and Seidlhofer (2006), for example, showed L1 Arabic speakers in a Jordanian setting adopting the Arabic expression *ya'ni* when speaking English with their German L1 interlocutors. This expression served multiple functions, including as an extension marker, as an inner negotiation marker and as a deictic center marker to 'soften' statements, similar to the discourse marker *I think* (Pözl and Seidlhofer 2006: 160-162). These speakers appeared to feel that the use of this expression was locally appropriate since they were "on home ground and talking about matters intrinsic to their own culture" (Pözl and Seidlhofer 2006: 162-163). In this case, locally relevant cultural references were adopted, but ELF studies have shown that globally relevant cultural references can be adopted as well. Vettorel (2014), in her study of ELF blogging practices, noted that interactants appeared to engage in code-switching in her data either to signal local L1 cultural identities or to signal association with more global communities. As an example of the latter, some interactants who were part of Anime communities code-switched to Japanese as a sign of affinity with those communities (Vettorel 2014: 155). In addition to the adoption or adaptation of existing practices, however, negotiation of cultural norms and practices may equally lead to the creation of novel practices or references that cannot be directly linked with the linguaculture of any of the speakers involved, as was the case in the novel uses of laughter and pausing in Meierkord (2002) mentioned above.

Kramsch's (1993) notion of a cultural 'third space'⁶⁸ (Kramsch 1993: 210, 233) has been used to account for the ways in which participants in ELF talk appear to draw on existing cultural practices and references, as well as to create new cultural practices and references *in situ* (cf. Baker 2009a: 571-572, Baker 2015a: 29, Baker 2016: 73⁶⁹). According to Kramsch, communication in a second language takes place in a 'third space' that is between the speakers' first language and culture (L1/C1) and the target⁷⁰ language and culture (L2/C2), while actually

⁶⁸ Here, Kramsch (1993) originally uses the term 'third place'. However, in more recent work on intercultural communication, scholars increasingly refer to this concept as a cultural 'third space'. I prefer 'third space', as it highlights the abstractness of the location in which communication can be said to be taking place.

⁶⁹ Additionally, Kaur (2016) referred to Casmir and Asunción-Lande's (1988: 294) similar concept of 'third culture' in her discussion of the negotiated nature of cultural practices in ELF communication (Kaur 2016: 149).

⁷⁰ Baker (2016) expresses some reservations about the use of the term *target* here, noting that "although these characterizations of using an L2 highlight the fluidity of such

belonging directly to neither. This frees communication from the norms of both L1/C1 and L2/C2, allowing participants to use aspects of either or to create new practices and norms as the context dictates (Kramsch 1993: 210, 233-259).

Baker (2009a, 2009b, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2015a, 2015b, 2016, 2018, 2022) has arguably written most extensively on the subject of the relationship between language and culture in ELF communication from an intercultural perspective. His writings are based in large part on an empirical study involving a set of recordings and follow-up interviews made in a Thai university setting (Baker 2009a). Like other ELF studies mentioned above, Baker's data showed participants mediating and negotiating cultural practices from their own and other cultures, as well as creating new ones, a process which is particularly clearly illustrated in the following example from Baker (2009a: 577-578). This example shows the participants, Oy (Thai L1), Nami (Thai L1) and Chas (Australian English L1)⁷¹, overtly negotiating who should decide whether or not to conclude their conversation.

Example 1

- 1 OY: so carry on or drop it
- 2 NAMI: I hate saying up to you because I'm not really conservative type girl ((laughs))
- 3 don't like it
- 4 OY: err I don't like it either
- 5 CHAS: make a decision then ((gestures with hands to Nami and Oy))
- 6 OY: yeah you make it you're older than me ((gestures with hand to Nami))
- 7 CHAS: ((laughs))
- 8 WILL: ((laughs))
- 9 NAMI: [I think like . I think that's (?)]
- 10 OY: [a bit of respect] ((smiling and laughing))
- 11 NAMI: [thank you very much] ((places hand on Oy's shoulder smiling and laughing))
- 12 WILL: [that's very Thai] very conservative and Thai defer to the older person
- 13 NAMI: you used to be Thai ((places hand on Oy's shoulder laughs))
- 14 OY: ((laughs))
- 15 NAMI: actually no I don't think so actually I have a lot of things to do
- 16 CHAS: ok
- 17 OY: oh ok alright (I'll go as well)

(Baker 2009a: 577-578)

communication and emphasize the need to move away from L1/C1 and L2/C2 norms, they still retain the notion of established 'target' communities with which particular languages are associated. This is problematic in that for intercultural communication through ELF it is not clear what particular target communities and language norms the communication is 'in between'" (Baker 2016: 73; cf. also Baker 2015a: 29-30).

⁷¹ The final speaker, Will, who is actually Baker himself, has not been a participant in the conversation up to this point, but has just entered the room as the speakers are deciding whether or not to end their discussion (Baker 2009a: 577, 2015a: 97).

In the process of determining who should decide whether or not to end the conversation, Oy and Nami refer to two practices which they orient to as being traditionally Thai, deferring to the male participant (line 2) and deferring to the elder participant (line 6). However, these two conventions for ending a conversation are ultimately rejected. Both Nami and Oy profess that they do not like the convention of deferring to the man (lines 3-4), and they appear to treat the suggestion to defer to the older party as a joke (lines 10-11) (Baker 2009a: 578). Ultimately, Nami decides that the conversation should end because she has other things to accomplish (line 16), to which Chas and Oy agree (lines 16-17). According to Baker (2015a), this example shows “communicative practices negotiated and emerging in the interaction. Previous practices and discourses are referred to and drawn on, particularly those associated with what the participants, and the researcher, regard as traditional Thai practices” (Baker 2015a: 98), but ultimately the participants must agree during this instance of communication on who should take responsibility for ending the discussion and why.

Baker also used this excerpt as an illustration of another trend in his data. He argued that it shows that cultural factors and groupings other than nationality and national culture may play a significant role in intercultural communication through ELF. In addition to traditional Thai culture, the categories of gender and age are also highly relevant to the participants in this conversation, something that became all the more apparent in Baker’s post-recording interviews with the participants; consequently, these categories need to be considered in any interpretation of the exchange (Baker 2009a: 578-580, Baker 2015a: 98). On the grounds of the complex interplay of the different cultural factors and groupings he found in his data, Baker argued against ‘simplified’ interpretations of ELF communication on the basis of national culture alone (cf. Baker 2015a: 16). He also cautioned against assuming that national culture will always be the primary cultural category, or indeed a relevant category at all, for interactants in particular instances of intercultural communication through ELF (Baker 2011a: 39; cf. also Zhu 2015: 72).

In addition to demonstrating the interactants in his data negotiating and creating cultural practices and references during particular instances of communication and “drawing on multiple frames of reference in the same conversation” (Baker 2015a: 95), Baker (2009a) also showed participants in ELF talk “moving between and across local, national and global contexts in dynamic ways” (Baker 2015a: 95). Another of Baker’s more oft-quoted examples demonstrates this nicely:

Example 2

- 1 PHILIPPE: no Marseilles is really nice really nice city south of France close you have
- 2 Nice Cannes it's really cool the food is amazing and they drink err Ricard
- 3 NAMI: Ricard
- 4 PHILIPPE: they play err petanque
- 5 NAMI: err
- 6 PHILIPPE: petanque
- 7 NAMI: petanque ahh petanque
- 8 PHILIPPE: yeah (?)
- 9 NAMI: there's some there's some people from my school that
- 10 PHILIPPE: you know that the French embassy they organize err a
- 11 championship every year in Thailand
- 12 NAMI: yeah
- 13 PHILIPPE: I've been a few times
- 14 NAMI: do you play
- 15 PHILIPPE: ah
- 16 NAMI: do you play
- 17 PHILIPPE: no . I'm shit
- 18 NAMI: ((laughs)) you're really young ((laughs))
- 19 PHILIPPE: I know you have to be really old to play that game
- 20 NAMI: NO ((laughs))
- 21 PHILIPPE: maybe I'm not old enough
- 22 NAMI: no at school a lot of young students play petanque
- 23 PHILIPPE: maybe they think it's cool ... uhu

(Baker 2009a: 581-582)

Here, the two speakers, Nami (Thai L1) and Philippe (Belgian French L1) are discussing the game of petanque. In the course of their conversation, they relate the game to a series of cultural associations at several different levels: national/regional (Marseille, the south of France), transnational (the French embassy in Bangkok) and local (school students in Thailand) (Baker 2015a: 96). The resulting cultural associations can be seen as competing (e.g. Philippe's claim that you must be old to play petanque (line 19) versus Nami's assertion that she knows it as a game for young students (line 22)), yet both participants seem able to accept these different characterizations and to extend their understanding of petanque to accept information that is new to them (e.g. Phillippe's attempt to explain why young Thai students might want to play petanque in line 23) (Baker 2009a: 583). Importantly, neither speaker's characterization of petanque appears to become dominant (Baker 2009a: 583). Thus, according to Baker, "this extract demonstrates culturally based references expressed through the medium of ELF communication that are fluid and negotiable, with both participants having to adapt to alternative semantic associations for petanque" (Baker 2009a: 583). In this way, this example might be seen as "an instance of negotiation and adaptation in meaning that leads to the sort of wider awareness of multiple associations and meanings of cultural practices and their associated terms" (Baker 2015a: 97), an area which has also been explored by Xu and Dihn (2013).

8.3 *ICC as a pedagogic framework for intercultural teaching in the ELF-oriented classroom?*

The overall picture that arises of culture in ELF communication is that of “an emergent, negotiated resource in communication which moves between and across local, national and global contexts” and takes place in a cultural ‘third space’ rather than within a pre-defined cultural context (Baker 2012a: 64). How well, then, can Byram’s (1997) ICC framework accommodate this picture? In many areas, the framework appears to fit nicely. ELF researchers generally agree with Byram that the successful multilingual, multicultural speaker makes the better model for the ELF-oriented classroom than the native speaker (cf. Baker 2011: 46, 47; Baker 2012b: 23, 24; Vettorel and Lopriore 2013: 486; Kaur 2016: 153). Byram’s critical approach to culture as embodied in his fifth *savoir*, critical cultural awareness, also corresponds well with the ELF field’s generally critical approach to established concepts such as language, culture, speech communities, etc. (cf. Seidlhofer 2011: 64-93, Widdowson 2012, Cogo 2012: 98). Further, ICC is able to account, at least to a certain extent, for the way in which cultural practices and references are actively adapted and created in ELF communication, in that it “emphasizes the importance of interpretation, interaction, negotiation and mediation in intercultural interaction and communication” (Baker 2015a: 151). And finally, ICC has proven particularly useful for the language classroom (Baker 2015a: 151), in that it considers pedagogic factors such as the roles of teachers and learners, locations of learning and issues of assessment. These are areas that must also be explored if research into the role of culture in ELF communication is to be translated into meaningful classroom practice for the ELF-oriented classroom.

However, there are a few points in which ICC does not seem to account well for the role of culture in ELF communication. These can generally be traced back to the fact that Byram’s framework is based largely on nationally and geographically bounded notions of culture in which a strong association is implied between a nation-state, the language of its native speakers and a national culture. Although he acknowledged the existence of cultural levels and identifications other than the national (Byram 1997: 21), Byram explicitly adopted national culture as his primary level of cultural focus:

The argument for developing learners’ understanding of the beliefs, behaviors and meanings of the national group is then that it helps learners in inter-national communication and interaction. It is assumed that all interaction will make some reference to national identity and cultural beliefs and practices. (Byram 1997: 20)

In adopting a national level of focus, Byram consciously upheld what he acknowledged to be a dominant trend in current language teaching (Byram 1997: 19), though he proposed to approach it from both a critical and comparative perspective (Byram 1997: 20). Byram’s choice of language in his descriptions of the five *savoirs* that make up his framework of intercultural

competence reflects this nationally bounded conception of culture. For example, in describing the knowledge *savoirs*, he described the development of knowledge “of social groups and their products and practices *in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country*” (Byram 1997: 51, emphasis added). Similarly, Byram described his central component, critical cultural awareness, as “an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products *in one’s own and other cultures and countries*” (Byram 1997: 53, emphasis added). In a more recent discussion of this *savoir*, Byram upheld this nationally bounded conception of culture:

critical cultural awareness includes a critique of *our own communities and societies as well as that of other countries*. It does this because foreign language learning inevitably draws attention to *other countries*, where the language being learnt is spoken, and to the communities and society *of those countries*. (Byram 2012b: 10, emphasis added)

Thus, a nationally bounded view of culture can be seen as a pervasive underlying element in Byram’s conception of ICC.

Several problems arise from this focus on a nationally bounded concept of culture. First of all, it appears to presuppose that we will be able to identify target cultures with which our learners are likely to interact. Byram rather tacitly assumed that the primary focus for cultural learning in the language classroom would be on the national culture of a nation in which the language in question is primarily spoken as L1. This makes some sense, considering that Byram was mainly concerned with an EFL scenario in which a learner is preparing for interaction with native speakers of a language in the native speaker’s home country. In such cases, it should generally be possible to identify a target community of users with which the learner wishes to interact. However, this can become quite problematic for ELF interactions:

Given the variety and heterogeneity of English use in such settings, a user or learner of English could not be expected to have a knowledge of all the different cultural contexts of communication they may encounter and even less so the *languacultures*⁷² of the participants in this communication. (Baker 2012a: 65)

In other words, it would be impossible to prepare learners specifically with knowledge of every possible culture with which they might come into contact in ELF interactions.

Byram himself acknowledged that those learning a language for use as a lingua franca “cannot acquire knowledge of all the national identities and cultures with which they may come into contact” and will therefore require “a focus on methods, as well as content” (Byram 1997:

⁷² This is one of the few instances in which Baker utilizes the term *languaculture* in his writings. However, Baker (2015a) explicitly states that he treats both terms as synonymous, in keeping with researchers such as Risager (2006, 2007) (Baker 2015a: 81). It therefore seems safe to assume that the two can be considered synonymous here as well.

20). However, only one of the eleven objectives he set up for his knowledge *savoirs* relates to more general methods; the other ten all describe specific types of knowledge to be acquired about a target culture, as well as about one's own (Byram 1997: 58-61). Additionally, Byram still recommended adopting the cultures of English-speaking nations such as Great Britain and the United States as the primary focus of critical and comparative cultural studies in the ELF-oriented classroom (Byram 1997: 114-115). The relevance of focusing on these cultures in the ELF-oriented classroom has been called into question for at least two reasons. First, as has been discussed above, ELF research has established that the cultural and communicative norms and practices of the ENL countries are generally not adopted as the default basis for such communication simply because ELF communication involves English. And second, these cultures cannot be assumed *a priori* to be the most relevant to learners who will primarily use English as a lingua franca outside the classroom. It may be that learners will encounter some speakers from these countries in ELF situations, but it is also quite possible that they will not. Even where they do, ENL cultural norms and practices will not necessarily dominate the interaction. Therefore, focusing on the cultures of the major ENL countries will likely be of limited value for learners in the ELF-oriented classroom.

Another problem with ICC resulting from Byram's nationally bounded conception of culture is that it does not account very well for the way in which ELF users actually appear to draw upon multiple cultural frames of reference in interaction. Byram (1997) "assumed that all interaction will make some reference to national identity and cultural beliefs and practices" (Byram 1997: 20). However, as ELF researchers such as Baker (2009a) and Vettorel (2014) have demonstrated, national culture may not be the only level of cultural reference involved in a particular instance of communication; the local and global levels may also play a role, as well as alternative groupings and identifications such as gender, age, interests, profession, etc. Interactants may move between and across these levels, and it is even possible that more than one level or grouping may be relevant at any given point in an interaction. This is not to say that the national level should be completely downplayed. As Baker (2015a) points out,

[n]ation states have not disappeared and, as Holliday (2011, 2013) demonstrates vividly, they still exercise a powerful pull on cultural identifications[:] [sic]"it is a fact that people everywhere really do use, talk about, explain things in terms of, and present themselves with national cultural profiles, despite their lack of scientific basis means [sic]. These profiles are therefore *real* in their minds and have to be taken seriously" (2013: 164). Nonetheless, the increased interconnectedness brought about by the processes of globalization [...] means that we need to recognize that national cultures, however we might chose [sic] to characterize them, are just one scale or level in the complex multitude of cultural characterizations or systems we take part in. (Baker 2015a: 67, emphasis original)

National culture is likely to play a role in ELF communication, and this should not be ignored. But addressing the national cultural level while ignoring others may lead to an over-simplified

or essentialized interpretation of what is happening in an exchange (cf. Baker 2015a: 16), particularly if the exchange involves the use of a global lingua franca such as English. Thus, an exclusive focus on the national cultural level may overlook the complexity of cultural frames of reference that has been described in ELF interactions.

An additional problem with focusing primarily on the national level of culture is that it may lead to an overemphasis on ‘otherness’. It sets up a clear division between ‘our’ and ‘other’ cultures, since the national boundaries of countries do not overlap (Baker 2015a: 153). Byram frequently included references to ‘own’ and ‘other’ cultures in his description of the five *savoirs* of intercultural competence in ICC. Again, his description of critical cultural awareness is an excellent case in point: it is described as “an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in *one’s own* and *other* cultures and countries” (Byram 1997: 53, emphasis added). Similar wording can be found in his descriptions of the attitudes, knowledge and skills of interpreting and relating *savoirs*.

This focus on ‘otherness’ in ICC may again obscure the existence of alternative cultural groupings and identifications, particularly those which transcend national boundaries, such as the identification with a global Anime community in international chatrooms described in Vettorel (2014). Communities and identifications such as this one do not fit well into the ICC framework because they cannot be explained in terms of national boundaries. Additionally, the emphasis on boundaries between ‘our’ and ‘other’ cultures leads to an emphasis on mediating ‘between’ cultures in several of Byram’s learning objectives, particularly for the two skills *savoirs* (Byram 1997: 61, 63). However, research into ELF has shown that “people do not have to be in-between cultures, they can be part of many different groups simultaneously without being between anything” (Baker 2015a: 153). Additionally, given the complex, fluid and negotiated nature of cultural references and practices in ELF communication, it may be difficult to determine which cultures and communicative practices ELF communication can be said to be ‘in between’ in a given interaction (Baker 2016: 73).

Finally, Byram’s characterizations of lingua franca communication in his writings do not fit well with research into ELF. Though Byram acknowledged that some learners may be preparing to use a language as a lingua franca and that language education has the responsibility to prepare these learners for this use of language (Byram 1997: 3), he tended to treat lingua franca communication as a form of deficit communication. His first remarks on language used as a lingua franca are quite telling. Here, he referred to the use of a language as a lingua franca as “an estranging and sometimes disturbing means of coping with the world for all concerned” (Byram 1997: 3). In later writings, he claimed that a lingua franca would never be able to serve satisfactorily as a means of uniting Europe linguistically because “the likelihood of

misunderstanding in a lingua franca is strong” (Byram 2008: 198). In the same paragraph, he also seemed to adopt the position that lingua franca communication is a form of culture or identity neutral communication, writing that “to use a lingua franca is reductive of [the interactants’] social identities, and diminishes them as human beings” (Byram 2008: 198). Both of these positions have been discussed above as problematic in light of research into the role of culture in ELF communication. In a later publication, he seemed to suggest that successful lingua franca communication could only take place if both parties were familiar with “a linguaculture from which the lingua franca has been derived”, i.e. the linguaculture of a community of native speakers of the language in question (Byram 2012a: 93). He thus appears to have assumed another problematic position, that lingua franca communication must be linked to the cultural norms of native speakers in order to be successful. Baker (2015a) felt that these misunderstandings of the nature of ELF communication could also “be viewed as a consequence of positing national structures as the predominant frame of cultural reference and identity orientation and thus failing to account for other cultural groupings and identifications” (Baker 2015a: 154). Consequently, Byram might have been more likely to dismiss lingua franca communication as deficit because it could not satisfactorily be tied to a target national culture. Whether or not this is the case, his characterizations of lingua franca communication as a deficit form of communication are not commensurate with findings of research into ELF.

Although ICC does seem to be able to account for the negotiated nature of cultural practices and references in ELF communication, its nationally bounded conception of culture limits its applicability to ELF communication in several substantial ways. A number of researchers have subsequently attempted to revise ICC and incorporate a more critical approach to intercultural communication. Most influential among these have been Byram’s (2008) ‘intercultural citizenship’, Guilherme’s (2002) ‘critical citizens’ and Risager’s (2007) ‘world citizens’. Byram (2008) attempted to build on the idea of critical cultural awareness, but largely retained the nationally bounded conception of culture that pervaded his original conception of ICC. Both Guilherme (2002) and Risager (2007) were critical of nationally bounded conceptions of culture; however, both still made use of the concept of target communities of speakers as an integral part of their frameworks. Additionally, Guilherme (2002) included no consideration of English used as a lingua franca, while Risager (2007) at times showed a misunderstanding of ELF research, most notably writing that

[s]ome people seem to think that ongoing research projects on language (English) as a lingua franca will result in people beginning to *teach* English as a lingua franca.
(Risager 2007: 197, emphasis original)

Here, her concern seems to be that ELF will be adopted as a model for the ELT classroom, despite the by now well-established viewpoint within the field of ELF research that ELF “is not a target-language community with an identifiable linguistic code or linguaculture” (Baker

2015a: 85) and thus cannot serve as a linguistic model for language learners. These positions led Baker (2015a) to conclude that these frameworks “share many of the limitations of the original model of ICC in a focus on national cultural structures and an unreflective assumption of the presence of an intercultural line. This in turn means that their applicability to understanding intercultural communication through ELF is restricted” (Baker 2015a: 155).

8.4 Intercultural Awareness (ICA): A new framework in light of ELF

In light of the limitations of ICC and related frameworks in accounting for culture in ELF communication, Baker (2009b, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2015a) proposed a new framework outlining what he termed ‘intercultural awareness’ (ICA). The framework retains many aspects of Byram’s ICC; indeed, Baker (2012a) himself stated that “ICA is best conceived as an extension of the earlier conceptions of [cultural awareness]”, and in particular Byram’s ICC framework, “that is more relevant to the needs of intercultural communication in expanding circle and global lingua franca contexts” (Baker 2012a: 66; cf. also Baker 2015a: 163). Like ICC, ICA is meant to be both a description of what a speaker with intercultural awareness possesses in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as a pedagogical framework to inform and guide teaching in the ELT classroom (Baker 2012a: 67, Baker 2012b: 30). ICA, like ICC, also adopts the intercultural speaker possessing the competences described in the framework, rather than the native speaker, as the model for the classroom learner (cf. Baker 2012a: 65, Baker 2012b: 30-31). Most crucially, though, ICA adopts the central element of ICC, critical cultural awareness, “emphasiz[ing] the need to reflect critically on cultural practices and their relationship to communication” (Baker 2015a: 163). However, ICA revises and extends a number of aspects of ICC, including critical cultural awareness, in an attempt to better account for the ways in which the cultural and intercultural dimensions of communication appear to play out in successful ELF interactions.

In particular, ICA is an attempt to answer concerns about the tendency in ICC and other previous frameworks to view culture as a bounded entity, often intrinsically linked to the concepts of nation and national language, as has been discussed above. Rather,

ICA recognizes the *intercultural* nature of the sociolinguistic context of lingua franca communication, especially through English. This involves an understanding of cultures as fluid, hybrid and emergent in intercultural communication, and the relationship between a language and its cultural context and references as being created in each instance of communication, based on pre-existing resources and those that emerge *in situ*. (Baker 2012b: 28-29, emphasis original)

ICA therefore attempts to account for “intercultural communication as a process and the need to employ any intercultural awareness in a flexible and situationally relevant manner” (Baker 2018: 33). This is emphasized in Baker’s definition of ICA:

Intercultural awareness is a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices and frames of reference can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in communication. (Baker 2011b: 202, Baker 2015a: 163⁷³)

In the second half of the definition, ‘context specific’ links Baker’s definition to Hymes’ (1972) concept of acceptability, whereby Baker stressed that “these terms emphasize the situatedness of appropriacy and that it is a concept that is likely to vary between instances of communication” (Baker 2015a: 164). This underscores again the need for a high degree of flexibility in actual ELF communicative situations. In the first half of the definition, Baker chose the term ‘intercultural’ to draw attention to ICA’s emphasis “on awareness of intercultural communication rather [than] [sic] awareness of particular cultures” (Baker 2015a: 164). He used the term ‘awareness’ in a holistic sense meant to incorporate knowledge, skills and attitudes without making what he viewed to be a problematic distinction between competence and performance (Baker 2015a: 163). Indeed, Baker considered conscious understanding of the nature of culture and its role in communication to be as important as any tacit, underlying competence (Baker 2015a: 167). Finally, his reference to ‘culturally based forms, practices and frames of reference’ aims to avoid creating a link between culture and particular nationalities or couching culture in terms of “an ‘our/their’ culture distinction” (Baker 2015a: 163).

Rather than breaking his framework down into partial competences around the specific types of attitudes, skills and knowledge needed for successful intercultural communication as Byram did in ICC, Baker instead divided his framework into twelve elements, which are intended to “delineate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a user of English as a global lingua franca needs to be able to successfully communicate in these complex settings” (Baker 2012a: 67). These twelve elements are in turn organized into three levels, as Figure 3 shows:

⁷³ Baker first offered a definition of ICA in Baker (2009b). This definition is nearly identical to the above definition, except that Baker refers to ‘frames of understanding’ rather than ‘frames of reference’ and to ‘real time communication’ rather than ‘communication’ (cf. Baker 2009b: 88). This earlier version of the definition also appears in Baker (2012a) and Baker (2012b). However, I have chosen to adopt the version from Baker (2015a) as the definition that reflects the most up-to-date understanding of ICA available. It should still be noted that this definition was not yet available when my pilot course was planned and held in 2013.

Level 1: basic cultural awareness

An awareness of:

1. culture as a set of shared behaviors, beliefs, and values;
2. the role culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning;
3. our own culturally based behavior, values, and beliefs and the ability to articulate this;
4. others' culturally based behavior, values and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally based behavior, values and beliefs.

Level 2: advanced cultural awareness

An awareness of:

5. the relative nature of cultural norms;
6. cultural understanding as provisional and open to revision;
7. multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping;
8. individuals as members of many social groupings including cultural ones;
9. common ground between specific cultures as well as an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures;

Level 3: intercultural awareness

An awareness of:

10. culturally based frames of reference, forms, and communicative practices as being related both to specific cultures and also as emergent and hybrid in intercultural communication;
11. initial interaction in intercultural communication as possibly based on cultural stereotypes or generalizations but an ability to move beyond these through: [sic]⁷⁴
12. a capacity to negotiate and mediate between different emergent communicative practices and frames of reference based on the above understanding of culture in intercultural communication.

Figure 3: The twelve elements of intercultural awareness
(Baker 2015a: 164⁷⁵)

Baker emphasized that these twelve elements “are, of course, an abstraction and that the distinctions between the different components are for analytical purposes” (Baker 2015a: 167). The twelve elements are meant to be useful for describing more narrowly what should be understood as one holistic concept, and, as with ICC and other previous frameworks of

⁷⁴ For readability, I will refrain from adding [sic] to subsequent quotations of ICA element 11.

⁷⁵ Baker’s ‘Twelve elements of intercultural awareness’ first appeared in Baker 2012a: 66, and Baker notes that the more current version published in Baker (2015a) is adapted from Baker (2012a). Again, I have chosen to reproduce the most current version of these twelve elements here, although this version was not yet available at the time my course was planned and held. The differences between this version and the version which appeared in Baker (2012a: 66) are minimal; Baker originally used the phrase ‘culturally induced’ in place of ‘culturally based’ in elements 3 and 4.

communicative competence, this is intended in part to guide teachers as they select what cultural topics to teach in their individual classroom settings.

Level 1, which Baker called ‘basic cultural awareness’, includes an elementary understanding of culture as a concept (element 1), as well as its role in interpretation of meaning (element 2). This entails the development of “a conscious understanding of the individual’s own linguaculture and the manner in which it influences behavior, beliefs, and values, and its importance in communication” (Baker 2015a: 165). Thus, the focus here is particularly on the development of an awareness of the learner’s own cultural background and the ability to articulate this awareness (element 3). At this level, awareness of one’s own culture will often be expressed in generalizations and stereotypes (Baker 2015a: 165). First comparisons may also be made with other cultures (element 4). Again, knowledge about other cultures will probably not yet be systematic and will likely also be based on generalizations and stereotypes, but this knowledge is intended primarily to aid the development of a basic awareness of cultural differences and of a rudimentary ability to articulate aspects of one’s own cultural practices through comparison to others’ (Baker 2015a: 165).

One characteristic trait of this level is that any understanding of culture, either as a general concept or in relation to specific cultural groups, is likely to be essentialist in nature; that is, it will likely be based on an artificially simplified understanding of cultural groupings and influences. As has been discussed above, such an essentialist view of culture is generally seen as problematic for ELF communication. However, Baker maintained that such a level is necessary within a framework of intercultural awareness because

it is important to recognise that in attempting to model how language and culture may be perceived and used in intercultural communication essentialist positions may be adopted by those engaged in intercultural communication. Such positions, particularly related to national cultural characterisations, are a common part of folk knowledge and also much intercultural training. Any characterisation of intercultural communication and intercultural competence or awareness needs to account for them, even if we attempt to move beyond them. (Baker 2015a: 165)

Many learners may bring some competence at this level with them into the classroom, acquired either through more general processes of socialization or through more targeted cultural learning such as the intercultural training mentioned by Baker in the above quotation. Learners may also encounter interlocutors in actual communicative situations outside the classroom who have not moved beyond this level, and they must be prepared for such situations as well. However, for the ELF-oriented classroom, this level is to be viewed as a starting point for developing ICA, a basis upon which to build rather than an end unto itself.

Level 2, which Baker called ‘advanced cultural awareness’, is characterized by development away from the essentialist perspectives of level 1 and toward a more complex

understanding of culture and its role in communication (Baker 2015a: 166). However, this more complex understanding will generally remain “within defined cultural groupings (often at national levels)” (Baker 2015a: 222). Baker acknowledged that in many ways, this level of his framework is most similar to Byram’s (1997) conception of ICC in terms of the knowledge, skills and attitudes described. A comparative approach involving knowledge of specific cultures still plays a significant role here (element 9), and Baker noted that this knowledge might still be of culture at the national level (Baker 2015a: 166). In terms of skills, a speaker at this level should be able to use his or her knowledge of particular cultures to predict potential areas of cultural mismatch which could potentially lead to miscommunication (element 9) (Baker 2015a: 166). Additionally, they “should also be able to compare and mediate between specific cultural practices and frames of reference”, though this might still “be in relation to national or target communities” (Baker 2015a: 166).

However, in line with more critical interpretations of ICC such as Guilherme (2002) and Risager (2007), Baker also emphasized the need to begin to move beyond an essentialist perspective toward a more diverse, flexible and nuanced understanding of culture and its role in communication (Baker 2015a: 166). Many of the elements Baker listed as being part of this level are focused on the development of an awareness of the diverse, contested and fluid nature of culture. This includes an awareness that cultural norms are relative (element 5); that our understanding of culture reflects the state of our current experience and may need to be revised as we gain further experience (element 6); that cultural groups will likely contain individuals with diverse rather than homogenous perspectives (element 7); and that individuals generally identify with more than one type of social group and not only with their national culture (element 8). Thus, there is already “an attempt to go beyond single cultural frames of reference” (Baker 2012b: 30) apparent in the characterization of this level, a theme that becomes all the more central in the description of the final level.

The final level, level 3, depicts full intercultural awareness as envisaged by Baker. It is at this level that the framework most noticeably departs from previous frameworks such as ICC in its attempt to better account for the nature of intercultural communication as it is currently understood in ELF research. This level is characterized by a “fluid, hybrid and emergent understanding of cultures and languages in intercultural communication” (Baker 2012a: 67) which “transcends fixed boundaries and language-culture-nation correlations” (Baker 2015a: 222). Someone who has achieved this level “recognizes that cultural references and communicative practices in intercultural communication may or may not be related to specific cultures” (Baker 2015a: 166) and that “English is used to express and enact cultural practices and forms that are related to a range of communities, moving between and across the local, national and global in dynamic ways that often result in emergent and novel practices and

forms” (Baker 2015a: 166-167). This involves an awareness that speakers in intercultural interactions may draw on some of the references and practices of specific cultures, but that they may also negotiate and even create their own references and practices *in situ* (element 10). Additionally, it involves awareness that an interaction may initially be guided by generalizations and stereotypes, but that it is possible to progress past these as the interaction develops (element 11). Most centrally, according to Baker, someone with full ICA has developed the skills necessary “to mediate and negotiate between different cultural frames of reference and communicative practices as they occur in specific examples of intercultural communication” (element 12) (Baker 2015a: 166). They are thus able to put their conscious understanding of culture into practice in flexible and context-specific ways, allowing them “to cope with the diversity and fluidity of intercultural communication in which cultural frames of reference cannot be defined *a priori*” (Baker 2012b: 30).

The ICA framework thus appears to be a progression of three levels in which the first two are viewed as building blocks and only the third represents fully-developed intercultural awareness. However, Baker stressed that learning guided by ICA may not always follow this seemingly linear progression. Rather, some learners may develop some of the later elements before some of the earlier ones, especially if they have already had experience in multilingual environments (Baker 2012a: 67, Baker 2015a: 167). As teachers, we therefore cannot assume that a learner who demonstrates a higher-level awareness or skill has necessarily acquired all the previous elements as well. Additionally, even speakers who have developed full intercultural awareness as it is described in level 3 may make use of elements from other levels, thus appearing to “‘revert’ to lower levels” in actual instances of communication (Baker 2015a: 167). Thus, it may be difficult to ascertain where a speaker falls on the framework, as well as whether and to what extent learning has taken place after classroom instruction.

Overall, the ICA framework prioritizes the development of a conscious understanding of the nature of the relationship between language and culture, as well as the skills needed to translate this understanding flexibly and context-sensitively into interaction in actual intercultural settings. Knowledge of specific cultures is viewed as secondary, since, as has already been mentioned above, it is widely acknowledged that learners cannot possibly be equipped with specific knowledge of every culture that they may encounter in interactions using ELF. The emphasis on skills and awareness over specific knowledge sets ICA apart from ICC, in which knowledge of specific cultures, and particularly of those cultures associated with countries in which the language studied is spoken as L1, is treated as equally important alongside attitudes and skills.

This is not to say that knowledge of specific cultures has no place in the ICA framework: “To develop ICA learners need to have an in-depth knowledge of culture, and to achieve this, it is necessary for learners to have cultural knowledge” (Baker 2012a: 67). It will therefore be important, especially in developing the first two levels of ICA, to help learners gain knowledge about the cultural references and practices of at least a small number of cultures in order to help them develop the higher-order awareness and skills involved in the third level. However, such knowledge “is not the end point of learning. Instead it should be viewed as part of the process of engagement with interculturality in which knowledge of ‘others’ is continually reflected upon, evaluated, adapted and changed” (Baker 2015a: 186). Thus, the acquisition of specific knowledge is viewed as serving the development of awareness and skills, rather than as an end unto itself.

For the ELF-oriented classroom, researchers in the field of ELF generally agree that this knowledge need not be of the cultures typically associated with countries in which English is widely spoken as a native language. Rather, classroom work would ideally focus on those cultures that are locally relevant to the learners, so far as these can be identified (Baker 2012a: 67). Furthermore, knowledge of one’s own culture is included in ICA, so that exploration of the learners’ own local culture(s) can become an initial area of focus for classroom instruction (Baker 2012b: 31). An ELF-oriented approach thus opens up a wider range of cultures for exploration in the classroom than has traditionally been presented in ELT materials. In addition to focusing on specific cultures, however, Baker also maintained that “it is necessary to focus on the intercultural encounters themselves and examine the different ways in which culturally influenced behaviors are manifested in such communication and the way these are negotiated by the participants in the exchange” (Baker 2012a: 67-68). In looking at carefully selected instances of intercultural communication, learners have the chance to notice the ways in which cultural norms and practices are negotiated and created, allowing them to develop the kinds of awareness characteristic of level 3 of the ICA framework.

8.5 *The role of culture and intercultural instruction in the pilot course*

Given the intercultural nature of ELF communication as it has been described in the literature and summarized in this introductory chapter, as well as the importance ascribed to “intercultural communication skills and strategies” (Jenkins 2014: 26) for successful ELF communication, culture and intercultural communication was established as a significant strand in the pilot course. And since Baker’s ICA seemed to be the framework which is

currently best able to account for the nature of culture and its relationship to language in ELF communication, as well as the kinds of attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary for successful intercultural communication through ELF, it was adopted as the principle guide in planning the culture-related lesson segments of the pilot course. In the remainder of this strand, Chapter 9 will begin by discussing the factors that influenced how the specific topics that became the focus of the individual lesson segments in this strand of the course were selected. The following four chapters (Chapters 10-13) will then look more closely at each of these four topics in turn. The first section of each of these chapters begins by identifying which elements of ICA were addressed and discussing the tasks and materials chosen to facilitate work on each topic. The subsequent sections of each chapter provide an analysis of what actually happened in the classroom during those lesson segments. Finally, Chapter 14 draws some overarching conclusions about how well these plans worked in practice and to what extent they reflected the suggestions for cultural and intercultural teaching in the ELF-oriented classroom set out in this introductory section.

It is worth mentioning at this point that much research has been done, and continues to be done, in the area of culture in ELF and ELF as a form of intercultural communication since the pilot course was held in the first half of 2013. This introductory chapter has drawn upon studies and publications that were not yet available then. Therefore, it will at times be necessary in the analysis of the pilot course to discuss how I might have changed what I chose to do then in light of more recent insights.

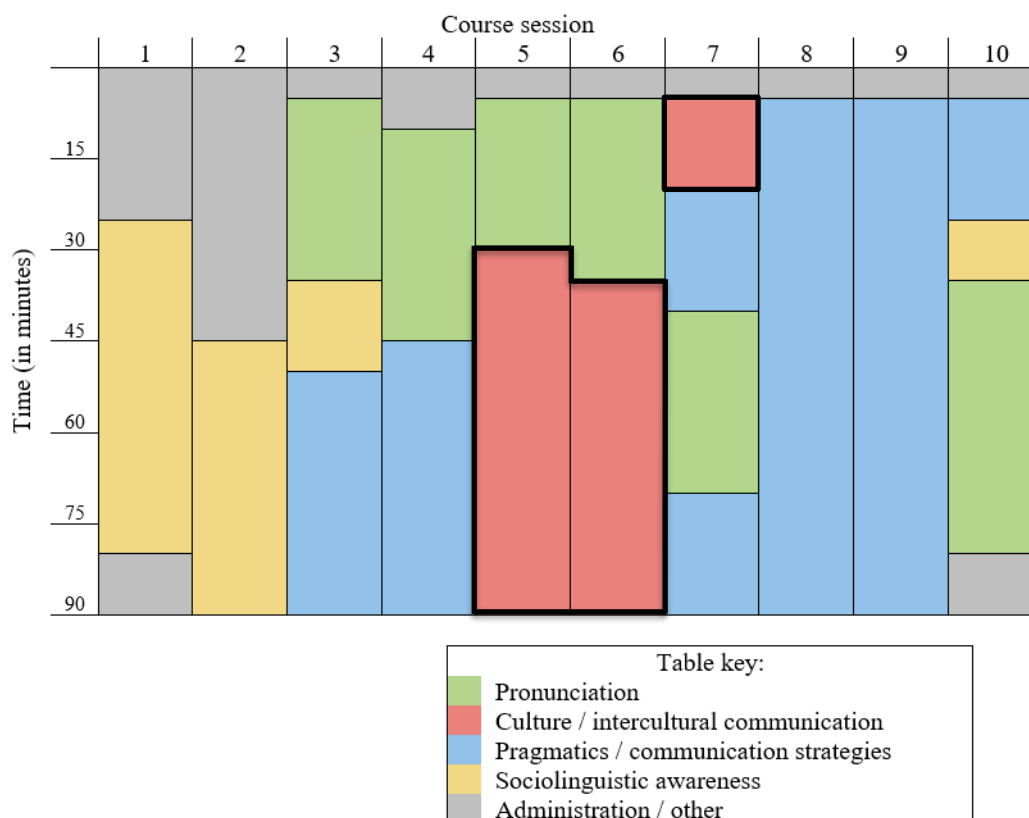
9 Selecting topics and materials for developing Intercultural Awareness (ICA)

The complex, fluid and emergent nature of culture and its relationship to language in intercultural communication as it has been described in ELF research and summarized in Baker's ICA framework poses significant challenges for both learners and teachers in the ELF-oriented classroom. This creates a need for teachers to engage in "[s]election and simplification of content to make it manageable for teaching and learning"⁷⁶ (Baker 2015a: 199). It is up to the teacher to balance this pedagogical need for simplification and manageability against the risk of oversimplification and essentialization (Baker 2015a: 199, Baker 2015b: 26). The teacher is ultimately responsible for "critically evaluating what aspects of culture are focused on and what are excluded or left for later" (Baker 2015b: 26), and this will in large part have to do with the local context of teaching and the needs of the learners in a particular classroom (Baker 2015a: 199, Baker 2015b: 26). This chapter will explore factors that impacted the selection of topics and materials for lesson segments on culture and intercultural communication in the pilot course.

As with the other strands of the pilot course, time was an important factor that had to be considered in planning the lesson sequence on culture and intercultural communication. During preliminary planning of the course, portions of course sessions 5 through 7 were reserved for targeted work on developing ICA. This essentially placed culture in the center of the 11-week course. These sessions were split with topics in the areas of pronunciation (course sessions 5 through 7) and pragmatics and communication strategies (course session 7), so that about half of each of these three course sessions (approximately 135 minutes total) was available for tasks focused on culture and intercultural communication. The distribution of these lesson segments within the pilot course is shown in Table 10:

⁷⁶ As Baker (2015a) points out, the need to select and simplify in the face of complexity is not unique to the area of (inter)cultural teaching in ELT: "the tension between simplicity and complexity is a common one in language teaching and applies to all aspects of the process from linguistic forms, to discourse structures and cultural content" (Baker 2015a: 199).

Table 10: *Culture and intercultural communication lesson segments*



Given the limited amount of time we had to devote to culture and intercultural communication, and the shortness of the course in general, it was clear that we would not be able to make much perceptible progress toward developing ICA. I hoped, however, to systematically give the students opportunities to develop more awareness of the nature of culture and its relationship to language in ELF communication in relation to various points on the ICA framework.

Unlike with the pronunciation strand of the pilot course, I chose not to attempt to ascertain the students' level of ICA at the start of the course through some sort of diagnostic assessment. To my knowledge, no assessment tools have specifically been developed for assessing ICA. Byram (1997), however, talked at length about how to assess the five *savoirs* of ICC (Byram 1997: 87-111), and the indicators he described are considerably more complex and time-consuming to collect and evaluate than assessing the pronunciation of discrete features using a pronunciation paragraph, as I did for the pronunciation strand of the course (cf. Chapter 5). In addition, as has been mentioned in 8.4, Baker has pointed out that the development of ICA does not necessarily take place in a linear fashion (Baker 2012a: 67, Baker 2015a: 167). Even if I had been able to establish that a particular learner exhibited awareness of a particular element of ICA, this would not have guaranteed that he or she had developed an awareness of

all of the prior elements of the framework. Likewise, establishing that a learner appeared to lack awareness of a particular element would not necessarily have implicated that he or she lacked awareness of all later elements of the framework.

Instead, I put together a series of lesson segments that addressed a number of important themes which had crystalized out of my study of the literature on culture in ELF communication and that touched on a wide range of the elements of ICA. In contrast to the lesson segments in the pronunciation and pragmatics/communication strategies strands of the course, the focus of these lesson segments was intended to be squarely on (inter)cultural content and awareness, rather than on the development of linguistic or strategic competences (cf. Baker 2015b: 24). However, some connections were also created to the other strands of the course, e.g. through the use of listening tasks involving non-native speaker accents of English, which would also contribute to the development of students' receptive accommodation skills (cf. 7.2). These connections will be highlighted in relation to specific lesson segments in the subsequent chapters of this strand.

One of the aims for this strand was to give the students at least some opportunity to work with elements at level 3 of ICA, since this is the level that truly reflects the kind of competence needed in ELF communication and sets ICA apart from previous frameworks such as ICC. However, it seemed inadvisable to jump straight to this highest level without establishing a common basis upon which to build as a learning group. The lesson sequence would therefore need to start with some activities aimed at developing – or possibly reactivating – awareness of at least some of the elements at levels 1 and 2 before introducing elements from level 3. However, it was never the intention to take an entirely linear approach to developing ICA in the pilot course. Even activities aimed primarily at addressing elements of basic cultural awareness were conceptualized so as to bring in insights from the study of culture in ELF communication, in part by linking lower-level elements of ICA to higher-level ones. This approach would help us to avoid the kind of essentialized portrayal of culture that has characterized much cultural teaching in traditional ELT. Additionally, it would make the lesson segments more efficient, in that it would give any students who had not yet had the opportunity to develop awareness of lower-level elements the chance to do so, but would also provide students with opportunities for development at higher levels within the same activity.

With this approach to the elements of ICA and a number of potential topics in mind, I then began the search for tasks and materials that would support their development in the classroom. This proved somewhat challenging due to the lack of ELT materials available at the time at which the pilot course was being planned which reflected and supported an approach to culture and intercultural communication consistent with frameworks such as Baker's ICA.

Intercultural and ELF scholars have critiqued a number of aspects of the cultural representations traditionally presented in ELT materials, and particularly in textbooks, which do not fit well with such an approach. These include the frequently essentialized and even stereotypical nature of such representations (Gray 2010: 178-179; Vettorel 2010: 154; Baker 2015a: 179); the restricted focus on the national level of culture (Baker 2015a: 175, 179) and particularly on the cultures and cultural norms of nations in which English is spoken as a native language, especially Great Britain (Gray 2010: 174, 136-137; Vettorel 2010: 154); the limited range of cultural themes presented (Kramsch 1991: 218; Gray 2010: 119-121, 174-175); the focus on facts and cultural products rather than on processes of intercultural communication (Kramsch 1993: 8; Baker 2015a: 179); and the uncritical way in which cultural representations are often presented (Vettorel 2010: 154; Baker 2015a: 175, 179).

There are some indications that the situation may slowly be changing. In her study of textbooks published for use in Italian secondary schools, Vettorel (2010) found that “some innovative elements for a more enlarged representation of culture” had begun to appear in the materials she examined in the form of “an opening up towards a wider view, driving away from a totally NS-referenced, target-culture perspective” (Vettorel 2010: 178). Dewey (2015) and Baker (2015a), on the other hand, were somewhat less sanguine about how far-reaching change has actually been. Both examined *Global* and *English Unlimited*, two adult coursebook series published around 2010 and marketed specifically as preparing learners for international communication, and both came to the conclusion that, although these coursebooks claim to adopt and promote a global perspective on English and its use as a lingua franca in intercultural communication, in practice little had changed in terms of the way in which language and culture were actually approached (Dewey 2015: 123-124, Baker 2015a: 180-181). Likewise, Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013), who evaluated six adult coursebook series then currently on the market, including *Global* and *English Unlimited*, concluded that none of the books in their corpus really go far enough in presenting cultural norms beyond those of Great Britain and the United States or providing tasks which help learners to develop critical cultural awareness⁷⁷ (Tomlinson and Masuhara 2013: 241).

There would thus appear to be a paucity of ideal ELT materials to turn to for the teacher who wishes to incorporate an approach consistent with current intercultural and ELF research

⁷⁷ It should be noted that while Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) make some valid arguments about shortcomings in the approaches to culture in the six adult coursebook series they investigated, they themselves seem to implicitly adopt the position that cultural learning means learning about national cultures. Levels other than the national are completely absent from their discussion (cf. Tomlinson and Masuhara 2013: 241).

on culture and intercultural communication into the classroom. However, Baker (2012a, 2012b, 2015a, 2015b) has “attempted to bridge the supposed gap between theory and practice” by offering “empirically grounded suggestions for teaching as well as materials which incorporate insights from intercultural communication and ELF research” (Baker 2015a: 194). He divided these suggestions into the following five⁷⁸ strands (Baker 2015a: 195-198):

1. **Exploring the complexity of local cultures:** Since all learners bring their own cultural backgrounds with them into the classroom, this is a strand for exploration that Baker claimed “is available in all settings” (Baker 2015a: 195). As the title of the strand suggests, the major goal in exploring cultures known first-hand to the learners is to help them uncover the diversity and complexity of those cultures. Baker claimed that even those learning groups that are seemingly the most linguistically and culturally homogenous often prove to be quite diverse. Through discussion and small ethnographic projects, this diversity can be revealed. Learners can be guided toward awareness of the multi-voiced nature of culture, in which cultural groupings may include individuals with different or even conflicting viewpoints. They should also become aware of levels of cultural grouping other than the national and the fact that most individuals belong to multiple cultural groupings of different kinds. Finally, they should come to realize that cultural characteristics that may generally apply to a particular group might not apply to each and every member of the group individually. In other words, although the majority of the members of a group may exhibit a particular attribute or attitude, thus making it characteristic of the group as a whole, individual members of the group may be exceptions. This heightened awareness of the complexity and diversity of their own cultural groupings can then be used to lead to a heightened awareness of similar phenomena in other cultures (Baker 2015a: 195-196).
2. **Exploring cultural representations in language learning materials:** Baker acknowledged that language learning materials and textbooks are widely used in the ELT classroom, and that they thus provide a significant source of cultural content through the images and descriptions of the cultural groupings they provide. Despite their shortcomings, he argued that such materials “can still be put to productive use in developing ICA” (Baker 2015a: 196). The key here is to approach these cultural representations critically. Learners can be asked to compare these representations with their own experiences of the cultures exemplified. They may also be asked to consider questions such as what has been included in the representation, what has been left out and why. Additionally, they could be given the task of comparing representations of the same culture in different textbooks or language learning materials. Through such activities, “learners should begin to develop the abilities needed to make critical

⁷⁸ In the earlier versions, Baker (2012a, 2012b) differentiated between six strands rather than five. This newer version represents a reorganization of his ideas, rather than implying that he has removed or reduced previous suggestions. I find this reorganization quite logical, and I have chosen to adopt the categories described in Baker (2015a) as being the most up-to-date, as well as the most exhaustively discussed, version of Baker’s suggestions, even though this version was not available yet when the pilot course was designed and held.

comparisons between cultures as well as learning to critically evaluate any characterization of culture” (Baker 2015a: 196).

3. **Exploring cultural representations in the media and arts both online and in more ‘traditional’ media:** This strand is very similar to strand 2, but it extends the resources available for classroom work to include the various forms of ‘traditional’ media (literature, art, film, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, etc.), as well as digital media (websites, blogs, podcasts, etc.). Baker claimed that the internet is particularly well-placed to draw attention to more global cultural groupings “which may not easily be associated with any particular national group” (Baker 2015a: 196). The internet can also help learners to generally appreciate the global role of ELF. Additionally, Baker stressed the need to include representations of cultures outside the Inner Circle, suggesting for example that the selection of “English language literature should clearly extend beyond that produced in the inner circle countries” (Baker 2012a: 68). As in strand 2, a critical perspective should be taken to all cultural representations examined “with comparisons and critical interpretations encouraged” (Baker 2015a: 196).
4. **Making use of cultural informants:** In the ELT classroom, “cultural informants can provide a source of knowledge and interpretations of other cultures and the learners’ own culture” (Baker 2015a: 197). Here, Baker primarily envisioned language teachers as the main resource available for the classroom. Non-local teachers can share their firsthand experience of their own cultures, as well as offering an outsider’s perspective on the learners’ cultures. Local teachers who share the learners’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds may still have experience with other cultures that they can share with their learners. Additionally, both local and non-local teachers can discuss their experiences with intercultural communication with their learners. No matter the source of the cultural insights, Baker stressed that a critical stance is still imperative in which the subjective and partial nature of such accounts is acknowledged (Baker 2015a: 197).
5. **Engaging in intercultural communication both face-to-face and electronically:** “[R]esearch into cultural and intercultural awareness highlights the not surprising finding that *experience* of intercultural communication is essential for developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for successful intercultural communication” (Baker 2012b: 31, emphasis original). Thus, Baker encouraged the inclusion of experience of intercultural communication in the language classroom if at all possible. Such experiences “are valuable in themselves as offering opportunities to develop and put ICA into practice” (Baker 2012a: 69), but are also important “as examples of intercultural communicative experiences which can serve as a source for subsequent classroom exploration and discussion” (Baker 2015b: 23). They might take the form of an exchange of some variety, but Baker stressed that there are many other possibilities for intercultural communication even if travel is not an option. Learners might interact with tourists or other visitors to their area. They might engage in online communication through mutual projects with learning groups from other cultures, either asynchronously through email or synchronously through chatrooms or video services such as Skype (Baker 2015a: 197-198). According to Baker, learning groups including non-local learners and/or taught by non-local teachers provide ready-made opportunities for intercultural communication within the classroom. And finally, “students and teachers can bring their own experiences of intercultural communication [outside the classroom] to the class for discussion and reflection, for example considering what was successful or not successful or how they felt about the

experience” (Baker 2012a: 69). Thus, there are many opportunities for incorporating experiences of intercultural communication into the classroom that can help learners to further develop ICA.

In formulating these strands, Baker was interested in accounting for materials and resources that are available to teachers for classroom instruction. However, he stressed that these strands were not to be taken as prescriptive. He purposefully kept his suggestions quite general, “since the particular details of applying these strands will depend on local contexts [...]. Of course, not all of these ideas will be relevant in all contexts and there may be other opportunities for developing ICA in classrooms which have not been included here” (Baker 2015a: 195). Thus, Baker considered it “crucial that teachers interpret the suggestions here in a way that is relevant to their own teaching contexts” (Baker 2015a: 195). This involves evaluating the possibilities and constraints placed upon their classrooms by their individual teaching situations, as well as by the needs and interests of their learners.

Finally, Baker consistently stressed the need for a critical approach to all of these strands:

It is important to realize that all of these sources will only provide partial accounts of cultures and will inevitably be biased. However, as long as this is made clear and learners and teachers approach the cultural images and information presented in a critical manner, these can provide valuable opportunities for experience of and reflection on intercultural communication and contact with other cultures that can aid in the development of ICA. (Baker 2012a: 69)

None of the resources Baker has suggested will be ideal in the sense that none are capable of giving a comprehensive picture of the nature of culture and its relationship to language in intercultural communication. Thus, it will be necessary to treat all materials and resources critically in the classroom if learners are to develop the kind of awareness of culture and its role in intercultural communication described in ICA.

The quotation above also suggests that a critical approach may actually help teachers to solve the question of where to find appropriate materials for developing ICA in the classroom, a point which Baker (2015a) also made in discussing the second strand of resources for the ELF-oriented classroom, in which the focus is on ELT materials. According to Baker (2015a), such an approach allows teachers to choose less-than-perfect representations of culture such as those often found in current ELT materials and to use their imperfections as a starting point for discussion (cf. Baker 2015a: 196). A similar point has been made by Seidlhofer (2011), who claims that “[w]hat is crucial therefore is not *what* teaching materials are used but *how* they are used” (Seidlhofer 2011: 201, emphasis original). Thus, Seidlhofer argues, teachers need not wait for the development of ideal ELT materials, but can begin with what they have available to them, provided they adopt a critical approach.

One of the more specific research aims for this strand of the pilot course thus became to explore further how currently available ELT materials might be critically approached and adapted to facilitate the development of ICA in the ELF-oriented classroom. The search for tasks and materials for this strand of the pilot course began with an examination of a number of different ELT materials that were then available. Additionally, rather than basing classroom instruction on one source, it seemed advantageous to select tasks from a range of sources for at least three reasons. First, it would allow the selection of the strongest tasks available for each particular topic. Second, it would help to balance out the weaknesses of individual materials, thus providing the students with better learning opportunities. And third, it would make it possible to compare tasks and materials from a number of sources and to explore what appeared to make each more or less effective for developing ICA in the classroom. Consequently, a number of materials of different types were considered, including general English coursebooks, business English materials and intercultural training materials.

Tasks were ultimately selected from three sources, each representing a different type of material: the *Intercultural Resource Pack* (Utley 2004), a set of intercultural communication training materials; *Working in Asia* (Frendo and Hsu 2010), a business English textbook focused on intercultural communication between German and Asian business people; and *English Unlimited* (Tilbury et al. 2011), the general English coursebook series that the university language center through which the pilot course took place was currently using as the basis for many of their English courses. Together, these three sources provided enough tasks and materials to support the development of the topics and elements of ICA that had been selected in ways that would be compatible with an ELF-oriented approach to culture and intercultural communication. It was therefore unnecessary to utilize additional types of resources from the other four strands described by Baker (2015a: 195-198) in designing and selecting tasks for the pilot course. That said, several of the tasks drew to some extent on elements of Baker's other strands, most notably on the first, 'exploring the complexity of local cultures', and the fifth, 'engaging in intercultural communication both face-to-face and electronically'. These connections will be indicated in relationship to the relevant tasks in the discussion of lesson planning for each topic in Chapters 10 through 13.

Despite their potential, none of the selected tasks was completely ideal from an ELF-oriented standpoint; each had some weaknesses in terms of how culture and its relationship to language in intercultural communication were presented. I will discuss the weaknesses identified during the planning phase of the course and how I planned to critically address them with the students as they become relevant in the discussion of each topic as well.

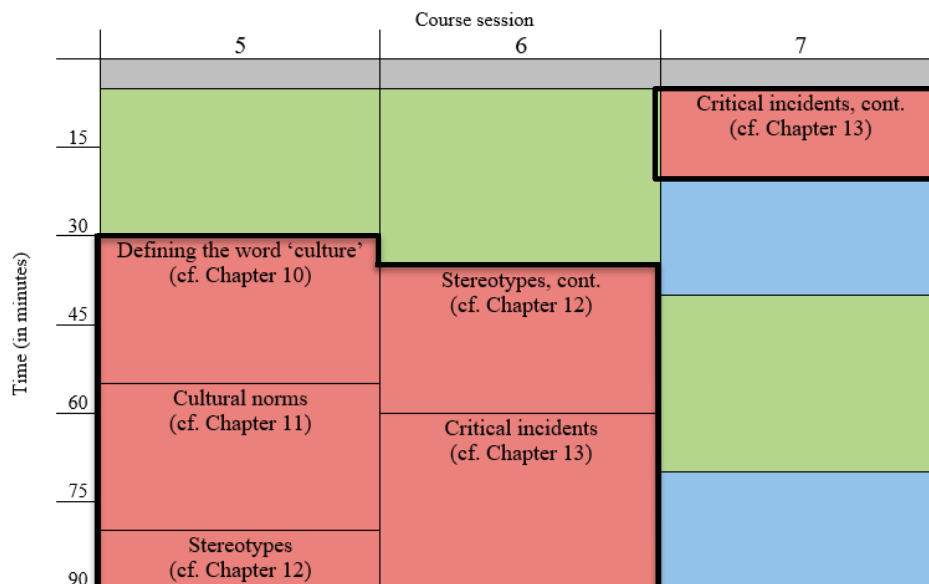
The final plan for this strand of the course consisted of a series of four lesson segments centering on four topics and their connections with nine of the twelve elements of ICA, as is shown in Table 11:

| <i>Course session(s)</i> | <i>Topic</i> | <i>Elements of ICA to address</i> | <i>Source of tasks/materials</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 4-5 | Defining the word 'culture' | 1, 8 | <i>Intercultural Resource Pack</i> (Utley 2004) |
| 5 | Cultural norms | 3, 4, 5, 9 | <i>Working in Asia</i> (Frendo and Hsu 2010) |
| 5-6 | Stereotypes | 7, 11 | <i>Working in Asia</i> (Frendo and Hsu 2010) <i>Intercultural Resource Pack</i> (Utley 2004) |
| 6-7 | Critical incidents | 2, 9 | <i>English Unlimited B2</i> (Tilbury et al. 2011) <i>Working in Asia</i> (Frendo and Hsu 2010) |

Table 11: Overview of topics on culture and intercultural communication

Table 12 further illustrates how these topics were distributed within course sessions 5-7:

Table 12: Distribution of culture and intercultural communication topics by lesson segment



| Table key: | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ■ | Pronunciation |
| ■ | Culture |
| ■ | Pragmatics / communication strategies |
| ■ | Sociocultural aspects of English |
| ■ | Administration / other |

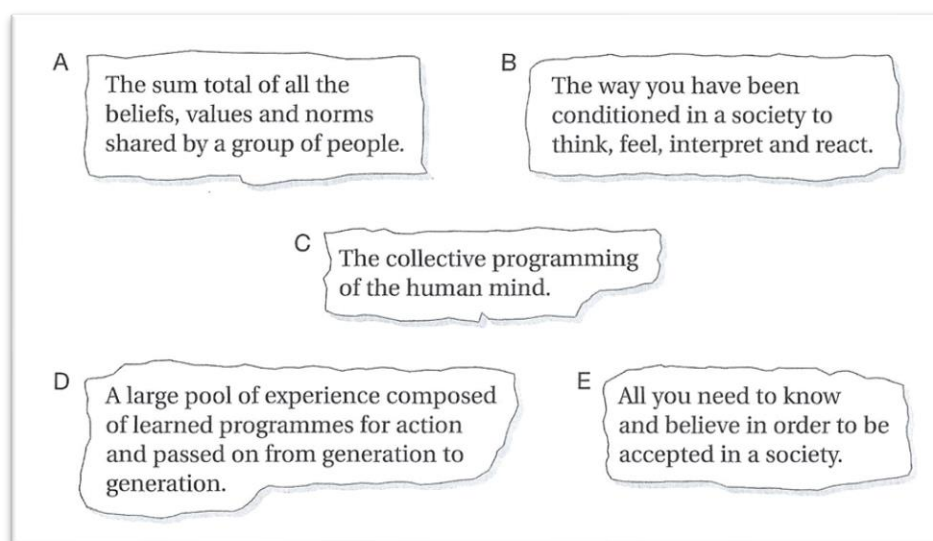
Having addressed the more general factors and considerations that influenced the choice of topics and materials for this strand of the pilot course, the following four chapters will discuss each of these topics in turn. The chapter devoted to discussion of each topic is indicated in Table 12 above. The first section of each chapter will identify the elements of ICA that constituted the pedagogical aims for that lesson segment and outline the tasks that were used to address these aims. The following sections will then provide analysis of what actually happened in the classroom during the lesson segments themselves.

10 Topic 1: Defining the word *culture* (course sessions 4-5)

10.1 Pedagogic aims, tasks and materials for topic 1

The lesson sequence on culture and intercultural communication in ELF began by addressing the basic question: What is culture? The primary aim of this lesson segment was thus to raise – or reactivate – the students’ “awareness of culture as a set of shared behaviors, beliefs and values” (ICA element 1). The materials used to facilitate the development of this topic in the classroom came from module⁷⁹ 1.2 from the *Intercultural Resource Pack* (Utley 2004: 14-15), entitled *Defining the word ‘culture’*. In this module, learners are provided with a worksheet that begins with the statement “‘Culture’ can mean different things to different people” (Utley 2004: 15). It then gives the learners a series of questions to briefly consider: what factors contribute to the creation of culture, what groups can be said to have a culture, and how culture manifests itself. Following this, at the heart of the module, the worksheet presents five definitions of culture as a starting point for discussion on how the learners themselves understand the term:

Materials excerpt 22:



Utley (2004): 15

⁷⁹ The *Intercultural Resource Pack* is described as “designed to be modular”, in the sense that “any activity can be used independently of the others” (Utley 2004: 6). I have therefore chosen to refer to sections within this work as ‘modules’ rather than ‘units’.

The worksheet directs the learners to read through these definitions and decide which one is closest to their own understanding of culture. The learners are then asked to consider whether anything appears to be missing from the definitions. Finally, they are invited to write their own definition of culture if they are unsatisfied with those provided.

The goal of this module is not to present or develop an ultimate, ‘correct’ definition of culture, but rather to get the learners thinking about their understanding of the notion of culture and its facets. As Utley (2004) puts it in the teacher’s guide to module 1.2, “[a] search for [the learners’] ‘best’ definition may be motivating, but the most important thing in this activity is to generate, compare and expand ideas” (Utley 2004: 14). Thus, the process of considering various definitions of culture and the discussion generated by the activity are in some ways more important than the definitions the learners settle upon in the end. The definitions provided offer a range of views on culture, and particularly as these are not intended to be prescriptive, no obvious clashes were identified with an ELF perspective on culture and its relationship to intercultural communication during the planning phase of this topic.

The teacher’s guide to this module proposes that the learners work through the tasks on the worksheet in pairs or small groups (Utley 2004: 14). In order to use limited class time as effectively as possible, however, I decided to have the students prepare for this discussion on their own outside of class. The tasks on the worksheet would therefore be assigned as homework at the end of course session 4 in preparation for small group work and ultimately a whole class discussion in course session 5. In course session 5, the students would work together in groups of four and discuss their solutions to the tasks on the worksheet. After talking through their individual solutions, they would then be asked to come up with a group definition based on their discussion. The groups would then reconvene, and each group would present its definition to the class. As a follow-up, the class would be asked to comment on any similarities and/or differences that emerged across the definitions developed by the smaller groups as a way of encouraging more critical discussion about culture as a concept with the whole learning group.

Finally, at the end of the lesson segment, I planned to bring the discussion back to the topic of what kinds of groups can be said to have a culture. I hoped to make the point here that it is not only national groups that can be said to have a culture and to begin to consider with the students what other kinds of groups people may identify with. This would allow us to begin developing “an awareness of individuals as members of many social groupings including cultural ones” (ICA element 8) (Baker 2015a: 164) as a secondary aim to the lesson. This element is part of level 2 of ICA and thus would help to extend the scope of the activity beyond basic cultural awareness (ICA level 1) to advanced cultural awareness (ICA level 2) as well.

Having outlined the planning of the lesson segment on defining the word ‘culture’, the rest of Chapter 10 will consider some of the more interesting points that arose during the lesson segment itself. 10.2 will first examine the definitions of culture that the students developed in small groups and the discussion that these definitions precipitated. 10.3 will then look more closely at the discussion of other groups that can be said to have culture. Finally, 10.4 will offer a brief summary of the analysis and some concluding remarks about this lesson segment.

10.2 Working with and presenting definitions of the word culture

The group work phase during course session 5 went quite smoothly. Most of the students appeared to have completed the assignment, and all appeared to be engaged in the discussion. This phase of the lesson took slightly longer than anticipated, as some groups required more time to write their definitions, but the delay was minimal and did not really impact the overall timing of the lesson segment.

During the group work phase, only one group’s discussion was captured by the single recording device used to record the course. It is therefore impossible to compare what happened within the various groups during the group work phase itself. However, when the groups shared their definitions during the subsequent whole-class discussion phase of the lesson segment, it became apparent that in formulating their definitions, all the groups had zeroed in on the same two definitions from the worksheet. Here are the groups’ definitions in the order in which they were presented:

S2⁸⁰: a culture is passed uh: on from generation to generation and is influenced by traditions religion and geographic [sic] (.) the sum of all beliefs values and norms shared by a group of people (T5: 1311-1314) (S2, S3, S17)

S18: culture is the sum total of all the beliefs values and norms shared by a group of people that is characterized by language religion arts music and so on (.) and is passed on from (.) from from generation to generation (T5: 1329-1333) (S5, S10, S14, S15, S18)

S7: culture defines a group of people (.) who share the same beliefs values uh: and norms depending on geography c- (climbing {climate})⁸¹ (.) social and or any other

⁸⁰ The student who presented – which in most cases involved reading – the group’s definition for the class is listed at the beginning of each definition. Each definition is reproduced exactly as it was presented, including false starts, hesitations, etc., since the students did not produce an official written version of their definitions as part of the task. The students who made up each group are listed directly after each definition.

⁸¹ This word was a bit difficult to understand on the recording and sounded most like *climbing*, but it seems likely that S7 was actually trying to produce *climate*, which was found in the introductory

background which have a consistent influence on the human being and on the future generations (T5: 1341-1345) (S1, S7, S11, S12)

S8: culture combines the sum of all the beliefs values norms traditions art experience and manners of a group of people (.) and passed on from generation to generation (T5: 1360-1363) (S6, S8, S13, S16)

Each group had used significant portions of definition A, including at least a near variation on the chunks ‘the sum total of all the beliefs, values and norms’ and ‘shared by a group of people’. Additionally, each had incorporated a version of the chunk ‘passed on from generation to generation’ from definition D, though only the last group appeared to have drawn on any of the rest of the definition through the inclusion of ‘experience’ in their definition. The rest of the given definitions had otherwise been excluded.

Besides using pre-existing chunks from definitions A and D, each group had also added something to its definition that was not present in any of the original definitions from the worksheet. Again, these additions show some interesting similarities across groups. The first and third groups both incorporated references to factors which might influence culture, such as the phrase *influenced by traditions religion and [geography]* in the first group’s definition and the phrase *depending on geography [climate] (.) social and or any other background which have a consistent influence* from the third group’s definition. By contrast, the second and fourth groups seemed to focus more on cultural ‘products’, or those aspects of society in which culture is revealed. Both groups mentioned characteristic components of what is generally referred to as ‘high culture’ or ‘big C culture’ (cf. Baker 2015a: 47-48), which includes the products of a society that are valued as higher forms of art. References to ‘high culture’ included *arts music and so on* in the second group’s definition and *art* in the final group’s definition. However, the final group also mentioned *traditions [...] and manners* as ‘products’ of culture, making them the only group to incorporate some aspects of what is often referred to as ‘low culture’ or ‘small c culture’, which includes “the whole way of life of a particular people” (Baker 2015a: 48).

To some extent, the definitions presented by the four small groups appear to be compatible with an ELF-oriented understanding of culture as a phenomenon affecting intercultural communication. This is perhaps most apparent in the groups’ incorporation of portions of definition A from the worksheet into their own definitions. Definition A reads very much like Baker’s ICA element 1, “an awareness of culture as a set of shared behaviors, beliefs, and

questions on the worksheet directly after the word *geography*, thus suggesting that this group borrowed those terms from these questions.

values” (Baker 2015a: 164). Thus, in basing their definitions on definition A, the entire class appeared to demonstrate an awareness of culture commensurate with ICA element 1.

However, although no group attempted to specify more clearly what kind of social grouping their definition was meant to describe, there are some elements in nearly all of the definitions that suggest that the students may have had a conception of culture in mind that was linked to the notion of culture as primarily associated with nation-states, or at least geopolitically bounded areas. The first and third groups both listed geography as one influence on culture, the third also adding climate, suggesting that they had such a conception in mind. Additionally, although other kinds of social groupings could potentially also be said to create cultural products, those small groups that named cultural products as part of their definitions mostly mentioned products which are associated with the concept of ‘high culture’, a conception which has been shown to be linked primarily to nation-states (cf. Baker 2015a: 47-48). These associations are problematic from an ELF standpoint, in which culture has been associated with social groupings at a range of levels within, above, below and across national boundaries. Finally, no group included wording of any kind that indicated an understanding of culture as an emergent phenomenon that is open to mediation and negotiation by the groups’ participants. In retrospect, this was most likely due to the fact that none of the definitions on the worksheet drew on a conception of culture as interactive practice, something that had escaped my notice during the planning phase of the lesson segment. In some ways, the fact that all the groups honed in on the phrase ‘passed down from generation to generation’ from definition D suggests that the students might have viewed culture as relatively passive and immutable, though our later discussion showed that they intended primarily to express a notion of continuity rather than suggesting that culture did not change over time.

I was very surprised by how similar the four groups’ definitions turned out to be. My planned follow-up question had been to ask the students to comment on what was similar and what was different about the groups’ definitions, and I had hoped to open up some debate about different points that had been included or excluded by the various groups. However, when I realized that the class had all drawn on aspects of the same two definitions and augmented them in similar ways, I concluded that this question might not be very fruitful. Unable to come up with a better question on the spot, I still asked the students what common themes they had noticed (T5: 1365-1366). Three students immediately mentioned three of the four main themes of the definitions that were identified and discussed above. S3 named *that the culture is passed on from generation to generation* as a common element (T5: 1367-1368). This gave us the chance to explore the idea that culture does change over time, but that a certain basis seems to be passed along so that there is a measure of continuity (T5: 1380-1394). S8 also noted that all groups had included *that it’s a sum of all the beliefs and values and stuff* (T5: 1396). Finally,

S15 identified that the groups had added *all sort of characteristics like history religion um: arts and so on* (T5: 1404-1405), referring to the groups' various additions to the given definitions. This gave us the chance to discuss whether these other characteristics the students had included could be considered part of culture itself or products of culture, and the class quickly agreed that many seemed to be both (T5: 1406-1420). Interestingly, no one identified the concept of 'shared by a group of people' as being a common theme, although it was a part of definition A that all groups had also included in some form.

At the time, my realization that the definitions were so similar dissuaded me from asking about differences, since these were minimal and fairly subtle and I felt that this would likely not spark much more debate than asking about similarities. In retrospect, though, we could have followed a couple of different lines of questioning that might have been more productive in uncovering why the students had all been drawn to the same definitions and what this said about their conceptions of culture. I could have asked the students why they or their groups had rejected definitions B, C and E so thoroughly. Additionally, I could have asked them to comment on why they had included what they did from outside the given definitions. These questions would likely have led to some interesting insights about what the students believed culture to be and might have given me more opportunities to introduce insights from ELF research into the nature of culture in intercultural communication.

10.3 Considering different kinds of social groupings that could be said to have culture

Up until this point, the lesson had focused on raising awareness of ICA element 1, "an awareness of culture as a set of shared behaviors, beliefs, and values" (Baker 2015a: 164), and the students demonstrated that they possessed this basic awareness, though it appeared to be linked conceptually to the notion of nations, or at least geographically bounded areas. As a final follow-up question to the task we had been discussing, I changed the focus somewhat, zeroing in on the phrase 'a group of people' from definition A on the worksheet. After reminding the students that all of them had used this phrase in their group definitions, I asked them *who do we mean when we say a group of people (1) what kinds of groups can have a culture* (T5: 1422-1423). In discussing these questions, I hoped to raise awareness in the students that groups other than nations can also be said to have a culture and that an individual can conceivably belong to multiple groups, points related to ICA element 8, "an awareness of individuals as members of many social groupings including cultural ones" (Baker 2015a: 164).

At first, these questions did not generate many responses. S8 was the only student to raise her hand at first, saying *like almost any group like in countries or the um: (.) city* (T5: 1424). In naming *countries* as her first example of a group that may be said to have a culture, S8's answer reaffirms a point frequently raised by researchers into culture, that popular conceptions of culture are generally strongly linked to the concept of nation-states (cf. Baker 2015a: 47-63). However, S8 immediately named cities as another possibility, suggesting that she was aware that there were other levels at least of geographically bounded culture below the national. After I recast this initial part of her answer, she then added *but also: ah: work work culture the workplace* (T5: 1432-1437). This response hearkened back to the introductory text on the worksheet, which prompted the students to think about what groups can be said to have a culture and specifically mentioned companies as a possibility (Frendo and Hsu 2010: 15). Another member of S8's group had also drawn attention to this point on the worksheet during small group discussion, prompting a short exchange on the idea of company culture in that group (cf. T5: 1202-1214). Thus, this answer was not wholly original, though it was a departure from geographically bounded groupings.

When no other answers were immediately forthcoming, I next attempted to lead the group toward the consideration of social groupings less connected to geopolitical boundaries by asking them whether students could be said to have their own culture (T5: 1440). This got a large laugh from the students (T5: 1441) and prompted two students to respond without waiting to be called on. S8 responded with *kind of* (T5: 1442), while S2 added *drinking culture*, prompting another laugh (T5: 1443-1444). I then recast my question to draw more attention to the idea of student culture as a form of transnational culture: *ah the question is ahm do you think that student culture is maybe more similar you know that people who go to universities are maybe similar in different countries even though [...] the national cultures the country cultures are different* (T5: 1445-1451). Interestingly, one of our exchange students, S16, agreed quite enthusiastically, interjecting *uh yes* (T5: 1449) even as I was still phrasing my question and nodding vigorously (cf. T5: 1452⁸²). This suggests that his experience as an exchange student had helped him to observe similarities between the behaviors, norms and values of students in the different systems in which he had studied. However, no one else volunteered a response and I did not ask S16 to qualify his position further, so that this point remained rather weak, if it was at all successful for most of the students.

⁸² Since this course was audio- rather than video-recorded, there is generally no record of the students' nonverbal responses to questions or tasks. However, in this case, there is evidence to support this non-verbal response because I myself commented on it on the recording (T5: 1452).

Instead, I asked again if the students could name *any other kinds of groups that maybe have a culture of their own* (T5: 1454-1455). This time, the question generated quite a few responses. S18 mentioned *religious groups* (T5: 1457), to which I added that these groups are also examples of groupings that often transcend national boundaries (T5: 1460-1461). S16 suggested *maybe ethnic groups* (T5: 1463). S10 proposed *business units* (T5: 1473). In agreeing with her, S13 recast her answer as *yeah companies* (T5: 1475), a point that we had already touched on with S8's answer to my initial question. However, S10 interjected that she meant subgroups within companies as well (T5: 1479-1482). In interpreting and extending her answer, which she had some difficulty wording coherently, I suggested IT professionals as an example of a group that might be said to have their own culture (T5: 1483-1487). S7 then suggested Google as a concrete example of a company that could be said to have its own culture (T5: 1489-1492). Next, S1 mentioned *eating cultures like e:hm vegans or vegetarians* (T5: 1494) and finally, S7 named punks who decide to live on the street (T5: 1498), qualifying this suggestion with *er who want to (.) don't want to you know want to (.) uh earn money or go to jobs or something like that* (T5: 1500-1502). Thus, he did not seem to have the homeless in mind so much as those who have consciously decided not to participate in conventional society.

Although quite a bit of discussion still revolved around the concept of company culture suggested by the worksheet, these later answers show significantly more range in terms of the kinds of connections (e.g. profession, ethnic heritage, religious beliefs, lifestyle choices) between those who identify with the particular group, as well as the levels at which the group can be said to function. For instance, while religious groups, 'eating cultures' and countercultural groups such as punks generally can all exist at a regional or local level, there are also examples of such groupings at a transnational level, particularly since the advent of the internet. Groups exist on social media, for example, where vegans and vegetarians can share recipes and nutrition tips and connect with others who share this lifestyle choice⁸³. The students' initial hesitation in coming up with these responses again suggests that their conception of culture was probably still largely linked with the concept of geopolitically bounded areas. However, with a little bit of time and thought, they were able to extend this conception, at least within the frame of the discussion, to consider other types of groups not so easily associated with geopolitical boundaries, suggesting that this part of the discussion may have been able to facilitate some development of ICA element 8, "an awareness of individuals

⁸³ A quick search of Facebook immediately yielded several groups and pages devoted to veganism. At the top of the list was the group *Vegan Recipes to Share*, which boasted 131,000 members from any number of countries. In browsing through the first 20 or so listed members, I found members from Canada, the USA, India, England, Sweden and the Philippines.

as members of many social groupings including cultural ones” (Baker 2015a: 164), for at least some students.

As I prepared to wrap up our whole-class discussion and move on to the next topic in the lesson sequence on culture, I summarized the point that I had been hoping to make with this final line of questioning:

ah i think a lot of times when we think about culture we kind of stop at national national cultures [...] but eh we don't think about some of these other groups as much so we're going to try to keep that in our mind too that it doesn't just have to be NATIONAL culture that we're talking about (.) it could be regional but it could also be things like business like (.) ehm what kind of work do you do (.) it could be student culture (.) it could be a:hm religion or ethnicity it could be (.) many many things that we can say have their own cultures (T5: 1505-1507, 1510-1517)

In this summary, I specifically drew attention to the fact that most people generally treat culture as something most closely linked to nationality. Using the students' examples, I reminded them that they had come up with other types of groups that operated on levels other than the national and could also be said to have their own cultures, and I encouraged them to keep this in mind as we continued to talk about culture in the pilot course. It might have been useful here to return briefly to the students' definitions and discuss whether or not they were able to account for levels of culture other than the national. This might have allowed students to notice that while other kinds of social groupings may produce products, those small groups that mentioned cultural products generally mentioned ones associated most strongly with national groupings. They might also have become aware that the influences listed, such as geography and climate, applied mostly to geographically bounded groupings rather than more transnational types.

I then added one final point, that individuals may identify with more than one social grouping which can be said to have a culture:

a:hm and sometimes we even belong to many DIFFERENT groups (.) a:hm (.) sometimes ah: we may (.) you know (.) be: german and yet a:hm (.) we also belong to (.) ah: a particular kind of business culture and a particular religion and we have (.) a couple lifestyle choices and things like that so we have many different cultural identities (T5: 1517-1523)

This was an idea that we had otherwise left unexplored in our discussion, but which is an integral part of ICA element 8. During the lesson, I did not attempt to pursue this point any further, but simply transitioned into the next activity. However, in retrospect, it might have been more effective to include a final task in which the students were asked to consider what kinds of groups they identified with that could be said to have a culture, such as the sociogram task presented in Hall and Toll (1999). In this task, learners create pictorial representations of the social groups they belong to in the form of a set of (potentially overlapping) circles. Through guiding discussion questions, they are then asked to consider the codes of behavior in each social context and how they may differ from circle to circle. The aim of the task is to help

learners appreciate that “we all have multiple identities, multiple behaviors which we adopt as a matter of course to respect the conventions and values of our different social groups” (Hall and Toll 1999: 20). This ultimately helps to illustrate that “values and behaviors are *relative*, dependent on social context” (Hall and Toll 1999: 20, emphasis original).

Although adding such a task would have required more time than had initially been allotted for this topic, relating this point back to student experience and allowing the students to reflect on their own cultural identities almost certainly would have gone farther toward raising their awareness of ICA element 8 than simply presenting them with the information that individuals generally belong to multiple kinds of groups. In discussing their cultural identities with their peers, the students also probably would have uncovered a certain level of diversity within the class, although at the national level, the overwhelming majority identified as German. Thus, the activity would have been an example of Baker’s first strand of resources for talking about culture in the ELF-oriented classroom, “exploring the diversity of local cultures” (Baker 2015a: 195-196), and might have helped students begin to appreciate that any cultural group is actually made up of individuals with a variety of perspectives and experiences (related to ICA element 7, “an awareness of multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping” (Baker 2015a: 164)). However, although a whole-class discussion might provide the opportunity to uncover the widest diversity in an activity like this, it might still be preferable to hold this discussion in small groups. Identity is a highly personal topic, and many learners might be uncomfortable talking about this in front of the whole class. Sharing in small groups of four to six would create a more personal and less threatening environment in which to share information while still allowing more chances to uncover diversity than pair work.

10.4 In summary

All in all, the materials from module 1.2 of the *Intercultural Resource Pack* appear to have provided a good starting point for this lesson, though there are several things I could have done as the teacher to better support and develop the kinds of awareness that were the aims of the lesson. The worksheet was able to generate discussion about the students’ understanding of the concept of culture. Though the students generally demonstrated an awareness of ICA element 1, “an awareness of culture as a set of shared behaviors, beliefs, and values” (Baker 2015a: 164), the definitions of culture they formulated in their small groups also made clear that their conceptions of culture were likely still based on a correlation between culture and nation-states. It also remained unclear why all the groups had gravitated to only two of the given definitions,

excluding the rest from their corporate definitions, though this could likely have been clarified by a few questions during the whole-class discussion. The tasks on the worksheet facilitated a transition to talking about what types of groups other than nation-states might be said to have culture. Though discussion here started slowly, the students ultimately contributed quite a few insightful suggestions. Thus, the activity may have contributed to some extent to increased awareness of ICA element 8, “an awareness of individuals as members of many social groupings including cultural ones” (Baker 2015a: 164). However, connecting the idea of individuals as members of multiple groupings that can be said to have culture more firmly to students’ personal experience would probably have been able to raise awareness of this aspect of ICA element 8 more effectively than merely mentioning it to the class, though it would have required additional time. Discussion resulting from this activity might also have helped students begin to appreciate the level of diversity within a group that otherwise appears to be quite homogenous, thus potentially extending this lesson segment to include some work on ICA element 7, “an awareness of multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping” (Baker 2015a: 164).

11 Topic 2: Cultural norms (course session 5)

11.1 Pedagogic aims, tasks and materials for topic 2

After the lesson segment on defining culture, course session 5 would go directly on to another lesson segment dealing with the theme of cultural norms. The *Focus on culture 1* section of Unit 1 of *Working in Asia*, entitled *Cultural norms* (Frendo and Hsu 2010: 12), was chosen as the basis for this lesson segment. In this section, learners are given the chance to discuss some of their own cultural norms connected to a range of themes and then to compare these norms with the norms of several Asian cultures (cf. Frendo and Hsu 2010: 12). Using this section would thus allow us to work on two further elements of ICA at the level of basic cultural awareness (ICA level 1): “an awareness of our own culturally based behavior, values and beliefs and our ability to articulate this” (ICA element 3), and “an awareness of others’ culturally based behavior, values and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally based behavior, values and beliefs” (ICA element 4) (Baker 2015a: 164). Additionally, these tasks would be extended in order to begin developing two elements of advanced cultural awareness (ICA level 2) as well, “an awareness of the relative nature of cultural norms” (ICA element 5) and “an awareness of common ground between specific cultures as well as an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures” (ICA element 9) (Baker 2015a: 164).

As has been discussed in 8.4, Baker’s ICA framework prioritizes the development of conscious intercultural awareness and of the skills to successfully engage in intercultural communication in ELF situations over knowledge of specific cultures. However, Baker also stressed that there are points in the ICA framework, particularly at the lower levels, at which learners will need to acquire specific cultural knowledge in order to facilitate the development of such awareness and skills (cf. Baker 2012a: 67). This was the case for this lesson segment, with its focus on ICA elements 3, 4, 5 and 9. In order to engage in a comparison of cultural norms and to develop an awareness of the relativity of cultural norms and of potential points of overlap and mismatch, it would be necessary to explore the students’ knowledge of their own norms, but also to expose them to norms of others outside their own cultural groups. It was therefore necessary to select materials presenting cultural norms of a group or groups to which the learners themselves did not belong.

This opened up the question of which cultures to draw upon for exploration and discussion in the classroom. As has also been discussed in 8.4, ELF researchers have rejected the cultures of Inner Circle countries that have long been the primary focus of cultural study in traditional ELT as the default focus of cultural study in the ELF-oriented classroom. Instead, they encourage the inclusion of cultures from the Outer and Expanding Circles as well, while

acknowledging that in teaching for ELF communication, it will be impossible to prepare learners with specific knowledge of all the cultures with which they may come into contact (cf. Baker 2012a: 67). This allows teachers to include cultural references and representations from a much larger range of cultures in the classroom, depending on the needs of the specific learning group.

The materials chosen for this lesson segment came from a business English textbook aimed at preparing learners for business interactions specifically in Asian countries; thus, the cultural examples used in the book are largely taken from Asian settings. This seemed advantageous for this particular lesson segment, in which the focus was on comparison and contrast between cultural norms, because no one in our learning group came from an Asian cultural background. Thus, we were likely to find more obvious cultural contrasts to talk about than if we had focused on other European cultural groups. At the same time, I was aware that since few of us in the course (including myself) were particularly familiar with Asian cultures, our discussion ran the risk of falling into stereotypes. According to Baker (2015a), this is typical of work at the level of basic cultural awareness (ICA level 1), to which ICA elements 3 and 4 belong; discussions of culture at this level often take place “at the level of broad generalizations and stereotypes and hence any understanding of culture may still be essentialist in perspective” (Baker 2015a: 165). However, the next topic we were scheduled to address was stereotypes, and I felt we would be able to balance out the dangers of falling into stereotypes while talking about the cultural norms of other cultures in this lesson segment by raising awareness of stereotypes the following week.

The two tasks⁸⁴ from the *Focus on culture 1* section of *Working in Asia* around which this lesson segment was planned both follow a similar pattern. They invite the learners to first explore and articulate their own conceptions of cultural norms around a particular topic or topics and then to compare their perceptions with those of representatives from different Asian cultural groups. Thus, they appear to draw on two of Baker’s strands of resources for the classroom. Those parts focused on student experience draw on “Exploring the complexity of local cultures” (cf. Baker 2015a: 195-196), while those involving comparison to representations provided by the textbook draw on “Exploring cultural representations in language learning materials” (cf. Baker 2015a: 196). However, the tasks are organized around


⁸⁴ These two tasks are actually listed as three separate numbered items on the students’ book page. However, I would argue that the first numbered item stands alone as a task, while the second and third can be considered as two steps in a task sequence, since they both explore the same themes.

different culturally influenced topics and use different media to present representations of Asian cultures.

In the first task, learners are asked to consider norms of business dress. The task is intended to help learners realize that these norms are influenced by cultural factors that may vary from cultural group to cultural group. The learners are asked to formulate their own thoughts on what constitutes appropriate clothing to wear to work and to compare their ideas with a series of pictures of business people from Asian countries.

Materials excerpt 23:

1 What do you understand by 'business dress'? Which of the forms of dress in the photos would you consider appropriate for international business? What would you wear? And in your own place of work?



Fredero and Hsu (2010: 12)

Engaging with this task would thus give the students practice with both ICA element 3, “an awareness of our own culturally based behavior, values and beliefs and our ability to articulate this” (Baker 2015a: 164) and ICA element 4, “an awareness of others’ culturally based behavior, values and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally based behavior, values and beliefs” (Baker 2015a: 164). Since the textbook is specifically aimed at people already working in a profession, the last question provided in the task is phrased with a current workplace in mind. This would not apply to most of the students in the pilot course, but I felt that the task could still be effective if the students were asked to consider the questions in light of the job they thought they would have after university. I planned to give the students a few minutes to generate ideas in pairs before asking them to share and discuss their ideas with the whole class.

I was particularly drawn to this task because I felt that the pictures had the potential to direct the students’ attention to a number of different factors that might influence norms of business dress, many of which draw on levels of culture other than the national. Only the third picture features a woman wearing a traditional costume that students would probably associate primarily with her country of origin. Two other pictures include head coverings that are

generally worn by members of certain religious groups. The second picture depicts a woman in a headscarf, while the fifth portrays a man in a turban, which also seems to invite discussion of gendered norms. The remaining two pictures, which feature a man in a blazer and button-down shirt and a woman with short, spiky hair in a graphic t-shirt, invite learners to consider formal versus informal styles of dress. I thus felt that this task had the potential to encourage comparison of cultural norms of business dress that were rich and complex and allowed students to explore and describe not only the norms themselves, but the factors behind them. This would allow us to engage not only in the description and comparison of norms called for in ICA elements 3 and 4, but also to increase awareness of the relative nature of norms as described in ICA element 5.

The second task is split into two parts. In the first part, learners are asked to talk about what they associate with a series of four concepts (*family*, *saying hello*, *speed limits* and *paid annual leave*). In effect, they are being asked to articulate what is normal in their experience of each of these concepts, a clear connection to ICA element 3, “an awareness of our own culturally based behavior, values and beliefs and our ability to articulate this” (Baker 2015a: 164). I decided to have the students think briefly about these concepts on their own, then meet in groups of four to compare their ideas. After they had the chance to discuss them together for a few minutes, we would then move on to the second part of the task as a class. In this part, the learners are asked to listen to speakers from different Asian countries talk about each of the concepts and then to compare and contrast these speakers’ statements with their own conceptions, activities that correlate to ICA element 4, “an awareness of others’ culturally based behavior, values and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally based behavior, values and beliefs” (Baker 2015a: 164). Particularly in the case of the second concept, *greetings*, I also saw potential for extending the discussion beyond a simple analysis of what was similar and different to considering how these similarities and differences in norms might potentially affect communication, thus making a first tentative connection to ICA element 9, “an awareness of common ground between specific cultures as well as an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures” (Baker 2015a: 164), an element we would then explore further in topic 4 (cf. Chapter 13). In this second part of the task, we would work with each concept separately. We would first collect ideas from various groups about how they had understood a particular concept, then listen to the corresponding section of the recording and discuss how the ideas of these speakers were similar to or different from the students’ own.

In addition to providing us with representations of cultural norms to discuss, the recording included in this task appeared to be particularly suitable for the ELF-oriented pilot course since it featured non-native speakers of English speaking with apparently authentic accents. This

would allow us not only to discuss the cultural content of the recordings, but also to gain some practice in listening to a range of authentic non-native accents of English, giving the students the chance to develop their receptive accommodation skills in the area of pronunciation (cf. 7.2.2). Again, the fact that most of the students in the course were largely unaccustomed to these accents could be considered as an advantage, since receptive phonological accommodation skills principally involve the ability to deal with unfamiliar accents.

While the tasks in this section of *Working in Asia* addressed relevant themes relating to this strand of the course, I was also aware that since *Working in Asia* is a textbook, it could not be considered as a source of truly authentic material. For example, although the speakers on the recordings seemed to be non-native speakers of English with largely authentic accents, it was unclear whether the listening texts had been written and recorded for the textbook or whether they had been collected through interviews or in other, less prompted speech contexts. Similarly, there was no information about the pictures included for discussion in the first task and how the materials writers had acquired or selected them. Both of these factors increased the need to handle these images and texts critically, keeping in mind that they present a partial and subjective, and even possibly biased or essentialized, view of the cultures they claim to represent.

Having described the planning of this lesson segment, 11.2 and 11.3 will present discussion of patterns that emerged during classroom work with each of the two tasks from the *Focus on culture 1* section of Unit 1 of *Working in Asia*. 11.4 will then conclude with a brief summary of the most important points concerning classroom work with this topic.

11.2 Task 1: Talking about norms of business dress

In the pair work phase of task 1, the students seemed to be engaged in productive discussion of the questions relating to this task on the worksheet. As I walked around the room, I observed that all the pairs appeared to be on task and were talking animatedly together. This phase of the lesson lasted about two minutes, and each pair seemed to find ample points relating to the task to discuss during this time. The recording of this phase of the lesson supports these observations, as it is characterized throughout by a general buzz of voices. However, just as in the group work phase of the previous topic, the single recording device only picked up one pair's conversation clearly, so that it is impossible to reconstruct a complete picture of what took place during this phase. It is nonetheless interesting to note that this pair's discussion appears to have revolved primarily around two factors that they felt could affect norms of

business dress, nationality and formality. Particularly the latter also became a major theme of the discussion with the whole class later on in the lesson segment, which suggests that it may have played a role in other pairs' discussions as well.

Given that the students generally seemed to find plenty of relevant points to discuss with their partners during the pair work phase of this lesson segment, the discussion with the whole class got off to a surprisingly slow start. Initially, no one seemed willing to comment on whether they would consider any of the outfits pictured to be appropriate to wear in the workplace. When I made the question more personal, asking if there were any outfits the students themselves would feel comfortable wearing for work, this prompt elicited some rather flippant responses. S15 volunteered *i like the last one*, indicating a man wearing a turban (T5: 1626). This was obviously not meant in earnest and was met with laughter from several students (T5: 1627-1628). The next student, S16, responded more seriously that he would wear a suit, but not a turban (T5: 1631-1634). However, when S15 jestingly asked him why (T5: 1636), he matched her tone in his answer, replying *uh i don't have enough hair*, which was again obviously meant as a joke (T5: 1639). Even as I was trying to point out to the class that turbans were not something we saw very regularly in our local culture (T5: 1641-1643), S16 added in the same jesting tone that he might also consider wearing the sari, saying *i i i w- would maybe look good with a sari* (T5: 1646).

S16's humorous answers to S15's joking question may indicate that both of them were aware of why S16 would not choose to wear a turban, namely that he did not belong to the religious group that wore this type of head covering. The whole class seemed equally aware that only women would wear saris. I suspect that most if not all the students in the group recognized the influence of gender and/or religion in several of the pictures, especially since women wearing headscarves had become a more commonplace sight in the local culture in recent years, and headscarves were currently contested to some extent as appropriate dress in public domains, including the university classroom. However, no one seemed willing to name these factors directly in front of the whole class. During the pair work phase of the lesson, the pair whose discourse was captured by the recording device (S13 and S16) had identified one outfit as *probably from a muslim country* (T5: 1580-1781), which suggests that the students may have been less inhibited when talking to their partners. Possibly, the students may have felt that talking about these factors was insensitive or politically incorrect and might expose them to negative reactions from their peers if they voiced them in front of the whole group. Equally, however, they may have considered these factors to be so obvious that they were not worth naming. In a sense, the pictures might have been too exotic to spark discussion because the differences to the students' own notions of business dress were too great. Either way, there might have been some merit in attempting to bring these factors to light through direct follow-

up questions, such as “No, seriously, why wouldn’t you be likely to wear the turban to work?” If we could have gotten beyond the students’ initial hesitation, then we might have been able to examine where this hesitation had come from and what that implied about the roles of these factors in our own experiences.

The discussion became much more productive when the students began to consider the concept of formality of dress. Rather early on in the discussion, one student, S3, had commented that he and his group felt that the outfit in the first picture on the worksheet, featuring a man wearing a blazer and button-down shirt, *is everywhere uh a good choice* (T5: 1616-1617). Although no one picked up on this comment immediately after it was made, another student, S8, returned to it rather abruptly later in the discussion. She nominally agreed with S3’s estimate that the outfit in the first picture would be appropriate in every context, but then added *but the casual way is okay too i guess in like creative jobs marketing agency or something* (T5: 1651-1656). Her comment led us to consider the dimension of formality and how this relates to the norms of dress that have been developed by particular companies or professions. S8 went on to add that some companies do not have a dress code where employees must wear more formal attire *like a suit or something* (T5: 1657-1660), positing as a possible explanation that *they want to be young and (.) hip i don’t know* (T5: 1662-1663). This comment sparked quite a bit of debate within the group. S3 defended his original position, that more formal items like suits or blazers are generally the most acceptable form of business dress, while S8 and S16 introduced a series of counterarguments (T5: 1668-1695). Several other students showed support for the various positions through backchannels⁸⁵ (e.g. T5: 1690). This part of the conversation was characterized by quite a bit of overlap between speakers, and several students self-selected rather than waiting to be called on, which suggests that they were quite engaged in the debate. Finally, S18, who had been waiting patiently to be called on, pointed out that norms involving formality might not only be an issue of company image, but also of profession. She gave a personal example, saying:

for example i’m going to be a civil engineer and if you come to a worksite where everybody is working and you are wearing a suit or a dress or something like that it be would be: totally: (.) uh (.) OVERdressed so in our business everybody wears jeans and (.) a blazer (T5: 1702-1708)

In essence, S18 argued that particular professions may develop norms of dress that may have to do with various factors of the work they do.

⁸⁵ The role of non-verbal signs of support for various positions could not be established, since all recordings made were audio rather than video.

While S18's description of what she expected that she would wear to work as a civil engineer and why members of her profession dressed this way is clearly a solid example of a student successfully reflecting on and articulating her own cultural norms (ICA element 3), most of the students' contributions up until this point in the discussion revolved around why different companies or professions might develop different norms of dress due to different considerations or factors. Thus, this task appears to have primarily facilitated engagement with the notion of the relative nature of cultural norms (ICA element 5). However, the students displayed varying degrees of awareness of this element of ICA. In acknowledging some of the factors that may influence a company's or profession's norms of dress, some students, such as S8 or S18, demonstrated that they were aware that such norms are relative. By contrast, S3's insistence throughout much of the discussion that a blazer and button-down shirt would be most appropriate in all situations could be interpreted as evidence of a failure to grasp the notion that norms are dependent on factors that may be valued differently by different social groupings, suggesting that he had not yet developed an awareness of this element of ICA.

It is particularly interesting that, up until this point, the whole-class discussion had not touched upon the level of national culture. Rather, the students seemed to be demonstrating a level of awareness that company or professional identity might be more salient in determining norms of business dress than factors such as nationality in many instances. Remarkably, I was actually the one to pull the discussion towards the level of national cultures. In connection to our discussion of issues surrounding formality of business dress, I talked about how I had had to adapt what I wore to work when I moved from the United States to Germany, since German teachers generally dress more casually than their American counterparts (T5: 1717-1734). While this story continued to draw on the theme of formality, it also inadvertently introduced the notion that norms of business dress may be associated not only with particular professions, but also with particular national cultures. Considering that ELT has been criticized by ELF scholars researching culture for focusing on the national level of culture to the marginalization or exclusion of others, it seems unfortunate that I as the teacher was the one to introduce this level into the discussion. This may have signaled to the students that I considered explanations of cultural norms in terms of national culture to be more important than consideration of other levels, especially as I let my point stand uncritically as the final point made during discussion of the first task. Nevertheless, this story was effective in the sense that the students appeared to be able to relate to it, since they were all familiar with the school setting and the way that their teachers had dressed. It represents an example of me as the teacher functioning as a cultural informant for my students by sharing my own intercultural experiences with them, thus drawing another type of resource available to us in our course into the discussion (cf. Baker 2015a: 196).

All in all, this task was able to generate some useful discussion related to the topic of cultural norms. In particular, it provided good opportunities to consider the factors that may affect particular norms and to become more aware of the relative nature of these norms (ICA element 5). However, given the students' initial reluctance to talk about the pictures in the task with the whole group, discussion might have been richer if some of the pictures in the task had been replaced with other pictures which were closer to the students' cultural experiences while still touching on themes such as religion, gender, formality, professional and company image and even nationality. This might have involved substituting the picture of the woman wearing the sari and the man wearing the turban with images taken from European contexts rather than Asian ones, since these images were furthest from the students' experience of workplace dress.

11.3 Task 2: Comparing own cultural norms to others' through a listening task

Because the whole-class discussion of the first task from the *Focus on culture 1* section of Unit 1 of *Working in Asia* took somewhat longer to gain momentum than anticipated, that segment of the lesson generally required a bit more time than was originally planned. We therefore had less time left in the course session for discussion of the second task, meaning that this discussion had to be curtailed somewhat. Nevertheless, the analysis of the transcript of this phase of the lesson shows a qualitative contrast between the discussions that took place in the two halves of this task. Discussion of the first half of the task, in which the students were asked to consider and discuss their own culturally-based notions of four concepts (*family*, *saying hello*, *speed limits* and *paid annual leave*), uncovered the diversity and complexity of these norms within the students' experience. In both the small group and the whole class phases of this part of the lesson segment, the students appeared to consider a number of factors that might influence these norms. By contrast, from the point at which we began to work with the listening texts in the second half of this task, discourse about cultural norms revolved exclusively around national cultures and was characterized by highly essentialized statements about both the 'other' cultures featured on the recordings and the students' own national cultures. The following sections will illustrate this difference by examining more closely the discussions of two of these concepts, *family* (11.3.1.) and *saying hello* (11.3.2), from both the small group and whole class phases of this task.

11.3.1 Example 1: Family

Before hearing the portion of the listening text on *family*, the students were given the opportunity to share with the whole class the ideas about what constituted a family that they had developed in their small groups. One particularly striking aspect of this discussion was that the ideas the students shared revealed a certain level of diversity of perspective across the members of the learning group. The first to contribute to this part of the discussion was S15, who responded with *<soft> mama </soft>* (T5: 1895). This was said quietly without raising her hand or waiting to be called on. The choice of the word *mama*, using the childish term of address rather than the more neutrally categorical word *mother*, implies that S15 probably meant this contribution only half-seriously. At the same time, it suggests that for her at least, mothers were a central figure in the family. I recast her comment as *so all you need is a mama and then you have a family* (T5: 1897), essentially accepting it as a legitimate contribution to the discussion. S8 then named *the relatives* (T5: 1900). This led to some discussion amongst the class about whether *family* refers only to parents and children, or to those living in the same household, or whether it includes other relatives (e.g. grandparents) as well (T5: 1901-1935). Finally, S18 told us that she considered her boyfriend to be part of her family (T5: 1949). Although I also accepted this statement in much the same way I had accepted S15's, some members of the class seemed to find it more challenging. S3 asked S18 directly if she and her boyfriend were married, to which S18 replied *not yet* (T5: 1952-1953). This implies that S3 considered marriage between people not related by blood to be a bond that could form a family, but would not have considered unmarried couples to be family units, as S18 appeared to do.

The discussion of what constitutes a family made apparent that not all of the views held by individual members of the class were held in common, despite the fact that most of the students came from similar national cultural backgrounds. Thus, in addition to giving students practice in articulating their own cultural norms (ICA element 3), one of the main aims of the lesson, this discussion was able, at least to some extent, to demonstrate in a personally relevant way the diversity in viewpoints that may exist below the surface even in a group that otherwise seems fairly homogenous. It therefore provided the students with the opportunity to develop their awareness of ICA element 7, "an awareness of the multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping" (Baker 2015a: 164). Thus, this part of the task facilitated work not only at the level of basic cultural awareness (ICA level 1), to which ICA element 3 belongs, but also at the level of advanced cultural awareness (ICA level 2).

The diversity of viewpoints that was uncovered in the whole-class discussion of the students' conceptions of family stands in stark contrast to the representation of what constitutes

a family presented in the listening text dealing with this concept. In this text, a female speaker relates the following:

CDf2⁸⁶: well in my country a family consists of three people (.) two parents and one child (Frendo and Hsu 2010: Audio CD Track 4)

This text is extremely brief, lasting for only eight seconds on the recording. In it, the speaker makes a statement about a national cultural grouping, as is evidenced by the phrase *in my country*. She appears to speak as a representative of this entire national culture, as though the viewpoint she espouses is universally held. There is no acknowledgement that others may have different views, let alone discussion of what those views might be and how or why they may have arisen.

Classroom discussion of this text also revolved largely around notions of national culture and primarily involved essentialized statements about this ‘other’ culture. As soon as they understood what the speaker on the CD had said⁸⁷, most students were quickly able to guess what country she was from:

Excerpt 26:

T5: 1971-1975 (01:22:25 - 01:22:30)

| | | |
|------|------|--|
| 1971 | Sxx: | {lots of background conversations erupt} child child child |
| 1972 | S3: | chinese |
| 1973 | Sxx: | china china |
| 1974 | S13: | yeah she even talks like it |
| 1975 | S15: | @ @ @ @ @ @ |

That the students were able to ascertain that the woman must come from China based on this brief text implies that they were generally aware of the one-child policy that the Chinese government had had in place for many years in an effort to control the size of China’s population. S13’s remark, *yeah she even talks like it* in line 1974, suggests that some of the students may also have been exposed to Chinese accents before. However, S13’s intonation indicates that he did not have a very high opinion of this accent.

I did little to counteract the essentialism in this text or to encourage the students to consider it more critically. Instead of asking the students to tell me more about how they had reached the conclusion that the woman was from China, I briefly talked about the one-child policy myself (T5: 1981-1984). Although I then attempted to balance this against the point that many

⁸⁶ The speaker designation CDf2 denotes that the speaker is the second female speaker on the listening track and is unnamed either on the track or in the written materials accompanying the listening task. In this case, the narrator was also female, and since she spoke first, she was designated CDf1.

⁸⁷ As expected, the students found this brief text quite challenging to understand due to the authentic non-native accent of the speaker (cf. 7.2.1). In particular, they had trouble understanding the word *child*, so that I had to repeat this word for them (T5: 1967-1970).

families in Germany also only have one child, though by choice rather than as the result of a law, I again gave the students this answer rather than trying to help them come to this conclusion on their own (T5: 1984-1987). While this did provide the students with an opportunity to expand their “awareness of others’ culturally based behavior, values and beliefs”, the first half of ICA element 4 (Baker 2015a: 164), which was one of the main aims for this segment of the lesson, this opportunity remained relatively passive. In providing the answers myself, I also did not allow the students the opportunity to work on their “ability to compare this with our own culturally based behavior, values and beliefs”, the second half of ICA element 4 (Baker 2015a: 164). The primary reason that I provided answers myself during this phase of the lesson had to do with time. Trying to elicit these answers from the students would likely have taken significantly more time than summarizing these points myself, and we were under time pressure to finish the task before the course session ended. Nevertheless, classroom work with this text could probably have been more productive if the students had been guided toward a more critical reflection on the text and the cultural representation it presented.

11.3.2 Example 2: Saying hello

The analysis of classroom discussion of *family* in the previous section focused on a portion of whole class discussion as illustrating the complexity of this discussion and the ways in which it brought to light the diversity of viewpoints within the learning group. However, the discourse captured during the group work phase of the first half of this task also shows that the students engaged in more complex and nuanced discussion of the various concepts involved in the task when talking together in their small groups than when we discussed the listening texts with the whole group in the second half of the task.

During the small group discussion phase of this task, the recording device primarily captured the discussion between S6, S8, S13 and S16. Their discussion of what they understood by *saying hello* began as follows:

Excerpt 27:

T5: 1791-1797 (01:17:05 - 01:17:19)

| | | |
|------|------|--|
| 1791 | S13: | okay saying hello |
| 1792 | S8: | yeah we said like handshaking or: |
| 1793 | S16: | uh-huh |
| 1794 | S8: | a hug giving |
| 1795 | | giving hugs or kisses (.) yeah or just saying it it depends on |
| 1796 | | how close you are to the people you're saying |
| 1797 | | hello to |

S13's turn in line 1791 marks the group's shift of attention from discussing *family* to discussing *saying hello*. S8 then offers what is essentially a list of things she feels belong to her understanding of *saying hello*, including *handshaking [...] a hug giving giving hugs or kisses (.) yeah or just saying it* (lines 1792, 1794-1795). Interestingly, she includes not only linguistic but also nonlinguistic forms of greeting, suggesting a wider interpretation of this concept than might be suggested by the phrase *saying hello*. She also ends her turn with an insightful statement: *it depends on how close you are to the people you're saying hello to* (line 1795-1797). Essentially, she is introducing the role of contextual factors, and specifically that of social distance, in determining what would be considered appropriate when greeting someone.

This point immediately becomes quite important for the group, as S13 is initially quite skeptical about hugging and kissing as an appropriate form of greeting in the local culture.

Excerpt 28:

T5: 1810-1816 (01:17:44 - 01:17:51)

- 1810 S13: really hug
- 1811 S8: why hug
- 1812 S13: with a kiss
- 1813 S6: family?
- 1814 S8: family? (.) you don't hug your family?
- 1815 S6: you hug your mom you don't shake her hand
- 1816 S13: oh yeah yeah (.) i i hug my family

S13's contributions *really hug* in line 1810 and *with a kiss* in line 1812 are delivered in an almost mocking tone that makes clear to his group that he does not agree with these suggestions. However, in lines 1813-1815, S6 and S8 point out that our relationship with those we are greeting may make a difference to the way in which we feel it is appropriate to greet them. As S6 puts it in line 1815, *you hug your mom you don't shake her hand*. S13 is ultimately able to agree with this, saying in line 1816 *oh yeah yeah (.) i i hug my family*. By referencing their own experiences with the local culture, S6 and S8 are able to help S13 recognize the role of social distance in determining appropriate forms of greeting.

The conversation then turns towards cultural norms of greeting in other cultures with which members of the group are familiar.

Excerpt 29:

T5: 1822-1834 (01:17:56 - 01:18:16)

- 1822 S16: in portugal every girl and boy kisses
- 1823 S8: yeah
- 1824 S16: and every girl and girl kisses and
- 1825 S8: in france
- 1826 S16: on the cheek
- 1827 S8: in france it's the same you always give two kisses
- 1828 S16: yes (.) even when you don't know them
- 1829 S8: yeah (.) when you just got to know them it's like hey i'm [S8]
- 1830 kiss kiss (.) yeah that's
- 1831 S16: and we never only men shake hands in

| | | | |
|------|------|--------------|----|
| 1832 | S8: | okay | |
| 1833 | S16: | | in |
| 1834 | | portugal (2) | |

This topic is introduced by S16, a Portuguese exchange student, who begins to talk about the role of cheek kissing as a form of greeting in his home country (lines 1822, 1824, 1826). He is quickly joined by S8, who was born and raised in Germany but had spent considerable time in France, and who finds similarities between S16's description of greetings in Portugal and her experiences with greetings in France (lines 1825, 1827).

In this part of the exchange, cultural references are frequently made overtly at the level of national culture (lines 1822, 1825, 1827, 1833-1834). There is also an implicit comparison to the local culture in Germany, in that this is still being said in relation to S13's skepticism of kissing and hugging as an acceptable form of greeting in his experience. S16 appears to begin his turn in line 1822 in order to illustrate how the role of kissing as a form of greeting is different in his experience than its role in German culture. However, in describing how men and women greet each other in various constellations, the discussion also touches on the role of gender in norms of greeting in these countries. S16 and S8 seem to agree that in both Portugal and France, it is the norm for greetings between two women or a man and a woman to involve two kisses on the cheek (cf. lines 1822-1828). By contrast, S16 notes that, in Portugal at least, only greetings between two men involve shaking hands (lines 1831-1834). S16 also draws social distance as a contextual factor back into the conversation when he notes that cheek kissing occurs in Portugal *even when you don't know [the other person]* (line 1828). This stands in contrast to norms of the local culture, in which the group has established that kissing is more appropriate in socially close relationships such as with family members.

During this part of the small group phase of the task, the students demonstrated an ability to notice and articulate their own cultural norms in regards to the concept *saying hello* (ICA element 3) and to make some initial comparisons, at least at the national level, to other cultural groupings with which individual members of the group were familiar (ICA element 4). Thus, it would appear that the task was able to facilitate work with both these elements of ICA. More remarkably, however, it also allowed the students to build up a differentiated view of cultural norms of greeting that took into account a range of contextual factors including social distance, national cultural norms and gender in determining what constituted an appropriate greeting in a particular context. Thus, the students also showed some awareness of cultural norms as relative (ICA element 5) in their acknowledgement that different social groupings may draw upon different contextual and social factors in making judgments about the appropriateness of a particular form of greeting.

This differentiated view of cultural norms of greeting again stands in stark contrast to the recorded text about this concept provided on the CD. In it, a different female speaker makes the following statement:

Cdf3: korea (.) korean people (.) we do not like to make ah (.) eye contact (1) we feel that this is ah disrespectful (Frendo and Hsu 2010: Audio CD Track 4)

Oddly, this text is only very indirectly connected to the concept of saying hello. It focuses instead on describing norms of eye contact, and the learners are left to make the connection between eye contact and greetings on their own. Like the text about family discussed above, this text features only a single viewpoint by a single speaker, and this speaker, in beginning with the phrase *korea (.) korean people (.) we*, again appears to speak for an entire national grouping as though that group's viewpoints on this concept were entirely homogenous. In contrast to the students' discussion in their small group, the narrator in this text does not offer much consideration of social factors that might affect norms of greeting in her culture. Although she explains that Koreans consider eye contact disrespectful, there is no attempt at an explanation of why this is so or whether this is true in all contexts or only in some, e.g. where there are marked differences in social distance or social status. The text thus remains far less nuanced than the students' discussion. While it presents a representation of the cultural norms of Korean culture that may facilitate the development of "an awareness of others' culturally based behavior, values and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally based behavior, values and beliefs" (ICA element 4) (Baker 2015a: 164), it provides little evidence of the relative nature of social norms (ICA element 5).

Listening to this text had an interesting effect on the whole-class discussion. Much of the discussion after we had listened to this text also focused on norms of eye contact rather than on norms of greeting more generally. Similarly to the listening text itself, this discussion took place exclusively at the level of national culture and largely involved making generalized statements about national cultures. This is particularly apparent in S3's statement about norms of eye contact in Germany offered in response to the listening text: *it's (.) unpolite in (.) germany i would say normally you: have contact with the have contact with your eyes* (T5: 2038-2043). In talking about norms of eye contact in Germany, S3 demonstrated an ability to articulate one of the norms of a group to which he belonged (ICA element 3). However, as in the listening text, he phrased his answer as a blanket statement that implied that all members of his national culture held the same viewpoint without exception. Similarly, when S12, one of the two Brazilian exchange students in the course, talked about how Brazilians handle greeting someone they know when walking down the street later in the discussion, he also made generalizations about norms at the national level (T5: 2053-2065, 2070). Thus, although we had a range of cultures to compare and contrast as part of our discussion of *saying hello*, the

discussion stimulated by the listening task remained largely essentialist in nature and did not really progress beyond the level of basic cultural awareness described in Baker's framework of ICA.

I used the students' answers to point out that there was a large difference between their notion of norms of eye contact and those presented in the listening text, and that such a mismatch might cause miscommunication in intercultural communication (T5: 2044-2050). These remarks thus created a first link to ICA element 9, "an awareness of common ground between specific cultures as well as an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures" (Baker 2015a: 164), an element we would explore more thoroughly in the final topic in the lesson sequence on culture (cf. Chapter 13). However, this link remained superficial at this point in the lesson sequence.

11.3.3 Discussion

Classroom discussion of the concepts of *family* and *greetings* in the first half of this task, both in small groups and as a class, seems to have been considerably more complex and nuanced than either the perspectives expressed about these concepts in the listening texts or the discussion that resulted from them. Although most of the participants in the pilot course were from the same national culture, the whole-class discussion of the students' conceptions of *family* involved contributions from a range of students, some of whom had differing perspectives from the others. And while the group captured on the recording during the small group phase did talk about cultural norms of greetings in two countries other than Germany with which they were familiar, this part of their discussion also touched on social distance and gender as important factors in determining what constitutes an appropriate form of greeting in a particular context. Thus, in addition to giving students practice in articulating their own cultural norms (ICA element 3), discussion of the first half of the task was able to demonstrate, at least to some extent, the "multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping" (ICA element 7), as well as give the students the chance to consider "the relative nature of cultural norms" (ICA element 5) (Baker 2015a: 164).

By contrast, the whole-class discussions of the representations of cultural norms presented in the listening texts from the second half of this task were less felicitous. Although they allowed the students some opportunity to recognize the cultural norms of others and compare them to their own (ICA element 4), which was the main aim of this part of the lesson segment, discussions from this half of the task focused exclusively on culture at the national level with no acknowledgement of the potential for diversity within these national cultural groupings.

Both the students and I tended to make comparisons in the form of blanket statements about both our own cultures and those featured in the listening texts. We also did not discuss other kinds of factors that might play a role in variations in cultural norms between members of a group or contexts in which the norms might surface.

In regard to ICA element 4 specifically, Baker notes that the “ability to make general comparisons between one’s own cultural interpretations and ‘others’ [...] may be at the level of broad generalizations or stereotypes and hence any understanding of culture may still be essentialist in perspective” (Baker 2015a: 165). This may help to explain why the whole-class discussion during this phase of the lesson was less nuanced and more prone to essentialist statements than earlier discussion of the students’ own understanding of these concepts. However, it would also appear that our tendency towards generalizations and a focus on national cultures without reference to other factors that might influence these concepts was exacerbated by several characteristics of the listening texts that are featured in this half of the task. First, the authors consistently accentuate the relationship between cultural norms and national cultures. In the listening text on *family*, the authors chose to focus on China, presenting a conception of family as something linked to a national government policy in that country. Likewise, the final two concepts, *speed limits* and *paid annual leave*, are also regulated by government policies in many countries, including the countries both of the speakers recorded on CD and of the students in the learning group. The text on *saying hello* alone involves no link to national governments, but the very first words uttered by the speaker identify her as Korean, placing nationality very prominently in this text as well. Second, the speakers in the texts generally appear to speak for their entire nation, providing monolithic portrayals of the cultural norms they are describing. Compounding this issue, the textbook offers only one perspective on each concept. Learners therefore have nothing with which to compare each perspective, especially if they are relatively unfamiliar with the cultural background from which the speaker stems. Third, the texts are extremely short, providing little that might help to direct the students to an explanation of what may have given rise to a particular norm and thus might help them develop an awareness of the relativity of cultural norms (ICA element 5). Finally, the texts do little to challenge learners’ preconceived ideas. For example, the students in the pilot course seemed to be largely aware of the one-child policy in China; the text about family merely confirmed their previous ideas about Chinese culture rather than offering them anything that might animate them to think about these ideas more critically. All in all, this textbook appears to confirm the criticism repeatedly raised that ELT textbooks generally present essentialist representations of culture that often focus exclusively on culture at the national level (cf. Chapter 9).

As the teacher, I should have been much more aware of the issues with these listening texts and the effects they would be likely to have on classroom discussion. However, in assessing the texts, I had focused more attention on the potential contributions that the authentic accents might make to classroom work on receptive phonological accommodation and on the need to include some representations of ‘other’ cultures in order to work at all on ICA element 4, “an awareness of others’ culturally based behavior, values and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally based behavior, values and beliefs” (Baker 2015a: 164). I had failed to appreciate just how stereotyped and nationally focused the content of the listening texts actually was. This need not necessarily have been a reason to reject the texts outright. As discussed in Chapter 9, Baker (2015a) has argued that “materials, even stereotyped ones, can still be put to productive use in developing ICA” (Baker 2015a: 196). Still, the key to success, according to Baker, is to approach such materials critically, something I cannot claim to have done. I more often reinforced the essentialized representations in the materials than challenged the students to view them critically, something that was exacerbated by the time pressure the discussion was under.

It certainly would have been possible to adopt a more critical approach toward the listening texts. For example, in the case of the text on *family*, after eliciting the students’ previous knowledge about the one-child policy in China, I could have asked them how many children the average family in Germany has and what factors might account for that trend. This might have more effectively demonstrated to the students that the birthrates in both countries are actually not so dissimilar, although the reasons behind these rates differ. Additionally, I might have reminded the students that some of them felt that people beyond parents and children belonged to a family and raised the question about whether people in China would consider other types of blood relatives, such as grandparents or aunts and uncles, to be family. Though it might not have been possible to answer this question conclusively on the basis of the listening text, it would have created a connection back to the more diversified class discussion and thrown additional critical light on the representation of cultural norms surrounding family in China on the CD.

Such a critical treatment would almost certainly have required more time than was actually available for this task. In retrospect, therefore, it might have been better to focus on just one or two of the concepts and to exclude the others. This would have saved some time during the small group phase of discussion that could then have been reinvested into the whole-class discussion of the students’ understanding of the concepts and a more critical consideration of the content of the listening texts. Given the potential which discussion of the concepts of *family* and *saying hello* showed for uncovering the diversity and complexity of perspectives within the group, these concepts would appear to be apposite choices. If possible, it would probably

be helpful to augment the provided listening texts with other written or recorded sources. How easy it might prove to find such texts is, however, difficult to determine.

11.4 In summary

In conclusion, the analysis of the tasks from the *Focus on culture I* section of Unit 1 of *Working in Asia* upon which the lesson segment on cultural norms was based point to a wider trend in my data from this strand of the course: that discussion drawing on students' own cultural norms and experiences was richer and more complex than discussion based on representations of other cultures from ELT materials. Both tasks from the *Focus on culture I* section of Unit 1 of *Working in Asia* began by asking students to explore their own cultural perspectives, thus utilizing as their starting point what Baker (2015a) referred to as “exploring the complexity of local cultures” in his discussion of resources for classroom teachers (Baker 2015a: 195). This proved effective for facilitating increased awareness of and opportunities to practice articulating cultural perspectives, thus enabling work on ICA element 3, “an awareness of our own culturally based behavior, values and beliefs and the ability to articulate this” (Baker 2015a: 164), one of the major learning aims for this topic. Additionally, these parts of the tasks allowed the students to make connections to higher-order elements of the ICA framework from level 2, advanced cultural awareness. They helped the students to gain awareness of the relative nature of norms (ICA element 5) through the consideration of a variety of factors that may lead to differences in norms in different social groupings. And just as Baker (2015a) suggested in his discussion of “exploring the complexity of local cultures”, beginning with their own perspectives also allowed the students to uncover evidence of “the multi-voiced nature of cultural characterizations and the complexity of the relationship between languages and culture” (Baker 2015a: 195). Thus, these tasks provided an opportunity to increase the students' awareness of ICA element 7, “an awareness of multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping” (Baker 2015a: 164).

By contrast, while the representations of ‘other’ cultural norms in the form of pictures and listening texts in each task facilitated a certain amount of work on ICA element 4, “an awareness of others' culturally based behaviors, values and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally based behaviors, values and beliefs” (Baker 2015a: 164), discussion drawing on these sources of input often remained at a relatively essentialist level. Thus, the stereotyped representations provided in the *Focus on culture I* section of Unit 1 of *Working in Asia* appear to have contributed negatively to classroom discussion. These

representations were flawed enough that I should probably have considered modifying them in order to better facilitate discussion. In this way, we might have been able to make our approach to ‘other’ cultures less essentialist while simultaneously improving the effectiveness of the materials in facilitating comparisons between our own and others’ cultural norms (ICA element 4). This approach might also have created more opportunities to make stronger connections to higher-order elements of ICA, such as the relative nature of cultural norms (ICA element 5), as well as potential areas of mismatch that might give rise to miscommunication (ICA element 9), areas which remained rather underdeveloped in classroom discussion of the listening texts from the second task in particular.

12 Topic 3: Stereotypes (course sessions 5-6)

12.1 Pedagogic aims, tasks and materials for topic 3

The third topic planned into the culture and intercultural communication strand of the course was the topic of stereotypes. For this topic, there were three major learning aims. The first was to raise awareness in the students of what stereotypes are, as well as how and why we form them. This included impressing upon them that we all have stereotypes about other social and cultural groups in our minds. These were basic and important prerequisites for the other aims of the lesson. The second aim for the lesson segment was to raise awareness that, while stereotypes may describe with some accuracy a tendency across or within a particular group, they may not apply to each and every individual within that group; that is, individuals can be exceptions to a particular stereotype (cf. Baker 2015a: 56-57). This is part of developing ICA element 7, “an awareness of multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping” (Baker 2015a: 164). The final aim of the lesson segment was to raise student awareness of the potential dangers of relying on cultural stereotypes in intercultural communication and to discuss with them how we might try to go beyond this kind of reliance. In combination with the awareness that we all have stereotypes, this relates to ICA element 11, “an awareness of initial interaction in intercultural communication as possibly based on cultural stereotypes or generalizations but an ability to move beyond these” (Baker 2015a: 164).

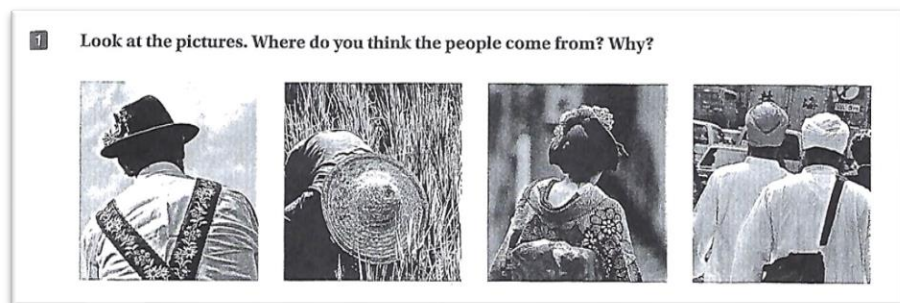
The aims of this lesson segment were generally higher up the ICA framework than in the previous two lesson segments. Element 7 belongs to ICA level 2, advanced cultural awareness, a level which had already been targeted to some extent by activities in both of the previous lesson segments. Working on element 11, though, represented the first time we would work on an element belonging to ICA level 3, intercultural awareness. As has already been mentioned in Chapter 9, providing students with some opportunities to develop awareness at this final level of ICA was one of the overarching aims for this strand of the course. I was conscious, however, that due to the time constraints of the course, development of such awareness was likely to remain rudimentary. Additionally, since there were no real possibilities for practicing intercultural communication built into the course, our exploration of this element would remain more cognitive than experiential.

I again found a promising series of tasks in *Working in Asia*. These tasks came from the *Focus on culture 2* section of Unit 2, entitled *Stereotypes* (Frendo and Hsu 2010: 25). The activities presented in this section addressed the learning aims for this lesson segment in a particularly cogent manner, making it possible to cover a number of important aspects of stereotypes in a relatively short space of time. However, in order to increase efficiency, this lesson segment was split across two course sessions. The topic would be introduced at the end

of course session 5 and then the students would be given an assignment to work on outside of class in preparation for further discussion in course session 6.

As an introduction to the topic, the first task from the *Focus on Culture 2* section would be done as the final activity in course session 5. Here, the learners are presented with four photos of people wearing some more traditional forms of dress from four different areas of the world. They are asked to consider where these people might be from and why they think so.

Materials excerpt 24:



Fredero and Hsu (2010: 25)

The students would be asked to discuss these pictures with a partner. We would then collect some ideas from various pairs as to where the people in each picture were from, focusing on how each pair came to the conclusions they did. After that, I would write the word *stereotype* on the board and ask the students to provide a basic definition. They would then be invited to comment on whether they felt that relying on stereotypes would generally have a positive or negative impact on intercultural communication. This discussion was meant to be primarily a collection of previous knowledge and a way for me to gauge the students' current level of awareness in preparation for further discussion in course session 6.

Having thus introduced the topic of stereotypes, I would finally assign the second task from *Focus on culture 2* as homework. Here, the learners are asked to read through a "list of tips for a foreigner coming to work in Germany" (Fredero and Hsu 2010: 25). They are then asked to indicate which statements they agree with and which they disagree with by ticking the appropriate box next to each statement.

Materials excerpt 25:

2

Read the following list of tips for a foreigner coming to work in Germany.
Do you agree or disagree with the statements?

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Germans never smile during business. For them, business is a serious matter. | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| 2 When you meet a German always shake hands, even if you know them. | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| 3 Most Germans enjoy drinking beer. You need to learn to like it too. | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| 4 Public transport in Germany is very reliable. | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| 5 Germans are very proud of their productivity and quality standards. You should praise them when possible. | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| 6 Germans are very punctual. Never be late for an appointment or a meeting. | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| 7 Germans enjoy organization. Sudden changes of plan are to be avoided. | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| 8 German don't like drinking tap water. | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |

Frederick and Hsu (2010: 25) [sic]

In the following course session, the students would begin by discussing their answers to the homework in small groups, using three questions for guidance:

1. Did you all agree or disagree with the same statements?
2. German students: How many of these statements are true about you personally?
3. Would this list be helpful for someone who is coming to Germany to work? Why or why not?

After the groups had had a chance to consider these questions, we would then discuss the groups' responses to them as a class.

Despite its overt and exclusive focus on culture at the national level, this task was particularly well constructed for illustrating some of the main points about stereotypes that were the focus of this lesson segment. The task is built around a list of 'dos' and 'don'ts' for non-native visitors to a particular country, an approach that is frequently used in intercultural training materials aimed at preparing people for intercultural interaction with interactants from specific national cultures (cf. e.g. Axtell 1993, Lewis 2006, Martin and Chaney 2009). Generally, this approach is considered problematic for an ELF-oriented approach to culture because such lists present learners with generalized and often stereotypical statements about cultural norms that belie the complex nature of culture and identity (Santner-Wohlfahrtsberger 2015: 56-57, Baker 2015a: 180). As Baker specifically points out, such an approach masks the fact that generalizations are based on the aggregated norms of a group; the behavior of a given individual, however, is likely to vary considerably more than such descriptions suggest (Baker 2015a: 180). However, this task turns this approach on its head by asking learners to consider a list describing purported cultural norms from their own national culture. This allows the learners to discover the problems with such lists for themselves, since each of them is likely to be or to know an exception to at least one of the statements on the list. Additionally, class discussion of the task would allow us to uncover concrete examples of individuals in our own

learning group who were exceptions to the various stereotypes, illustrating in a personal way one of the major points of this lesson segment and hopefully sensitizing the students to one of the dangers of relying uncritically on stereotypes in intercultural communication.

As has been discussed in Chapter 2, the majority of the students enrolled in the pilot course came from the same linguistic background; thirteen out of sixteen of them spoke German as L1, though two spoke additional L1s as well. These thirteen had in large part also been primarily socialized into German society and national culture, so that they were likely to identify themselves as German and to approach the statements in the task described above as descriptions of ‘their’ culture. In the case of the other three, who came from other countries and spoke other first languages, I felt confident that they would be able to form opinions about many of the items on the list because they had already been living and studying in Germany as exchange students for several months and had had time to gather some cultural impressions. They would also have the chance to explore with their German classmates how well their impressions matched the German students’ opinions. Thus, this activity would be able to engage all the students, even those who did not consider themselves part of the cultural group described by the list in the activity.

After discussing the groups’ responses to the list of statements about Germany, I left room in the lesson plan for an optional activity to be used if we seemed to be well within the time allotted for the topic. This activity came from Module 2.8 of the *Intercultural Resource Pack* (Utley 2004: 46-47). In it, learners are asked to consider what factors may influence the formation of negative cultural stereotypes. They are given a list of sixteen potential factors (*the media, education, fear, poor communication skills*, etc.) and asked to discuss together whether any factors are missing from this list. They are then asked to identify the four factors that they as a group feel are most common in the formation of negative stereotypes about cultures. I planned to have students do this activity in small groups, then to briefly compare and discuss results with the whole class. The goal here was again to get students thinking rather than to present them with hard and fast answers. I hoped to help them understand that stereotypes form for a reason and that they have psychological and social functions. This would help us to avoid an overly simplified view of stereotypes as completely harmful or negative constructions. However, if time were short, we would be able to skip this activity without hampering the main aims of the lesson segment.

Finally, I intended to wrap up this lesson segment by discussing with the students whether stereotypes generally impact intercultural communication in positive or negative ways, as well as whether it is possible to completely avoid stereotypes and stereotyping. I also planned to generate ideas with them about how we might handle our own stereotypes so as to be more

effective intercultural communicators. The aim of this discussion was to raise the students' awareness that cultural stereotypes may inform communication, particularly in early phases of an interaction with people from cultural groups with which we are relatively unfamiliar, but that we need to treat these stereotypes critically so that we can move beyond them where they might otherwise hinder intercultural communication (ICA element 11).

The rest of this chapter will offer analysis of four particularly interesting aspects of classroom work with these tasks. 12.2 will present analysis of the discussion captured between one group of students during the small group phase of the lesson segment in which the students were discussing their homework. This group happened to be made up of two German students and two exchange students from Brazil, and thus represented an actual instance of intercultural communication. 12.3 and 12.4 will explore aspects of the whole group discussion phase of the lesson that point to ways in which the second task was able to facilitate productive work towards the learning aims for this topic. 12.5 will then discuss a particularly interesting phase of this lesson, in which the students took over the discussion and invited the Brazilian exchange students, S11 and S12, to act as cultural informants for the rest of the class. Finally, 12.6 will offer a concluding summary of the trends in the data from this lesson segment.

12.2 *Small group discussion: A group engages in intercultural communication*

Although we were somewhat pressed for time at the end of course session 5 and it thus became necessary to condense the discussion of task 1 of the worksheet on stereotypes from *Working in Asia* somewhat, this task still made an effective introduction to the topic of stereotypes. Instead of discussing all of the pictures, we focused only on the first. This picture was particularly effective for our learning group because it depicted a stereotype with which the group was quite familiar. The students barely needed two seconds to conclude that the man in this picture probably came from Bavaria, a conclusion they supported by citing the felt hat and suspenders he was pictured wearing (T5: 2164, 2166, 2168, 2171-2173). They were equally quick to predict that he was wearing *Lederhosen*, traditional leather trousers, on his legs, though this was not pictured (T5: 2169-2170, 2174-2178). This picture thus made an efficient and effective way to introduce *stereotypes* as the next topic we would be discussing. In the interest of time, I then provided the students with a definition of the term *stereotype* instead of asking them to generate one. Even though formulating a class definition would have been a good linguistic exercise for the group, providing the students with an explanation did not really detract from the purpose of the introductory sequence, since this was not a concept with which

I expected them to be wholly unfamiliar. Thus, this condensed approach was still able to prime them for the new topic and to prepare them to complete their homework assignment in preparation for more discussion in the following course session.

In course session 6, the discussion questions generated a lot of discussion about the worksheet during the small group phase of the lesson segment. The students seemed very engaged with the task, discussing the questions thoroughly and going through the stereotypes point by point rather than looking for general trends. The members of each group did not agree on as many of their answers as I had anticipated, and several groups debated one or more of the statements quite energetically. However, since only one recording device was used, just one group's discussion was captured during this part of the lesson.

The composition of the recorded group was particularly interesting. While three of the four groups were primarily made up of students from Germany⁸⁸, the recorded group was comprised of two students from Germany (S1 and S7) and two exchange students from Brazil (S11 and S12). Thus, this group involved a balanced number of 'insider' and 'outsider' perspectives on the stereotypes of German culture presented on the worksheet. Additionally, because the students came from two different linguacultural backgrounds, this group's discussion could be viewed as a relatively authentic example of an intercultural exchange through ELF in which the students had the opportunity to experience intercultural communication firsthand. Such opportunities were comparatively rare in the pilot course, given its largely homogenous linguacultural make-up. Closer analysis of the discourse in this group shows that while the group largely arrived at similar conclusions about the truth-value of the eight statements in task 2, differences in their cultural backgrounds did lead to some differences of opinion that then needed to be negotiated within the group. These points of negotiation also led the group to engage in additional comparative discussion of cultural norms in Germany versus in Brazil.

For the most part, the individual members of this group had come to the same conclusions about the statements on the worksheet. For example, they found that all of them had agreed with statement 2, *When you meet a German always shake hands, even if you know them* (T6: 1569-1577). In a more nuanced opinion, they had also all agreed with the first half of number 3, *Most Germans enjoy drinking beer*, but had disagreed with the second half, *You need to learn to like it, too* (T6: 1577-1619). However, when they arrived at the fourth statement, *Public transportation in Germany is very reliable*, they discovered that their opinions differed along

⁸⁸ Two groups were made up exclusively of German students, while the third involved three German students and one exchange student from Portugal. This third group thus also involved both 'insider' and 'outsider' perspectives, but was less balanced than the group that was ultimately recorded.

national cultural lines. Both the students from Brazil (S11 and S12) had agreed with the statement (T6: 1627-1628). The German students (S1 and S7) seemed incredulous about this, causing quite a bit of laughter (T6: 1629-1632), before they admitted that they had both disagreed with the statement (T6: 1633-1634). S11 and S12 were then quick to offer an explanation of their position:

Excerpt 30:

T6: 1635-1640 (00:51:32 - 00:51:41)

1635 S12: because you <53> don't (.) don't don't (.) yeah</53>
 1636 S11: </53> okay because you don't live in brazil @@@ </53>
 1637 S12: yeah i mean @ @ @
 1638 S7: ah::: <54> okay </54>
 1639 S11: <54> <@> you don't know (.) </54> <55> our transport
 1640 transport yes </@> </55> @ @

In S11 and S12's estimation, the difference between their opinion of German transportation and their German interlocutors' opinion was the result of differing experiences with public transportation systems. They were comparing their experience of the German system to their experience of the system at home in Brazil. The German students did not have this point of comparison and thus judged the German system differently. In other words, S11 and S12 recognized that the students were judging the veracity of statement 4 in comparison to their own cultural frames of reference regarding public transportation. In that respect, S11 and S12 were demonstrating "an awareness of the role that culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning" (ICA element 2) (Baker 2015a: 164).

S11 and S12 then went on to jointly illustrate the Brazilian system for their German interlocutors:

Excerpt 31:

T6: 1641-1670 (00:51:37 - 00:52:00)

1641 S12: <55> if you live in brazil it's some- </55>
 1642 S7: @ @
 1643 S12: sometimes
 1644 very different
 1645 S1: okay
 1646 S7: <56> because </56>
 1647 S12: <56> yeah i </56> agree yeah
 1648 S11: you have to go to the: bus station and wait
 1649 S7: yes
 1650 S11: <57> you don't yeah have no time no </57>
 1651 S12: <57> you have no time (.) the bus stop there you know?
 1652 </57>
 1653 S7: does (.) does the time plan (wait) there
 1654 S11: no (.) <58> there's no plan </58>
 1655 S12: <58> no plan no plan </58>
 1656 S1: @ @ @
 1657 S7: @ @ @ @
 1658 S11: no time
 1659 S12: you go there and the people say okay the bus is coming
 1660 S11: @ @

1661 S12: but coming at what time what time yeah i don't
 1662 know
 1663 S7: oh today's coming (.) <59> today you can </59> @@@
 1664 S11: <59> maybe ten minutes </59>
 1665 S12: <59> yeah today's coming </59>
 1666 S12: today's coming yeah
 1667 S11: maybe thirty minutes <60> maybe </60> one <61> hour so
 1668 </61> yeah
 1669 S7: <60> okay </60>
 1670 S12: <61> so yeah </61>

Knowing the German system as they do from their experience as exchange students in Germany, S11 and S12 are able to describe some significant points of difference to the system in Brazil, most notably that there is no schedule hanging in the bus station to inform travelers when the bus is expected to stop (lines 1650-1658). In identifying and describing relevant points of difference, S11 and S12 are thus able to demonstrate their ability to make comparisons between the German and Brazilian public transportation systems (ICA element 4).

This stretch of discourse is characterized by a lot of repetition, both self and other, as well as by a lot of overlapping talk, particularly between S11 and S12. They seem to be telling a story together, sometimes trying to make the same point simultaneously (lines 1650-1652), sometimes repeating what the other has just said for clarity (line 1651) or emphasis (lines 1655, 1658), and sometimes picking up the narrative from the other speaker (line 1659). This appears to cause some problems of understanding for S1 and S7, most apparently in lines 1650-1653, where S11 and S12 simultaneously attempt to explain that there is no schedule on display at the bus stop. S7's follow-up question in line 1653, *does (.) does the time plan (wait) there*, immediately shows that he has not understood what S11 and S12 were trying to communicate. However, the non-understanding is quickly remedied in the next few turns, with S7's laughter in line 1657 showing that he has finally understood. S11 and S12 appear to enjoy sharing their experience with their German interlocutors, and they also appear to enjoy their interlocutors' reactions. At two points, the narrative is punctuated by laughter from S1 and S7. At both these moments, the German students seem to suddenly understand a point the Brazilian students are trying to make that they nevertheless find surprising or even shocking (lines 1656-1657, 1663).

After S11 and S12 completed their description, the students then returned to discussing the reasons for their responses to statement 4 on the worksheet:

Excerpt 32:

T6: 1671-1698 (00:52:01 - 00:52:26)

1671 S1: so in comparison the: eh:
 1672 S12: yeah here's perfect
 1673 S1: here <62> is much </62> better than there
 1674 S11: <62> here IS perfect </62>
 1675 S11: yeah
 1676 S12: here is perfect
 1677 S11, S12: @@@@

1678 S7: okay if we compare this conditions (.) in german they're
 1679 always complaining oh the <L1ger> deutsche bahn's {german
 1680 railway's} </L1ger> always so late and
 1681 S12: yeah @
 1682 S1: yeah
 1683 S11: yeah
 1684 S7: just because I disagree
 1685 S12: okay
 1686 S7: but in comparison to bra<63>zil xxxx </63>
 1687 S11: <63> sometimes it IS </63> later everywhere
 1688 S7: yeah
 1689 S12: @ @
 1690 S11: in comparison
 1691 S12: @ @
 1692 S11: <@> with brazil it's </@>
 1693 @ @ @ @
 1694 S7: so we can say (.) it's mixed up with us depending on the
 1695 position <64> xxxx </64>
 1696 S11: <64> yeah </64>
 1697 S12: <64> bra</64>zil yeah yeah it's xxx
 1698 S7: okay (6)

S1 reintroduces this topic by paraphrasing S11 and S12's position, that the German public transportation system seems very reliable in comparison with the Brazilian system. However, while S1 uses the phrase *here is much better than there* (line 1673), S12 jumps in with the claim that *here is perfect* before S1 can even finish his turn (line 1672). This phrase is taken up by S11 in overlap with S1's turn (line 1674), then repeated again by S12 (line 1676) and punctuated by shared laughter between the two Brazilian students (line 1677). One might get the impression that S11 and S12 are setting up their opinion as clearly and unarguably more correct than that of their German interlocutors. However, when S7 explains his position, that German nationals are frequently frustrated with the German train system because trains often arrive later than they are scheduled (lines 1678-1680), S12 and S11 acknowledge this point by agreeing with S7 that trains do sometimes run late in Germany (lines 1681, 1683, 1685, 1687). In return, S7 acknowledges that he understands why S11 and S12 would find the German system reliable compared with the system in Brazil (line 1686). The group then decides to agree to disagree, acknowledging and accepting that the response to statement 4 on the worksheet will be different depending on one's previous experiences with systems of public transportation (lines 1694-1698). Essentially, they accept both the Brazilian students' and the German students' perspectives as valid and agree to allow them to coexist, rather than trying to persuade one side or the other to concede their opinion in favor of adopting the other.

As a specimen of intercultural communication, these three excerpts appear to illustrate several of Baker's (2009a, 2015a) claims about the nature of intercultural communication through ELF. The participants draw on multiple frames of reference within their discussion, yet, as in Baker's petanque example, in which a Thai national and a French national are

discussing their experiences with the game of petanque (see Example 2 in 8.2), neither characterization is treated as dominant, nor are they hybridized. The four students in the excerpts above are able to present and negotiate differences in their experiences without rejecting others' positions as invalid or trying to construct a single perspective which can accommodate both positions simultaneously. Ultimately, they seem comfortable allowing for different and even conflicting associations in their negotiated interpretation of statement 4.

The exchange about differences in cultural experience in relation to transportation systems seems to have opened the way for this group to engage in further cross-cultural comparisons as their discussion continued. This is particularly apparent in their discussion of statement 6, *Germans are very punctual. Never be late for an appointment or meeting*. In talking about the general importance of punctuality in Germany, S7 claimed that

if you go on a date or something with friends (.) it's said uh <L1 ger> pünktlichkeit ist eine tugend (heißt es da) {punctuality is a virtue (they say)} (.) also {so} </L1 ger> (.) so just (.) punctuality is important i guess <soft> for germans </soft> (T6: 1749-1753).

Through his remarks, S7 implied that even in casual situations, punctuality is valued and expected in Germany. He even included a German adage to underline his point. This comment sparked a lengthier discussion of cultural norms surrounding meeting times in Germany versus in Brazil. In a sequence with some strong parallels to their description of public transportation in Brazil, S11 and S12 described some of the differences in Brazilian norms for meeting up with friends, noting that it was quite common for people to arrive later than the agreed upon time (T6: 1763-1767) and that it was not seen as problematic to wait for someone (T6: 1773-1774). Despite his obvious interest, S7 seemed rather mystified and uncomfortable with the difference in norms. Although he understood that everyone would interpret an invitation for 8 o'clock to mean somewhat later, he still added with concern *but if you don't know (.) wh- what time this is [...] this is difficult* (T6: 1787, 1790). This again led to some negotiation of viewpoints. S12 responded with the self-deprecating remark *we get sad we are sad (.) this is our world* (T6: 1791), though he and S11 did not seem to take this too seriously, as they both laughed about this immediately afterwards (T6: 1794). S7 then finally signaled some acceptance of their perspective, conceding that *the cool people always come later* (T6: 1795). Ultimately, the group agreed to agree with the statement (T6: 1797-1798).

In the discussions of meeting times as well as of public transportation, S11 and S12 largely volunteered information about differences in cultural norms in their own country. However, toward the end of the group work phase, S7 increasingly requested information from S11 and S12, quite possibly because of their previous openness to talking about their cultural experiences. This first occurred in talking about statement 8, *German [sic] don't like drinking tap water*, when S7 asked them about the quality of tap water in Brazil (T6: 1861-1862). He

thereby demonstrated a sincere interest in learning more about their country and their cultural experiences. In discussing the final guiding question for the small group discussion of task 2 on the worksheet, whether the students thought the list presented in the task would actually be helpful to someone coming to Germany to work, S7 again actively solicited S11 and S12's input, this time as experienced intercultural communicators, asking them if they had prepared themselves for their university exchange on the basis of some of the stereotypes they had heard about Germany (T6: 1909-1910). S12 answered affirmatively, though he seemed to misinterpret the personal nature of S7's question somewhat in his response (T6: 1911-1917). S7 then posited the second statement, *When you meet a German always shake hands, even if you know them*, as a hint he felt would probably be particularly useful for incoming visitors (T6: 1921-1922), to which S12 agreed on the basis of his own experience (T6: 1929-1942). In actively seeking input from S11 and S12 at these points in the discussion, S7 thus encouraged them to act as cultural informants about their own country and national culture, but also about their experiences with intercultural communication as exchange students in Germany, further enriching the group's discussion.

The analysis of the discourse that took place in this group during this phase of the lesson points to the potential value of opportunities for intercultural communication within ELF-oriented courses. In this segment of the lesson, the group recorded not only had the chance to consider and articulate their views on the stereotypes presented on the worksheet, but were also able to exercise their skills as intercultural communicators. Where they encountered differences of opinion, they were able to engage in negotiation of understanding with each other. Particularly S11 and S12 demonstrated an ability to identify points of mismatch (ICA element 9) and draw comparisons between culturally informed norms and practices (ICA element 4). The whole group also demonstrated an ability to move beyond a cultural stereotype in interaction to a perspective that was more complex and less fixed (ICA element 11). At the same time, they conceivably gained a new awareness of the "multiple associations and meanings of cultural practices and their associated terms" (Baker 2015a: 97) in considering others' culturally informed viewpoints affecting notions of concepts such as the reliability of transportation or punctuality when meeting someone. In engaging in intercultural dialogue together, they not only exercised their skills as intercultural communicators, but likely gained a measure of intercultural awareness through the process that had the potential to make them stronger intercultural communicators in the future. However, although the group was able to share some of the insights they gained with the rest of the class later on in the lesson segment (cf. 12.4 below), their experience in this phase of the task was exceptional, given the generally homogenous linguacultural make-up of the learning group.

While many interesting things took place during this group's discussion, particularly as their discussion could be considered an example of actual intercultural communication, it is still unfortunate that they were the only group recorded during this phase. It would have been very interesting to compare this group's conclusions directly to the discussions that took place in the other groups and to see whether this conversation varied significantly from more 'culturally homogenous' groups. However, in comparing this group's discussion of the different statements on the worksheet with points brought up later in the lesson during the whole class discussion by speakers who had participated in other groups, it appears that the group reached very similar conclusions about the truth-value of individual statements, as well as the kinds of problems they identified with some of the statements. For example, like the group recorded, the class generally seemed to agree with the first half of statement 3, *Most Germans enjoy drinking beer*, but found the second half, *You need to learn to like it too*, to be problematic (T6: 2203-2204, 2483). Only the recorded group's stance on statement 4, the reliability of public transportation, appears to have been unique, with the other groups apparently concluding, as S1 and S7 initially did, that this statement was categorically false (T6: 2162-2184). Finally, it would appear from later discussion with the whole class that all groups also concluded that the list on the worksheet would generally be useful to those wishing to come to Germany to work, a point that I then attempted to counter or at least qualify. Interestingly, just as the recorded group cited statement 2, about shaking hands, as an example of a statement that they felt would be useful for visitors to Germany, this statement was most often referenced during whole class discussion as support for the usefulness of such lists (T6: 2066-2069, 2095-2104, 2290-2293). So, for the most part, it would appear that this group came to comparable conclusions with the others, with the exception of statement 4.

12.3 Whole class discussion I: Uncovering the relativity of stereotypes using students' own experiences

Comparison between the discussion in the small group captured on the recording and the whole group discussion phase suggests that the students generally seemed to have similar ideas about the veracity of the statements in task 2 of the worksheet on stereotypes from *Working in Asia*. However, the main aim for this task was not to establish the truth-value of the individual statements, but rather to use the statements to uncover some of the problems with relying on stereotypes in order to help the students to become more aware of the need to treat stereotypes critically as a basis for intercultural communication. In the whole class discussion phase of this

task, we therefore focused primarily on talking about the second and third questions that had been provided to guide the students' discussions in their small groups.

Addressing the second question, which asked the German students in the group to consider which of the statements in task 2 applied to them personally, helped us to uncover two problematic aspects of stereotypes that make them unreliable as a basis upon which to build intercultural communication. First, discussion of this question helped to demonstrate to the students that individuals are often exceptions to particular stereotypes that may otherwise be generally true of a group of people. In particular, discussion of statement 3, *Most Germans enjoy drinking beer. You need to learn to like it too*, was able to illustrate this particularly effectively. Here, I took an informal poll of the German students in class that day, asking those who personally liked beer to raise their hands (T6: 1977-1978), then those who did not (T6: 1981). This livened up the class quite a bit, and each round of hand raising was met by laughter from the group (T6: 1979-1980, 1984, 1987). The results were quite telling, as my comments immediately afterwards show:

T: so it's interesting that even even ah within a group of what are we about fifteen tonight sixteen (.) a:hm (.) we have about eight germans raise their hand and say i like beer and four raise their hand and say eh not so much (.) ahm (.) so that's already that's a big group to even though it's the minority it's a big group to say that that's not true about them even though that's something that (.) much of the world thinks of when they think of germany they think of BEER and people DRINKING BEER and germans like BEER so (T6: 1989-1998)

Of the twelve German students present that day⁸⁹, eight indicated that they liked beer, while four indicated that they did not. This was a significant minority, suggesting that although the first half of statement 3 on the worksheet was generally true for the German students as a group, it only predicted the actual preference of two out of three students in that same group. Thus, this poll was able to make the “multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping” (ICA element 7) (Baker 2015a: 164) especially visible for the students and to show them that it may be problematic to assume that a given stereotype will automatically apply to every member of a particular social grouping.

Discussion of this question also helped us to uncover a second issue with stereotypes, that such generalized statements may mask the complexity of contextual factors behind a particular culturally based value or behavior. In identifying statements that were not true about them personally, S8 named statement 6, *Germans are very punctual* (T6: 2010), saying *well i am not*

⁸⁹ The attendance record shows that fifteen students were present at course session 6, twelve German students and three exchange students (two from Brazil and one from Portugal). Therefore, we can conclude that all the German students present participated in the impromptu poll.

(T6: 2012). In response to her answer, I began to initiate another survey, asking the German students who considered themselves punctual to raise their hands (T6: 2017-2021). However, before we were able to discuss the results, another student, S3, broke in and commented that the importance ascribed to punctuality was often relative to the type of event (T6: 2022-2024), to which another unidentified male speaker immediately agreed (T6: 2025-2027). S3 named business meetings as an example of a context in which it *is very unpolite when you be unpunctual* (T6: 2030-2033). This led us to discuss further examples of contexts in which punctuality would be considered very important versus contexts in which it might be considered less vital in Germany. Although this aspect of the discussion might have been even more productive if the students had been asked to comment on why they thought Germans had come to value punctuality in particular situations, it nonetheless provided the students with the opportunity to notice how complex the notion of the importance of punctuality actually was in the local culture, compared to the relative straightforwardness of the statement presented on the worksheet.

During this part of the discussion, I also shared a personal anecdote with the class, telling them about how I had come to Germany with this stereotype of German punctuality in mind and been shocked as a university student to discover that students often came late to class. I had been equally mystified by the *Universitätsviertelstunde*, where by tradition university courses in Germany begin a quarter of an hour after they are scheduled and end a quarter of an hour early (T6: 2039-2056). In this respect, I functioned as a cultural informant for the students, providing an ‘outsider’ perspective on local cultural norms and practices.

12.4 Whole class discussion II: Considering the role of stereotypes in intercultural communication

In the next phase of the whole group discussion, we dealt with the third question that had been provided as a guide for the earlier discussion in small groups, whether the list of tips provided in task 2 would be helpful for someone from another linguaculture who was planning to come to Germany to work. This question was meant to initiate a discussion of the potential dangers of relying on stereotypes in intercultural communication, as well as how we might try to go beyond them in actual intercultural encounters. These points were both related to the final learning aim for this lesson segment, which was to raise the students’ “awareness of initial interaction in intercultural communication as possibly based on cultural stereotypes or generalizations but an ability to move beyond these” (ICA element 11) (Baker 2015a: 164).

After their experience debating the truth-value of the statements about German culture in small groups, as well as the insights we had gained regarding potentially problematic aspects of stereotypes as a basis for communication earlier in the whole group discussion phase, I expected the students to immediately recognize that relying on lists of stereotyped statements would likely not be particularly helpful for intercultural communication. However, although we got there in the end, it proved more difficult than expected to move our discussion toward the point I was trying to make, with the result that this part of the lesson segment wound up taking a little over 15 minutes instead of the 10 minutes that had been planned.

Contrary to my expectations, the students initially indicated that they felt that the list provided in task 2 would be helpful to someone from another cultural background planning to come to Germany to work. The earliest responses focused on specific statements that the students felt would be worth being aware of. In particular, the second statement, *When you meet a German always shake hands, even if you know them*, was mentioned twice as an example of a norm it would be helpful to know (T6: 2066-2069, 2095-2101). Interestingly, the second student to name this statement was the exchange student from Portugal, and he seemed to be speaking from personal experience when he claimed that *it's very important to know because people will look at you as if you were (.) an alien* if you do not shake hands in Germany (T6: 2100-2101). Other students also named statement 6, the statement about punctuality (T6: 2067, 2074-2077); statement 5, which claimed that *Germans are very proud of their productivity and quality standards. You should praise them when possible* (T6: 2082-2085); and statement 4, *Public transportation is very reliable*, though the student who cited the latter made it clear that he wished to make the converse point, that people coming to Germany should realize that the trains are sometimes late so that they could plan accordingly (T6: 2162-2184).

In considering the list more holistically, most of the students also seemed to feel that such a list would generally be helpful in preparing oneself for an intercultural encounter. This is apparent in the responses by S2, who stated *i think the person (.) doesn't make ah anything wrong if he makes (.) exactly from the list for the most part yeah* (T6: 2190-2195), and S13, who felt that *there are good hints in it* (T6: 2213). On the other hand, a few students seemed to feel that the list might be problematic. S16, for example, said that he did not feel that the list was helpful *because in some way it gives an impression that you have to follow certain rules or people (.) won't like you and i think people will accept you if you don't learn how to appreciate beer* (T6: 2200-2204). He thus seemed to feel that the list was too prescriptive in dictating the way in which a visitor must behave in order to be accepted into German society. In an attempt to cast further doubt upon the usefulness of such lists, I reminded the students that we had been looking at a list for a familiar culture. I pointed out that if we had been considering a list for a culture with which we were not as familiar, *we can't really say whether*

those things are true or not we could just read them and (1) we'd have to believe them because we haven't been there (T6: 2226-2229). This was a somewhat weak way of drawing attention to the fact that anyone completely unfamiliar with a culture will not be able to recognize which statements on a list like the one we worked with in this task may actually be helpful and which ones are in fact unimportant or even false.

We then shifted to talking about stereotypes and their role in interactions more generally. In this phase of the discussion, several students acknowledged that all people have stereotypes, but each of them also countered this answer with a qualifying statement that showed that they were aware that stereotypes needed to be treated critically. S3 stated *um i think it's very normal that you have stereotypes in your head but you (.) sh- sh- uh (.) have to be open-minded and when you come to a country you have to be ah open and um (.) try to: see how it's really is and sometimes stereotypes are always- also true so* (T6: 2237-2247). His suggestion, to keep an open mind and compare what you think you know about a culture with actual cultural experience, was echoed by the next student, S13. He at first claimed *i also try um (.) NEVER to have stereotypes* (T6: 2249-2250), but later admitted that he was not always successful, saying *actually sometimes i [am] also in this group* (T6: 2269-2270). He used a self-deprecating story to illustrate that in his experience, individuals are often exceptions to stereotypes, concluding *so um and (.) i always try to be uh uh to be open* (T6: 2264-2265).⁹⁰ Finally, S2 responded that there was generally a grain of truth in most stereotypes (T6: 2272-2273), but qualified this statement a moment later with *then: sometimes (.) some stuff is (.) not [true]* (T6: 2275-2276). At this point, I reminded the students about the results of our beer poll, saying *okay (.) yeah: as we were just discovering (.) with the beer thing for example um (.) eight out of twelve times you might be right but those last four times (.) maybe not (.) so it's important to remember that there are always exceptions* (T6: 2277-2282). This made a nice connection back to an earlier point in the lesson and allowed me to reinforce the learning aims connected to ICA element 7, awareness that individuals may be exceptions to stereotypes that are otherwise generally true of a group.

At this point in the discussion, some students also showed awareness that stereotypes can be both useful and detrimental for intercultural communication. This is most apparent in a response by S8, who told the class that she felt stereotypes could have both good and bad effects on intercultural communication (T6: 2288). She again cited statement 2 about the importance of shaking hands when greeting people as an example of something that would be *good to know*

⁹⁰ Interestingly, instead of mentioning another stereotype about national cultures, S13 brought in a stereotype revolving around gender, the only non-national example in the whole class discussion.

(T6: 2293), but then continued *but if you [...] know the wrong things or think (.) you know the right things then it can be bad too* (T6: 2298-2304).

Despite the fact that it had taken some time to arrive at this point, it was encouraging to me to see that students were beginning to show a level of awareness that there are reasons to treat stereotypes critically as a basis for intercultural interactions. Building upon this, we spent the final part of the discussion considering how we might deal with the stereotypes we hold about others so as to ensure that they would not have a negative effect on an intercultural encounter. Here, the students offered a number of insightful suggestions. S3 felt that stereotypes might offer a productive way to break the ice and begin a conversation with a relative stranger (T6: 2308-2330). S2 also suggested that *you maybe can ask the person if [a stereotype] is correct* (T6: 2348). Though her response seems very similar to S3's response, in that it also involves confronting stereotypes directly with one's interlocutors, she appears to have had something subtly different in mind. Whereas S3 was suggesting that stereotypes may have value as a way to strike up a conversation, S2 seemed to be aiming at the value of questioning interlocutors from other cultures about stereotypes in order to learn more about and potentially revise one's knowledge of a particular culture. S4, however, disagreed with this more direct approach. He felt that

you can have [...] stereotypes (.) in your mind but (.) i think it's always rude when you r- reveal them in front of the other person and so yeah you should (.) uh ground your knowledge (.) of the culture from this conversation you have with the other culture right not f- from the stereotype (T6: 2356-2366).

He essentially contradicted S2 and S3's view that one should address stereotypes head-on, proposing instead that one should use information gained indirectly from the intercultural encounters themselves to inform and revise one's understanding of a culture. S13 agreed with him that one should *see [a stereotype] as a hint* (T6: 2374-2375), by which he seemed to mean it should be treated as a hypothesis to be proved or disproved, as he went on to add that one should *then learn [...] if this stereotypes are true* (T6: 2377-2378). Finally, S16 mentioned the importance not only of being open but also of trying to take things with a sense of humor (T6: 2414-2415). He felt that a sense of humor *always helps to create a (.) good basis for communication and it (.) lifts up your mood so it's (.) as long as you have a good sense of humor you'll always get along* (T6: 2418-2425).

In this final part of the discussion, the students demonstrated much more awareness of the need to treat stereotypes critically and handle them with caution in intercultural encounters than they had earlier on. The strategies the students proposed for dealing with stereotypes in conversation show that they were at least cognitively able to envision ways in which to move beyond stereotypes in intercultural conversation, though opportunities to put these strategies into practice had been relatively rare in the course. This awareness is the foundation of the

second half of ICA element 11, “awareness of initial interaction in intercultural communication as possibly based on cultural stereotypes or generalizations but an ability to move beyond these” (Baker 2015a: 164), the development of which was one of the main aims of this lesson segment. The students’ responses in this part of the discussion also displayed an awareness of other elements of ICA that were not specifically targeted in this task. For example, in suggesting the importance of keeping an open mind and checking one’s stereotypes against ongoing input, whether directly or indirectly acquired, the students demonstrated a certain awareness of ICA element 6, “cultural knowledge as provisional and open to revision” (Baker 2015a: 164). Thus, this phase of the lesson could ultimately be considered successful in that it seemed able to help the students develop and articulate attitudes toward stereotypes that showed compatibility with an ELF-oriented approach to culture and intercultural communication.

12.5 Inviting ‘outsider’ perspectives: The students take over the discussion

As I was wrapping up the whole-class discussion and getting ready to move on to the next topic, S13, one of the German students, raised his hand and asked S11 and S12, the two exchange students from Brazil, which statements they had found accurate about Germans and which they had disagreed with (T6: 2445-2457). In essence, S13 was inviting S11 and S12 to become cultural informants and to provide the class with an outsider’s perspective on the local culture, thus spontaneously incorporating another instance of Baker’s fourth strand of cultural input into the lesson segment (cf. Baker 2015a: 197). I had been more intent on making the point during the lesson segment that individuals can be exceptions to stereotypes and had thus focused mostly on the perspectives of the German students. Although I myself had impulsively included a few brief anecdotal comments on my own experiences as a non-German living in Germany during the whole-class discussion of individual statements on the list (T6: 2039-2056, 2431-2444), I had not intended to open up discussion from this angle. However, the resulting exchange turned out to be quite valuable, both because of the insights it yielded and because of the obvious interest of the German students in hearing more about the Brazilian students’ perspectives.

S12 fielded the question, though he seemed to feel a bit as though he had been put on the spot initially. He first focused on which statements he had disagreed with, naming statements 1, 3 and 8 (T6: 2461-2463). After a pause, he then went back and qualified his answer to statement 3, saying that he had disagreed mostly with the second half of the statement, that

anyone coming to Germany needs to learn to like beer (T6: 2470-2483). S13 agreed with him on this point (T6: 2484). Then, when S12 repeated that he had ticked 'disagree' on statement 8, *German [sic] don't like drinking tap water* (T6: 2486), S13 responded that his group had agreed with this statement, though his tone implied that he personally had not (T6: 2487). S12 then qualified his answer, saying that he was personally unsure when doing the homework about whether Germans liked to drink tap water, but added in laughing intonation *now i know* that some Germans liked it and some did not (T6: 2489-2496).

At this point, S13 commented that he found it interesting that he and S12 agreed on their answers to so many statements, although S12 came from Brazil and he, S13, had lived in Germany since birth (T6: 2497-2509). S7 then joined the exchange and reported to the group that he had found S11 and S12's answer to statement 4 about the reliability of the German public transportation system to be very interesting during small group discussion. He summarized the cultural difference in positions within the group, saying that he and S1 did not consider the German system reliable, while S11 and S12 considered it very reliable compared to the Brazilian system (T6: 2512-2518). S11 then joined the conversation and gave a shorter version of the description of the Brazilian public bus system that she and S12 had presented to her group (T6: 2523-2531), with some support from S12 toward the end (T6: 2532-2537).

The class followed the whole exchange with interest, listening attentively and laughing appreciatively at several points (T6: 2495, 2519, 2528, 2534, 2536, 2539). They seemed genuinely interested in their peers' perspectives, resulting in an atmosphere both friendly and curious. Initially, S12 seemed to feel a bit awkward about having the class's undivided attention on him, but as the exchange developed and he experienced support for his positions from S13, he seemed to relax and found more to say. In their description of the Brazilian bus system, S11 and S12 again appeared to enjoy their narrative, and in this second rendition, they even seemed to go for an increased entertainment effect, enjoying and inviting their peers' laughter at several points throughout their description (T6: 2528, 2534, 2536, 2539).

This exchange is rather unique in my data in that it was completely unregulated by me as the teacher, although it took place in the context of a whole-class discussion. The students spoke directly to each other and self-selected when to speak, rather than waiting for me to acknowledge them. Virtually all of the supportive backchannels during longer turns came from other students, rather than from me. This again points to the students' engagement in the discussion. It also suggests that they may have felt more immediately responsible for the discussion since it began with a student directly questioning another student. I reassumed an active role only when it was clear that S11 and S12 were finished with their narrative, and then I did not really add anything or attempt to summarize the discussion, but only commented on

how interesting I had found their contributions before introducing the next topic (T6: 2540-2545).

This part of the whole-class discussion shows that the use of students as cultural informants can be quite productive on a topic such as this one, at least in courses involving older students who have some ability to articulate their cultural experiences. It allowed us to explore non-local perspectives on the local culture, but also added a comparative element to the lesson, particularly at the point at which S11 and S12 talked about the public transportation system in their own country. This topic also drew several additional elements of ICA into the discussion that I had not initially planned to include in the lesson. It illustrated the role that culture and experience play in the interpretation of the meaning of concepts such as the reliability of public transportation (ICA element 2) and gave the class the chance to consider the relative nature of culturally influenced perceptions in light of differing cultural experiences (ICA element 5). Given that alternative perspectives came from fellow students and were delivered in an entertaining fashion, it seems probable that the students were particularly likely to have retained awareness gained during this part of the lesson segment beyond the end of the course. In retrospect, I am very glad that S13 raised this question for the group, as we would have lost an important learning opportunity if he had not.⁹¹

12.6 In summary

Overall, this lesson segment was quite successful. The tasks from the worksheet from *Working in Asia* (Frendo and Hsu 2010: 25) turned out to be quite effective, allowing us to achieve the aims set out for the lesson. The first task on the worksheet provided an effective introduction to the topic in a very short amount of time. It allowed us to address what stereotypes are while demonstrating to the students that all of us have stereotypes. Classroom work with the statements on Germany in the second task demonstrated to the group that individuals may be exceptions to widely held stereotypes, an important part of ICA element 7, “an awareness of multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping” (Baker 2015a: 164). Although I was initially a bit concerned that the students felt a list of tips based on stereotypes was an effective tool for those preparing to visit another country, the students did acknowledge that

⁹¹ As it was, we still missed one ‘outsider’ perspective. There was a third exchange student in the pilot course, S16 from Portugal, who did not contribute to this conversation. He was in S13’s small group, which may explain why S13 did not apply to him for his opinions, since S13 had probably already heard them. S16’s presence in his group may even have inspired S13 to question S11 and S12 in the first place. However, it seems a sad oversight that S16 was not invited to add his perspectives to the discussion.

stereotypes must be handled critically and proposed a number of strategies that could help a speaker to go beyond them as intercultural communication progressed, so that by the end of the discussion, we had arrived at a point consistent with ICA element 11, “an awareness of initial interaction in intercultural communication as possibly based on cultural stereotypes or generalizations but an ability to move beyond these” (Baker 2015a: 164).

The worksheet’s focus on the class’s local culture, and hence on cultural references that were relevant to the students and with which the students had generally had direct experience, appeared to facilitate particularly lively and productive discussion. Thus, the lesson demonstrates how Baker’s (2015a) first resource for teaching culture and intercultural communication, “exploring the complexity of local cultures”, can facilitate lessons which raise awareness of particular points of ICA (cf. Baker 2015a: 195-196). Finally, the inclusion of the perspectives from students acting as cultural informants added particular richness to this lesson segment and extended the range of ICA elements covered in classroom work on this topic to include ICA element 2, “an awareness of the role culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning” (Baker 2015a: 164), and element 5, “an awareness of the relative nature of cultural norms” (Baker 2015a: 164), in addition to elements 7 and 11.

The lesson segment on stereotypes ultimately lasted 30 minutes instead of the 20 that were initially planned. This was mostly due to the fact that the whole group discussion phase of the lesson segment lasted much longer than anticipated, first because it took longer to arrive at an ELF-compatible view of the value of stereotypes in intercultural communication and second because of the unplanned inclusion of S11 and S12’s perspectives as cultural informants. As mentioned in 12.1 above, one additional activity had actually been planned for the lesson segment addressing where negative stereotypes come from. However, this activity had been identified as optional from the start, and I ultimately chose to omit it because the discussion of the other tasks was so productive.

13 Topic 4: Critical incidents (course sessions 6-7)

13.1 Pedagogic aims, tasks and materials for topic 4

The final topic of the strand on culture and intercultural communication through ELF focused on a series of critical incidents in which differing cultural norms resulted in miscommunication between interlocutors in intercultural situations. These critical incidents were selected from two sources: Unit 8.1 of the coursebook *English Unlimited B2* (Tilbury et al. 2011: 62-63) and the critical incident section from Unit 1 of *Working in Asia* (Frendo and Hsu 2010: 17). Consideration of these critical incidents aimed to raise the students' "awareness of the role culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning" (ICA element 2), as well as their "awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures" (ICA element 9) (Baker 2015a: 164).

Critical incidents have become a widely used tool in intercultural training programs. However, the critical incident has its origins in the Critical Incident Technique (CIT), a method developed for the United States military by Colonel John Flanagan during World War II as a "set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior" to aid in the analysis of human interaction with complex systems, such as the operation of combat planes (Flanagan 1954: 327). CIT focuses on the methodical collection and analysis of case studies, generally in the form of personal narratives about a specific interaction within the system being studied. The goal of the technique is to collect case studies which will aid the researcher in understanding, and ultimately in improving, the performance of human interactions within the complex system. Cases with this potential are known as critical incidents. According to Flanagan, an incident can be defined as "any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act" (Flanagan 1954: 327). In order to be considered critical, an incident must take place "in a situation where the purpose or intent of the act seems fairly clear to the observer and where its consequences are sufficiently definite to leave little doubt concerning its effects" (Flanagan 1954: 327).

In the decades following World War II, CIT was also increasingly applied to interpersonal interactions, including intercultural situations, and it became an established technique in intercultural communication research (Heringer 2014: 225). Several approaches to intercultural training drawing on the critical incident as a pedagogic tool were also developed, most notably the Culture Assimilator approach (cf. Fiedler et al. 1971) and its variants (Heringer 2014: 228). In such approaches, learners are presented with critical incidents involving intercultural communication and then engaged in their analysis in order "to teach individuals to see situations from the perspective of members of the other culture" (Albert 1983: 189). Through

work with these critical incidents, learners are expected to gain awareness and declarative knowledge of the other culture, as well as the ability to turn this awareness and knowledge into appropriate action in similar circumstances (Heringer 2014: 229). Thus, the expectation is that work with these critical incidents will ultimately improve the learners' performance as intercultural communicators in situations similar to the critical incident, an expectation that has been confirmed by a number of subsequent studies (cf. Cushner and Landis 1996: 191).

The Culture Assimilator approach in its more traditional iterations involves a highly structured series of steps in which learners are first presented with a critical incident, then guided through interpretation and analysis and finally presented with a solution and an explanation in terms of the cultural norms of one or both parties in the interaction (cf. Fiedler et al. 1971: 99-102; Thomas 1991: 118, Heringer 2014: 230-237). Programs based upon this approach generally focus on critical incidents between members of two specific cultural groupings, representing the learners' native culture and a specific target culture (Heringer 2014: 231). Such programs have become particularly common for courses aimed at business people, as well as those designed for learners preparing to study or do an internship abroad (Heringer 2014: 231).

While neither of the materials selected for use in the pilot course adheres strictly to pedagogic steps detailed in versions of the Culture Assimilator approach, the critical incidents they present for analysis still largely adhere to the criteria set out in such approaches (cf. Fiedler et al. 1971: 97). They each present a typical situation involving interaction between a cultural 'outsider' and a member of a particular culture. The critical incident is presented as a narrative in which the cultural 'outsider' shares their version of the exchange and their uncertainty about why their interlocutor reacted as they did. The learners are then invited to speculate on what they think may have caused these reactions. The tasks are constructed on the premise that, with enough cultural knowledge, the learners will be able to construct a plausible interpretation of the situation in which they identify areas of mismatch between cultural norms that have led to communicative difficulty. Thus, in keeping with Flanagan's original definition of the critical incident, the narratives present a sufficiently complete picture to allow the incident to be "interpreted in a fairly unequivocal manner, given sufficient knowledge about the culture" (Fiedler et al. 1971: 97), and the tasks guide the learners to consider the cultural context in which the exchange is taking place and to draw conclusions based on their knowledge of the cultural norms that the interactants have brought to the encounter.

According to Heringer (2014), critical incidents have the potential to support the development of intercultural competence through interactive learning, in that the learners themselves are led to uncover cultural knowledge and develop intercultural awareness through

the interpretation and analysis of representative case studies (Heringer 2014: 224). Although critical incidents are generally quite brief and appear to be self-contained, deeper understanding of the situation requires learners to go beyond the text itself and examine the larger context in which the critical incident has taken place (Heringer 2014: 238). Through careful consideration of such incidents, it is possible to gain insights particularly into cultural differences and the ways in which these differences may potentially lead to problems in intercultural encounters (Heringer 2014: 239). This suggests that critical incidents may have a particular value for helping learners to develop their awareness of the latter half of ICA element 9, “an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures” (Baker 2015a: 164), one of the primary reasons that tasks based upon this approach were selected for use in the pilot course.

Although critical incidents hold the potential to help learners develop certain aspects of ICA, they also pose certain dangers as well. In presenting situations in which cultural mismatch leads to communicative problems, critical incidents generally “refer to particular cultural norms, use them as a point of orientation and indirectly propagate them” (Heringer 2014⁹²: 231). Thus, in conveying information about the cultural norms of others, cultural incidents run an inherent risk of encouraging “generalization, homogenization and stereotyping” (Heringer 2014: 239). Additionally, many materials feature critical incidents that have been “cleaned up” or “trimmed to make a point” (Heringer 2014: 239). This reduction in their complexity both undermines the authenticity of such critical incidents and also heightens the danger they will “convey a simplified world view, in which every problem is accorded a fitting solution quickly and without complication, smoothly and almost automatically” (Heringer 2014: 241), thus leading to essentialist views of culture and its role in intercultural communication. Therefore, such critical incidents must be treated especially critically in the classroom, if indeed they are used at all.

The use of CIT in intercultural communication research was originally based on the premise that “behavior in different cultural groupings differs in specific situations”, resulting in “critical incidents when members of these cultures come into contact” in the form of “misunderstandings, confusion and conflict” (Heringer 2014: 225). Thus, CIT was used in the context of a research paradigm in which intercultural communication was generally assumed to be a particularly problematic form of communication due to differences in cultural norms.⁹³

⁹² All direct quotations from this source have been translated from the original German by the author of this dissertation.

⁹³ While this was a prevalent presupposition in earlier research into intercultural communication, more recent studies have begun to shift their perspective away from the assumption that communicative

This legacy is still apparent in the way critical incidents are used in intercultural training materials to portray cultural mismatch as resulting in problematic communication. By contrast, as has been discussed in 8.2, research into ELF communication has generally found that such communication is actually largely successful and that culture rarely causes overt communicative difficulties. Rather, speakers in ELF interactions seem to work very hard at suspending cultural expectations and ensuring mutual understanding through the use of communication strategies. Nonetheless, at least anecdotally, most of those who have found themselves in intercultural situations seem to be able to tell a story or two about discomfort or awkwardness that arose from differing cultural expectations in such situations, even if communication did not actually break down (cf. Baker 2015a: 15-16 for one such example). It is therefore important to note here that ‘miscommunication’ in critical incidents rarely involves communication breakdown or even perceptible communicative difficulties. Rather, it most often appears to refer to a lingering sense of discomfort or bafflement, or an *ex post facto* realization that mutual understanding was not as complete as one thought at the time (cf. Heringer 2014: 219-223, 227, 232-234; Baker 2015a: 15-16). Thus, critical incidents presenting this type of scenario would appear to be in line with an ELF understanding of the relationship between culture and communication.

Unit 8.1 from *English Unlimited B2* (Tilbury et al. 2011: 62-63) is organized around three critical incidents in which cultural expectations have led to misunderstanding in the sense of lingering discomfort or unease. Each scenario is presented first from the point of view of one interactant as a listening text supported by an illustration depicting a key scene from the encounter. In each case, this interactant is left with the feeling that something has gone wrong, but is unsure what it might have been. The learners are guided through the listening texts by a series of comprehension questions. Then they are asked to discuss potential explanations for the miscommunication in pairs before they are presented with the other side of the story in the form of a post by the other participant on a fictitious website entitled *Cross-cultural misunderstandings*. They are given the chance to react affectively to these explanations and to discuss how they might have handled each situation differently.

Despite the fact that these tasks come from a B2-level coursebook, the activities themselves make some valuable points about the particular topic of this lesson segment, and make them better than other materials I had examined. Although the listening and reading texts were perhaps somewhat below the students’ level of comprehension, the open nature of the

problems in intercultural talk can necessarily be traced back to cultural differences between participants (cf. Baker 2015a: 153, Kaur 2016: 135).

discussion questions about what had gone wrong in each situation would allow us to discuss the scenarios at a level that was appropriate for a more advanced course. I also decided to omit the grammar and vocabulary points presented in the unit, since they were unlikely to be problematic for more advanced learners.

Still, there are several ways in which this unit was less than optimal for an ELF-oriented course. First, while each scenario presents an instance of intercultural communication, only one of them takes place in an ELF setting. The characters in the first scenario both come from inner circle countries, while the second features a non-native English speaker from an expanding circle country who is living and studying in an inner circle country, thus representing an EFL scenario. Only the final scenario, in which both characters are non-native English speakers from expanding circle countries meeting in an expanding circle country, appears to be an instance of ELF communication. Although the inclusion of an ELF situation at all can be seen as a positive development, considering that ELT materials have long focused on the cultural norms of native English speakers (cf. Vettorel 2010: 154), this constellation of scenarios is still somewhat awkward for a course oriented toward communication through ELF. A second drawback to these activities is that, in two out of three of the recordings, it is a native speaker who presents his or her side of the encounter. Thus, the listening texts do not contribute much to exposing the learners to a range of non-native accents of English, a prerequisite for developing receptive accommodation skills in the area of pronunciation (cf. 7.2). Finally, these scenarios appear to have been scripted for the coursebook, and thus do not represent authentic instances of intercultural communication, so that they needed to be treated critically in this respect.

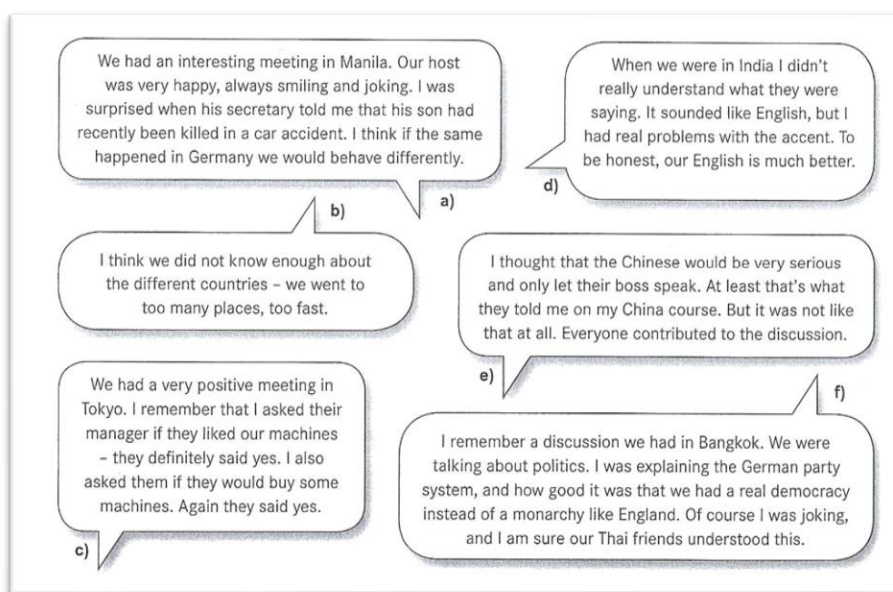
The unit includes one further task focused on learner experience, which I planned to include if time allowed at the end of course session 6. In this task, each learner is asked to prepare to talk about a situation in which they were involved in a misunderstanding. The task instructs the learners to describe three aspects of this situation: what happened, why the learner thinks it happened and how he or she felt at the time. Then the learners are invited to listen to their peers talk about their situations and to comment on whether they feel that their peers have identified a likely reason for the misunderstanding or whether there might be other possibilities.

The context of the task makes clear that the learners are not limited only to intercultural situations in which they have experienced miscommunication in the sense of a lingering sense of discomfort or bafflement. Rather, they are also encouraged to describe instances of misunderstanding in the more traditional sense as well. The task instructions suggest several examples of contexts in which such a misunderstanding may have arisen (e.g. on holiday, travelling, with family or friends, in a relationship) that do not necessarily have to have

anything to do with intercultural communication. Though this did answer my concern that not all the students would have a fitting intercultural experience to share, the task thus did not entirely fit with the topic of the lesson segment, which is one reason I decided to include it only if we found ourselves with enough time at the end of course session 6.

In an effort to combat the shortcomings of the critical incidents presented in Unit 8.1 of *English Unlimited B2*, I decided to augment this lesson segment with a second critical incident, this one taken from Unit 1 of *Working in Asia* (Frendo and Hsu 2010: 17). The scenario presented here is quite a bit more complex than those from Unit 8.1 of *English Unlimited B2*. Rendered as a reading text, it describes a situation in which the owner of a company has just completed a grueling tour trying to drum up new customers for his products. At the time, he felt that the tour went well, but three weeks after returning home, he has had no orders from the potential customers he and his team visited. He therefore asks his team for some comments on the trip. The rest of the text presents a series of six quotations (a-f) from members of his team describing various impressions of their experience:

Materials excerpt 26:



Frendo and Hsu 2010: 17

The learners are invited to discuss the quotations and talk about what they think the problems may have been. Finally, they are asked to comment on what they might do differently on a similar trip.

In the pilot course, the first part of this task would be assigned to the students as homework to be completed between course sessions 6 and 7. They would be asked to read through the

scenario and to think about their answers to the questions raised in the task. At the beginning of course session 7, they would then have the opportunity to compare and discuss their answers in small groups before following up on these discussions with the whole class.

I was aware that the students would probably find the scenario from *Working in Asia* challenging in several ways. First, as has already been mentioned above, it is quite a bit more complex than the scenarios from Unit 8.1 of *English Unlimited B2*. There is no single factor or problem that can account for the outcome of the whole scenario. The task is also left open; learners are not presented with hard-and-fast solutions as they are in the other task, although the Teacher's Guide to *Working in Asia* does make some suggestions about possible explanations. Despite the challenges this complexity and openness entailed, this task had the potential to generate a more interesting and likely a more critical and nuanced interpretation from students than the previous scenarios. Another possible challenge for the students was that this critical incident was taken from a business textbook and involved a business scenario, which was not a context that many of the students were particularly familiar with. However, as I am also not a business expert but was still able to speculate on some possible problems, I felt that the activity would be accessible enough to generate meaningful discussion. Finally, the scenario describes impressions of a tour through Asia, and some of the problems implied rely on learners having some knowledge of Asian countries and cultures, e.g. that Thailand is a monarchy (cf. Materials excerpt 26, quotation f above). As has been mentioned before, neither I nor my students had much firsthand knowledge of Asian cultures. However, even used with a learning group who did not know much about the cultures involved, these materials appeared to have the potential to contribute effectually toward the development of the specific elements of ICA which were the focus of this topic.

Due to its complexity, the critical incident from Unit 1 of *Working in Asia* feels more authentic than the three scenarios from Unit 8.1 of *English Unlimited B2*. However, it is unclear whether it was written for the textbook or adapted from actual experience. Either way, the quotations from the various employees read like written rather than spoken English, and each quotation seems to have been written or selected and adapted to lead the learners toward a specific idea, with the result that it appears to be an instance of the "cleaned up" sort of critical incident which is often presented in intercultural training materials (cf. Heringer 2014: 239). In this respect, the scenario needed to be approached critically.

Having described the aims, tasks and materials that formed the foundation for this lesson segment in 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3 will now present analysis of what happened during classroom work with the critical incidents from *English Unlimited B2* and *Working in Asia* respectively. 13.4 will then offer a brief discussion of the most important themes that emerged from this

lesson segment, as well as some suggestions about how the approach to this topic could have been modified to better reflect an ELF-oriented approach to culture and its relationship to intercultural communication.

13.2 Tasks from Unit 8.1 of English Unlimited B2

Originally, classroom work with the tasks from Unit 8.1 of *English Unlimited B2* was scheduled to take place during the final 30 minutes of course session 6. However, since the discussion of the previous topic, *stereotypes*, had taken significantly longer than anticipated, we were left with only 15 minutes, thus requiring considerable spontaneous modification to the original plan. We were only able to complete the listening task, in which the students listened to one interactant's perspective on each critical incident and then discussed the answers to the comprehension questions about the listening texts, as well as their thoughts on what might have caused the miscommunication in each scenario, in pairs. There was not enough time for the students to read and discuss the website posts presenting the other interactant's perspective on each encounter during the course session, though I did inform the students at the end of the lesson that these posts were on the back of their worksheets, and many of the students appeared eager to read them and find out whether their ideas about what had caused the miscommunication in each scenario were accurate.

As in the other pair and group work phases in this lesson sequence, the single recording device was only able to capture a limited amount of what happened in this pair work phase. Although the students had been asked to form pairs, the group primarily recorded during this phase of the lesson was actually comprised of three students (S2, S3 and S4), since there were an odd number of students present at course session 6.⁹⁴ In their discussion, the group was able to answer all of the comprehension questions about the listening texts correctly and to clarify with relative ease one small misunderstanding about the text that one group member brought forward (T6: 2703-2706). As they progressed from critical incident to critical incident, they spent less time talking about the questions and more time talking about what might have caused the lingering sense of unease or bafflement described by the narrator, indicating that they found this aspect of the discussion more compelling.

⁹⁴ The attendance record for the course shows that 15 students were present at course session 6.

For each critical incident, S2, S3 and S4 were able to identify a mismatch in cultural expectations that they believed might have led to miscommunication. In two cases, they drew conclusions that came fairly close to the explanations provided by the textbook. For the first critical incident, which involves a British man inviting his Canadian host for dinner in a restaurant in Toronto, they were able to establish fairly confidently that the problem involved differences in cultural norms of tipping, though they seemed unsure whether the man had likely tipped too much or too little (T6: 2655-2677, 2684-2692). For the last, in which a girl from Italy describes some awkwardness when she arrives in South Korea and greets her Korean friend at the airport, the group guessed that the girl had shown more open affection in public than one usually would in this national culture (T6: 2742-2763). At the very end of the pair work phase, the recording device also picked up part of the discussion of this third scenario between another pair, S1 and S7, showing that this pair had also conjectured that awkwardness had arisen because the Korean girl had been embarrassed by her friend's open display of affection (T6: 2771-2774).

In discussing the second critical incident, however, S2, S3 and S4 proposed two possible interpretations, one of which was not at all close to the explanation provided by the textbook. In this scenario, an Australian girl has asked a Colombian exchange student to come to a party her friends are having, but cannot understand why she appears not to enjoy the party. According to the textbook, the exchange student felt out of place because the Australians' party did not meet her cultural expectations of what a party should be. On that particular day, she found those differences too much to adjust to and therefore left the party early (Tilbury et al. 2011: 63). In discussing this critical incident, S3 first proposed that the girl might be feeling homesick (T6: 2700-2701), an idea that had been introduced by the narrator in the listening text (cf. T6: 2604-2605). Although S2 initially agreed with this explanation (T6: 2702), she introduced a second interpretation shortly thereafter, speculating that the problem might have been caused by mismatch in norms of eye contact:

Excerpt 33:

T6: 2713-2725 (01:25:14 – 01:25:35)

- 2713 S2: maybe (.) um (.) sh- she doesn't look in the eyes (.) at them
 2714 S4: ah
 2715 S2: and because of that (.) she looks bored
 2716 S3: ah
 2717 S4: or maybe because they wear (dark) glasses
 2718 S3: @ @ @ @ @
 2719 S2: <@> xxxxxxxx </@>
 2720 S3: @ @ @
 2721 S2: so i i think maybe it's
 2722 S3: yeah
 2723 S2: she doesn't look them in
 2724 the eyes because (.) it's unpolite for her
 2725 S3: yeah (.) yeah maybe

S2 suggests that the exchange student is not actually bored by the party, but possibly appears to be so because she adheres to different cultural norms of eye contact than the rest of the party guests (lines 2713, 2715). Although S4 diverts the group's attention from this suggestion with a comment about the other party guests, who are pictured wearing dark sun glasses (lines 2717), S2 returns to the idea about different norms of eye contact in line 2721, conjecturing that the girl might consider direct eye contact impolite (lines 2721-2724). She thus appears to mean her contribution to be taken seriously. S3 concedes that this might be possible, though he hedges this agreement with *yeah maybe* (line 2725). Unfortunately, there is then a gap in the recording in which any further conversation within the group becomes unintelligible for four seconds. After this gap, however, the group moves on to talk about the next critical incident, indicating that no one had really attempted to reject or contradict S2's suggestion, as this likely would have prompted a longer discussion within the group.

S2's suggested explanation for this scenario is interesting in a number of ways. It hearkens back to the listening text on norms of greeting for Koreans that we had heard during the lesson segment on cultural norms in course session 5. This suggests that S2 had developed some lasting awareness, potentially new to her in the last course session, of a norm from a specific culture that was different than her own (ICA element 4). She also appears to have been aware that differences in cultural norms of eye contact might potentially give rise to difficulties in communication, thus indicating some awareness of ICA element 9, the development of which was one of the aims of this lesson segment. It is unclear, however, why she would think that the norms of eye contact that the listening text from the previous week had equated with Korean culture would also hold true for an exchange student from Columbia. Up until this point, most of the examples from 'other' cultures used in the pilot course had come from Asian contexts. It is therefore possible that S2 was simply largely unfamiliar with Columbian cultural norms and therefore had no other starting point for her interpretations than our discussion of norms of greeting the previous week. It is, however, also possible that she and her group had somehow missed or misheard where the exchange student was from when listening to the second critical incident.

Finally, it is interesting that S2 looks for a cultural explanation for this critical incident at all. S3 had already raised a possible affective explanation, that the girl was feeling homesick. It seems equally reasonable that the girl might be shy or dislike large parties, personal characteristics that need not be connected to culture at all. Quite possibly, S2's awareness that we were engaged in a lesson segment on a topic relating to culture and intercultural communication is the reason that she focused on trying to find a cultural explanation. Unfortunately, the recording device did not pick up any other pairs' discussions of this

scenario, so that it is impossible to know what other pairs conjectured about possible causes of the miscommunication.

I had never anticipated that the students would struggle to comprehend the listening texts featured in this task. Additionally, I knew they would have access to the official explanation of what had led to discomfort in each critical incident by the end of the lesson, which would act as a sort of control for their own ideas. For these reasons, I had always planned for most of the discussion in this lesson segment to take place in pairs, rather than with the whole class. However, in retrospect, I wonder if I might have been able to lead the discussion of potential causes of discomfort in a more critical direction than the task seemed to invite if we had had this part of the discussion as a class instead of in smaller groups. Judging by the discussion between S2, S3 and S4, as well as S1 and S7, the students seemed to be aware that these tasks were taking place within the context of a lesson segment on culture, and they therefore looked for possible explanations of the discomfort experienced by the characters in the scenarios in terms of differences in cultural norms and expectations, rather than considering other non-cultural factors which might also have played a role. Additionally, like the listening texts about cultural norms from course session 5 (cf. 11.3), both the listening texts and the blog posts from Unit 8.1 of *English Unlimited B2* mention the nationalities of the characters involved prominently, subtly leading learners toward the assumption that national culture must play a role in any explanation. As Baker (2015a) has pointed out, though, differences in cultural norms may lead to miscommunication, but they need not be the sole or even principle factor behind all difficulties encountered in intercultural communication (Baker 2015a: 15-16). If I had been leading the discussion, I could have cast some doubt on these assumptions and pushed the students to consider other explanations.⁹⁵

We also did not have time for the final task from Unit 8.1 of *English Unlimited B2*, in which the students are invited to share and discuss anecdotes in small groups about a time when each of them was involved in a misunderstanding. Although I had planned to do this activity only if there was some extra time at the end of the course session, it seems in retrospect that leaving this task out was particularly unfortunate for two reasons. First and foremost, it would have been a potential opportunity to draw discussion of the students' personal experiences with intercultural communication into the lesson sequence, an element that was otherwise missing

⁹⁵ Since the final explanations provided in the blog posts establish that discomfort was actually linked to differences in cultural norms and expectations in each of the situations, I would only have been able to carry this point so far. However, giving the 'actual' explanations to the students without discussing them further, as I wound up doing in this lesson segment due to lack of time, might have helped to downplay this.

from this strand of the course⁹⁶. Baker (2012a, 2012b, 2015a) has stressed the importance of actual intercultural communication for the development of ICA. This can include reflecting on and discussing instances of such communication that have taken place outside the classroom (Baker 2015a: 198). Additionally, analysis of the tasks in the culture strand of the pilot course has shown that tasks drawing on the students' experience were generally the most successful at supporting the achievement of the aims set out for a particular topic (cf. Chapter 14 for further discussion of this point), adding additional support for including reflection and discussion of student experience with intercultural communication in this strand of the course.

13.3 Tasks from Unit 1 of Working in Asia

Course session 7 began with a discussion of the critical incident from Unit 1 of *Working in Asia*, which the students had been asked to prepare as homework. In the first phase of the discussion, the students had the opportunity to compare and discuss their answers to the questions posed in the task in small groups. We then engaged in follow-up discussion with the whole class.

Throughout this lesson segment, the students seemed to be engaged in the discussion of this critical incident, both in their small groups and with the whole class. Overall, the students' suggestions about what had likely gone wrong in the scenario were logical and well founded. The students generally seemed able to recognize the role of culture in helping to explain what had gone wrong in the scenario, showing that they were aware of "the role culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning" (ICA element 2) (Baker 2015a: 164). Some were also able to use specific knowledge of the cultural norms of social groupings mentioned in the critical incident (ICA element 4) to identify points of potential mismatch that may have caused specific communication problems in the scenario (ICA element 9), although such knowledge of other cultures was typically expressed in highly essentialized terms.

As in most of the other pair and group work phases of this strand of the course, the recording device was only able to capture the conversation of one group in the small group discussion phase of this lesson segment, this one composed of three students, S2, S3 and S17.

⁹⁶ As mentioned above in 13.1, this task does not focus exclusively on describing experiences with misunderstandings that have arisen in intercultural situations. It therefore might have been wise to begin by asking students to consider whether they had ever found themselves in a situation like the ones described in Unit 8.1 of *English Unlimited B2* and then inviting them to describe a misunderstanding that arose in another kind of setting only if they had no intercultural experience to share.

Because this was the only group captured on the recording during this phase, it is impossible to comment on how other groups approached the task or what conclusions they reached during this phase of the discussion. However, there are some interesting aspects of the discussion in the recorded group that deserve brief mention.

S2, S3 and S17 apparently found ample points to discuss during the eight minutes that this phase of the lesson lasted. They began by talking about the difficulties which they felt might have contributed to the unsuccessful outcome of the trip in light of the comments from the team (quotations a-f) recorded on the worksheet. In identifying these difficulties, they often made reference to the cultural norms of the cultural groupings indicated in the quotations, frequently in the form of rather general and even stereotyped statements at the national level. For example, in discussing quotation c, in which a member of the company talks about a meeting in Tokyo in which the manager answered several direct questions in the affirmative, S3 mentioned that people in Japan *just always say yes* (T7: 200). S2 interjected her support for this statement, adding *to to everything* (T7: 201). S3 then explained *they (think it) unpolite to say no* (T7: 203). From these comments, it appears that S2 and S3 had some previous knowledge of Asian business practices, though it remains unclear how they had acquired this knowledge and whether it was entirely limited to the kinds of generalized statements they produced here. They demonstrated an ability to identify “possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures” (ICA element 9) based on knowledge of “others’ culturally based behavior, values and beliefs” (ICA element 4) (Baker 2015a: 164), though this knowledge appeared to be somewhat superficial and thus tended toward essentialism.

The group also took a solution-oriented approach towards the problems they identified, generally making suggestions for ways in which a problem might be avoided after they had identified it. For example, in discussing quotation d, in which a member of the team talks about how difficult it was to understand English spoken with an accent in India and claims that the team’s own English is far better, the students not only criticized this negative attitude towards others’ English, but also made several suggestions about how the team might have dealt with this difficulty more positively:

Excerpt 34:

T7: 233-242 (00:09:59 - 00:10:21)

- | | | |
|-----|------|--|
| 233 | S17: | but you have to say my english is very bad can you talk a bit |
| 234 | | slower |
| 235 | S2: | yeah something like this |
| 236 | S3: | yeah or you |
| 237 | S2: | xxxxx |
| 238 | S17: | not telling them their english is bad |
| 239 | S3: | @ or you can get in contact at home with in- (.) indian people |
| 240 | | who speaks english (.) so you can t- try to learn like (.) the |
| 241 | | speech and xxxx |
| 242 | S2: | yeah |

Instead of adopting a negative attitude about their counterparts' English, the group agreed that it might have been better to project more humility about the team's own difficulties understanding the local accent (lines 233-234) or to try to become more familiar with the accents they were likely to encounter in advance (lines 239-241).

In the whole class discussion phase, a wide range of students contributed to the discussion, and several took fairly lengthy turns. In this phase, the students also began by naming some of the problems with the trip that they had identified in their small groups. However, as the discussion progressed, the students increasingly offered suggestions for dealing with similar circumstances in the future. For example, S17, the first student to contribute to the whole class discussion, commented that *the main problem was that [the team] visited too much in uh (.) few time and so they can't get in contact with this people and they don't know anything about traditions and how to make business in in in this country* (T7: 340-348). As the discussion continued, his classmates made a series of suggestions for dealing with the problems that he had identified. S15 felt that it would be wise to *inform yourself um: (.) before you're making this trip* (T7: 543-544). More specifically, she suggested finding out more about topics such as *politics kitchen [i.e., cuisine] eh:m history in order to have a:hm a topic [that] you can talk about (.) and maybe get better contact with some- some persons* (T7: 545-551). Building upon this, S3 suggested arranging to have a cultural informant from each country on the planned itinerary *who can tell you what ahm (.) what's important to know about the people: how the people make business and what you can talk about or something (.) but just gives a little bit tips about the country* (T7: 580-584). Thus, the students showed an ability to critically reflect not only on the problems implied by the quotations that provided the basis of this task, but also on potential solutions, much as S2, S3 and S17 had shown during their small group discussion.

The role of jokes and humor also became an important theme in the whole group phase of the discussion. This theme, which recurred several times, was initially introduced by S16 by way of a more general comment about the team's attitude toward their intercultural encounters on the trip: *ah i think at some point they might have forgotten that they were (.) talking to people who are very different and when they were for instance making jokes maybe they could have mis- mis- been misunderstood by (.) the others* (T7: 373-379). Here, S16 mentioned jokes as a potential source of misunderstanding that the team members had largely underestimated during their trip. S3 came back to problematic aspects of making jokes again a short while later with a more specific reference to quotation f, which reported on a discussion one member of the team had about politics in Thailand, where he jokingly remarked that he was glad Germany had "a real democracy instead of a monarchy like England" (cf. Materials excerpt 26, quotation f in 13.1). S3 felt that this joke was in poor taste, since Thailand is also a monarchy (T7: 473-477), and he agreed with S16 that there was a high chance that such a joke might be

misunderstood (T7: 479-483). His comments point to a problem with the direction of the joke, that the joke was made at the expense of the other culture rather than of the speaker's own culture. S16 further accentuated this point a few turns later, when he commented *i think you can talk about politics in business [...] but in this case [...] he did not only make a joke about the other he also said he himself his culture is better (.) and i think that was a problem* (T7: 520, 528-530). In his turn, S16 seemed to be saying that neither the topic of politics nor the use of humor was really the problem; rather, it was the fact that the speaker assumed a position of cultural superiority, even if it was only in jest. This led me to comment that self-deprecating jokes might be more appropriate in such circumstances (T7: 536-537, 539, 541), to which S16 readily agreed (T7: 538, 540). Finally, S15 introduced the idea that jokes relying on sarcasm should generally be avoided in intercultural encounters like this one (T7: 551-552). This led me to talk about how I had found it difficult to spot sarcasm in conversations with Germans when I first came to Germany, and that I had frequently missed that someone meant to be sarcastic, much to the amusement of my husband (T7: 559-571). In this way, I assumed the role of cultural informant for the students, telling them about my own experiences with intercultural communication as a non-local in the local culture.

In contrast to the conversation between S2, S3 and S17 in the small group phase of the lesson, the students generally made very few references to the cultural norms of specific national cultures during the whole class discussion. This only happened once, after S15 made a direct reference to quotation c, in which the person quoted reported asking some direct questions about interest in their product in Tokyo and always receiving a positive answer (T7: 385-392). S1 responded to this reference by expounding upon norms of politeness in Japan: *it's the politeness of the japanese [...] if they don't want to buy it then (.) they don't say no (.) i (.) don't want to have it (.) eh but they say eh i come back later so okay they don't negate anything you say* (T7: 400, 411-415). Like S2 and S3 in the small group discussion analyzed above, S1 demonstrated an ability to identify a potential point of cultural mismatch between the sales team and their clients (ICA element 9) based on his knowledge of a specific national culture's norms and values (ICA element 4), though he produced a rather generalized statement about the other culture. However, S1 had already had more direct contact than most of the class with Asian cultures and was planning an internship in Japan during his studies (cf. T2: 325-339). He therefore was probably better placed than anyone else in the learning group to provide insights into at least some of these cultures, though it is not clear here whether he spoke from personal experience or was reporting on a generalization he had learned about Japanese culture secondhand, e.g. through a course preparing him for his internship.

13.4 In summary

In several ways, the critical incidents from both Unit 8.1 of *English Unlimited B2* and Unit 1 of *Working in Asia* seem to have provided an effective way to address ICA element 2, “an awareness of the role culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning”, as well as the second half of ICA element 9, “an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures” (Baker 2015a: 164). The students’ responses to the tasks formulated around these incidents showed that they were generally able to identify cultural factors that supported their interpretation of what had happened during each critical incident described, and that they were able to appreciate how differing norms might have contributed to the miscommunications that arose in those scenarios. This was particularly apparent in the whole-class discussion of the more complex and open-ended scenario from *Working in Asia*, in which the students came up with a range of logical suggestions as to what had gone wrong and what the business team might consider doing differently if they encountered a similar situation again.

Cushner and Brislin (1996) have noted that critical incidents have a particularly motivational effect on learners because “they depict cross-cultural encounters in an interesting way. The incidents include named people who are trying to adjust, and it is inherently interesting to read about what happens to them” (Cushner and Brislin 1996: 15-16). The data from this lesson segment supports this claim. The students appeared interested and invested in the critical incidents presented in both sets of materials, as is evidenced by their eagerness to read the other side of the critical incidents presented in Unit 8.1 of *English Unlimited B2*, as well as by the wide range of students who contributed to the whole-class discussion of the critical incident from *Working in Asia*.

As has been discussed in 13.1 above, critical incidents seem particularly well-suited to helping learners develop an awareness of ICA element 9, “an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures” (Baker 2015a: 164). It is probably impossible to work on this element without focusing some attention on the cultural norms of ‘others’ and the ways in which they differ from our own. Heringer (2014) has warned that, in orienting towards specific differences in cultural norms, the critical incident approach runs an inherent risk of encouraging generalized and stereotyped views of culture and its role in intercultural communication (Heringer 2014: 239), and this danger was confirmed to some extent in the classroom discussions of the scenarios discussed above. In many cases, student awareness of the cultural norms of others was still expressed as rather generalized statements, suggesting that the students’ understanding of culture, as well as their knowledge of the specific national cultures of the characters in the scenarios, with which most students appeared to have

had little or no direct experience, was still largely essentialist in nature. According to Baker (2015a), however, this is typical of cultural understanding at levels 1 and 2 of ICA, to which ICA element 2 and 9 belong respectively (cf. Baker 2015a: 165-166). Therefore, this was to be expected to a certain extent.

However, there are a few ways in which the materials chosen exacerbated this problem. All of the scenarios included in this lesson segment take a very national approach to culture. It is, for example, one of the primary categories used to identify the interactants in the three scenarios from *English Unlimited B2*. The nationalities of the interactants are mentioned prominently in the listening texts (cf. T6: 2580-2617 for the transcription of these texts), as well as in the website posts (cf. Tilbury et al. 2011: 63). In the scenario from *Working in Asia*, references to places are a bit more specific, and are mostly to regions (e.g. Bavaria) or major cities (e.g. Manila, Tokyo, Bangkok). However, several countries are named as well (e.g. India, China, England), and there are some references to groups of people primarily by nationality (e.g. ‘the Chinese’, ‘our Thai friends’) (cf. Frendo and Hsu 2010: 17). In both sets of materials, critical consideration of other factors at other levels, including those that may not have to do with culture, is not included. Thus, all these critical incidents seem to work on the assumption that the problems involved can be explained in terms of differences between national cultures. Throughout this topic, the recordings of classroom discussions, both those in pairs/small groups and with the whole class, show that the students also considered cultural factors primarily at the national level, and it seems likely that this was a result of the focus on national cultures apparent in the materials.

Although I agree with Baker that learners need to become aware that mismatches in cultural norms and perspectives may make intercultural communication challenging and even lead to miscommunication, I feel in retrospect that this topic may have been overemphasized in the pilot course. Additionally, it may have been disadvantageous to end the lesson sequence on culture with this topic. Research into ELF as intercultural communication has shown ELF encounters to be generally communicatively successful, yet all the critical incidents considered within this topic portrayed intercultural communication as something prone to be problematic. This may have left students with the undesirable impression that ELF communication is actually more likely to be unsuccessful.

Instead of looking at so many different critical incidents in a row, it might have been wise to spend less time here. For example, instead of including all three scenarios from *English Unlimited B2*, we could have talked about the third one, which dealt with an awkward greeting at the airport, in the context of the discussion of cultural norms of greeting in topic 2 (cf. Chapter 11). This would have allowed for a stronger connection in this lesson to ICA element

9, “an awareness of common ground between cultures as well as an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures” (Baker 2015a: 164), a connection that would have been logical since cultural norms of greeting are addressed in both materials. Later, one or maybe two other critical incidents could have been considered instead of four as part of a separate topic addressing ICA element 9 more thoroughly, as well as ICA element 2, “an awareness of the role culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning” (Baker 2015a: 164). This would have been justifiable, since the data discussed in this section shows that students did demonstrate an awareness of these elements, albeit with a rather essentialized perspective.

If discussion of miscommunication were to be limited to only one or two critical incidents, however, I would likely not choose the critical incidents from *English Unlimited B2* or *Working in Asia* again. Instead, I would look for a critical incident that reflects a more authentic ELF scenario in a setting with which the learning group would likely be familiar. Additionally, it would be beneficial if the critical incident were to allow for more consideration of factors beyond national culture. Baker (2015a) offers a critical incident of his own early on in his monograph, in which he presents a situation that could be interpreted as an instance of cultural mismatch at the national level, but which he then deconstructs to show how other factors such as power relationships and even linguistic issues have likely played a role as well (Baker 2015a: 15-16). This critical incident could potentially be explored with university-level students, since the situation presented takes place in the context of a university language center and thus would likely be familiar enough to be accessible to them. It has the advantage of providing some support for the teacher, since an analysis of factors that were probably involved has been provided. However, the teacher would still need to develop tasks or questions around this text that would help the students to consider the whole range of factors suggested in Baker’s analysis.

If the amount of time spent on critical incidents had been reduced, time might have been available to work on a fifth topic including a task or two demonstrating how intercultural communication can nevertheless be successful despite differences in cultural norms and expectations. Ideally this would have involved looking at actual instances of ELF communication, which are admittedly hard to find in traditional ELT materials. However, one possibility might be to use transcripts from exchanges Baker recorded, such as Examples 1 and 2 discussed in 8.2. Alternatively, some of the recordings included in Walker (2010) might have had the potential to facilitate this topic as well. Ending with this new topic would have avoided the problem of leaving the students with a final impression of ELF talk as particularly problematic talk and might also have allowed for some classroom work on ICA element 10, an element otherwise not included in our consideration of culture and intercultural

communication, by highlighting the negotiated and emergent nature of cultural norms in ELF communication.

14 Discussion and reevaluation of the lesson sequence on culture and intercultural communication

This final chapter on the culture strand of the course will revisit the aims and strategies laid out in Chapter 9, drawing some overarching conclusions about the approach taken to culture and its role in intercultural communication in the lesson sequence as a whole. It will then briefly compare this lesson sequence to findings from a pilot course described in Baker (2012c, 2015a).

In planning this strand of the course, the lesson sequence was designed around a number of important topics which had emerged from study of the literature on culture and its relationship to intercultural communication through ELF and which facilitated work with a range of the elements of ICA. Through this approach, classroom work was able to touch on quite the majority of the twelve elements of ICA through the four topics explored, as Table 13 below summarizes:

| <i>Course session(s)</i> | <i>Topic</i> | <i>Elements of ICA planned to address</i> | <i>Elements of ICA actually addressed</i> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|
| 4-5 | Defining the word 'culture' | 1, 8 | 1, (8) |
| 5 | Cultural norms | 3, 4, 5, 9 | 3, 4, (5), (7), (9) |
| 5-6 | Stereotypes | 7, 11 | 7, 11, (2), (5), (6) |
| 6-7 | Critical incidents | 2, 9 | 2, 9 |

Table 13: *Elements of ICA addressed during lesson sequence on culture*

Of the twelve elements of ICA, we ultimately worked with aspects of elements 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11 through the various tasks utilized during this strand of the course. However, not all elements were addressed as thoroughly or as effectively as others. For example, in the second topic, *cultural norms*, the focus of the lesson was primarily on the development of ICA elements 3 and 4, which involve awareness of, as well as the ability to articulate, the cultural norms of one's own and others' cultural groupings respectively. Connections to ICA elements 5 and 9 were somewhat secondary, in that these elements were drawn into the discussion at only a few specific points in the lesson segment (cf. 11.2, 11.3.2). The same can be said of elements 2 and 5 within the topic of *stereotypes* (cf. 12.2, 12.5). Therefore, these elements are listed in parentheses in Table 13 above. Likewise, the way some elements were addressed was not as effective as the way others were addressed. With regards to element 8 in topic 1, *defining the word 'culture'*, and the elements 5 and 9 in topic 2, *cultural norms*, I largely drew conclusions relating to these elements for the class, rather than using teacher-led questioning

or other task types to help the students develop their own insights (cf. 10.3, 11.3.2). These elements are therefore listed in parentheses as well.

Additionally, although most of our exploration of the various elements of ICA touched upon in the course involved elements I had planned to cover, classroom work with particular topics occasionally drew elements that were not anticipated into the discussion. This happened within topic 2, *cultural norms*, when the discussion of norms of family uncovered a range of perspectives within the learning group, not all of which were held in common, despite the fact that most of the students in the class came from the same national cultural background. This provided us with evidence of “the multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping” (Baker 2015a: 164), thus affording students with an opportunity to develop some awareness of ICA element 7 (cf. 11.3.1). Similarly, in our discussion of how to approach our own stereotypes so as to minimize their negative impact on intercultural communication, several students contributed ideas that drew on ICA element 6, “an awareness of cultural understanding as provisional and open to revision” (Baker 2015a: 164) (cf. 12.4). Our exploration of these elements was generally more indirect and less comprehensive than those intentionally targeted, so that they have also been placed in parentheses in Table 13.

As has been previously explained in 8.4, the twelve elements of the ICA framework are grouped into three levels: elements 1 through 4 belong to basic cultural awareness (level 1), elements 5 through 9 to advanced cultural awareness (level 2) and elements 10 through 12 to intercultural awareness (level 3) (cf. Baker 2015a: 164). Table 13 above shows that elements 1 through 9 were addressed in the pilot course; thus, classroom work touched upon, at least to some extent, all of the elements in levels 1 and 2. However, one of the stated objectives for this strand of the course was to spend at least some time working on elements belonging to level 3 of ICA, since this is the level that truly reflects the kind of competence needed for successful intercultural communication through ELF (cf. Chapter 9). Within level 3, only one element, element 11, was really addressed during the discussion of one topic, *stereotypes*. It is perhaps not wholly surprising that only one connection to this level of ICA was made, since classroom work primarily featured tasks taken from existing ELT materials, and these materials generally do not adopt an approach commensurate with the flexible and emergent understanding of culture reflected in level 3 of ICA. I have already suggested at the end of 13.4 above that it would have been a good idea to include a fifth topic focusing on instances of successful intercultural communication through ELF in this strand of the course. This would probably have facilitated the exploration of at least one more element of level 3, but likely would also have required me to draw on resources other than ELT materials in order to include actual examples of ELF conversations.

As a group, the students in the course generally displayed an openness to and interest in our discussions on culture and its relationship to intercultural communication. They participated actively in small group tasks, and a wide range of students contributed to whole class discussions. Additionally, as has been discussed at relevant points within the analysis of classroom work on each topic (cf. Chapters 10-13), individual students demonstrated at least some of the attitudes and skills associated with various elements of ICA in the discussions that took place during this lesson sequence. However, it is impossible to say with any certainty to what extent these demonstrated attitudes and skills were developed over the course of the lesson sequence and to what extent they may already have been present before the course began, since no form of diagnostic assessment aimed at establishing students' level of ICA before the course was done. Especially since many of the students had already had previous experience with intercultural communication, it seems likely that some of them had developed awareness of at least some elements of ICA before enrolling in the course. Baker (2015a) has suggested that "the development of ICA [...] [is] likely to occur over a much longer time scale" than a short course of 10 or 15 weeks, so that it is unlikely that much change would have been perceptible even if pre- and post-instruction assessment tools had been employed (Baker 2015a: 230). This lends added weight to the argument that students may have come to the course with some of the attitudes and skills described in the ICA framework already present.

There is, however, some evidence that suggests that the class in general may have become somewhat more open to the complexity of the relationship between culture and intercultural communication over the course. For example, while the definitions of culture produced by the groups during topic 1 generally implied a correlation between nation-states and culture (cf. 10.2), students showed more readiness after our discussion of other levels and types of groupings that might be said to have culture at the end of topic 1 to consider these in our discussion of the second topic, *cultural norms* (cf. 11.2, 11.3). Additionally, some discussions, such as the discussion of how to deal with our own stereotypes so as to keep them from inhibiting intercultural communication, took some time to gain momentum, indicating that this way of thinking was relatively novel to the students. However, as the discussion progressed, quite a few students were able to make insightful contributions to the discussion, suggesting that at least some students were able to adjust to what were potentially unaccustomed perspectives (cf. 12.4). Still, this observation of increased awareness of complexity remains tentative at best. Moreover, it cannot be reduced to individual students. Though this appears to be a trend in the course at large, it is possible that some students already possessed this awareness before the course, while others did not develop it despite opportunities to do so.

Beyond the general strategy of selecting topics based on relevant themes in the literature on intercultural communication through ELF that would address a range of elements of ICA, I

was interested in exploring how a critical approach might allow teachers to utilize currently available ELT materials despite problems that have been identified with the cultural representations in such materials (cf. Baker 2015a: 196). For this reason, the lessons in this lesson sequence were constructed around tasks from a number of ELT materials, including a general English textbook, a business English textbook and a set of intercultural communication training materials. Overall, I found that the tasks that most successfully facilitated work on elements of ICA were those that drew on student experience, particularly student experience with the local culture. These tasks included the parts of the tasks from the *Focus on culture 1* section of Unit 1 of *Working in Asia* (Frendo and Hsu 2010: 12) that were used as part of classroom work on topic 2, *cultural norms*, in which the students were asked to comment on their own understanding of a series of concepts related to cultural norms. They also included the task involving a list of tips for foreigners coming to work in Germany from the *Focus on Culture 2* section of Unit 2 of *Working in Asia* (Frendo and Hsu 2010: 25), which was used as the basis for discussion in topic 3, *stereotypes*. Although these tasks come from ELT materials, they appear to hinge upon the first of the five strands of potential resources Baker (2015a) identifies for teaching culture in the ELF-oriented classroom, the strand he calls “exploring the complexity of local cultures” (cf. Baker 2015a: 195-196). As Baker suggests in his description of resources of this type, these tasks were generally useful in calling the students’ attention to the diversity of norms and perspectives within our own learning group, despite the fact that most of the students came from the same national background.

Because tasks drawing on student experience were generally quite successful, I have suggested in my analysis of classroom work on individual topics that this type of task might have been introduced at a few other points in the lesson sequence in order to better facilitate work on specific elements of ICA. For example, a brief task could have been included at the end of topic 1 which asked the students to make a list of the different social groupings to which they felt they belonged and to discuss these lists in small groups using a set of guiding questions. This probably would have illustrated ICA element 8, “an awareness of individuals as members of many social groupings including cultural ones” (Baker 2015a: 164), better than simply telling the students that this was the case (cf. 10.3).

Conversely, the tasks selected from pre-existing ELT materials that drew on representations of other cultures were probably least successful in facilitating the development of a non-essentialist perspective on culture and its role in intercultural communication consistent with the ICA framework. These tasks would fall squarely into Baker’s second strand of resources for teaching culture in the ELF-oriented classroom, which Baker refers to as “exploring cultural representations in language learning materials” (cf. Baker 2015a: 196). In the pilot course, they included the parts of the tasks involving the set of pictures and the

listening texts from the *Focus on culture 1* section of Unit 1 of *Working in Asia* (Frendo and Hsu 2010: 12) that were used as part of the second topic, *cultural norms*, as well as the critical incident tasks from Unit 8.1 of *English Unlimited B2* (Tilbury et al. 2011: 62-63) and Unit 1 of *Working in Asia* (Frendo and Hsu 2010: 17) that provided the basis for the final topic, *critical incidents*. The cultural representations included in these tasks exhibit some of the principal weaknesses that have been identified in ELT materials in the literature (cf. Chapter 9). They draw primarily on culture at the national level, either ignoring or marginalizing other cultural levels and potentially relevant social factors. Additionally, they present generalized representations of specific cultures that suggest that all members of a culture think and act the same way, thus supporting the development of stereotypes rather than facilitating critical reflection. Although Baker (2015a) has drawn attention to the need to treat such representations critically in order to avoid essentialism (cf. Baker 2015a: 196), I underestimated the impact of these weaknesses on classroom discussions and did not adopt a critical enough approach to counteract them. I have suggested some possible alternatives that may have improved the approach taken to each of these tasks (cf. 11.2, 11.3.3 and 13.4), but it seems likely that this will remain a challenging aspect for many teachers interested in adopting an ELF orientation in the ELT classroom so long as such representations continue to appear in ELT materials, and particularly in textbooks.

In addition to the two strands of Baker's resources for the ELF-oriented classroom which the tasks chosen from ELT materials drew upon, a third type of resource was also employed during the lesson sequence on culture: what Baker terms "making use of cultural informants" (Baker 2015a: 197). This was not a resource I had planned to use, but one that was drawn upon rather spontaneously at various points in the lesson sequence. Several times during whole class discussions, I as the teacher intuitively acted as a cultural informant for the students, generally by sharing insights from my own experiences. Sometimes this took the form of offering a non-local perspective on the local culture, as was the case in the discussion of norms of business dress (cf. 11.2) and stereotypes involving German punctuality (cf. 12.3). At other times, it involved sharing anecdotes about my own experiences with intercultural communication in order to illustrate a point we were developing during a discussion, such as a story I told about difficulties identifying sarcasm when talking with Germans during the discussion of a critical incident (cf. 13.3). Additionally, the three exchange students in the course (S11, S12 and S16) also stepped into the role of cultural informant for their peers from time to time. The most striking instance of this was when another student invited S11 and S12, both from Brazil, to comment on their perceptions of the veracity of a list of statements about German culture during the third topic, *stereotypes*. This led these students not only to comment on how they perceived the local culture as non-locals, but also to share some insights about cultural norms

in their own country (cf. 12.5). At other times, there is evidence that all three exchange students served as cultural informants for their peers in the context of small group discussions (cf. 11.3.2 and 12.2).

While the students generally responded favorably to the insights I shared with them in my role as cultural informant, they seemed particularly interested in, and motivated by, the insights provided by their non-local peers. This may have been because the students were able to identify more strongly with these cultural informants. They were the same age as the other participants in the course and shared the status of university students working toward technical degrees with most of the others as well. Despite the fact that there were relatively few non-local students enrolled in the course and that they did not represent a particularly diverse range of ‘other’ cultures, their insights still helped to shape our exploration of culture and its role in intercultural communication. Peer cultural informants are, of course, a resource that is not necessarily available in all learning groups, but the data from this course suggests that, at least as long as learners are old enough and experienced enough to be able to articulate their own cultural experiences, as well as their insights into the local culture, even a relatively small number of non-local perspectives can be a valuable resource for teaching and learning about culture and intercultural communication in the ELF-oriented classroom.

Since completing the pilot course, I have learned⁹⁷ that Baker also devised and held a pilot course in order to explore how well both his conception of ICA and his suggestions for classroom resources for teachers might be translated into actual classroom practice (cf. Baker 2015a: 229). Like my own pilot course, Baker’s course was held as a one-semester course at the university level (Baker 2015a: 217). Unlike my pilot course, however, it was offered online, principally as a course of independent study, though students also had the chance to participate in some asynchronous discussion forums and synchronous chats (Baker 2015a: 216-217). The course focused primarily on culture and intercultural communication without addressing other levels of language (Baker 2015a: 229), though it did include topics involving awareness of the current sociolinguistic role of English in the world (Baker 2015a: 215-216, 249-250). Thus, it was somewhat less comprehensive than my own course, which, as a language course aimed at developing the students’ ability to communicate in lingua franca situations through English, involved work on pronunciation, vocabulary, pragmatics and communication strategies in addition to culture and awareness of the sociolinguistic role of English in the world today.

⁹⁷ Baker first published the analysis of this course in 2012 (Baker 2012c); however, I only became aware of this aspect of his research through his discussion of the course in Baker (2015a), which was published after my own pilot course was completed.

The content of Baker's course shows some marked similarities to the content of the strand on culture and its role in intercultural communication in my pilot course. Baker organized his course around a series of 10 topics:

1. Defining culture
2. Intercultural communication
3. Cultural stereotypes and generalizations in communication
4. The individual and culture
5. English as a global language
6. Exploring my own culture
7. Intercultural communication and the internet
8. Comparing cultures: politeness
9. Globalization and transcultural global flows
10. Intercultural awareness

(Baker 2015a: 215-216)

From the brief description of each topic provided (Baker 2015a: 249-251), it becomes clear that quite a few of these topics have strong parallels to topics in my own course. As in my own course, Baker began with a task exploring culture as a concept and then asked students to write and share their own definitions of culture (Baker 2015a: 249). His third and fourth topics touched on the same themes as the discussion of stereotypes in topic 3 of my course (Baker 2015a: 249). Topics 6, 7 and 8 in Baker's course explored aspects of the local culture and compared these with aspects of specific other cultures, as we did in topic 2, *cultural norms* (Baker 2015a: 250). However, Baker largely drew on resources other than ELT materials, in particular the internet, to facilitate these topics. Finally, instead of incorporating elements of the ICA framework into individual topics, his course ended with a topic explicitly introducing ICA and "consider[ing] the importance of different elements of intercultural awareness" (Baker 2015a: 251). In between, topics 2, 5 and 9 addressed the sociolinguistic role of English in the world today, covering issues that were also included in my pilot course, though separately from the strand of the course dealing with culture and intercultural communication (cf. 3.2).

Baker's course also included an opportunity for the students enrolled in it to engage in an actual instance of intercultural communication by inviting them to participate in a live chat session with a group of students from the University of Southampton. This activity was optional, since it required students to be available at a fixed time, and Baker reported that only 9 out of the 31 students enrolled in his course actually participated (Baker 2015a: 217). While Baker stated about the chat session itself that "there is no evidence here of whether these participants developed their intercultural awareness through this exchange", he felt that "it is a good example of the type of interactions that can be offered in classroom teaching" (Baker 2015a: 228). Beyond their value as opportunities for experiencing actual intercultural communication, such interactions "also provide ideal material for subsequent classroom

discussion and reflection” (Baker 2015a: 228). A chat session like this with another university group, possibly held outside of regular course meeting times as an optional activity, might have provided a way to incorporate a chance for the students to engage in actual intercultural communication into my course as well. The chat format, in which a synchronous discussion is documented as text, would have made it possible to select and bring in extracts of the conversation to discuss with the class in a subsequent session, in addition to talking more generally about the students’ impressions of the experience.

Baker also drew some conclusions about his course based on the data he collected that were similar to those from my own course. First, his data suggests that his students entered the course with “an already high degree of awareness [...] and generally positive attitudes, particularly towards intercultural communication” (Baker 2015a: 230). I have suggested that this appears to have been the case for the students in my course as well, which might be accounted for by the fact that many of them had had experience with intercultural communication before enrolling in the course. Additionally, Baker found it difficult to determine how much his students’ attitudes toward intercultural communication and awareness of the elements of the ICA framework changed over his course (Baker 2015a: 222, 230). He accounted for this in part with the argument that “the development of ICA [...] [is] likely to occur over a much longer time scale” than the span of weeks comprising a one-semester university course, “mak[ing] any attempt to document learning and development tentative and partial” (Baker 2015a: 230). Finally, despite the limitations he identified (cf. Baker 2015a: 228-230), Baker ultimately concluded that the course “demonstrates that the concept of ICA and the five pedagogic strands [of resources for teaching culture in the ELF-oriented classroom] can be usefully translated into classroom practice” (Baker 2015a: 230). Further, his study showed that “such a course is positively received by both teachers and students” (Baker 2015a: 231). My data would appear to corroborate these findings. Although the structure of my course was somewhat different and the tasks and materials used drew in part on different pedagogical resources, it proved possible to use the ICA framework and relevant topics emerging from the literature on intercultural communication through ELF to develop a lesson sequence which contributed to the overall aims of my ELF-oriented pilot course and which appears to have been interesting and motivating for the students.

At least two subsequent studies, Yu and Van Maele (2018) and Abdzadeh and Baker (2020) have also upheld the findings that the ICA framework makes an effective tool for developing ICA in learners in the ELF-oriented classroom, as well as that Baker’s strands of learning resources can be effectively used to support classroom work on ICA. Both also concluded that significant progress in ICA was unlikely to occur over the span of one short course. The settings of the courses reported on in these studies were significantly different from the pilot course

analyzed in this dissertation. The course reported on in Yu and Van Maele (2018) was focused on reading rather than oral communication, and the course reported on in Abdzadeh and Baker (2020) was designed for secondary-level learners rather than university students. Both courses took place in contexts in which the learners had had little previous experience of intercultural communication, meaning that the learners did not bring the high levels of awareness observed by Baker or myself to the courses reported on in those studies. For this reason, the authors in both studies concentrated on developing advanced cultural awareness (ICA level 2) with their learners and consciously decided against working on elements of intercultural awareness (ICA level 3), a significant difference to the learning aims of both my own pilot course and the course designed by Baker. Thus, the finding that at least some elements of ICA level 3 could be successfully developed, at least to some extent, with the students in this pilot course represents an important contribution to current research.

Strand 3:
Pragmatics and
communication strategies

15 In search of priorities for teaching pragmatics and communication strategies (CSs) in the ELF-oriented classroom

Similar to the area of pronunciation, the pragmatics of ELF communication has drawn research attention since before the field of ELF research was really established as such. Some of the earliest studies in this area (e.g. Firth 1990, 1996; Meierkord 1996; House 1999) were published before Seidlhofer's (2001) call for a concerted research effort into ELF. Pragmatics then became one of the central areas of inquiry within the newly established field of ELF research, alongside pronunciation and lexicogrammar. Subsequently, it has received even more attention in light of the shift of focus in the area of lexicogrammatical description from form to function (cf. 1.1). In light of this shift, researchers studying the lexicogrammatical forms of ELF communication turned their attention increasingly toward the description of the functions that these forms serve in communication, and thus toward the pragmatic functions and processes underlying their use (cf. Cogo and House 2018: 221; Jenkins et al. 2011: 292). In light of the results this research has yielded to date, Seidlhofer and Widdowson (2009) have gone so far as to argue that "it may turn out that what is distinctive about ELF lies in the communicative strategies that its speakers use" rather than in the forms used to realize them⁹⁸ (Seidlhofer and Widdowson 2009: 37).

ELF as a field of linguistic inquiry was established in part due to pedagogic concerns (cf. 1.2), and research into various phenomena of ELF communication has generally been done with an eye toward what empirical findings about ELF might mean for language teaching. In this sense, the area of pragmatics is no exception; empirical studies of various pragmatic aspects of ELF frequently include discussion of the ramifications of findings for ELT (cf. e.g. Cogo and Dewey 2012, Kaur 2009a), and conceptual pieces on implications for teaching that draw more broadly on the emerging body of research into ELF pragmatics have also been written (cf. e.g. Jenkins 2012; Murray 2012; Widdowson 2012, 2015). However, in contrast to the areas of pronunciation and culture, there has been little attempt to consolidate research findings to date into some form of handbook or framework that might act as a guide for teaching pragmatics in the ELF-oriented classroom. And this makes the task of identifying priorities for the ELF-oriented classroom in the area of pragmatics somewhat less straightforward than in other areas, despite the relative wealth of empirical research available.

⁹⁸ Baker (2018) in turn has argued that such communicative strategies are "not necessarily distinctive to ELF but [are] rather a central feature of intercultural communication in general" (Baker 2018: 33).

15.1 *Communicative competence: From Hymes to early frameworks for ELT*

A pedagogic interest in pragmatics is undoubtedly not unique to an ELF-oriented approach to ELT. Similar to the area of intercultural communication described in the preceding strand (Chapters 8-14), the shift to a communicative approach to language teaching brought with it an increased interest in the teaching of pragmatic aspects of language use in addition to grammar, an interest that largely grew out of Hymes' (1972) concept of communicative competence. Hymes went beyond the grammatical competence described by Chomsky (1965) to look at how speakers use language appropriately in social contexts. He drew attention to the sociolinguistic dimension of communication, extending "the scope of knowledge required to communicate successfully beyond formal linguistic properties to include a range of aspects related to knowledge of social context" (Baker 2015a: 135). Hymes formulated his conception of communicative competence as a set of four questions:

I would suggest, then, that for language and other forms of communication (culture), four questions arise:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally *possible*;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is *feasible* in virtue of the means of implementation available;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is *appropriate* (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually *performed*, and what its doing entails

(Hymes 1972: 281, emphasis original)

Formal linguistic competence is addressed in question one, but the other three questions go on to consider language in the context of social use, i.e. what is feasible (whether interlocutors would actually be able to process a possible utterance, dependent largely on psycholinguistic factors), what is appropriate (which will depend primarily on the social context in which the utterance is made) and what is performed (the extent to which something is actually produced by speakers) (cf. Hymes 1972: 284-286).

Hymes' conception of communicative competence "inspired applied linguistics to see the goals and methods of language teaching in new ways" (McConachy 2018: 13). With the advent of CLT, his ideas began to be adopted into frameworks for language teaching. The arguably most influential early model was developed by Canale and Swain in the early 1980s (Canale and Swain 1980, Canale 1983). Canale and Swain's framework draws upon Hymes' original ideas, but also elaborates them with regard to second language learning and use. It breaks communicative competence down into four partial competences. The first, grammatical competence, corresponds to Hymes' concept of what is possible and involves "knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar, semantics and phonology" (Canale and Swain 1980: 29). In other words, it is concerned with knowledge of the linguistic system of a language.

By contrast, the other three partial competences deal more with the pragmatics of language use. The second, sociolinguistic competence, encompasses the sociocultural rules of use, referring to “the ways in which utterances are produced and understood *appropriately* with respect to the components of communicative events outlined by Hymes (1967, 1968)” (Canale and Swain 1980: 30, emphasis original; cf. also Canale 1983: 7). Canale and Swain further differentiated between appropriateness of meaning and appropriateness of form⁹⁹:

Appropriateness of meaning concerns the extent to which particular communicative functions [...], attitudes (including politeness and formality) and ideas are judged to be proper in a given situation. [...] Appropriateness of form concerns the extent to which a given meaning (including communicative functions, attitudes and propositions/ideas) is represented in a verbal and/or non-verbal form that is proper in a given sociolinguistic context. (Canale 1983: 7; cf. Canale and Swain 1980: 30)

Sociolinguistic competence thus appears to be related most strongly to Hymes’ concept of what is appropriate. However, Canale and Swain (1980) made clear that this partial competence is also concerned with Hymes’ notion of the extent to which something is actually performed by speakers, which they referred to as “knowledge of probability of occurrence” (Canale and Swain 1980: 31). However, Canale (1983) later added that “this notion may be of limited value given the unpredictable and creative aspect of communication” (Canale 1983: 8). The third partial competence, discourse competence, involves the structuring of discourse above the sentence level and primarily includes issues of coherence and cohesion (Canale and Swain 1980: 30, Canale 1983: 9-10)¹⁰⁰. The final partial competence is strategic competence, which involves the use of “verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence” in another area of competence (Canale and Swain 1980: 30; cf. also Canale 1983: 10-11). Taken together, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and

⁹⁹ This distinction is very similar to the distinction Leech (1983, 2014) and Thomas (1983) made between sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics, and Canale and Swain’s appropriateness of meaning and appropriateness of form have come to be widely referred to in the literature as sociopragmatic competence and pragmalinguistic competence respectively (cf. Pflingsthorst and Flöck 2014: 155; Taguchi and Roever 2017: 7, 229; McConachy 2018: 14). Sociopragmatics can be defined as “the cultural values that determine the relationship between participants and their views of the target speech act”, while pragmalinguistics can be defined as “the total of lexical and grammatical resources and the way they can be developed for pragmatic purposes” (Taguchi and Roever 2017: 229, cf. also Leech 2014). Leech (2014) further emphasized that these two areas “are closely connected and that pragmalinguistic meanings need to be mapped onto sociopragmatic values to enable culturally appropriate pragmatic performance” (Taguchi and Roever 2017: 229).

¹⁰⁰ In Canale and Swain (1980), sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence were originally described as two corresponding parts of the same competence, labeled sociolinguistic competence (cf. Canale and Swain 1980).

strategic competence combine into what could be called a description of a pragmatic competence for language learners.

In drawing attention to the need to teach not only grammar, but also “to embrace social, discursal and interactional dimensions in language teaching” (Leung 2005: 124), Canale and Swain’s framework of communicative competence “represented a considerable broadening of the conceptual base of second language curriculum and pedagogy” (Leung 2005: 124). It elevated the importance ascribed to the development of pragmatic competence by language learners and opened the way for increased attention to this aspect of communication in the language classroom. Indeed, Canale and Swain (1980) went so far as to claim that the development of pragmatic competence appeared to them to be equally important to that of grammatical competence:

There is no strong theoretical or empirical motivation for the view that grammatical competence is any more or less crucial to successful communication than is sociolinguistic competence or strategic competence. The primary goal of a communicative approach must be to facilitate the integration of these types of knowledge for the learner, an outcome that is not likely to result from the overemphasis on one form of competence over the others throughout the second language programme. (Canale and Swain 1980: 27)

Subsequent frameworks of communicative competence have also generally treated pragmatic competence as an essential competence that learners need to develop in order to become successful users of a language. For the most part, these frameworks, which most notably include those by van Ek (1986), Bachmann (1990) and Bachmann and Palmer (1996), and Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), appear to adopt the partial competences proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) as a starting point, but then either additional partial competences are added (e.g. van Ek 1986, Celce-Murcia et al. 1995) and/or the original partial competences proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) are reorganized in some fashion (e.g. Bachmann 1990, Bachman and Palmer 2010). Pragmatic competence is also included as an essential component of language proficiency in the highly influential *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001), in which the three constituent partial competences from Canale and Swain (1980) are also evident (cf. Limberg 2014: 204, Pflingsthorst and Flöck 2014: 156). Additionally, descriptions of CLT in ELT teacher training and teaching materials generally show

a certain commonality in the way CLT is described [...] The common concerns are: pragmatic language meaning in context (sociolinguistic competence), knowledge and use of language above the sentence level in spoken and written discourse (discourse competence), and active language use in learning activities (strategic competence). These can be seen as an attempt to extract what is useful in the original Canale and Swain formulation of communicative competence for practical purposes in ELT. (Leung 2005: 127)

Thus, Canale and Swain's (1980) framework has had considerable influence on CLT, and Leung (2005) goes so far as to claim, with reference to Brown (2000), that this framework has come to possess "the status of a central doctrine for ELT, which in various manifestations in applied linguistics and ELT teacher education handbooks and manuals has persisted to this day" (Leung 2005: 124).

15.2 Approaches to teaching pragmatics in mainstream ELT

In response to the increased emphasis on the development of pragmatic competence as an important facet of communicative competence, a growing body of pragmatics research has emerged that has helped to shape current approaches to teaching pragmatics in the language classroom. In particular, two directions of pragmatic study have been particularly informative for pragmatics teaching.¹⁰¹ One is the area of cross-cultural pragmatics. This subfield looks at languages either individually or contrastively to investigate "which linguistic resources are used to realize particular intentions or speech acts"¹⁰² (Flöck and Pfüngsthorn 2014: 182). Generally, this research has been done at the level of the speech act, investigating how particular speech acts are realized in particular linguacultures (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b, Young 1994, Chen 2010, Netz and Lefstein 2016). However, some research in this area has also addressed issues connected to Politeness Theory as put forth by Brown and Levinson (1987) (e.g. Blum-Kulka and House 1989, Takahashi and Beebe 1993).

On the one hand, such studies have allowed researchers to identify universal elements of pragmatics that appear to hold across all linguacultures. These include, for example, "[b]asic orientations to the effectiveness and social cohesiveness of communicative action, such as the

¹⁰¹ A third direction, known as intercultural pragmatics, is also currently gaining traction as a research perspective on pragmatics in second language use. This is a socio-cognitive approach to the study of pragmatics which "*is concerned with the way the language system is put to use in social encounters between human beings who have different first languages, communicate in a common language, and, usually, represent different cultures*" (Kecskes 2014: 14, italics original). According to Taguchi and Roever (2017), "pragmatics in ELF closely aligns with the socio-cognitive approach in intercultural pragmatics" (Taguchi and Roever 2017: 248), and Cogo and House (2017) have named ELF as the primary area in which research into intercultural pragmatics is currently taking place. However, this research direction was still emerging when the pilot course was conceptualized and held, as is evident in the fact that one of the primary monographs, Kecskes (2014), was published after the data from the pilot course had already been collected. Additionally, it has not yet had a measurable impact on mainstream pragmatics teaching. Therefore, I will not include more discussion of this approach to pragmatics here.

¹⁰² Translated from the original German by the author of this thesis.

Cooperative Principle (Grice 1975) and politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987)” (Kasper and Rose 2001: 4), as well as a repertoire of speech act types including those identified in Searle’s (1975a) classification, a number of the main realization strategies for some of these types of speech acts, and “the expectation that recurrent speech situations are managed by means of conventional routines [...] rather than by newly created utterances” (Kasper and Rose 2001: 5). On the other hand, cross-cultural pragmatics research has also shown that the preferred strategies and linguistic choices for the realization of particular speech acts or politeness conventions are often linguaculturally specific (cf. Flöck and Pfingsthorn 2014: 183, Kasper and Rose 2001: 5, Taguchi and Roever 2017: 3). For example, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989b) investigated differences in the level of directness speakers choose to encode in realizations of directive speech acts in a number of languages including English, Danish, German and Hebrew. Such research has been deemed useful for SLA in that it allows the prediction of which realizations of pragmatic acts language learners from a particular linguacultural background will be able to transfer directly from their L1 into the target language and which will need to be acquired due to significant differences (cf. Kasper 1997:119-121; Taguchi and Roever 2017: 6, 9).

The other, and arguably more influential, area of pragmatics research that has been particularly informative to current approaches for teaching pragmatics in the language classroom is that of interlanguage pragmatics. Here, the focus is specifically on “L2 learners’ ability to comprehend and perform pragmatic functions in a target language and how that ability develops over time” (Taguchi and Roever 2017: 5). As the name suggests, interlanguage pragmatics is an area of study arising from the interlanguage perspective on language acquisition and development, one of the longstanding tenets of SLA research (cf. Selinker 1972, Gass et al. 2014). In this perspective, a learner’s linguistic system is viewed as developing along a continuum towards an endpoint, which has traditionally been conceived of as the linguistic competence of a native speaker (cf. Selinker 1972, McConachy 2018: 18). This perspective also places much emphasis on the notion of linguistic transfer, or “the unintentional application of L1 patterns and frames of understanding to the L2” (McConachy 2018: 18; cf. also Selinker 1969, 1972; Gass et al. 2014), and its effects on communication in the L2. In considering these effects, a distinction is often made between the notions of positive transfer and negative transfer¹⁰³. Positive transfer, also referred to as facilitation, can be defined as

¹⁰³ Gass et al. (2014) emphasized the fact that positive and negative transfer refer to the products of the process of transfer, rather than to two different processes: “the actual determination of whether or not a learner has positively or negatively transferred something is based on the output, as analyzed by the researcher, teacher, native speaker/hearer, when compared and contrasted with [target language] norms.

“[t]he use of the first language (or other languages known) in a second-language context, when the resulting second-language form is correct” (Gass et al. 2014: 529). In other words, (subconsciously) applying L1 patterns results in the production of a ‘correct’, target-like form. By contrast, negative transfer, also referred to as interference, is understood to be “[t]he use of the first language (or other languages known) in a second-language context, resulting in a nontarget-like second-language form” (Gass et al. 2014: 528). The amount of negative transfer in a learner’s output is generally viewed as indicative of how far the learner has progressed along the continuum. To this end, much of the work in interlanguage pragmatics has been focused on comparing the comprehension and production of speech acts by learners with that of native speakers (cf. Taguchi and Roever 2017: 253, Kasper 1997: 116, Selinker 1972).

Research from the area of interlanguage pragmatics has established that the pragmatic competence of language learners differs in various ways from that of native speakers of the language in question (cf. Kasper 1997). Studies have also demonstrated that a learner’s development of grammatical competence in a language does not guarantee a corresponding level of pragmatic competence (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 1996, Kasper and Roever 2005). Rather, it seems to be necessary to support the development of pragmatic competence by engaging in some form of pragmatics teaching in the language classroom. Further research has shown that this appears to be true for advanced learners as well as beginners (cf. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989a: 10), suggesting that pragmatic instruction “is necessary at every level of learners’ proficiency” (da Silva 2003: 56). In general, researchers now agree that teaching in the area of pragmatics does lead to increased pragmatic competence, and that explicit teaching is generally more successful than merely exposing learners passively to pragmatic phenomena¹⁰⁴ (cf. Kasper 1997, 2001a, 2001b; Kasper and Rose 1999, 2001; Norris and Ortega 2000; Bardovi-Harlig 2001; Crandall and Basturkmenn 2004; Rose 2005; Ishihara and Cohen 2010; Taguchi 2015; Taguchi and Roever 2017).

Additionally, research into interlanguage pragmatics has generally established that learners are often relatively unaware of the pragmatic conventions of both their own L1 and the language they are attempting to learn (cf. Flöck and Pflingsthorst 2014: 183). Kasper and Rose

In other words, there is a process of transfer; there is not a process of negative or positive transfer” (Gass et al. 2014: 80).

¹⁰⁴ Taguchi and Roever (2017) claimed that the explicit approach to pragmatics “works particularly well for adult learners, whose cognitive system is fully developed, and learners at intermediate and advanced levels of L2 proficiency, who have little trouble comprehending and producing the L2, but may lack pragmatic form-function mapping” (Taguchi and Roever 2017: 220). Thus, the explicit approach would appear to be particularly appropriate in the pilot course for this study, in which the learning group was comprised of advanced adult learners in a university setting.

(2001) note that while “learners get a considerable amount of L2 pragmatic knowledge for free” because of the universality of certain pragmatic phenomena and the potential for positive transfer from L1 to L2 of others (Kasper and Rose 2001: 4),

learners do not always capitalize on the knowledge they already have. It is well known from educational psychology that students do not always transfer available knowledge and strategies to new tasks. This is also true for some aspects of learners’ universal or L1-based pragmatic knowledge [...]. There is thus a clear role for pedagogical intervention, not with the purpose of providing learners with new information but to make them aware of what they know already and encourage them to use their universal or transferable L1 knowledge in L2 contexts. (Kasper and Rose 2001: 6-7)

The notions of raising learner awareness of pragmatic phenomena and of using learners’ pragmatic resources from their L1s have both become significant tenets of current approaches to teaching pragmatics in the language classroom (cf. Eslami-Rasekh 2005, Flöck and Pfingsthorn 2014). In general, pragmatics researchers currently advocate an increased focus in the language classroom on the development of an awareness of underlying pragmatic principles and processes and their relationship to contextual factors that motivate the choice of form to fulfill a particular function in a particular situation (Rose 1994, Kasper 1997, Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor 2003, McConachy 2009, Flöck and Pfingsthorn 2014). This recommendation has come to be widely accepted as good practice in the current literature on pragmatics teaching (cf. Eslami-Rasekh 2005, Murray 2010, Limberg 2014).

Traditionally, both cross-cultural pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics have drawn particularly extensively on Speech Act Theory as put forth by Austin (1962) and refined by Searle (1969, 1975a, 1975b)¹⁰⁵. Murray (2010) noted that “[t]o date, the principle focus of pedagogical pragmatics remains the speech act” (Murray 2010: 294; cf. also Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 19, Gass et al. 2014: 322, Taguchi and Roever 2017: 221). In Speech Act Theory, the linguistic function of an utterance as determined by the intention of the speaker in making it is centrally important and is used as the primary classifying feature of the utterance, rather than grammatical criteria (cf. Austin 1962, Searle 1975a). In response to the emphasis on the speech act in applied pragmatics research, a few language learning materials and textbooks have adopted a syllabus based on the speech act, though most still retain a more traditional organization around a grammatical syllabus (McConachy and Hata 2013: 295-296). However, even traditionally organized textbooks have begun to pay more attention to speech acts, though

¹⁰⁵ Taguchi and Roever (2017) provides an overview of the topics most frequently addressed in studies related to the teaching of pragmatics. While speech acts have received the most research attention (Taguchi and Roever 2017: 221), other topics have also been studied, including the use of routine formulae (ibid. 222), larger-scale interactional skills to aid in the development of turns (ibid. 223) and receptive skills such as implicature (ibid. 224).

the way in which these speech acts have often been presented has come under a certain amount of scrutiny, as will be discussed in Chapters 16 and 17.

Beginning with Canale and Swain (1980), there has been an underlying assumption generally apparent in mainstream approaches to teaching pragmatics that learners will primarily require a pragmatic competence that allows them to communicate with native speakers of the target language. This assumption is rarely explicitly stated as such, but rather appears to be taken very much for granted. Canale and Swain (1980), for example, claimed that “[a] communicative approach must be based on and respond to the learner’s communication needs” (Canale and Swain 1980: 27); they then went on to add almost immediately:

It is particularly important to base a communicative approach on the varieties of the second language that the learner is most likely to be in contact with in a genuine communicative situation, and on the minimum levels of grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence *that native speakers expect of second language learners in such a situation* and that the majority of second language learners may be expected to attain. (Canale and Swain 1980: 27, emphasis added)

Thus, it becomes apparent that Canale and Swain presupposed that the ‘genuine communicative situations’ in which learners will use a second language would primarily involve communication with native speakers, and that it was the expectations of these native speakers that should serve as the yardstick by which the learner’s communicative competence is measured. This presupposition has in turn given rise to a second well-established assumption in mainstream pragmatics teaching, that the aim of such teaching should be

a matter of reducing negative pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer from the learner’s L1 while gradually incorporating more native-like pragmatic features into the learner’s developing linguistic system, thus becoming able to use and interpret the L2 appropriately according to native-speaker norms. (McConachy 2018: 18)

In other words, the purpose of pragmatics instruction should be to help learners acquire a more native-like pragmatic competence in the L2.

Although there has been some measure of acknowledgement since the 1980s that “the complete assimilation to target language pragmatic norms is an ideal which is not realizable in the classroom”¹⁰⁶ (Limberg 2014: 210) and that “emulating a native speaker model may not always be the most functional and desirable way of communicating in the L2” (Kasper 1997: 117), the oblique assumption that the aim of pragmatics teaching should be the development of a native-like pragmatic competence still appears to go largely unquestioned in more recent

¹⁰⁶ Translated from the original German by the author of this thesis.

publications on pragmatics teaching in ELT¹⁰⁷. There is still a widespread tendency to talk about English as the target language and to equate this target with the utterances produced by native English speakers (cf. Eslami-Rasekh 2005: 200, Flöck and Pfingsthorn 2014: 195). And even though Kasper (1997) acknowledged early on that many learners may ultimately “use English at least as much as a *lingua franca* [...] as they do for communicating with native speakers” (Kasper 1997: 117; italics original) and even suggested that this may call into question which variety of English should serve as the basis of pragmatics teaching, the rest of her article appears to assume without question that “authentic native speaker input” should provide the basis for classroom work on pragmatics (cf. Kasper 1997: 125). Likewise, Murray (2010), in writing about the importance of developing an explicit meta-pragmatic awareness in learners, wrote that “by raising students’ awareness of the general principles, we increase the likelihood that they will notice and learn *their particular realizations in English*” (Murray 2010: 296, emphasis added). Thus, it becomes clear that the goal Murray (2010) had in mind is still the development of a native-like competence in which learners will ultimately assimilate, as far as possible, to native speaker pragmatic norms.

This raises an interesting question for the ELF-oriented classroom. As mentioned above, Canale and Swain (1980) claimed that language teaching should be based “on the varieties of the second language that the learner is most likely to be in contact with in a genuine communicative situation” (Canale and Swain 1980: 27). Sociolinguistic research has shown that today’s learners of English are more likely to use their English as a *lingua franca* for communicating with other non-native speakers of English than for communicating primarily with native speakers, and this is the scenario for which the ELF-oriented classroom primarily attempts to prepare them. The question, then, becomes whether or not the development of a native-like competence, in which the goal is to acquire the pragmatic norms of native speakers and to learn to use the realizations of pragmatic functions that a native speaker would use in a given situation, is likely to best serve these learners’ future needs. In order to answer this question, it will be necessary to briefly examine the current state of research into the pragmatics of English used as a *lingua franca*.

¹⁰⁷ An interesting, rather early exception to this trend is presented in Rose (1994). Rose questioned the native speaker as the model for the EFL classroom (in contrast to ESL contexts, in which he clearly saw the need for this model) on the grounds that “most learners of English in an EFL setting will use English primarily with other nonnative speakers (NNS) of English” (Rose 1994: 52) and that “[t]here are [thus] any number of possible target communities” that learners may ultimately interact with outside the classroom (Rose 1994: 55). His proposed approach to pragmatics teaching in this kind of context exhibits strong similarities with approaches aimed at developing learners’ meta-pragmatic awareness, a type of approach which will be addressed in more detail in 15.4 below.

15.3 *Empirical research into the pragmatics of ELF communication*

The earliest studies exploring the pragmatics of ELF communication (Firth 1990, 1996; House 1999, 2002; Meierkord 1996, 2002; Lesznyak 2004) pointed to its cooperativeness, in which the construction of mutual understanding appeared to take precedence over the use of ‘correct’ forms. These studies also noted the ‘robustness’ of such talk. Overt miscommunication was found to be rare, despite the intercultural nature of the encounters. However, these earlier studies have been criticized for being largely based on limited data and often involving simulated conversations. By contrast, more recent research has generally placed emphasis on the analysis of larger sets of naturally-occurring data (cf. Cogo and House 2018: 210, Jenkins et al. 2011: 286). Much of this research has continued to explore the nature of understanding in ELF from an interactional perspective, “focusing on how speakers construct and negotiate understanding and how they solve miscommunication problems” (Cogo and House 2018: 210).

More recent studies have upheld early findings that overt miscommunication is generally rare in ELF talk (cf. Mauranen 2006, 2007; Kaur 2009a, 2009b, 2011; Cogo and Dewey 2012). As has been discussed in the previous strands of this dissertation, non-standard pronunciation has most often been found to be the cause of problems of understanding in ELF (cf. Chapter 4), while cultural differences have virtually never been found to cause miscommunication (cf. Chapter 8). Of particular interest for this strand of the course, however, are findings from lexicogrammatical and pragmatics research into ELF. Empirical studies in the area of lexicogrammar have generally found that the use of non-standard forms in ELF talk is quite widespread (cf. Hülmbauer 2010, Cogo and Dewey 2012; cf. also Seidlhofer 2011). Hülmbauer (2010) went so far as to claim that, in her data set, “non-standard language dominates” (Hülmbauer 2010: 114). However, despite their prevalence, non-standard forms only rarely appear to cause communication problems. Cogo and Dewey (2012) observed that “[t]here are virtually no cases in our corpora where non-established forms in lexis or grammar lead to a communication breakdown or which appear to result in a slowing down or even momentary miscommunication” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 77). Hülmbauer (2010), on the other hand, found a slight tendency in her data for non-standard lexis to cause more significant problems than non-standard use of grammatical forms, particularly where speakers exhibited difficulty with paraphrasing a problematic item (Hülmbauer 2010: 70-74). Nonetheless, instances of communicative problems due to non-standard lexicogrammar were far less frequent in her data than instances in which non-standard lexicogrammar was able to facilitate successful communication (Hülmbauer 2010: 114). Similarly, Deterding (2013), who dealt exclusively with instances of overt misunderstanding in the Asian Corpus of English (ACE), found that “lexical issues, particularly unfamiliar words and phrases” occasionally caused understanding problems in his data, but that “[g]rammar rarely seem[ed] to cause a problem” except in

instances where it coincided with “unexpected pronunciation” (Deterding 2013: 130). The general picture that these studies paint is that ELF communication is largely able to be successful despite the frequent use of non-standard lexical and grammatical forms.

A number of studies (Pitzl 2005, 2010; Kaur 2009a, 2010, 2011; Cogo and Dewey 2012; Kennedy 2017) have also explored how interlocutors manage those instances in ELF talk in which communicative problems do arise. These studies have generally focused on instances of non-understanding, in which at least one interlocutor is aware that understanding is incomplete, as opposed to instances of misunderstanding, in which no interlocutor is aware of the problem at the time it occurs, as the former “can be signaled and negotiated in interaction immediately” (Pitzl 2005: 52; cf. also Cogo and Dewey 2012: 116). Generally, they have found that “ELF interlocutors are shown to exhibit a high degree of interactional and pragmatic competence” in negotiating and resolving non-understandings which do arise “so as not to disrupt the flow of the exchange and yet provide enough information to the interlocutor for the problem to be resolved” (Jenkins et al. 2011: 293). They have identified a number of communication strategies that are commonly used to signal non-understanding, including lack of uptake, minimal queries, (partial) repetition of the problematic item, reformulations with rising intonation, and overt clarification requests (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012: 120-127; Kaur 2009a). They have also identified communication strategies for negotiating understanding and thus resolving non-understanding, including repetition and paraphrasing (cf. Kaur 2009a, 2010).

One particularly salient observation in ELF pragmatics research is that ELF speakers do not wait until communicative problems arise to engage in negotiation of understanding. Rather, a number of studies (Pitzl 2005; Cogo and Dewey 2006, 2012; Lichtkoppler 2006, 2007; Cogo 2009; Kaur 2009a, 2009b; House 2010; Mauranen 2006, 2012) have attested the extensive use of communication strategies by ELF users to proactively ensure that mutual understanding is achieved and communicative problems do not arise in the first place. In such instances of preemptive strategy use, “no overt marker of a misunderstanding is in evidence” (Mauranen 2006: 135). Several of the studies listed above have identified specific strategies used for this type of pre-emptive work, including self-repair, repetition (both self and other), paraphrasing, clarification and confirmation requests, enhancement of explicitness and comprehension checks (cf. Mauranen 2006; Kaur 2009a, 2009b; Cogo and Dewey 2012).

Particular importance has been ascribed to the proactive use of strategies in ELF communication, in that they demonstrate “how mutual understanding in ELF is not taken for granted, but that speakers engage in a joint effort to monitor understanding at every stage of communication, even before non-understanding has taken place” (Jenkins et al. 2011: 293). Successful ELF users appear to demonstrate an awareness that they cannot be sure of sharing

pragmatic norms with their interlocutors, which in turn motivates them to suspend reliance on an established set of norms in favor of increased negotiation of meaning¹⁰⁸. Thus, it would seem that the proactive use of communication strategies may in fact be one of the key reasons why ELF communication is largely able to be successful despite a lack of adherence to native speaker norms (cf. Cogo and House 2018: 221). Moreover, the use of communication strategies has generally been interpreted not as compensating for lack of competence in other areas, but as a sign of ELF users' interactional and pragmatic competence (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012: 135, Baker 2018: 33). Proactive strategy use is viewed in ELF research as “imply[ing] that speakers are orienting to making meaning, formulating their ideas and trying to achieve understanding in contexts of interaction” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 128).

In addition to the attention given to signaling, resolving and pre-empting miscommunication, ELF studies in the area of pragmatics have also explored other ways in which ELF users “achieve understanding and build common ground” (Jenkins et al. 2011: 294). One significant area of exploration has been that of discourse management. A substantial body of ELF research has investigated various phenomena, such as topic management (Meierkord 1996; House 1999; Lesznyak 2004), turn-taking (including utterance completions and overlapping speech) (Meierkord 1996, 2002; Kaur 2011; Cogo and Dewey 2012), co-construction of utterances (House 2002, 2010), the form and function of discourse markers (House 2009, 2013; Baumgarten and House 2010), the use of chunking (Mauranen 2005, 2009), the use of back-channeling and minimal responses (Cogo 2009, Cogo and Dewey 2012) and the role of laughter and other non-linguistic resources in ELF talk (Pullin Stark 2009, Pitzl 2010, Matsumoto 2018). Like research into lexicogrammatical features in ELF talk, research into discourse management in ELF has focused on how these phenomena are able to contribute to successful communication in ELF, despite the fact that they are often deployed, both formally and functionally, in ways that differ from ENL (cf. Jenkins et al. 2011: 294-295; Cogo and House 2018: 212).

Another area of particular interest in the ways in which ELF users co-construct and negotiate understanding has been how interlocutors make use of their plurilingual resources. Lingua franca communication generally involves interlocutors who are both multilingual and multicultural, the majority of whom are non-native speakers of English; thus, one thing ELF interlocutors often have in common is their ‘shared non-nativeness’ as speakers of English (cf.

¹⁰⁸ The notion that speakers of different first languages who use a common language in intercultural situations generally negotiate and co-construct pragmatic norms *in situ* rather than relying on a pre-defined set of norms has become a central tenet of interlanguage pragmatics more generally (cf. Kecskes 2014: 15).

Hülmbauer 2009: 328-330). A number of studies have explored the ways in which ELF users exploit their knowledge of languages other than English to facilitate the collaborative construction of meaning. This has included investigations into the ways in which code-switching is employed in ELF talk (Klimpfinger 2007, 2009; Cogo 2009, 2010; House 2016; Franceschi 2017), but has also included consideration of more ‘covert’ transfer phenomena (cf. Jenkins et al. 2011: 294) such as the use of ‘false friends’ and literal translations, e.g. of idiomatic expressions (Hülmbauer 2009, 2011; Pitzl 2009). Hülmbauer (2009) noted that such transfer phenomena often lead to communicative success where “there is an overlap between speakers’ plurilingual mental lexicons” (Hülmbauer 2009: 341), either because the speakers share knowledge of the same language(s) other than English or because they know languages not held in common that nevertheless share similar features (cf. also Hülmbauer 2011: 151, 153). Recourse to such communication strategies allows ELF users “to enlarge their shared situational resource pool” (Hülmbauer 2009: 339). Thus, although SLA has often emphasized the negative effects of transfer in talk between non-native and native speakers (cf. Kasper 1997: 120), studies of ELF show that it may play quite a positive role in the co-construction of meaning in lingua franca talk in cases where plurilingual resources are held in common.

Overall, empirical research into ELF pragmatics shows that ELF communication is usually successful despite lack of adherence to a particular set of lexicogrammatical or pragmatic norms. Instead, successful ELF users appear to deploy their linguistic and pragmatic resources flexibly in order to support the co-construction of understanding, utilizing communication strategies that support related processes such as the negotiation of meaning, the pre-empting of miscommunication, and the signaling and repair of non-understanding. Both the flexible deployment of resources and the use of communication strategies appear to be motivated largely by perceptions of interlocutors’ needs, and indeed, a number of researchers have commented on the particularly listener-oriented nature of successful ELF communication (Kaur 2009b: 119, Dewey 2011: 207, Cogo and Dewey 2012: 103). Thus, engagement in processes of accommodation appears to be “a particularly distinguishing aspect of ELF communication” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 102), and the other communication strategies employed by successful ELF users which have been described in this section are generally viewed as supporting accommodation as an overarching strategy of ELF talk (cf. Mauranen 2003: 520, Seidlhofer 2004: 222, Cogo 2009: 257, Dewey 2011: 206-207, Cogo and House 2018: 212).

The pivotal role of accommodation in ELF talk has been recognized since very early in the field’s history. Jenkins (2000) first introduced the notion that accommodation plays a significant part in the area of ELF phonology, and the theoretical underpinnings of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) as they apply to ELF pronunciation have

already been discussed in 4.3. However, CAT appears to have considerable explanatory power in other areas of ELF as well. Analogous to the area of pronunciation, processes of convergence, in which speakers adjust their talk toward that of their interlocutors (cf. Giles et al. 1991a: 63, Giles et al. 1991b: 6-9), have generally been recognized as playing a particularly significant role at other levels of ELF talk as well, and, just as in the area of pronunciation, this appears to be motivated “predominantly [by] reasons of communicative efficiency” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 107; cf. also Cogo and Dewey 2006). However, as in the original model of accommodation theory put forward by Giles (1973) (cf. also Giles et al. 1991b: 18-19), accommodation in the area of lexicogrammar also appears to serve an affective function, at least to some extent. Dewey (2011) presented a number of examples of naturally occurring ELF talk in which interlocutors were shown to be “prepared to alter their own speech to both ensure intelligibility and show support and alignment” with each other (Dewey 2011: 212; cf. also 210). Cogo (2009) also found that “ELF speakers skillfully make appropriate and extensive use of accommodation strategies for cooperation and engagement” in addition to using them to enhance communicative efficiency in her data (Cogo 2009: 257).

One important difference between phonological accommodation and accommodation at other levels of ELF talk lies in the direction of convergence. Whereas ELF users engaging in phonological accommodation have been shown to converge on more target-like pronunciation of problematic items rather than on features of each other’s pronunciation (cf. Jenkins 2000: 61, 181, 186), lexicogrammatical convergence in ELF “tends to operate not towards an established norm or localized variety, but rather towards a co-constructed, continually emerging lingua franca code” (Dewey 2011: 210). In other words, rather than adjusting toward a pre-existing set of lexicogrammatical norms such as those of Standard English, ELF users actively adopt forms from each other, even if these forms are non-standard. Thus, it would appear that accommodation in the area of lexicogrammar functions similarly to accommodation as it has been described in communication between native speakers of a language (cf. Holmes 2008: 241, 242). Further, Dewey has also demonstrated that this convergence on non-standard forms may take place even when an interlocutor is aware that a form is non-standard (Dewey 2011: 212).

Similar to Jenkins’ (2000) findings in the area of pronunciation, Dewey (2011) and Cogo and Dewey (2012) point to the importance of both productive and receptive accommodation at other levels of ELF talk. Dewey’s (2011) examples show “a striking degree of productive convergence” in which ELF users actively adopted non-standard lexicogrammatical forms from their interlocutors during particular instances of communication (Dewey 2011: 212). Examples from Cogo and Dewey (2012) illustrate the importance of receptive convergence in ELF talk (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012: 103-106). Receptive accommodation is considered to

encompass “both tolerance and modified expectations” regarding an interlocutor’s use of language (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 104). Engaging in receptive accommodation appears to facilitate a more effective achievement of communicative flow as interlocutors co-construct understanding (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 104).

15.4 Reconsidering the teaching of pragmatics in light of ELF

On the whole, then, it would appear that “[i]ntelligibility in lingua franca settings has more to do with awareness of linguistic and cultural difference, and a speaker’s ability to accommodate towards an interlocutor than knowledge of a single set of linguistic and pragmatic norms” such as those of Standard English (Dewey and Leung 2010: 11; cf. also Firth 2009). As Taguchi and Roever (2017) put it at the conclusion of their review of current studies of ELF pragmatics,

the pragmatic aspect of ELF is revealed most in strategies that are used to facilitate joint meaning-making. In ELF talk, pragmatics extends beyond the notions of [...] pragmalinguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge, which L2 pragmatics research often focuses on. Besides these concepts, ELF pragmatics addresses how speakers use various conversation moves, communication strategies, and own and others’ linguistic resources to support smooth interaction. Hence, pragmatic success in ELF is essentially about interactional success, i.e. whether speakers are able to achieve mutual understanding and build rapport by using a variety of resources in a creative, flexible manner. (Taguchi and Roever 2017: 247-248)

These descriptions of what is – and what is not – required for communicative success in lingua franca talk have led ELF scholars to critique some of the underlying suppositions regarding the nature of communicative competence currently underpinning mainstream ELT practice as unlikely to facilitate the development of the kind of communicative competence necessary for ELF communication and to suggest that a shift in priorities may be necessary for the ELF-oriented classroom.

One of the primary points of criticism has been the amount of emphasis generally placed on formal accuracy in the classroom. In current ELT, “[t]he dominant orientation is to treat solely or mainly form as defining competence” (Canagarajah 2007: 928), not only in the teaching of grammar, but also in other areas of communicative competence. Through the process of translating Hymes’ (1972) conception of communicative competence from a guide for sociolinguistic research into a framework for language teaching, central notions such as appropriateness have been “turned into a pedagogic space where specific forms of language use are selected and projected as being appropriate according to some normative assumptions

of language practice set in an imagined social exchange”¹⁰⁹ (Leung 2005: 131). This transformation of appropriateness into something to be established in terms of a set of predetermined forms has in turn “led to a culture of thinking about language and communication in which English is ‘fixed’ as a set of norms, where the grammar of a standard variety is regarded as the primary prerequisite for communication, and intelligibility is seen as norm dependent” (Dewey and Leung 2010: 12). Thus, both appropriateness and intelligibility have come to be “only understood and largely assessed in relation to adherence to a fixed and finite set of language forms” (Dewey 2011: 223). These forms are generally derived from the communicative practices of monolingual native speakers of English, and much of the time spent in pursuit of the development of learners’ communicative competence in ELT has been spent on the development of “‘correct’, standard usage” (Dewey and Leung 2010: 12).

This focus on ‘correct’, standard usage may actually be detrimental to the development of the kind of pragmatic competence necessary for ELF and other forms of intercultural communication. McConachy (2018) pointed out that emphasis on adherence to standardized norms in the area of pragmatics may give learners a false sense of what is actually necessary in order to communicate successfully in intercultural encounters:

It is important to be cognizant of the fact that the way we present language to learners not only provides input for acquisition, but it also shapes their perspectives on what language is and how it works. Presenting pragmatic norms in a prescriptive way based on a narrow concept of appropriateness tells learners that communication is a process of acting out predetermined and rigidly controlled linguistic behavior. Whether intended or not, this is clearly a disadvantageous message to impart to learners when considering the cultural variability in language use that they will inevitably be exposed to when engaging in intercultural communication in the target language. (McConachy 2018: 29)

Since presenting pragmatic norms as though they can be predetermined belies the reality of the way in which ELF talk actually appears to function, such an approach cannot support the development of the kind of pragmatic competence that learners will actually need in ELF communication. Tarone (2016) stated more directly that “a singular pedagogic focus on sentence-level accuracy in classroom instruction is downright damaging to language learners’

¹⁰⁹ According to Leung, there is nothing surprising about this process; in fact, it stemmed from a pedagogical necessity: “Once the questions raised by Hymes were incorporated into a conceptual framework, curriculum discussions had to attend to guidelines for developing teaching and learning content and activities. The need to specify what is to be taught and learned inevitably turns research questions, which allow the possibility of both instability in existing knowledge and emergence of new knowledge, into pedagogic guidelines and principles which have to assume a degree of stability, transparency and certainty in existing knowledge” (Leung 2005: 125). Neither was this process deliberate or sudden; rather, it appears to have been “a collective, cumulative and, in all probability, a non-conscious process” (Leung 2005: 124). Nevertheless, Leung argues that the direction this process has taken is in need of reconsideration in light of communicative phenomena such as ELF.

development of communicative competence in general and strategic competence in particular” (Tarone 2016: 218). The problem, she argued, “is the convergent focus on one correct answer [...]. Language teachers spend far too much time and energy trying to get their students to produce sentence-level grammatical accuracy, where there’s just one assumed norm and one right answer” (Tarone 2016: 218). Not only does this belie the reality of actual communication in intercultural situations, which Tarone (2016) described as “a divergent and open-ended communicative process, where there are many possible solutions” (Tarone 2016: 218), it actually undermines the development of “the essential ability to creatively and flexibly draw upon a range of different target language forms and structures in order to reach a communication goal” (Tarone 2016: 217).

Murray (2012) has argued that research into the pragmatics of ELF can “provide an indication of those elements that could be usefully promoted and those that might be legitimately de-emphasized in the classroom” (Murray 2012: 321). The evidence that ELF users are largely able to communicate successfully despite their oft-noted lack of adherence to native speaker norms suggests that the development of ‘correct’ standard usage is a strong candidate for such de-emphasis (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012: 183). However, research into ELF pragmatics also indicates that other areas will require more attention in the ELF-oriented classroom than they commonly receive in mainstream approaches to teaching pragmatics. Rather than paying attention to what native English speakers do, it appears more important to base teaching in the ELF-oriented classroom on the communicative practices of successful multilingual ELF users (cf. Baker 2009a: 574, Baker 2012a: 63, House and Kasper 2000: 101). Research into ELF communication has shown that “[c]onformity to [native speaker] norms is neither necessary *nor sufficient* to meet the international demands for the effective use of English as a lingua franca” (Seidlhofer 2011: 92, emphasis added). It is insufficient in the sense that “it is a speaker’s flexibility to accommodate that ensures effective intercultural communication not proximity to a fixed set of grammatical norms” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 176; cf. also Canagarajah 2007: 936, Firth 2009: 163), and this suggests that the time and energy that could be freed up by focusing less on formal accuracy in the classroom should be invested in the development of the ability to accommodate flexibly to one’s interlocutors (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012: 183, Tarone 2016: 218).

This presents a substantial challenge for teachers in that “the role of accommodation has so far been largely overlooked in discussions of communicative competence in ELT” (Dewey 2011: 224). The question thus becomes what an approach that encourages the development of accommodation over adherence to norms of linguistic use might entail. Cogo and Dewey (2012) maintain that “[i]t will be especially good pedagogy if teachers can learn how to [...] focus more on communicative strategies” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 183), a position also

advocated by Seidlhofer (2004, 2011), Kirkpatrick (2010), Dewey (2012), Murray (2012), Galloway and Rose (2015), Kaur (2015a), Tarone (2016), Galloway (2018) and Kiczowski (2020). Learning to use communication strategies (CSs)¹¹⁰ is seen as vital to the development of the ability to accommodate flexibly to one's interlocutors, since "[s]uch skills result in the ability of interlocutors to adjust and align themselves to different communicative systems and cooperate in communication" (Baker 2012a: 63). Thus, Murray equates teaching learners to use CSs with "giving learners a pragmatic 'toolkit' of strategies that provides them with the wherewithal to construct, 'on the fly', a bespoke social grammar for each interaction according to the particular characteristics of their interlocutor and of the broader context in which that interaction takes place" (Murray 2012: 324-325).

As in the area of pragmatics more generally, a pedagogical interest in CSs is not unique to an ELF perspective on language teaching. CSs have been an area of research focus in SLA since the 1970s, and research interest increased significantly in the 1980s and 1990s after Canale and Swain (1980) included strategic competence as one of the central components in their influential framework of communicative competence for the language learner (cf. 15.1 above). Despite the significant body of research in this area, however, a clear-cut definition of the term *communication strategy* remains somewhat elusive in the literature. In their state-of-the-art article reviewing CS definitions and taxonomies, Dörnyei and Scott (1997) noted that there is "no universally accepted definition of CSs" (Dörnyei and Scott 1997: 174). Rather, the

¹¹⁰ In the literature within the ELF research paradigm, there is a certain amount of terminological inconsistency regarding this area of pragmatic study that is not as apparent in mainstream applied linguistics research. Researchers have used a number of different terms, including *communicative strategies* (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012, Galloway and Rose 2015), *pragmatic strategies* (cf. Cogo 2009, Kaur 2015a), *accommodation strategies* (cf. Cogo 2009), *accommodation and negotiation strategies* (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012) and *communicative and pragmatic strategies* (cf. Baker 2018). Vettorel (2019), in discussing this terminological variation, notes that "[t]hese terms are at times used interchangeably, and often not in a mutually exclusive way" (Vettorel 2019: 188). In more recent studies of ELF talk, researchers have largely employed the more established term *communication strategy* and its abbreviation CS (cf., e.g., Dimoski 2016; Dimoski et al. 2016; Franceschi 2017; Kennedy 2017; Vettorel 2018, 2019; Sato et al. 2019). For my part, I appreciate some of the nuances which the alternative terms suggest. The use of the modifier *communicative* suggests a more dynamic process, while *communication* seems more static. The use of *pragmatic* underscores the connection between such strategies and the pragmatic work they are used to achieve, while modifiers like *accommodation* and *negotiation* draw attention to the ELF understanding of such strategies as part of interactional and highly context-dependent processes. However, in keeping with the current trend in the ELF literature, I will use the more established term *communication strategy*, abbreviated as CS, in this thesis. The use of this term also underscores the connections to previous research into this area of pragmatics in mainstream SLA and applied linguistics. Nevertheless, I will retain the alternative terms used in some ELF sources where they occur in direct quotations with the understanding that these terms are used synonymously with the ELF-informed use of *communication strategy*, rather than in reference to different phenomena.

way CSs have been defined has depended in large part on the research perspective adopted in a particular study.¹¹¹

The term *communication strategy* was coined by Selinker in his influential paper on interlanguage (Selinker 1972), and much research into CSs has been done from an SLA/interlanguage perspective. Under this perspective, CSs have traditionally been viewed as “verbal or nonverbal first-aid devices used to compensate for gaps in the speaker’s L2 proficiency” (Dörnyei and Scott 1997: 177). Thus, the focus has largely been on strategies that language learners use for “dealing with language production problems that occur at the planning stage” (Dörnyei and Scott 1997: 177). Within this perspective, the most research effort has been focused on the identification and classification of what have come to be known as *achievement* or *compensatory strategies* (cf. Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 27, Dörnyei and Scott 1997: 195, 198). Such CSs “offer alternative plans for the speakers to carry out their original communicative goal by manipulating available language, thus compensating somehow for their linguistic deficiencies” (Dörnyei 1995: 57). However, some attention has also been paid to what are generally referred to as *avoidance* or *reduction strategies* (cf. Dörnyei and Scott 1997: 195). These CSs “involve either an alteration, a reduction, or complete abandonment of the intended message” (Dörnyei 1995: 57). More recently, Dörnyei (1995) proposed the inclusion of *stalling* or *time-gaining strategies*, on the grounds that “a primary source of L2 speakers’ communication problems is insufficient processing time” (Dörnyei and Scott 1997: 178). These CSs “are not actually used to compensate for any linguistic deficiencies but rather to gain time and to keep the communication channel open at times of difficulty” when a learner encounters a problem in encoding an intended message (Dörnyei 1995: 57).

Although the SLA/interlanguage perspective on CSs has continued to be very influential throughout CS research, an alternative perspective was proposed in Tarone (1980). This perspective attempted to account for the types of CSs that had been identified in SLA/interlanguage studies to date. However, rather than focusing on CSs as primarily compensating for deficiencies in the learner’s communicative system, Tarone proposed approaching them from an interactional perspective. She defined CSs as “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared” (Tarone 1980: 419). Under this perspective, CSs are viewed primarily as “tools used in a joint negotiation of meaning, in situations where both interlocutors are attempting to agree as to communicative goal” (Tarone 1980: 420). This perspective thus

¹¹¹ Cf. Dörnyei and Scott (1997) for a useful overview of studies from these different research perspectives.

conceptualizes CSs as serving not only speaker-oriented functions in overcoming problems with linguistic production, but listener-oriented functions as well. Thus, CSs might not only be used in cases in which a learner is unable to find a particular word, but also in cases in which he or she is able to find the desired word but suspects that his or her interlocutor might not be familiar with its meaning. The interactional perspective also allows for the inclusion of some types of repair, so long as the intention is “to clarify intended meaning rather than simply correct linguistic form” (Tarone 1980: 424). This extension of what is considered to be a CS led to further studies of what have come to be known as *meaning negotiation strategies* (e.g. Varonis and Gass 1985), as well as the inclusion of such strategies in subsequent taxonomies of CSs (cf. Dörnyei and Scott 1997: 178).

In the 1990s, a number of researchers also began to adopt a psycholinguistic perspective toward the study of CSs. These researchers argued that “CSs are inherently mental procedures; therefore, CS research should investigate the cognitive processes underlying strategic language use” (Dörnyei and Scott 1997: 180). A number of these studies have attempted to explain CS use in terms of Levelt’s (1989) model of speech production (cf. e.g. Poulishse 1993, Dörnyei and Kosmos 1998). Such studies have led to the inclusion, for example, of strategies which may result from self-monitoring of one’s own speech, e.g. various kinds of self-initiated self-repair and self-rephrasing, in taxonomies of CSs (cf. Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 28).

As mentioned above, Canale and Swain (1980) was the first pedagogically-oriented framework which incorporated strategic competence as one of the central aspects of communicative competence for the language learner. Canale and Swain (1980) defined strategic competence as “be[ing] made up of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence” (Canale and Swain 1980: 30). The emphasis on CSs as compensating for lack of competence in other areas clearly links this definition with a more traditional SLA/interlanguage perspective on CSs. However, Canale and Swain stopped short of including a taxonomy of CSs that might serve as the basis for classroom instruction. This is perhaps unsurprising, considering that CS research was still in its early phases when this framework was published. Indeed, the authors noted that “[w]e know of very little work in this area” (Canale and Swain 1980: 31). Due in part to the attention that the inclusion of strategic competence as a key component of Canale and Swain’s conception of communicative competence generated in the research community, this situation changed considerably over the next decade. By the mid-1990s, a significant body of research across the three different research perspectives described above had been collected, leading to attempts to integrate insights from these various perspectives into revised pedagogical conceptions of a communicative competence for the language learner.

While the CSs included in various taxonomies that have been proposed both within and across different research perspectives appear at first glance to vary widely, comparisons of these taxonomies have also drawn attention to their similarities. Many researchers (cf. e.g. Kasper and Kellerman 1997: 4, Dörnyei and Scott 1997: 187-198, Sato et al. 2019: 12) have generally agreed with Bialystok (1990) that

the variety of taxonomies proposed in the literature differ primarily in terminology and overall categorizing principle rather than in the substance of the specific strategies. If we ignore, then, differences in the structure of the taxonomies by abolishing the various overall categories, then a core group of specific strategies that appear consistently across the taxonomies clearly emerges. (Bialystok 1990: 61)

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) presented what they identified to be this core group of strategies as part of their conceptualization of strategic competence in their pedagogical framework of communicative competence for the language learner:

- AVOIDANCE or REDUCTION STRATEGIES
 - Message replacement
 - Topic avoidance
 - Message abandonment
- ACHIEVEMENT or COMPENSATORY STRATEGIES
 - Circumlocution (e.g., *the thing you open bottles with for corkscrew*)
 - Approximation (e.g., *fish for carp*)
 - All-purpose words (e.g., *thingy, thingamajig*)
 - Non-linguistic means (mime, pointing, gestures, drawing pictures)
 - Restructuring (e.g., *The bus was very... there were a lot of people on it*)
 - Word-coinage (e.g., *vegetarianist*)
 - Literal translation from L1
 - Foreignizing (e.g., L1 word with L2 pronunciation)
 - Code switching to L1 or L3
 - Retrieval (e.g., *bro... bron... bronze*)
- STALLING or TIME-GAINING STRATEGIES
 - Fillers, hesitation devices and gambits (e.g., *well, actually..., where was I...?*)
 - Self and other-repetition
- SELF-MONITORING STRATEGIES
 - Self-initiated repair (e.g., *I mean...*)
 - Self-rephrasing (over-elaboration) (e.g., *This is for students... pupils... when you're at school...*)
- INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES
 - Appeals for help
 - direct (e.g., *What do you call...?*)
 - indirect (e.g., *I don't know the word in English...* or puzzled expression)
 - Meaning negotiation strategies
 - Indicators of non/mis-understanding*
 - requests
 - repetition requests (e.g., *Pardon?* or *Could you say that again please?*)
 - clarification requests (e.g., *What do you mean by...?*)
 - confirmation requests (e.g., *Did you say...?*)
 - expressions of non-understanding
 - verbal (e.g., *Sorry, I'm not sure I understand...*)
 - non-verbal (raised eyebrows, blank look)
 - interpretive summary* (e.g., *You mean...?/So what you're saying is...?*)
 - Responses*
 - repetition, rephrasing, expansion, reduction, confirmation, rejection, repair
 - Comprehension checks*
 - whether the interlocutor can follow you (e.g., *Am I making sense?*)
 - whether what you said was correct or grammatical (e.g., *Can I/you say that?*)
 - whether the interlocutor is listening (e.g., on the phone: *Are you still there?*)
 - whether the interlocutor can hear you

Suggested components of Strategic Competence (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 28)

The five main categories in this taxonomy correspond to the various research perspectives that have been discussed above. The first three (*avoidance or reduction strategies*, *achievement or compensatory strategies* and *stalling or time-gaining strategies*) stem from the original SLA/interlanguage perspective on CSs, the fourth (*self-monitoring strategies*) from the psycholinguistic perspective and the final category (*interactional strategies*, including the sub-category *meaning negotiation strategies*) from the interactional perspective. Thus, this framework attempts to incorporate “the strategies most relevant to communicative language use and CLT” (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 26) from the various research perspectives into one pedagogically-oriented overview.

The question remains, then, how well such pedagogical conceptions of strategic competence fit with research insights into the use of CSs in ELF talk. As the quotation from Taguchi and Roever (2017) at the beginning of this section suggests, ELF studies of pragmatics have generally adopted an interactional perspective on CS use (cf. also Kennedy 2017: 4). As ELF researchers have attempted to explicate how ELF communication is able to be more often successful than not despite the high level of variation in the linguistic forms used, they have focused on the role of CSs in supporting underlying interactional processes such as accommodation and the negotiation of meaning. Thus, strategic competence from an ELF perspective can be defined as “the essential ability to creatively and flexibly draw upon a range of different target language forms and expressions in order to reach a communicative goal” (Tarone 2016: 217).

ELF research has identified a range of CSs that are regularly used in successful ELF talk, as has been discussed in 15.3 above. Many of the CSs identified and described in these studies are not unique to ELF talk; in fact, most of them appear in the taxonomy from Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) presented above. However, an ELF perspective on these CSs differs from the perspective that generally underlies pedagogical frameworks of communicative competence like Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) in two important ways. First, in keeping with the original SLA/interlanguage perspective, CSs continue to be viewed in such frameworks as primarily compensating for deficits in the language learner’s grammatical and sociolinguistic competence (cf. Canale and Swain 1980: 30, van Ek 1987: 55, Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 27, Dörnyei 1995: 57, Nakatani 2005: 77). Thus, while the taxonomy in Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) includes the category of interactional strategies, their cooperative function in the joint negotiation of meaning is treated as supplementary to the production-oriented, compensatory functions of the previous categories. Conversely, ELF studies have approached CSs not as primarily compensating for linguistic shortcomings,

but as essential strategies to achieve successful communication in interactions. [...] CSs have been considered not as strategies that only low-proficiency English

learners use to deal with their own lack of proficiency, but as those that all English users utilize to achieve mutual understanding. (Sato et al. 2019: 12)

As important interactional tools, “these strategies are not seen as ‘compensating’ for communicative deficiencies but rather as displays of pragmatic competence by successful multilingual and multicultural intercultural communicators” (Baker 2018: 33). They are strategies that allow speakers to accommodate to the needs of their interlocutors and to negotiate and maintain mutual understanding (cf. Baker 2012a: 63). The development and use of CSs should thus be viewed in the ELF-oriented classroom “as strengths that demonstrate developing competence as an ELF speaker” (Murray 2012: 322), rather than as compensations for deficits in target language competence.

The second difference has to do with the way in which one of the defining characteristics of CSs has traditionally been understood in mainstream CS research. With few exceptions, and regardless of research perspective, taxonomies of CSs have conventionally “posited problem-orientedness as a central feature of communication strategies” (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 27; cf. also Dörnyei and Scott 1997: 182-183). This means that, by definition, “strategies are only used when a speaker perceives that there is a problem which may interrupt communication” (Bialystok 1990: 3). While Bialystok’s use of the modal verb *may* in the quotation above would seem to allow for the possibility of preemptive CS use where a speaker anticipates a potential problem that has not yet been signaled, such proactive uses of CSs have not traditionally been included in descriptions of strategic competence. Rather, the research focus in the area of meaning negotiation strategies has been on the use of strategies “*after* some problem has surfaced during the course of communication” (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 26, emphasis original), implying that CSs will only be necessary in the face of overt communicative problems (cf. also Dörnyei 1995: 56, Dörnyei and Scott 1997: 186, Kasper and Kellerman 1997: 2-3, Gass et al. 2014: 320-321). By contrast, empirical studies of ELF communication have shown that successful ELF users employ CSs not only when overt communicative difficulties occur, but also proactively to ensure that mutual understanding is achieved so that miscommunication does not arise in the first place (cf. 15.3 above).

Overall, then, an ELF-oriented approach to teaching CSs will involve addressing many of the same strategies that have traditionally been identified as important for strategic competence in more traditional frameworks for CLT, but will require a shift in perspective in terms of the functions that these strategies are understood as fulfilling. Rather than compensating for a lack of linguistic or pragmatic competence, these strategies should be viewed as supporting important interactional processes such as accommodation towards one’s interlocutor(s) and co-construction and negotiation of meaning. Equally, although it will remain important to address CSs for signaling and resolving communicative problems, emphasis also needs to be placed on

the role that CSs can play in proactively securing mutual understanding and pre-empting communicative problems throughout the communicative process.

In addition to the development of strategic competence in support of accommodation and related processes, Rose (1994)¹¹², Murray (2012) and McConachy (2018) in particular also argue for the need for classroom work focused on the development of an awareness of general pragmatic principles and processes in the ELF-oriented classroom, an awareness McConachy called “essential to the development of an intercultural perspective on language use” (McConachy 2018: 24). In many ways, this parallels the direction that pragmatics teaching in mainstream ELT is currently taking. As has been discussed in 15.2 above, more recent literature on teaching pragmatics has emphasized the need to develop in learners an awareness of underlying pragmatic principles and processes rather than focusing exclusively on the verbal realizations that speakers use to achieve pragmatic ends. However, McConachy (2018) in particular offered some critique of the way pragmatic awareness is currently approached in mainstream ELT. The weaknesses he identified again arise, in his view, from the overemphasis on the development of a native-like competence that has traditionally underpinned “the interlanguage perspective on language development” (McConachy 2018: 18):

[T]he development of pragmatic awareness within the interlanguage paradigm has primarily been theorized as a process of noticing and understanding L2 pragmatic norms, while at the same time becoming aware of and controlling L1-based pragmatic knowledge which might interfere with the language acquisition process. Based on this theoretical imperative, and based on a view of language as a system of rule-relations, the object of pragmatic awareness – what learners are actually supposed to be aware of – has often been treated in highly normative and restrictive terms in teaching and research. (McConachy 2018: 20)

Such an approach “constrains opportunities for deeper reflection on the situated judgments that speakers make in interaction and the culturally shaped knowledge and assumptions they draw on in the process”, an effect which “has particularly important implications for intercultural communication in an L2 as there is obviously much more scope for variable interpretations of what constitutes appropriate language use” (McConachy 2018: 23). In light of this situation, McConachy argued that what learners require for successful intercultural communication,

¹¹² Rose (1994) addressed pragmatic awareness-raising in the context of the EFL classroom, yet it becomes very clear that what he had in mind was much more the preparation of learners for ELF than for EFL. He discussed the problems of pragmatic instruction in light of the fact that “most learners of English in an EFL setting will use English primarily with other nonnative speakers (NNS) of English” (Rose 1994: 52, cf. also 54-55). It is notable that Rose addressed this issue a full six years before the field of ELF studies as such was even founded and also proposed a solution that fits quite well with current perspectives on an ELF-oriented pragmatics pedagogy.

including lingua franca communication, is not pragmatic awareness, but rather meta-pragmatic awareness.

McConachy (2018) noted that the term ‘meta-pragmatic awareness’ is not new in discussions of teaching pragmatics; in fact, “the terms ‘pragmatic awareness’ and ‘meta-pragmatic awareness’ are often used inconsistently or interchangeably” (McConachy 2018: 23). However, McConachy aligned himself with researchers in the area of intercultural pragmatics such as Nikula (2002), Verschueren (2004) and Ifantidou (2014), who differentiate between the two on the basis that “pragmatic awareness is best used to refer to the knowledge that one needs to be able to use the language to accomplish particular pragmatic acts, but that does not necessarily presuppose the reflexive ability to articulate in detail the nature of one’s knowledge” (McConachy 2018: 23), while “meta-pragmatic awareness is a higher-order awareness in which the basis of linguistic judgments can be reflected on and articulated” (McConachy 2018: 24). McConachy stressed that the latter

is more than knowledge. When the scope of ‘pragmatic’ awareness goes beyond knowledge of specific pragmatic norms and develops into a broader capacity for reflection on pragmatic decision making and interactional effects, the nature of awareness can be viewed as developing towards the ‘meta-pragmatic’.
(McConachy 2018: 28)

Thus, meta-pragmatic awareness “is characterized by a growing ability to describe, evaluate and explore one’s own and others’ interpretations of features of language in use” (McConachy 2018: 24).

Although neither Rose (1994) nor Murray (2012) used the term ‘meta-pragmatic awareness’ to describe the kind of awareness that they believed should be the aim of the ELF-oriented classroom, it becomes clear that what they had in mind is quite similar to what McConachy described. Rather than focusing on teaching learners the details of a particular pragmatic system, Rose (1994) instead proposed to focus on what he termed *pragmatics consciousness-raising*. This approach “does not attempt to teach specific means of, say, performing a given speech act, but rather attempts to sensitize learners to context-based variation in language use and the variables that help determine variation” (Rose 1994: 57). It chiefly involves guided analysis and discussion of communicative performance – Rose suggested using video as a particularly fitting medium (Rose 1994: 57-58) – in which learners develop an ability to notice and comment on pragmatic choices and their contextual appropriateness (Rose 1994: 59). Similarly, Murray (2012) claimed that the main purpose of awareness-raising work in the area of pragmatics for an ELF-oriented language pedagogy should be “that it gets learners reflecting on what underlies the performance of speech acts and highlights the significance of dimensions of communication” (Murray 2012: 324). To facilitate this type of reflection, he argued, “learners need to be given a vocabulary or metalanguage

through which to do this” (Murray 2010: 295). Likewise, Rose (1994) acknowledged that the ability to engage in the kinds of analytical tasks he proposed would require learners “to master some of the pragmatic metalanguage used in speech act analysis”¹¹³ (Rose 1994: 59). Thus, both Rose and Murray also suggested that learners need to be able to talk explicitly about functions and processes that underlie pragmatic choices.

McConachy (2018), Murray (2012) and Rose (1994) agreed that raising learners’ meta-pragmatic awareness can help them to develop a pragmatic competence that is more readily transferable to situations beyond the classroom. Rose (1994) noted that the development of this kind of awareness “has the distinct advantage of providing learners with a foundation in some of the central aspects of the role of pragmatics which they can then apply in whatever setting they may encounter” (Rose 1994: 60). According to McConachy (2018), meta-pragmatic awareness “enhances the learner’s ability to consider the interactional consequences of particular linguistic strategies in interaction. [...] Over time, this feeds into the development of an analytical ability that learners can utilize beyond the classroom” (McConachy 2018: 28). Likewise, Murray (2012) argued that

by sensitizing learners to the general principles backgrounding speech act realization, teachers can empower them by helping ensure that they approach the many speech acts that will not and cannot possibly be covered in the classroom with some awareness of what may be ‘going on’ in their production. (Murray 2012: 324)

Thus, an awareness of general pragmatic processes and principles can help to increase pragmatic flexibility (cf. Murray 2010: 294), a notion which is highly salient to ELF, given that ELF speakers will need to be able to respond appropriately to a wide range of interlocutor needs “without necessarily sharing with their interlocutor a common social grammar” (Murray 2012: 322). This flexibility in turn supports the ability to negotiate pragmatic norms and accommodate to interlocutors (Murray 2012: 321).

Additionally, Murray (2012) maintained that learners should be guided toward an awareness of “the fact that there is variation in the expression of meaning and the perception of illocutionary force according to L1 background and the nature of corresponding form-function relationships” (Murray 2012: 324). This also parallels more recent recommendations for teaching pragmatics in mainstream ELT, which call for learners to be engaged in activities that encourage them to notice their own realizations of pragmatic functions and to compare and

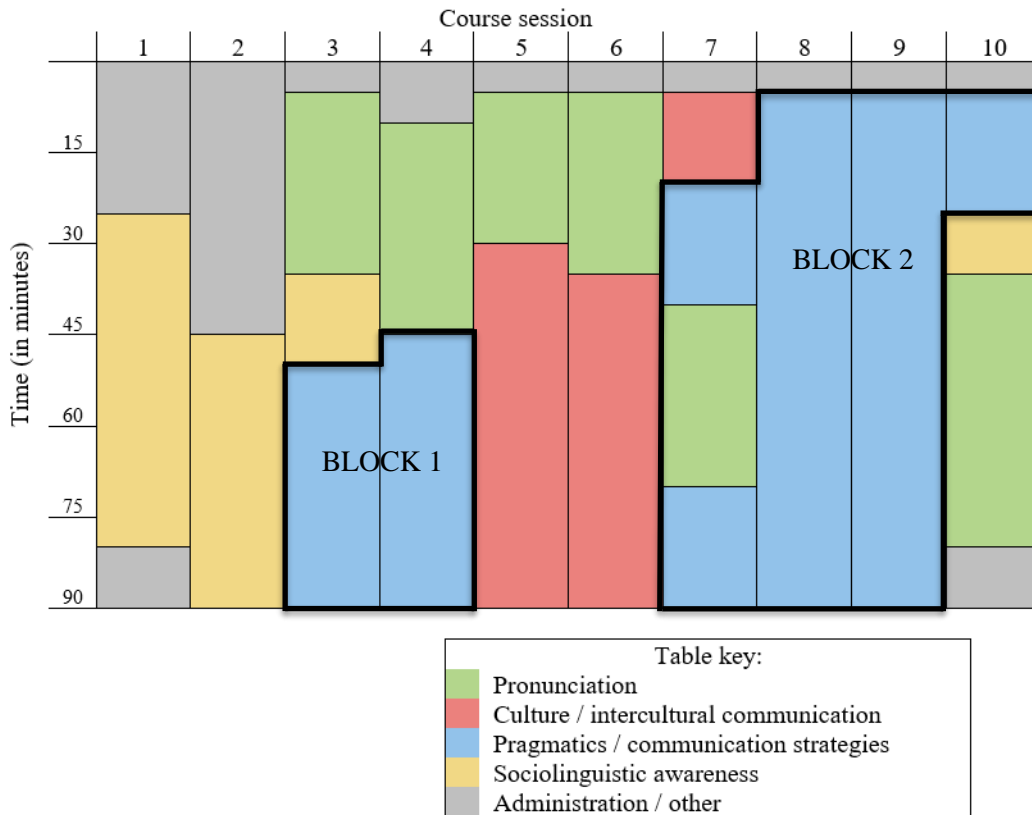
¹¹³ Regarding the mastery of metalanguage for talking about speech acts, Rose saw this as no insurmountable challenge for the classroom: “[T]his is no problem: [learners] are already required to master extensive metalanguage for learning grammar, so it is a practice they are familiar with” (Rose 1994: 59).

contrast these with the pragmatic realizations of others in English (cf. Rose 1994: 58, Bardovi-Harlig 1996: 31, Eslami-Rasekh 2005: 200, Limberg 2015: 280-281). However, in mainstream ELT, awareness of difference has generally been restricted to comparisons of speech acts in the L1 versus speech acts in English made by native English speakers (cf. Kasper 1997: 116). Furthermore, as has already been discussed in 15.2 above, such awareness is viewed as a prerequisite for developing a more native-like pragmatic competence in the target language. In the ELF-oriented classroom, by contrast, the goal of raising awareness that realizations of pragmatic strategies may differ across linguacultures would be to support the development of an awareness of the need to suspend reliance on particular pragmatic norms in favor of negotiation *in situ* (Murray 2012: 324), as successful users of ELF have generally been shown to do in interaction (cf. 15.3 above). Additionally, it would help to facilitate the development of tolerance for differences in pragmatic norms, an important aspect of receptive accommodation (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012: 103-106). Thus, the development of such awareness would serve the aim of developing the learners' ability to accommodate to their interlocutors, rather than their ability to adhere to a particular set of pre-established norms.

15.5 The role of pragmatics instruction in the pilot course

In light of the importance that has been ascribed to pragmatic processes for successful communication in ELF, it was concluded that work on pragmatics should constitute one of the central strands of the pilot course. Based on the empirical research on ELF pragmatics available at the time, as well as pedagogical suggestions for teaching pragmatic competence, classroom work in the area of pragmatics was divided into two blocks. Block 1 focused on the development of meta-pragmatic awareness of the pragmatic principles and processes which inform pragmatic choices. Block 2 focused on the development of strategic competence with a range of CSs that have been attested in ELF communication. The placement of these two blocks within the overall layout of the course is shown in Table 14 below:

Table 14: *Pragmatics lesson sequences by block*



As Table 14 shows, Blocks 1 and 2 were not contiguous. Rather, Block 1 took place during course sessions 3 and 4, while Block 2 occurred during course sessions 7 through 10. In between these two blocks, course sessions were largely divided between continuing work on individual features of pronunciation from the LFC (lesson segments in green, cf. Chapters 4-7) and the culture/intercultural communication strand of the course (lesson segments in red, cf. Chapters 8-14). The two blocks were also not identical in scope. While Block 1 involved one lesson sequence, Block 2 involved three sequences, each focusing on a different function or type of CS. As Table 14 indicates, more time was thus spent on Block 2 than on Block 1. Accordingly, Block 2 also yielded considerably more data, and this is reflected in the subsequent organization of the chapters relating to this strand of the course. Block 1 constitutes the focus of Chapter 16, while Block 2 is examined in Chapters 17 through 21.

16 Block 1: Raising meta-pragmatic awareness of general pragmatic principles and processes (course sessions 3 and 4)

Block 1 of classroom work on pragmatics took place during the second half of course sessions 3 and 4 and thus represents the earliest work on pragmatics in the pilot course. The overarching aim of this block was to help the students to become more aware of some of the factors generally involved in pragmatic choices and to begin to help them articulate this awareness; hence, the focus was squarely on developing the students' meta-pragmatic awareness of general pragmatic principles and processes. A secondary aim was to help the students to extend their repertoire of potential realizations for a few specific speech acts.

As has been mentioned in 15.2, work on pragmatics, and more specifically on raising (meta-)pragmatic awareness, in mainstream ELT commonly focuses on language at the level of the speech act. This leaves the teacher with the practical question of which speech acts to select as the focus of particular lessons in the classroom. A number of attempts have been made to develop a comprehensive list of speech acts or language functions that should be addressed in the classroom, including those by van Ek (1977), Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983), van Ek and Trim (1991) and Celce-Murcia et al. (1995). However, these lists are not without certain problems. Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) observed that where scholars have tried to collect such a list, the descriptions of the speech acts or language functions included have tended to be either too broad or too specific to a particular situation (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 20). Additionally, they noted, with reference to Flowerdew (1990), that “any attempt to categorize functions with the aim of producing a comprehensive, all-purpose system is likely to come under criticism for being somewhat ad-hoc and subjective” (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 20). Nevertheless, they concluded that “for practical, pedagogical purposes it is possible to draw up a list of the most common language functions which have sufficiently clear face and content validity” (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 20). They argued that such a list can be useful “as a helpful organizational construct and a practical guide for teachers, materials writers, and those designing classroom language tests” (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 20).

In terms of an approach to the teaching of meta-pragmatic awareness in the ELF-oriented classroom, Murray (2012) has suggested that many of the methods that have been developed to help learners develop their (meta-)pragmatic competence in ELT could also be used in the ELF-oriented classroom, so long as the tasks and materials selected to facilitate classroom practice are adapted to reflect “what we have learnt from empirical studies on pragmatic aspects of ELF interactions” (Murray 2012: 321, cf. also 323-324). Pedagogical approaches to pragmatics have generally included two main types of tasks (cf. Kasper 1997). The first type are awareness-raising tasks “aimed at raising the students' awareness about [particular]

pragmatic feature[s]” (Kasper 1997: 122). The other type are communicative tasks “offering various opportunities for communicative practice” (Kasper 1997: 122). While awareness-raising tasks primarily address the development of learners’ receptive pragmatic competence, the focus in communicative tasks is on the development of the learners’ productive pragmatic competence (cf. Kasper 1997: 131). Thus, by including a judicious mixture of the two task types, classroom instruction can contribute to the development of both receptive and productive aspects of learners’ pragmatic competence.

In terms of awareness-raising tasks, Murray (2010) claimed that the majority of the more recent suggestions for task types aimed at raising learner awareness of pragmatic principles and processes has been inductive; that is, most of these tasks go about raising learner awareness of pragmatic principles by having the learners induce general principles from specific examples of pragmatic acts. This represents a bottom-up approach

in which observation of particulars leads to an understanding of general principles: over time, through regularly engaging in activities of the above kind, learners will induce the broader principles that govern the choices we make in language in order to effectively and appropriately convey meaning. (Murray 2010: 295)

A number of researchers, including Eslami-Rasekh (2005), Kasper (1997), Rose (1994), Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991) and Murray (2010) himself, have provided descriptions or overviews of task-types fitting this description. These include working with discourse completion tasks; translating speech acts from the learners’ L1(s) into the target language; engaging learners in ethnographic data collection activities involving the realization of speech acts in their own local environments; and using materials such as dialogues, listening texts and videos, as well as invited guests, as sources for guided observation and discussion of pragmatic acts.

In addition to these inductive task types, Murray argued that learners can also benefit from deductive tasks, especially in helping them to develop meta-pragmatic awareness. Such tasks use a top-down approach to introduce learners to “those general, universal principles which govern linguistic choices and the way in which we are appropriate with language” (Murray 2012: 321). In focusing on these universal principles, such an approach “would give [learners] a kind of toolkit which they could use to analyze the performance of particular speech acts in particular settings and to consider the forces shaping meaning” (Murray 2010: 296). Murray viewed the development of this ‘toolkit’ through a deductive approach as vital for the successful ability to engage meaningfully in inductive activities: “only once learners have a ‘language’ or toolkit with which to do this can they begin to really notice and talk about speech

act realization in the L2¹¹⁴” (Murray 2010: 296). Thus, learners will benefit from the integrated use of both inductive and deductive task types in awareness-raising phases of pragmatics instruction.

Concerning ELF-oriented pragmatics teaching more specifically, Murray (2012) maintained that “[u]nderstanding the universal principles that apply enables the parameter-setting/negotiation process” that has been identified as a key aspect of ELF interactions “to happen more efficiently” (Murray 2012: 321). Thus, he saw the development of meta-pragmatic awareness through deductive tasks as a particularly important aspect of developing learners’ productive pragmatic competence for ELF interaction. Such deductive tasks help learners learn to attune to relevant principles as they negotiate the pragmatic parameters of an exchange with their interlocutor(s) *in situ* in actual communicative situations.

With regard to communicative practice tasks, Kasper (1997) stressed in particular that “practicing linguistic acts and discourse functions requires student-to-student activities that allow for some kind of conversational exchange” (cf. Kasper 1997: 123). Thus, she argued that practice tasks should take place in student-centered social constellations such as pair and group work. According to Kasper, “[s]tudent-centered activities do more than just increase students’ speaking time: They also give them opportunities to practice conversational management, perform a larger range of speech acts, and interact with other participants in completing a task” (Kasper 1997: 124). However, she added that “conversation alone does not ensure that students practice a larger variety of speech acts” (Kasper 1997: 125). For this reason, she saw it as “essential to include activities, such as drama, simulations, and role-play, where a wide range of roles, speech acts, and language functions can be practiced” (Kasper 1997: 125). Likewise, Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991) also argued for the inclusion of role-playing activities in pragmatics instruction, as “[r]ole-play situations can be developed to focus on virtually any speech act [...] and they provide an excellent way for students to practice both their pragmatic skills and their speaking skills” (Bardovi-Harlig et al. 1991: 13).

Beyond the types of tasks that might be usefully employed in lesson sequences focusing on the development of (meta-)pragmatic competence, considerable emphasis has also been placed in the literature on the importance of using authentic input¹¹⁵ as the basis for tasks and materials

¹¹⁴ I would argue that this is true for the ability to notice and talk about speech acts in the L1 as well.

¹¹⁵ Gilmore (2007) pointed out that “[t]here is a considerable range of meanings associated with authenticity, and therefore it is little surprise if the term remains ambiguous in most teachers’ minds” (Gilmore 2007: 98). The definition that appears to apply most closely here is the one adopted by Gilmore himself from Morrow (1977): “An *authentic text* is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort” (Morrow 1977: 13,

(cf. Flöck und Pfingsthorn 2014, Ishihara and Cohen 2010, Kasper 1997). Yet finding such authentic input can be a significant challenge for teachers (cf. Limberg 2014: 214, Gilmore 2007: 112), even in more recent language-learning materials. Language-learning materials aimed at developing learners' pragmatic competence have conventionally "present[ed] learners with lists of 'useful expressions' for various speech acts" such as apologizing or greeting someone (Crandall and Basturkmen 2004: 38). This approach has been widely criticized as presenting pragmatic input in a decontextualized fashion. In more recent materials, there has been a move to present pragmatic acts in the context of dialogues (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 1996: 23-26). While embedding pragmatic acts in dialogues "is certainly preferable to simply having a list of phrases in that there is more potential for learners to consider how speech acts might be utilized in connection with larger communicative goals in a given interaction" (McConachy 2018: 16), researchers still point to a number of problems with the dialogues that typically appear in language learning materials such as textbooks.

First of all, most dialogues appearing in textbooks are scripted by the materials writers. In many cases, such dialogues are based on native speaker intuition about pragmatic norms, rather than on empirical data (cf. Gilmore 2007: 100-101, Kasper 1997:125-126, Limberg 2014: 216). By and large, they are "constructed for showcasing target utterances" (McConachy 2018: 16); that is, they are written so as to present a specific set of linguistic realizations of particular pragmatic acts selected by the authors. Yet research studies comparing scripted dialogues with authentic conversations of the same type have found that scripted dialogues often present inaccurate representations of language use (cf. Gilmore 2007, Bardovi-Harlig et al. 1991, Berendt 1991, Wolfson 1989, Myers-Scotton and Bernstein 1988). They generally feature "communicative situations that are either idealized or artificially 'didacticized'" ¹¹⁶ rather than providing learners with accurate and authentic pragmatic input (Limberg 2014: 216).

In order to address the inaccuracies in many textbook dialogues, there is general concurrence among pragmatics researchers that "it is vital that pragmatic input to students be research-based" rather than relying on the intuition of materials writers (Kasper 1997: 126; cf. also Flöck und Pfingsthorn 2014, Ishihara and Cohen 2010). This has led Kasper (1997), for example, to call for "authentic native speaker input" as the basis for classroom tasks and materials in order to ensure that learners "build their own pragmatic knowledge of the L2 on the right kind of input" (Kasper 1997: 125). In terms of the ELF-oriented classroom,

cited in Gilmore 2007: 98, emphasis original). This is the underlying sense in which the term *authentic* will be used to describe input such as listening texts in this study.

¹¹⁶ Translated from the original German by the author of this dissertation.

researchers such as Murray (2012) have also emphasized the need to include authentic pragmatic input based on empirical research (cf. Murray 2012: 321). However, they argue that native speaker input is not necessarily the best kind of input for ELF-oriented learning. Rather, in place of authentic native speaker input,

the use of authentic materials [in an ELF-oriented approach to teaching pragmatics] would need to represent a range of different ELF scenarios in which participants were from a range of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and communicating for a variety of purposes and in various contexts. (Murray 2012: 323)

In the ELF-oriented classroom, then, input would ideally feature authentic instances of ELF communication.

If authentic, empirically grounded native speaker pragmatics input is difficult to find in current language-learning materials, then authentic, empirically grounded ELF pragmatics input is even scarcer. As has already been discussed in Chapter 7, even in textbook series which purport to include conversations and dialogues featuring non-native speakers of English, it is often difficult to determine from the given context whether interactions are really taking place in an ELF setting. Then too, even those speakers who are ostensibly L2 speakers tend to use structures and utterances that are indistinguishable from those of the native speakers, with the exception of an (often subtle and rather stereotypical) L2 accent (cf. 7.2.1). As far as I am aware, no materials have been developed to support pragmatics learning in the ELF-oriented classroom in the way that, e.g., Walker (2010) has attempted to do for an ELF-oriented approach to pronunciation (cf. 23.4 for further discussion). Thus, while the recordings provided in Walker (2010) may serve as a starting point for authentic input, in that they represent largely authentic ELF interactions, teachers will be on their own to conduct a pragmatic analysis of the conversations in these recordings in order to ascertain to what purpose they may be put in pragmatics instruction in the ELF-oriented classroom, and this may present a serious challenge to incorporating such sources into the classroom (cf. Gilmore 2007: 112).

The shortcomings of scripted dialogues raise some serious questions about whether such dialogues should be used as the basis for pragmatics teaching and learning in the language learning classroom, while the scarcity of authentic, research-based pragmatics input poses significant challenges to basing classroom instruction on authentic materials. Thus, the teacher would appear to be stuck between a rock and a hard place. However, McConachy (2018) has argued that scripted conversations can also be useful as a basis for classroom work on pragmatics, as long as they are approached critically. In his view, “it is necessary to treat language in textbooks and any other learning resource as something to be examined, whether it can be defined as ‘authentic’ or not” (McConachy 2018: 16). Specifically in light of “the global spread of languages and the concomitant diversification of speakership”, McConachy

reasoned that “[i]t is important that learners are able to analytically engage with the language that they do encounter” (McConachy 2018: 16), and this is something that he felt could be learned and practiced through critical examinations of non-authentic as well as authentic texts in the language classroom. Likewise, Gilmore (2007) argued for the importance of learning aims and the development of learners’ communicative competence over the authenticity of learning materials used to achieve these aims (Gilmore 2007: 98), while Seidlhofer (2011) contended, regarding an ELF-oriented pedagogy more specifically, that the content selected for classroom use is less important than how it is approached (Seidlhofer 2011: 201). Such positions potentially ease the burden on teachers, since they open up the possibility of using many existing materials, provided that a critical approach is adopted in the classroom.

In addition to the need to draw upon empirical data from pragmatics studies in order to ensure the accuracy of the pragmatic information presented in learning materials, researchers have also pointed to other problems with the way that pragmatic input has traditionally been presented in such materials. According to Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), “[t]he key...to developing student awareness of language functions and speech acts is to present them in larger pragmatic contexts for interpretation and to emphasize their situational constraints” (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 21; cf. also Gilmore 2007: 103). However, even where pragmatic acts are couched in a dialogue or conversation, “there is often a lack of information regarding the sociocultural variables which influence choices regarding use of language forms and the ways particular speech acts are constructed and interpreted in discourse” (McConachy and Hata 2013: 295). Learners are provided with little, if any, “information describing the sociocultural context of the interaction, such as the speakers’ gender, age, relationship, location, and more” (McConachy 2018: 6). Without this information, it is difficult for learners to develop an appreciation of the context-sensitive nature of pragmatics and the ways in which such contextual factors may have an effect on pragmatic choices.

Alongside the dearth of sociocultural context, many textbooks also lack activities aimed at developing learners’ meta-pragmatic competence (cf. Limberg 2014: 224). McConachy (2018) noted that while dialogues presenting pragmatic input are often followed by a set of comprehension questions, these questions

tend to focus almost exclusively on the retrieval of factual information. Conversely, analytical questions that prompt learners to reflect on the significance of linguistic choices observable in the dialogue, to consider their naturalness or appropriateness, or to compare strategies with the L1, are largely absent. (McConachy 2018: 16; cf. also McConachy 2009)

That is, the questions tend to focus on reading or listening comprehension, but do little to advance the development of the learners’ ability to analyze pragmatic aspects of the text and thus develop their meta-pragmatic competence. The emphasis on recall questions contributes

to the feeling that the main purpose of such texts is “that the learners simply scan through the dialogue to identify where the target phrases are being used, and that the larger communicative and relational concerns are peripheral” (McConachy 2018: 16).

Similarly, Murray (2010) noted that

[t]here has been little emphasis on what Bachman (1990: 89) refers to as an ‘examination of the pragmatic conditions that determine whether or not a given utterance is acceptable to other users of the language as an act, or the performance of an intended function’. This means that whatever learners glean of the relationship between form and function—between what is said and what is meant—its applicability is largely restricted to the particular instances of its use they have experienced in their learning. They are consequently deprived of the kind of productivity that comes from an understanding of general principles and the process of discovery that such understanding enables. (Murray 2010: 294)

In other words, most materials do not provide learners with sufficient opportunities to reflect on the effects of sociocultural factors with regard to pragmatic choices. Without such opportunities, learners cannot learn to extract from these materials the kind of knowledge of pragmatic functions and their relationship to forms that would allow them to apply this knowledge flexibly and productively in new situations they encounter. Yet flexibility and the ability to accommodate to the needs of one’s interlocutors are of paramount importance for ELF communication.

In light of these shortcomings in current pragmatics teaching materials, it becomes clear, then, that what is needed in ELF-oriented pragmatics teaching is more than dialogues presenting authentic, research-based pragmatic input. If learners are to develop the type of meta-pragmatic awareness that will allow them to participate successfully in ELF encounters beyond the classroom, then input must be couched in sufficient sociocultural context and supported by questions and activities that help them to reflect on pragmatic choices and principles relating to relevant aspects of the context.

In summary, applied pragmatics literature, both mainstream and ELF-oriented, suggests a number of principles upon which an approach to the teaching of pragmatics in the ELF-oriented classroom should be founded. First, pragmatic instruction should feature both awareness-raising and communicative practice tasks in order to foster both receptive and productive pragmatic competence. Awareness-raising tasks should include both inductive and deductive task types. The latter is especially important for the ELF-oriented classroom, as it is particularly salient to the development of a meta-pragmatic awareness that will in turn help learners develop the kind of flexible pragmatic competence needed in ELF communication. Communicative practice tasks should feature student-centered learning arrangements and include not only conversations, but also formats such as role-plays and simulations, in order to increase the range of speech acts that can be practiced. Second, wherever possible, pragmatic input should

feature authentic ELF communication involving a range of communicative situations and speakers from different linguacultural backgrounds. Where this is not possible, teachers can consider using less authentic materials such as the scripted dialogues often found in textbooks, but they will need to adopt a critical approach to such materials with their learning groups. Finally, any input needs to be presented in the context of relevant sociocultural factors which may have influenced the speakers' pragmatic choices, and this input should be supported by tasks and activities that help learners to notice and reflect on pragmatic acts and choices with reference to relevant contextual factors.

On the basis of these principles, 16.1 describes the tasks and materials that were developed and selected for Block 1 of the pragmatics strand of the course, in which the focus was on developing the students' meta-pragmatic awareness. The following section, 16.2, presents an analysis of actual classroom work with this lesson sequence during the course. Finally, 16.3 offers a brief reconsideration of the task sequence in light of classroom experience.

16.1 Tasks and materials for developing meta-pragmatic awareness

Due to the short nature of the course, it was clear that there would not be time to address a whole catalogue of speech acts or language functions systematically. Indeed, the aim of this block of the course was not to develop systematic knowledge of a range of speech acts, but rather to use a few selected speech acts to help the students develop a more universal meta-pragmatic awareness. Ultimately, a set of three speech acts – *giving an opinion*, *agreeing* and *disagreeing* – was selected as the basis for exploration of more general pragmatic principles and processes. This decision chiefly arose from three factors. First, these speech acts are regularly included in pedagogic lists of speech acts and language functions (cf. Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 20, 22; cf. also Chapter 16). Thus, these speech acts would seem to be generally viewed by scholars as common and useful to language learners. Second, a task was already planned for an earlier lesson segment that would require students to engage in these speech acts. Thus, a more specific focus on the pragmatic aspects of these speech acts would create continuity between content strands of the course. And finally, there was a task sequence in the textbook *English Unlimited CI* that focused on these speech acts, but in a way that was less prescriptive than textbook tasks focusing on pragmatics have conventionally been.

In the first three sessions of the pilot course, some classroom activities focused on raising the students' awareness of the sociolinguistic situation of English in the world today in order to help them understand what ELF is and why it might be useful to develop communicative

competence in this use of English (cf. 3.2). In the latter half of course session 2, the students were given a worksheet from module 6.7 of the *Intercultural Resource Pack* featuring a series of statements about English (Utley 2004: 99). Some of these statements focused on the role of English in the world (e.g. *It is spoken by a large proportion of the developed world.*, *It will no longer be the dominant world language in 20 years' time.*), while others had more to do with the language itself (e.g. *It has a relatively simple grammar.*, *You can make a difficult request very politely in English.*). The students were asked to do two tasks in small groups. First, they were to read the statements and to indicate whether they as a group agreed or disagreed with each statement. Then they were to look through the statements and decide as a group which statement represented the biggest advantage of English as a global language and which represented the biggest disadvantage.

In both of these tasks, the students in each group had to come to an agreement as to their opinions. To complete this task, they thus had to be able to give their individual opinions about the statements, agree and disagree with the opinions of other group members and try to persuade others to agree with their opinions. In other words, they had to engage in the speech acts *giving one's opinion*, *agreeing* and *disagreeing* (among others) in order to successfully complete the activity. However, at the time, we did not talk about the language they would need to accomplish these speech acts, nor about the factors that might influence their pragmatic choices in realizing them. The focus was on the task itself.

The *Explore speaking* section from Unit 7 of the textbook *English Unlimited C1* (Doff and Goldstein 2011: 73) features two task sequences based around these same speech acts – *giving one's opinion*, *agreeing* and *disagreeing* – that would facilitate the exploration of the language the students might use to accomplish these speech acts more closely while also beginning to consider some pragmatic factors influencing the choice of realization, such as effectiveness and appropriacy. As has been discussed in 15.4, textbooks and other language-learning materials have attracted criticism from ELF scholars for the prescriptive way in which they have traditionally presented pragmatic norms and realizations of specific speech acts. However, the tasks from this unit are exceptional in that they are not rigidly prescriptive. Instead of providing learners with 'useful phrases' for accomplishing the speech acts they focus on, they leave it to the learners to generate their own realizations and to consider how effective and appropriate these realizations are in the context provided.

Discussion of the statements from Module 6.7 of the *Intercultural Resource Pack* was completed in the middle of course session 3. As a transition to classroom work on pragmatics using the tasks from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 7 of *English Unlimited C1*, I planned to introduce the notion of the speech act to the students in layman's terms and to help them

identify the speech functions that would constitute the focus of the subsequent lesson segment. This introduction was scripted in the lesson plan as follows: “In linguistics, we sometimes talk about doing things with words. Last session, our topic was why English might have become the global language. But I also asked you to use English to do some tasks. What tasks did I ask you to do?” The following were listed as possible responses to this question: *giving your opinion, agreeing, disagreeing, coming to a consensus about statements, negotiating*. After guiding the students through this introduction, I then planned to introduce the first of the two task sequences from the *Explore speaking* section to the students.

The first of the two task sequences revolves around four conversations between various constellations of four different speakers about the topic of banning smoking in public bars and restaurants. The learners are provided with the transcripts of these conversations, but in each, the phrases used by the speakers to realize the speech acts *giving an opinion, agreeing and disagreeing* have been left out, replaced in the text by a numbered blank. The first two conversations are reproduced below:

Materials excerpt 27:

2 a Read these conversations. What are the people talking about?

1

A Well, I think it's been quite successful, because, you know, it's done what it set out to do. It's made cafés and restaurants places where you, I can, well, we can all now go without having to breathe in everyone else's smoke ...

B (*Find a way to interrupt and stop A talking*) ¹ _____. What about the terrible effect it's had on small businesses. Right? I mean, some of these places have actually had to close down because of it. Now how is that, how does that help non-smokers?

C (*Support what B said*) ² _____. There's just no point in having all these nice clean bars if there's nobody going into them.

2

A I think it hasn't worked. Quite honestly. People have started buying drinks to take home just so they can smoke, so bars and cafés have gone out of business.

B (*You disagree with A*) ³ _____. I mean, how many bars have actually gone out of business?

C (*Support what A said*) ⁴ _____. Not many bars have, have actually had to close, but a lot of places are struggling. Especially ones that don't have any outdoor space for smokers.

(Doff and Goldstein 2011: 73)

In task 2a, the learners are asked to read through the conversations and identify the topic being discussed in order to check that they have a global comprehension of the content. Then, in task 2b, they are asked to form small groups and brainstorm a list of potential phrases that would fit in the blanks in the conversations. As a basis for their suggestions, they are given a prompt for

each blank as to the function of the utterance, e.g. *You disagree with A* (blank 3) or *Support what A said* (blank 4). In two further steps, they are prompted by the task instructions to consider which of the phrases they have proposed would be most successful and why (2b2), and to try out their proposed phrases by reading them aloud as part of the conversation (2b3). Thus, they are being asked to consider how pragmatically effective and natural their suggestions seem to be in the given context. After the brainstorming phase is over, the original texts are played from the coursebook CD and the learners are asked to write down what the speakers actually say in each numbered blank. Then, in task 2c, they are invited to comment on whether they consider the speakers' choices more or less effective than the phrases they themselves proposed.

The conversations from this task attempt to include some more authentic qualities, such as some repetitions and false starts, but generally retain a scripted quality. In this sense, they appear to be examples of the kinds of conversations often included in textbooks that are “constructed for showcasing target utterances” (McConachy 2018: 16), in this case realizations of the speech acts *giving an opinion*, *agreeing* and *disagreeing*. Likewise, the audio recordings of the conversations are somewhat less than ideal from an ELF-oriented standpoint. While one of the speakers featured on the recordings is a non-native speaker of English with L1 Spanish, the other three are all native speakers (two from Great Britain and one from the United States). Thus, learners are predominantly exposed to native speakers as potential pragmatic models. Regarding the inclusion of a non-native speaker in these conversations, Tomlinson and Matsuhara's (2013) observation that “all the ‘characters’ [in the *English Unlimited* series] seem to speak and write with the same educated, English, middle-class, native-speaker voices, although there are acknowledgements to non-native speakers who took part in ‘the authentic recording sessions’” (Tomlinson and Matsuhara 2013: 244) seems to hold here. The non-native speaker retains some vestiges of his L1 Spanish accent, but there are otherwise no noticeable differences in his use of language to that of his native speaker counterparts. Thus, the exchange cannot be said to provide the kind of empirically based, authentic ELF input which provides the ideal basis for pragmatics tasks and activities in the ELF-oriented classroom.

An alternative to using these conversations might have been to retain the structure of task 2, but to replace the conversations with excerpts from recordings or transcripts of authentic ELF interactions. However, this would have been an extremely time-consuming endeavor, since, to my knowledge, no one has attempted to collect a corpus of ELF interactions focused specifically on these speech acts or to tag an existing ELF corpus by language function. I therefore would have had to sort through an immense amount of material in search of examples of the targeted speech acts. I did not feel that this effort would be worth the return, considering that the main aim of the lesson was the exploration of general pragmatic principles and

processes and that the conversations were meant only to supply initial input. Rather than try to replace these texts, I instead opted to adopt the kind of critical approach to them suggested in McConachy (2018) by extending classroom discussion of these texts later in the lesson sequence, as will be described further on in this section.

Up to this point, the focus of the task sequence in task 2 of the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 7 of *English Unlimited C1* is on generating realizations of speech acts and considering pragmatic issues such as effectiveness and appropriacy in the context of a conversation. Thus, these tasks could be classified as inductive tasks aimed at awareness-raising of pragmatic principles (cf. Kasper 1997, Murray 2010). After these text-based activities, the learners are given a final task, task 3, in which they are presented with three conversational scaffolds involving the speech acts *giving an opinion*, *agreeing* and *disagreeing* and asked to discuss a topic of their choosing following one of these scaffolds. They are urged to practice the conversation more than once, working on fluency in their language choices and turn-taking. They are thus provided with the opportunity to try out various realizations of the speech acts they have considered, giving them an opportunity for communicative practice with the pragmatic principles they have explored.

What I found particularly interesting about the whole sequence of tasks from this unit of *English Unlimited C1* is that at no time in the sequence is language prescribed for the realization of these speech acts. Learners are asked to consider the options presented in the recorded text but are free to choose other options if they feel these are more effective or appropriate. Neither are they asked to consider how idiomatic or formally ‘correct’ their own contributions are. Emphasis is thus placed on underlying pragmatic principles rather than on formal accuracy or adherence to standard, native-like forms or norms, and this thus seemed to be an approach that was compatible with an ELF perspective on teaching pragmatics, despite the drawbacks to the audio recordings used to provide pragmatic input in task 2.

However, while the task sequence from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 7 of *English Unlimited C1* seems to fulfill a number of principles for ELF-oriented pragmatics teaching in terms of its lack of prescriptiveness and attention to pragmatic principles such as appropriateness and effectiveness, it still falls somewhat short in terms of providing learners with sufficient sociocultural context. In presenting the conversations, both as a written transcript and as a recording, the authors of *English Unlimited C1* fail to provide any information about the speakers, their relationships to one another or the situation in which they find themselves discussing the issue of smoking in public bars and restaurants. Task 2a, in which the learners first encounter the conversations, simply instructs the learners to *Read these conversations* without providing any further background details (cf. Materials excerpt 27

above). None of the other tasks are aimed at helping the learners to notice contextual factors and to connect these to pragmatic choices either. Thus, the tasks stop short of helping learners to develop the kind of meta-pragmatic awareness that scholars such as Murray (2012) and McConachy (2018) have recommended as particularly important for ELF communication. I therefore planned to extend this lesson in course session 4 using a series of tasks based on suggestions by Murray (2010, 2012). These tasks took a deductive approach to helping students to become more aware of factors which might influence notions such as appropriacy and to be able to reflect meta-pragmatically on the effects that such factors may have on a speaker's pragmatic choices.

Murray (2010) suggests using Grice's Cooperative Principle (cf. Grice 1975) as one possible basis upon which to build deductive tasks for raising metapragmatic awareness. According to Grice, conversation is not just a series of unrelated remarks, but is characteristically a cooperative effort in which the participants recognize a common aim (or at least a common general direction) in their interaction. Conversation is therefore generally able to function in that interactants observe what Grice termed the Cooperative Principle: *Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged* (Grice 1975: 45). Grice further specified four maxims of conversation, conformity to which generally results in the upholding of the Cooperative Principle (cf. Grice 1975: 45-46):

- *Maxim of Quality*: Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
- *Maxim of Quality*: Try to make your contribution one that is true. Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- *Maxim of Relation*: Be relevant.
- *Maxim of Manner*: Be perspicuous. Avoid obscurity of expression. Avoid ambiguity. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity). Be orderly.

The default assumption in conversation is thus that a speaker will adhere to the Cooperative Principle and the maxims and will assume that his or her interlocutor(s) are doing the same, unless there are indications to the contrary¹¹⁷.

¹¹⁷ Grice was of course aware that these maxims can be, and frequently are, flouted in actual conversation (cf. Grice 1975: 49). However, a listener's ability to recognize when a maxim has been flouted and to work out what is meant from what is said is contingent on the existence of the Cooperative Principle and the maxims in that these provide a basis for figuring out what Grice has termed 'implicatures', or instances in which more is meant than is actually said (Grice 1975: 45, 50).

Murray argued that Grice's Cooperative Principle and its four maxims can be used as a basis for the development of the kind of pragmatic 'toolkit' learners need for pragmatic learning to take place:

Despite some 40 years having passed since it was first developed, and while not originally intended for pedagogical use, I believe [Grice's] Cooperative Principle with its four conversational maxims offers language teachers and learners one potentially useful guide to etiquette in communication and the socially appropriate use of language. It provides a framework which, through regular and skillfully guided classroom discussion, can help ensure that the principles emerge and help learners to develop precisely the kind of toolkit I have referred to. (Murray 2010: 296)

Murray used Grice's maxims of conversation to generate a set of discussion questions aimed at helping learners to develop their meta-pragmatic 'toolkit' (Murray 2010: 297-298, Murray 2012: 323-324). He acknowledged that his approach "recasts Grice in a way that diverges somewhat from the traditional reading of his work within mainstream pragmatics and in this respect can best be regarded as orienting to or having been inspired by the Cooperative Principle" (Murray 2010: 296). Nevertheless, he maintained that

[w]hat is important here is not the Cooperative Principle *per se* but the kind of questions we ask, and the subsequent discussion and analysis they can generate [...] the important thing is that it gets learners reflecting on what underlies the performance of speech acts and highlights the significance of dimensions of communication such as indirectness, irrelevance, terseness, vagueness, and the fact that there is variation in the expression of meaning and the perception of illocutionary force according to L1 background and the nature of corresponding form-function relationships. This, in turn, promises to help demonstrate for learners the need to negotiate a pragmatics with the ELF interlocutor. (Murray 2012: 324)

Thus, the main purpose of Murray's approach is to help learners develop their meta-pragmatic awareness by drawing their attention to general principles of conversation through guided discussion. Grice's Cooperative Principle and his maxims of conversation merely provide one possible scaffold for this approach.

In order to test out Murray's approach, I decided to use three of the questions proposed by Murray (2010, 2012) in the exact way in which he phrased them, and to use his suggested responses to assess how thoroughly we engaged with each question. I would discuss these questions with the whole learning group, recording the students' responses on the board as we went. The first question was, *During conversation, what do you think are some of the things that influence what we say and how we say it?*. This is a very general and open-ended question, and Murray noted that learners may require "careful prompting on the part of the teacher" to meaningfully engage with it (Murray 2010: 297). He suggested the following as possible responses:

- 1 who it is we're talking to and our relationship to them
- 2 where the communication's taking place
- 3 the feelings of the other person

- 4 the impression we want to give of ourselves
- 5 the kind of image we want to project
- 6 our purpose in communicating
- 7 what has been said previously in the conversation
- 8 how much we want to share with the person we're talking to
- 9 our attitude or emotional state at the time. (Murray 2010: 297)

These proposed responses touch on a number of contextual factors that may affect pragmatic choices in conversation. After collecting responses from the students on the board and prompting them as necessary until we had covered the points in Murray's list of suggested responses, we would then move on to Murray's suggested follow-up question, *How do these things affect what we say and how we say it?* (emphasis original). Again, Murray provided a list of possible responses:

- a They sometimes affect the amount we say.
- b They may affect how direct we are.
- c We might not say exactly what we feel.
- d We may lie or be dishonest.
- e Our language might be more formal or more casual, depending.
- f We may be vague or deliberately unclear. (Murray 2010: 297)

These proposed responses are derived more directly from Grice's maxims of conversation; response a) is related to the Maxim of Quantity, while responses c) and d) are related to the Maxim of Quality, and e) and f) to the Maxim of Manner. I would again use these responses as a basis to prompt the students if they had difficulty coming up with suggestions, recording their responses on the board. In relationship to this question specifically, Murray noted that at this stage, the purpose of the task is "to generate general rather than specific observations" (Murray 2010: 297). Therefore, if learners were to offer more specific suggestions, Murray encouraged the teacher to relate them back to a general principle. Finally, we would move on to a third question complex aimed at helping the students to "delve more deeply into the relationship between the motivation for what we say and how we say it (1-9) and the way in which these factors are reflected in types of language behavior (a) – (f)" (Murray 2010: 297): *In what ways do the things we listed in response to the first question affect the things we listed in response to the second? Can you say more about the connections between them and give some examples?*. In other words, this question complex invites learners to make connections between contextual factors and the ways they might cause us to observe or choose not to observe the conversational maxims. As possible responses to these questions, Murray proposed:

- If we're very close to someone we'll probably be more direct and say exactly what we feel.
- If it's a relaxed, informal situation we'll probably talk more and use more casual language.
- Sometimes we lie because we don't want to hurt the other person's feelings. For instance, . . . (Murray 2010: 298).

This list is considerably shorter than the others, and I anticipated that the students would be able to come up with more ideas than Murray listed here. At this stage, the learners are also invited to be more specific, supporting the connections they propose with descriptions of particular situations. I would again collect ideas from the students, prompting where necessary to help them generate responses to these open-ended and rather broad questions.

After using this deductive approach to activate and potentially extend the students' meta-pragmatic awareness, I then planned to return to conversations from task 2 of the *Explore speaking* section from Unit 7 of the textbook *English Unlimited C1* (Doff and Goldstein 2011: 73) and to extend the discussion of these texts in light of the pragmatic principles we identified in the guided discussion described above. As noted above, the authors of *English Unlimited* included no background contextual information about the conversations in this set of tasks, nor were there any tasks aimed at raising the learners' awareness of any contextual factors they might infer from the pragmatic realizations in the conversations themselves. Therefore, I developed a further inductive activity to help the students notice and critically reflect on the pragmatic aspects of these conversations. This activity involved playing the first of the four conversations from the textbook CD again while the students followed along in the transcript on their worksheet and then discussing the following questions with them:

- How old do you think the speakers are? Are they all the same age?
- How well do you think they know each other?
- Where do you think they are having this conversation?
- How would this conversation be different if ... (the participants were older/younger/different ages, they didn't seem to know each other well, there were differences in social status, the conversation was obviously taking place at a town meeting or at work)?

I designed these questions to help the students not only to notice and reflect on contextual factors and the effects they might have had on the pragmatic choices the speakers made in the texts, but also to consider how these pragmatic choices might have been different under different circumstances.

In a final step, we would return to the scaffolded conversations from task 3 that the students had engaged in at the end of course session 3. I would point out to the students that in the pilot course, the students were all roughly the same age, and most shared the same status as university students. I would then ask them to consider how this might have affected their scaffolded conversations in the previous session. Next, they would have the opportunity to try these conversations again, but under different contextual circumstances. This time, they should imagine that speaker A is a university professor, while speakers B and C are students, and that the discussion is taking place within the context of a university seminar. This was a setting with which the students in the course were generally very familiar. After giving the students time to

try this activity, I then planned to ask them to comment on whether and how their conversations were different from the first time they engaged in the task. This would give the students an opportunity both to practice adjusting their pragmatic choices in response to contextual factors and to reflect on the ways contextual factors actually affected their choices during the communicative task.

16.2 From planning to practice: Issues with time

The tasks described in 16.1 turned out to be far more time-consuming than anticipated, and some of the tasks that were planned for this lesson sequence ultimately had to be omitted in classroom practice. This was principally due to the fact that the task sequence from task 2 of the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 7 from the coursebook *English Unlimited C1* took considerably longer than expected. According to the writers of the textbook, this section is designed to fill one 45-minute English lesson (Doff et al. 2011: 8). Since we would be doing only two of the four suggested tasks, I calculated that we would be able to accomplish the task sequences in tasks 2 and 3 comfortably in the 40 minutes initially allotted for them during the second half of course session 3. However, after introducing the notion of speech acts to the students and asking them to read through the four conversations around which the task sequence in task 2 are based for universal comprehension (task 2a), we were only able to complete tasks 2b (brainstorming possible realizations) and 2c (comparing these realizations with the recorded text on the CD) for the first of the four conversations before course session 3 ended (T3: 1491-2054). We were thus unable to finish task 2, let alone task 3, during this course session. I therefore decided on the spot to assign the students the task of brainstorming two to three ideas for each of the remaining blanks in conversations 2 through 4 for homework so that we could finish task 2 expediently in the next course session (T3: 2054-2086). Because attendance was fairly low in course session 3, I emailed the assignment and a copy of the worksheet to the entire group to make sure that all the students would have the chance to complete the assigned task for the following course session.

I modified the lesson plan for the part of the next course session designated for work on pragmatics so that we could begin by completing tasks 2 and 3 from *English Unlimited C1* before moving on to the tasks I had designed around Murray's line of questions inspired by Grice (cf. 16.1 above). I planned to put the students back in their small groups and ask them to present the expressions they had come up with for each blank to one another, then as a group to choose the one they felt would best accomplish what the speaker intended. In order to

streamline the whole-class discussion phase, I would pass around one overhead transparency for each blank and ask each group to write down its suggestions for that blank, marking the expression the group thought would work best with a star. I would then present these overheads to the class one conversation at a time, and we would compare what the students suggested with what was actually said on the recording of each conversation. Then we would move on to the task 3 as I had originally planned it, and ultimately to the tasks based on Murray's questions.

60 minutes of course session 4 were planned for these tasks. However, because classroom work on pronunciation in the first half of this course session ran significantly over time, only 40 minutes of actual class time remained for work on pragmatics. And despite the fact that most students had done the homework and brought with them lists of expressions that would fit the blanks in each of the three remaining conversations, all of this time was needed to complete task 2 from *English Unlimited C1*.

The students engaged in lively discussions in their small groups, presenting their different ideas and debating about which expressions they felt were most appropriate and best able to achieve the speaker's intention (T4: 1122-1297). After about seven minutes, I passed out the six overhead transparencies and instructed the groups to record their suggestions, marking their preferred suggestion with a star (T4: 1298-1332). I expected that this step would go quickly, but writing the solutions on the transparencies took another seventeen minutes (T4: 1334-1686). Some groups were still haggling over which expression they thought was most effective and appropriate for a particular blank even as they were writing on the transparency, and this slowed the process down considerably.

Less than fifteen minutes of the course session remained at the conclusion of the small group phase. This was barely sufficient to present the groups' lists to the class and then compare their suggestions with what was actually said on the recordings (T4: 1687-1962). Each conversation was relatively long, and the students struggled to understand the audio recordings more than anticipated. Although individual students were able to repeat accurately for the group what had been said in a particular gap, I had the feeling that the majority of the students struggled to understand after a single listening. They would have benefitted from a second chance to hear each text, but there was simply no time to do this. As it was, time ran out before we were able to listen to the recording of the fourth conversation on the CD. There was also very little time to compare the students' preferred answers to the answers on the CD in anything but the most general and superficial terms. This whole part of the lesson felt rushed. I went three minutes over time at the end of the session to wrap up the lesson segment by briefly explaining why we had done the activity the way we had and touching on the idea that we make linguistic choices based on who we are talking to and in which situation, so that a set list of

expressions, e.g. from a textbook, is maybe not always so helpful (T4: 1963-2009). However, this wrap-up was superficial at best.

All in all, task 2 from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 7 of *English Unlimited C1* took some 80 minutes to complete. This meant that this was the only task we had been able to complete by the end of course session 4. The students had not had a chance to try out their suggestions in a communicative exercise (task 3), nor had we even begun to engage in a discussion of the factors that might affect our pragmatic choices in conversation using the tasks based on Murray (2010, 2012). However, at that point I felt that the material we had been using was exhausted. The students would not have appreciated another session on the same speech acts. Additionally, I really could not justify spending more time on this topic, given the number of other topics which have been indicated as important for ELF-oriented instruction.

The main aim of this block was to help students to become more aware of some of the factors generally involved in pragmatic choices and to begin to help them articulate this awareness; in other words, the focus was on helping them to develop their meta-pragmatic awareness. In using all of the allotted time to complete task 2, the lesson sequence bogged down on what was essentially meant to be only the introductory task. Although this task may have helped the students to extend their repertoire of potential realizations for the speech acts *giving your opinion*, *agreeing* and *disagreeing*, which was a secondary aim of the lesson sequence, the students never got to engage with the tasks that had the real potential to raise their awareness of general principles and processes underlying pragmatic choices in language use. The main aim of the sequence was therefore not achieved.

In retrospect, the time allotted by the materials writers of *English Unlimited C1* for the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 7 seems quite optimistic. In particular, the tasks the learners are asked to complete in small groups in task 2b are quite complex. For each gap in the text, they are asked to brainstorm what the speaker might possibly say to fulfill the speech function listed, consider which of their own suggestions would likely be most effective and then try out their suggestions by reading the conversation aloud. Given that there are eight blanks, it is unsurprising that task 2b took a considerable amount of time to complete. Furthermore, the conversations themselves are relatively lengthy, meaning that it took time to listen to each recording even once during classroom work on task 2c.

Since we did not reach the heart of the lesson sequence, it is not possible to compare students' levels of meta-pragmatic awareness before, during and after instruction. However, even if we had been able to complete the task sequence as it was originally planned within the allotted time, the students still may not have exhibited much perceptible growth in terms of their meta-pragmatic awareness after only two partial course sessions. Murray (2010) stressed

that learners will require “regular and skillfully guided” pragmatic instruction in order to build up their meta-pragmatic awareness (Murray 2010: 296). This implies that such development takes place over a longer stretch of time than the length of a short course such as this one. Nonetheless, given that meta-pragmatic awareness has been shown to be an important component of communicative competence for those who successfully engage in ELF communication, it was important to make a strong start towards developing the students’ meta-pragmatic awareness, and it remains highly unfortunate that the primary aim of this block was not achieved.

16.3 Rethinking the Block 1 task sequence in light of classroom experience

Directly after course session 4, I recorded some of my thoughts on how task 2 might have been approached more efficiently so that time would have remained for the other tasks that were planned as part of this first block of classroom work on pragmatics. At that time, I felt that it might have been wise to limit the discussion to only two of the conversations from the task or to assign different conversations to different groups in order to reduce the amount of material for which each group was responsible. Looking back over the completed course, however, I feel that it probably would have been wisest to omit the tasks from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 7 of *English Unlimited C1* entirely. It would have been much more expedient to begin directly with Murray’s discussion questions so as to ensure that the main aim of this lesson sequence was addressed.

Since Murray’s proposed questions are rather broad, I would argue that using a small set of speech acts as a focal point would still have been useful. I therefore would retain the transition I used to introduce this block in course session 3 (cf. 16.1), in which I introduced the notion of speech acts in laymen’s terms to the students and then guided them toward identifying the speech acts *giving an opinion, agreeing and disagreeing* that they had been engaging in as part of their discussion of the statements on worksheet 6.7 from the *Intercultural Resource Pack*. I would then continue with Murray’s suggested discussion questions, but I would rephrase the first question so as to make a more direct connection to these specific speech acts: *When we are giving our opinion or agreeing or disagreeing with someone, what do you think are some of the things that influence what we say and how we say it?* The proposed answers to this question, as well as the wording of the two follow-up questions, would remain the same.

In order to further explore the final question complex, *In what ways do the things we listed in response to the first question affect the things we listed in response to the second? Can you*

say more about the connections between them and give some examples?, it might be useful to look at a few short excerpts from the small groups' discussions of the statements from worksheet 6.7 of the *Intercultural Resource Pack*¹¹⁸. Without this more inductive type of work, the lesson sequence would run the risk of remaining too abstract. To do this, it would be necessary to transcribe the relevant section of course session 2, analyze it for speech acts and then select one or more relevant excerpts to examine with the students during course session 3, which would be quite time-consuming. However, it would have the advantage of drawing directly on the students' experience with these speech acts and helping them to make explicit their own linguistic decision-making processes. Alternatively, the transcript of the second conversation from task 2 of the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 7 of *English Unlimited C1* could be used, in which realizations of all three of the speech acts are present, or an attempt could be made to find an authentic piece of ELF discourse, though the difficulties of finding such examples has already been discussed in the opening of this chapter above. Regardless of the source, the focus of the discussion would be not so much on the actual language used to accomplish each speech act – although the students would likely require support in identifying the utterances used to realize each speech act – but rather on the kinds of pragmatic factors the speakers may have been attuning to in making their linguistic choices.

Finally, the students would be asked to comment on how the linguistic decisions in the excerpts we had just discussed might be different under different contextual circumstances, using one of the questions I had planned to pose about the conversations from task 2 of the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 7 of *English Unlimited C1*: *How would this conversation be different if ... (the participants were older/younger/different ages, they didn't seem to know each other well, there were differences in social status, the conversation was obviously taking place at a town meeting or at work)?* (cf. 16.1 above). I would then have the students do a communicative activity in which they are asked to discuss a controversial statement together in pairs, similar to task 3 in the lesson sequence from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 7 of *English Unlimited C1*. After they had completed one round of discussion, I would ask them to adopt the roles of professor and student and to repeat the conversation, as I had planned to do in the original lesson sequence. Finally, we would discuss as a class what effect this change of roles had on their discussions and why.

¹¹⁸ The potential usefulness of drawing upon the learners' own performance in the L2 as a source of input for ELF-oriented pragmatics instruction, specifically in the area of communication strategies, will be discussed in more detail in 22.4.

The suggested modifications to this lesson sequence draw Murray's deductive discussion questions to the fore in the sequence, allowing for a more immediate focus on contextual factors and the effects they may have on pragmatic choices in conversation. Thus, the modified lesson sequence proceeds more directly to activities aimed at raising the learners' meta-pragmatic awareness and helping them to develop their meta-pragmatic 'toolkit', the main aim of Block 1. However, in order to ensure that this discussion does not remain too abstract, the lesson sequence still calls for inductive work with situationally embedded realizations of a small set of speech acts, albeit in a task sequence of more limited scope than task 2 from the *Explore Speaking* section of unit 7 from *English Unlimited C1*. Finally, as in the original sequence, discussion and observation are linked to an opportunity for communicative practice. Thus, the learners are invited to notice aspects of their own pragmatic decision-making under different (if simulated) communicative parameters.

17 Block 2: Developing strategic competence through instruction on communication strategies (CSs)

Block 2 of classroom work on pragmatics took place during parts of course sessions 7 through 10. It was thus one of the primary areas of focus in the latter half of the pilot course. The overarching aim of this block was to help the students develop their strategic competence with a range of communication strategies (CSs) that have been identified as fulfilling important communicative functions in studies of ELF communication.

As has been discussed at length in 15.3, one of the reasons that communication breakdown in ELF talk is surprisingly rare despite the prevalence of non-standard lexicogrammatical forms and the wide range of linguistic backgrounds from which speakers may come appears to be that ELF users regularly employ CSs, both to resolve any communicative problems that become apparent before they can derail the conversation and to proactively ensure that miscommunication does not arise in the first place. Given the importance of CSs for successful ELF communication, ELF scholars generally agree that “[i]t is essential that teachers incorporate learning activities that enhance learners’ use of such strategies to maximize the effectiveness of their communication in ELF” (Kaur 2015a: 243). However, this still leaves the teacher with the practical question of how these CSs can be presented and practiced in order to help learners develop “the ability to use strategies adeptly and skillfully for effective communication in ELF” (Kaur 2015a: 252).

Although “most researchers would agree that strategic competence develops in the speaker’s L1 and is freely transferable to target language use” (Dörnyei 1995: 60), as well as that quite a number of CSs appear to be universal, many maintain that CSs will still need to be addressed in the classroom (cf. Dörnyei 1995: 61). Canale (1983) argued that

although a general strategy such as paraphrase is indeed universal and used in first language communication, learners must be shown how such a strategy can be implemented in the second language [...] Furthermore, learners must be encouraged to use such strategies (rather than remain silent if they cannot produce grammatically accurate forms, for example) and must be given the opportunity to use them. (Canale 1983: 11)

Thus, while the teaching of CSs may not involve the transmission of entirely new information, learners will still require the chance both to develop an awareness of how particular CSs might be used in the language they are learning and to practice deploying these CSs in communicative situations. Similar to other areas of pragmatic competence, then, there would appear to be “a clear role for pedagogical intervention, not with the purpose of providing learners with new information but to make them aware of what they know already and encourage them to use their universal or transferable L1 knowledge in L2 contexts” (Kasper and Rose 2001: 6-7).

In terms of the kind of approach that should be adopted in the classroom, Dörnyei (1995) maintained that instruction aimed at the development of strategic competence with CSs will be “most efficient if it is explicit (direct, informed)” (Dörnyei 1995: 65). He drew strong parallels to the teaching of learning strategies, in which

[r]esearch shows that strategy training which fully informs the learner (by indicating why the strategy is useful, how it can be transferred to different tasks, and how learners can evaluate the success of this strategy) is more successful than training that does not. (Oxford 1990: 207, quoted in Dörnyei 1995: 65)

Thus, learners should be made explicitly aware of the CSs they are learning, as well as the goals of classroom activities aimed at the development of CS use (Dörnyei 1995: 65). This recommendation for the teaching of CSs is corroborated in more recent studies (cf. Cohen 2002, Nakatani 2005, Maleki 2007, Kongsom 2016), including studies looking specifically at the teaching of CSs in ELF-oriented ELT (cf. Dimoski et al. 2016). Furthermore, it is in line with current pedagogic recommendations for the teaching of pragmatic aspects of language more generally, in which direct instruction has been shown to be more successful than simply exposing learners passively to pragmatic phenomena (cf. 15.2). Moreover, the results of the study reported on in Dörnyei (1995) indicated that the effectiveness of direct instruction in CSs is unrelated to the learners’ level of L2 competence, suggesting that learners can benefit from a direct approach at all levels of language learning (Dörnyei 1995: 79).

Despite emerging agreement as to the need for direct instruction in CSs in order to develop learners’ strategic competence, this area is largely still under-addressed in mainstream textbook series for language learning. At the beginning of the 1990s, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991) claimed that strategic competence was “[t]he component of communicative competence most neglected by language course books and teachers” (Dörnyei and Thurrell 1991: 17), and this situation had not changed significantly by the late 1990s despite continuing research interest in the development of strategic competence in language learners (cf. Dörnyei and Kormos 1998: 350). More recently, in view of the claim that instruction in CSs should receive increased prominence in the ELF-oriented classroom, Vettorel (2018) embarked on a study of tasks and activities related to the development of strategic competence in secondary-level textbook series published between 1990 and 2015. She found that there was essentially no systematic treatment of CSs in the majority of these textbook series (Vettorel 2018: 62). Most series provided “few or no contextualized examples” of CSs in use and also lacked “opportunities to actively ‘try [CSs] out’ in practice” (Vettorel 2018: 62). Additionally, tasks addressing CSs were often relegated to supplementary sections of the textbook such as those presenting exam skills (Vettorel 2018: 62), rather than being integrated into the main sections of the series. They were also rarely connected to ‘real world’ communicative situations (Vettorel 2018: 67). Based upon these observations, Vettorel ultimately concluded that “the relevance of CSs in L2

communication, and particularly in ELF, has not yet been acknowledged in ELT materials” (Vettorel 2018: 68).

This poses a potentially significant challenge for ELF-oriented pedagogy, since textbooks are still the main source of input in many language-learning classrooms and teachers often depend on them to help structure their teaching (cf. Harmer 2015: 71). It is unlikely that teachers will be able to find enough input to support the systematic development of strategic competence in a single textbook series. They may need to draw upon multiple resources or even design some of their own tasks and materials in order to provide their learners with systematic instruction and practice with CSs.

In terms of the kinds of tasks and activities that might be used to teach CSs in the language classroom, Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) maintained that “many of the techniques now used to explicitly teach structures, vocabulary, speech acts, etc. can also be used to teach communication strategies” (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 29). Likewise, Galloway (2018), in drawing attention to the importance of teaching CSs in the ELF-oriented classroom more specifically, stated that “many of the tasks in current communicative course books are suitable” for teaching aimed at the development of strategic competence (Galloway 2018: 476). Kaur (2015a) offered a more specific list of task types for the teaching of CSs, including information gap activities, collaborative problem-solving tasks, role plays and listening activities (Kaur 2015a: 251), all of which “are not new to ELT” (Kaur 2015a: 252). In fact, many of these suggestions are very similar to the kinds of tasks recommended for teaching (meta-)pragmatic awareness in mainstream ELT (cf. Chapter 16). However, beyond pointing teachers towards some potentially useful task types, the suggestions provided in all the sources above remain rather general and do not offer much in the way of structured guidance for the systematic development of strategic competence in the classroom.

A more detailed description of the ways in which different kinds of tasks and activities can contribute to the development of strategic competence has been provided by Dörnyei (1995), who suggested that learners would benefit from classroom work addressing six areas in the development of their strategic competence (Dörnyei 1995: 63-64, cf. also Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 29):

1. **Raising learner awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs:** This includes “making learners conscious of strategies already in their repertoire, sensitizing them to the appropriate situations where these could be useful, and making them realize that strategies could actually work” (Dörnyei 1995: 63). Dörnyei also highlighted “[t]he importance of conscious attention” to these CSs, as well as the need to develop a “metacommunicative awareness” of CS use (Dörnyei 1995: 63).

2. **Encouraging students to be willing to take risks and use CSs:** This involves encouraging learners “to manipulate the language without being afraid of making errors” (Dörnyei 1995: 63).
3. **Providing L2 models of the use of certain CSs:** This will involve using a “structured inductive approach” to examine the use of CSs in actual examples of communication, and might include “demonstrations, listening materials and videos, and getting learners to identify, categorize and evaluate strategies used by native speakers or other L2 speakers” (Dörnyei 1995: 63).
4. **Highlighting cross-cultural differences in CS use:** This entails drawing attention to “various degrees of stylistic appropriateness associated with CSs [...], differences in the frequency of certain CSs in the speaker’s L1 and L2, as well as differences in the verbalizations of particular CSs” (Dörnyei: 1995: 63-64).
5. **Teaching CSs directly by presenting learners with linguistic devices to verbalize them:** Dörnyei noted that certain CSs, though universal, appear to require “certain basic core vocabulary and sentence structures” in a particular language (Dörnyei 1995: 64). Thus, it is important to allocate some classroom time to the presentation of vocabulary and structures necessary for the various possible realizations of certain CSs.
6. **Providing opportunities for learners to practice strategy use:** According to Dörnyei, speakers are only able to use CSs to fulfill required functions “if their use has reached an automatic stage” (Dörnyei 1995: 64) Since “this automatization will not always occur without specific focused practice” (Dörnyei 1995: 64), opportunities for such practice need to be built into classroom instruction in order to ensure that the strategies that have been introduced will fully enter the learners’ repertoires.

Dörnyei’s areas provide a more practical framework for planning the systematic development of learners’ strategic competence. By making it possible for teachers to identify more precisely the purpose of a particular task or activity, the framework facilitates the development of a balanced, structured approach to the teaching of CSs in the language classroom.

In many ways, the approach to the teaching of CSs detailed in Dörnyei’s framework shares many similarities with approaches to the development of learners’ pragmatic competence in mainstream ELT discussed in Chapter 16. The basic distinction between the two fundamental types of tasks identified in Kasper (1997) is also apparent in Dörnyei’s framework: areas 1, 3, 4 and 5 all primarily involve awareness-raising, while areas 2 and 6 are related to communicative practice. Likewise, there is an emphasis in Dörnyei’s framework on the use of inductive tasks and authentic input as the basis for awareness-raising tasks (cf. Dörnyei 1995: 63).

Many aspects of Dörnyei’s framework also fit well with other suggestions that have been made regarding what an ELF-oriented approach to the teaching of pragmatics should entail. For instance, Dörnyei recognized in his first area, ‘raising learner awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs’, that learners need to develop a conscious awareness of the use of CSs. Although he used the term *metacommunicative awareness* rather than *meta-pragmatic awareness*, he seemed to have in mind the same kind of “ability to describe, evaluate and explore one’s own and others’ interpretations of features in language in use” (McConachy

2018: 24) that McConachy (2018), Murray (2010, 2012) and Rose (1994) posit as so important for the development of the kind of flexible, transferable pragmatic competence needed for ELF communication (cf. 15.4). Likewise, Dörnyei's second area focuses on tasks and activities "encouraging students to be willing to take risks and use CSs [...] without being afraid of making errors" (Dörnyei 1995: 63). This fits well with the general call in ELF circles to de-emphasize the importance of formal accuracy in the ELF-oriented classroom while spending proportionally more "time on activities where learners can apply their creative and adaptive ability to use L2 elements in unrehearsed oral interaction to make themselves understandable to their addressees" (Tarone 2016: 218).

However, in light of what research has revealed about the use of CSs in successful ELF communication, as well as some of the challenges that an ELF orientation poses for the classroom, several aspects of Dörnyei's framework require some further elucidation if they are to inform an ELF-oriented approach to the development of strategic competence in the classroom. In 15.4, it has been noted that while the teaching of CSs for ELF communication will involve many of the same strategies that have been identified as playing a role in foreign language use (cf. Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 28), ELF-oriented teaching requires an important shift in perspective in terms of the functions that these CSs are understood to fulfill. Rather than compensating for a lack of linguistic or pragmatic resources, these CSs should be viewed as supporting important interactional processes such as accommodating towards one's interlocutor(s) and co-constructing meaning. Additionally, although these CSs still have an important role to play in signaling and resolving communicative problems, their proactive uses for securing mutual understanding and pre-empting such problems before they can arise should also be emphasized. Thus, tasks and activities aimed at 'raising learner awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs' (area 1) in the ELF-oriented classroom need to address the functions that CSs have been shown to play in ELF talk. That is, they should be based on empirical evidence from studies of ELF communication (cf. Murray 2012: 321). These functions should also be reflected in the kinds of tasks chosen for 'providing opportunities for learners to practice strategy use' (area 6), particularly where such opportunities are embedded in communicative tasks.

In terms of 'providing L2 models for the use of certain CSs' (area 3), ELF scholars have generally adopted the position that the multilingual, multicultural speaker provides a more suitable model of pragmatic competence for the ELF-oriented classroom than the traditional native speaker model commonly adopted in ELT (cf. 15.4). This suggests that, rather than using interactions involving native English speakers as the primary basis for such activities, as is generally the case in mainstream ELT, learners in the ELF-oriented classroom would be better served if these activities were based on interactions taking place between multilingual,

multicultural speakers. To this end, Kaur (2015a) recommended using “[r]ecordings of ELF interactions which display participants successfully using pragmatic strategies to negotiate meaning and co-construct understanding” in order to support the development of strategic competence in the ELF-oriented classroom (Kaur 2015a: 251-252). In addition to providing sources of CS use for learners to reflect on, these recordings “can serve as models for learners to base their own interactions on” (Kaur 2015a: 252).

Dörnyei’s fifth area, ‘teaching CSs directly by presenting learners with linguistic devices to verbalize them’, also requires some reconsideration in light of ELF. As discussed in 15.3 and 15.4, ELF talk generally appears able to be successful despite the widespread use of non-standard forms, and this has led ELF researchers to criticize the amount of emphasis generally placed on formal accuracy in current ELT. Rather than focusing on the native-like use of forms to realize CSs, work on strategic competence in the ELF-oriented classroom should focus “on the learner’s ability to communicate effectively, not always or necessarily using language that is correct by native-speaker standards” (Kaur 2015a: 252). Thus, when presenting learners with linguistic means to realize CSs, care must be taken to avoid an overly normative approach. Learners may well need exposure to useful vocabulary and structures in order to be able to verbalize a particular CS in English, but they need not be required to produce these realizations exactly as a native speaker would. Rather than focusing on adhering to norms of usage, learners in the ELF-oriented classroom need to develop “the ability to generate many alternative ways of saying something” in order to develop the kind of flexibility which appears to be so vital for ELF communication (Tarone 2016: 219).

In many ways, Dörnyei’s fourth area, ‘highlighting cross-cultural differences in strategy use’, poses the most significant challenges for the ELF-oriented classroom. In current mainstream ELT, this would most likely take the form of comparing differences in the learner’s CS use in his or her L1 with that of native speakers of English, if not with the goal of encouraging learners to use CSs in a more native-like way, then at least with the goal of making them aware of the potential ramifications of using CSs in non-standard ways in native speaker/non-native speaker communication (cf. Kaspar 1997: 117-119, Eslami-Rasekh 2005: 207). However, since most learners today are less likely to come into contact with native speakers of English than with other non-native speakers in ELF situations, and since the communicative norms of native English speakers do not determine the communicative norms in an ELF interaction by default simply because the conversation is taking place in English, this would be unlikely to be particularly helpful to learners in the ELF-oriented classroom. In fact, an exclusive focus on the norms of native English speakers might even unintentionally lead learners to believe that these norms are more important for ELF communication than is actually the case (cf. McConachy 2018: 29). Therefore, adopting the use of CSs by native

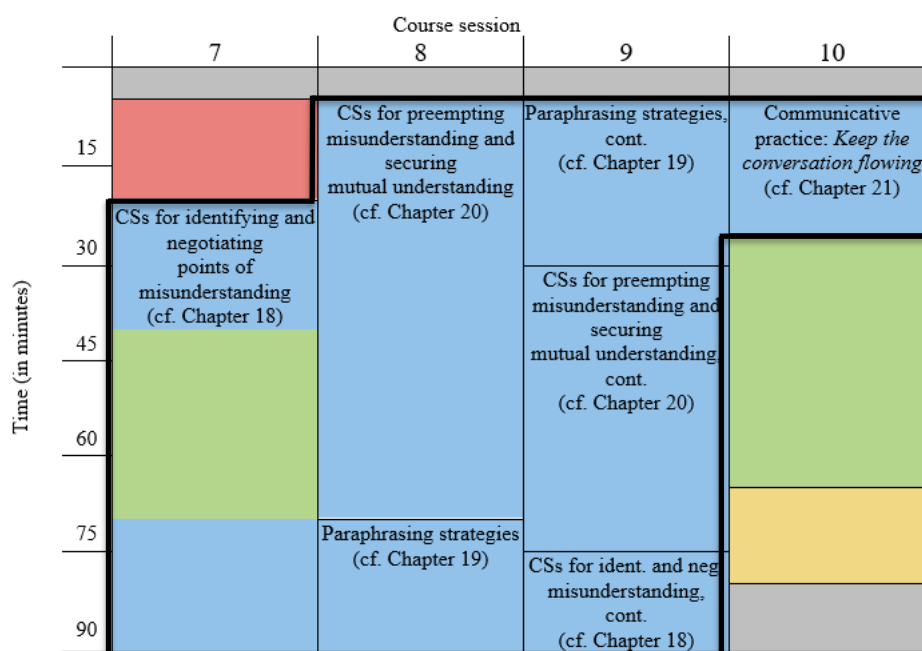
English speakers as the main point of comparison does not seem to be an especially suitable option for the ELF-oriented classroom. However, in many cases, it will not be possible to specify in advance all the linguacultures with which a learner may come into contact through ELF beyond the classroom. Even if this were possible, it generally will not be feasible for a learner to acquire specific knowledge of every linguaculture that he or she may encounter in the future (cf. Baker 2012a: 65). This complicates the question of which cross-cultural differences in CS use to highlight in the ELF-oriented classroom. Nevertheless, one possible starting point might be the comparison of CSs in the linguacultures of cultural groupings within the learning group itself.

It would appear, then, that the process of selecting or designing tasks and activities aimed at developing an ELF-oriented strategic competence can be usefully informed by the framework provided in Dörnyei (1995), so long as a few guiding principles are kept in mind. First, classroom instruction should focus on CSs attested in ELF communication, as well as the functions that these CSs have been shown to fulfill in such communication. Second, the multilingual, multicultural speaker should serve as the primary model for instruction. Finally, the focus of instruction should be on the effective and appropriate use of CSs in communication, rather than on learning to adhere to a standard norm of usage. In Block 2 of the pragmatics strand of the pilot course, in which the focus was on the development of the students' strategic competence, a direct approach was therefore adopted to the teaching of CSs. This approach was based largely on tasks and materials selected from a number of preexisting language teaching materials that covered a range of the areas identified in Dörnyei's framework and that fulfilled the guiding principles outlined above.

In light of research insights into CS use in successful ELF communication, as well as the materials available at the time the pilot course was in the planning phase, three particular functions that CSs may fulfill in ELF talk were selected as the focus of instruction, each of which will be examined in turn in the next three chapters: CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding (Chapter 18); strategies¹¹⁹ for paraphrasing intended meaning (Chapter 19); and CSs for preempting misunderstanding and securing mutual understanding through proactive work (Chapter 20). The distribution of these topics within Block 2 of classroom work on pragmatics is shown in Table 15:

¹¹⁹ Cf. Chapter 19 for an explanation of why the term *strategy* is used here rather than *CS*.

Table 15: Overview of Block 2 by theme



| Table key: | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ■ | Pronunciation |
| ■ | Culture / intercultural communication |
| ■ | Pragmatics / communication strategies |
| ■ | Sociolinguistic awareness |
| ■ | Administration / other |

Each of these chapters will begin by establishing why instruction on that particular type of CS was included in the pilot course. It will then discuss the learning aims that were established for work on that type of CS, as well as how and why particular tasks and materials were chosen, and in some cases modified, to facilitate the achievement of those aims. After that, each chapter will present analysis of interesting aspects of classroom work with the selected tasks and materials. Finally, each chapter will end with a summary of findings about work on the development of the respective type of CS and comment on ways in which the lesson segments might have been modified so as to increase the effectiveness of classroom instruction.

Chapters 18, 19 and 20 provide discussion and analysis of lesson sequences featuring direct instruction on particular types of CSs which took place over parts of multiple course sessions. By contrast, Chapter 21 will offer an in-depth analysis of classroom work with one specific communicative practice task, entitled *Keep the conversation flowing*, which took place during course session 10 at the very end of Block 2 (cf. Table 15 above). This task, which was

subsequently repeated as part of the paired oral exam constituting the final assessment in the course, proved to be a particularly rich source of data about the students' productive strategic competence, as well as about what they learned in this strand of the course. Analysis of the data also uncovered some implications for teaching CSs, in particular with regard to an ELF-oriented pedagogy. Following the analysis of this task, Chapter 22 will conclude with a discussion and reevaluation of Block 2 as a whole.

18 Communication strategies (CSs) for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding (course sessions 7 and 9)

That communication breakdown is rare in ELF talk is due in part to the fact that participants in such talk are able to deal effectively with any difficulties that do arise before they can derail the conversation. In outlining his proposal for an ELF-oriented approach to teaching pragmatics in the ELT classroom, Murray (2012) therefore stressed the importance of “regularly incorporating in the classroom reflective practices that help sensitize learners to breakdowns in communication, where they happen and why, and ways of resolving them” (Murray 2012: 322). Engaging in critical reflection of instances of communication in which problems have arisen can help learners to become more aware of what kinds of communicative problems may arise and the effects that such problems can potentially have on conversation, further underscoring the need to continually negotiate understanding with their interlocutors and engage in proactive work to preempt problems before they happen. Such reflection can also help learners to recognize and develop skills and strategies they will need in order to cope with problems of understanding that they encounter in ELF talk beyond the classroom. Thus, critical reflection on problematic moments in communication can serve as an important tool in helping learners to become more effective and successful ELF communicators.

18.1 Tasks and materials for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding


Block 2 of classroom work on pragmatics began with a lesson sequence dealing with identifying and negotiating instances of misunderstanding in conversation in part because this theme provided a logical transition from classroom work in the culture and intercultural communication strand of the course, which was concluded in the first half of course session 7. The final theme of this strand used critical reflection on a set of critical incidents to focus on how cultural mismatch can sometimes lead to a lingering sense of discomfort or the realization that mutual understanding was not as complete as one thought at the time (cf. Chapter 13). Thus, the focus of this theme was in a sense on the role that culture can play in miscommunication, especially where interlocutors are unaware of points of cultural mismatch.

After wrapping up our discussion of culture at the beginning of course session 7, we used a series of tasks from Unit 2.1 of the coursebook *English Unlimited B2* (Tilbury et al. 2011: 14-15) to explore the theme of identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding from a pragmatic perspective. As in the critical incidents we had discussed as part of the final theme in the culture strand (cf. 13.1), this task series begins by presenting the learners with situations


in which it becomes apparent that a misunderstanding has arisen and will need to be resolved. Unlike the situations from the culture strand, however, these misunderstandings are due to situational or interpretational difficulties rather than cultural mismatch and are identified and negotiated directly in the conversations rather than being presented by one interlocutor *ex post facto*. The sequence is designed to help the learners identify and reflect on what has led to an instance of misunderstanding and how it might be resolved. It also introduces some specific CSs to help learners negotiate instances of misunderstanding linguistically during an interaction.

The initial tasks in this unit serve to acquaint the students with how each of the two instances of miscommunication upon which the sequence is based has arisen:

Materials excerpt 28:



Not my day



LISTENING

- 1 What seems to be the problem in each picture? What might the people be saying or thinking?
- 2 17 Listen to Rainer's two conversations, first with his colleague Pauline, then with his wife Liana.
 - 1 What's the problem in each conversation?
 - 2 What's the solution?
 - 3 Who are the people in the pictures?
- 3 17 Listen again. Are these statements true or false?
 - 1 Chris's text message to Pauline was badly written.
 - 2 In the office where Rainer works, most people have now got the flu.
 - 3 Pauline will be able to go to her other appointments after the Layton meeting.
 - 4 Rainer's mother phoned to say thank you for her present.
 - 5 Liana chose the wrong thing in the catalogue.
 - 6 They can't return the present because Rainer bought it for a special price.
- 4 If you were Rainer, what would you say to Chris?
If you were Rainer's mother, would you keep the tree?

(Tilbury et al. 2011: 14)

The learners are first given the opportunity to speculate on what the problem might be in each situation based on a picture (task 1). They are then asked to listen to two telephone conversations in which the misunderstandings are identified and resolved, and to answer a series of comprehension questions about these conversations (tasks 2 and 3). Finally, they are given the opportunity to say how they would respond in each situation if they were a particular character in the scenario (task 4). Because the students were advanced learners of English and the listening texts were taken from a B2-level textbook, I did not anticipate that they would

have much difficulty with the listening tasks. I therefore expected that we would be able to move through these introductory tasks quite quickly.

These initial tasks set the stage for what Dörnyei calls a “structured inductive approach” to teaching CSs (Dörnyei 1995: 63). Through the listening text, learners are introduced to communicative situations in which a misunderstanding has arisen that is then subsequently identified and negotiated by the speakers through the use of CSs. In that sense, these initial tasks can be viewed as serving an awareness-raising function. The text provides the learners with input aimed at raising their ‘awareness about the nature and communicative potential’ of the CSs featured in the text (area 1 in Dörnyei’s framework for teaching CSs; cf. Chapter 17). Additionally, the text can be viewed as ‘providing L2 models of the use of certain strategies’ (area 3).

In terms of the model that the listening text provides for the learners, the text aspires to present communicative situations featuring an L2 speaker as one of the interactants. Nevertheless, this text exhibits a number of the shortcomings that have been identified as typical of listening texts and dialogues featured in textbooks (cf. 7.2.1, 16). It has clearly been scripted for the textbook, and thus cannot be considered an authentic source of input. Furthermore, although the main character in each of the two telephone conversations is identified as an L2 speaker with German as L1, he interacts in both conversations with L1 speakers. In fact, although this information is not overtly stated in the listening text or the coursebook, he appears to live and work in an English-speaking country, as both his wife and his co-workers are identified as native speakers of English. Thus, these exchanges could probably better be described as depicting ESL rather than ELF scenarios. Finally, beyond a subtle accent which is identifiable as German, the L2 speaker’s use of language is essentially indistinguishable from that of his L1 interlocutors. Since the text was used only briefly to introduce a discussion of CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding, and since the sequence also provided good opportunities for addressing contrastive stress and for communicative practice, this listening text was included anyway. However, later on in the sequence, an attempt was made to balance out the shortcomings in this listening text by including a more authentic recording from an ELF conversation featuring a naturally-occurring instance of misunderstanding which was then identified and resolved by the speakers (cf. further below).

After the listening tasks, the next task in unit 2.1 focuses on linguistic options for identifying and explaining the source of a misunderstanding and then negotiating and resolving it (task 5).

Materials excerpt 29:

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|----------|
| VOCABULARY | 5 | Complete the sentences from the conversations with the words on the right. | |
| Dealing with misunderstandings | <i>Explaining</i> | | |
| | 1 | I _____ you'd cancelled that meeting. | told |
| | 2 | Chris _____ me he'd cancelled all meetings because of the flu. | said |
| | 3 | You _____ you'd ordered that plant we talked about. | thought |
| | 4 | I think he _____ all <i>his</i> meetings. | explains |
| | 5 | That's _____ what he said. He said <i>all</i> meetings. | meant |
| | 6 | I see. Well, that _____ it. | not |
| | <i>Solving</i> | | |
| | 7 | What _____ I call for a taxi? I can be there in twenty minutes. | logical |
| | 8 | The _____ thing is to return the tree to the garden centre. | if |
| 9 | The other _____ is to take it to your office. | option | |

(Tilbury et al. 2011: 14)

Here, the learners are given a series of sentences from the listening texts. These sentences are divided into two categories related to negotiating misunderstandings, *explaining* and *solving*. In each sentence, some of the words are printed in bold, and one word has been replaced with a blank. These words are listed in a word bank next to the task. The students are asked to fill in each blank with the appropriate word from the bank. Together with the words in bold, the word in each blank becomes part of a phrase that could be used to negotiate an instance of misunderstanding and propose a solution in conversation. This task is thus an example of the kind of task described in area 5 of Dörnyei's framework for teaching CSs, in which the focus is on 'presenting learners with linguistic devices to verbalize CSs' (cf. Chapter 17).

Again, since the students in the pilot course were more advanced learners of English, I did not expect them to have much difficulty with this task. Nor was I interested in spending time drilling the phrases provided in the task. This task was not intended to be prescriptive. Rather, it was meant to raise the students' awareness of possible language for identifying and resolving misunderstandings that they might find useful later on in the task sequence. However, I was concerned that the textbook provided so few suggestions for the category *solving*. I therefore planned to brainstorm more ideas for proposing solutions to misunderstandings with the students.

After focusing on language for explaining and solving misunderstandings, the task series from unit 2.1 goes on to introduce the concept of contrastive stress to the learners (task 6). Contrastive stress belongs to an area of pronunciation, nuclear stress placement, that has been identified as particularly salient to intelligibility in ELF communication (cf. 4.2.2), and this topic was thus included as part of the strand of the course focused on pronunciation (see 5.3, 6.1.5). Its presence in unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2* underscores that using contrastive stress serves to highlight the speaker's intended meaning by drawing the listener's attention to a particularly salient part of the speaker's message, thus making it a useful pragmatic strategy for resolving (as well as preempting) misunderstanding in conversation (cf. Jenkins 1997: 18,

Walker 2010: 36-37). It therefore seemed doubly logical to include nuclear stress placement and contrastive stress at this point in course session 7, both as an important aspect of intelligible pronunciation for ELF and an important CS for negotiating meaning. However, as discussed in 6.1.5, I felt that task 6 from unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2* did not address nuclear stress placement thoroughly enough for the purposes of the pilot course. I therefore expanded upon this task with a series of tasks from Walker (2010) and Jenkins (2000) that would give the students targeted practice with nuclear stress placement (cf. 6.1.5 for a detailed description of this task sequence). These tasks would provide the students with more direct instruction on how to use nuclear stress placement to communicate pragmatic meaning and give them opportunities for targeted practice as well. After we had completed these tasks, we would then return to the task sequence from unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2*.

Up until this point in the lesson segment, the focus has been on raising the learners' awareness of language for explaining and proposing solutions to misunderstandings and, in the case of nuclear stress placement, on giving the learners targeted practice with contrastive stress. In the final task of the lesson sequence from unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2*, the focus then shifts to providing the learners with an opportunity for communicative practice. The task sequence culminates in a role-playing task (task 7) in which the learners are given the opportunity to use the CSs introduced in the earlier tasks in a communicative task. Thus, the emphasis of this final task falls squarely into area 6 of Dörnyei's framework, 'providing opportunities for practice in strategy use' (cf. Chapter 17).

In the role-playing task, the learners are presented with three short, everyday situations in which a misunderstanding has arisen and are asked to use the CSs from the preceding tasks to try to identify the point of misunderstanding in each situation and negotiate a solution. The role-plays are meant to be done in pairs and are essentially an information gap activity. One learner in each pair is designated speaker A and is asked to read a version of the scenario from A's perspective on a particular page in the supplementary pages of the textbook. The other learner is designated speaker B and is asked to read a slightly different version of the scenario from B's perspective on a different page in the supplementary pages of the textbook. These are the role cards for the first scenario as they appear in the textbook:

Materials excerpt 30:

Situation 1

It's evening. You arranged to meet Student B at the cinema today but when you arrived an hour ago, he/she wasn't there. You haven't received any messages from Student B. You're a bit worried. Maybe he/she just missed the bus, or maybe there's been an accident. Phone and find out what happened.

Situation 1, Role-play card A (Tilbury et al. 2011: 119)

Materials excerpt 31:

Situation 1

You and Student A have arranged to meet at a cinema tomorrow evening. You've written the date in your diary and you're looking forward to it. At the moment you're in a café, chatting with another friend who you haven't seen for a long time. Suddenly, you get a phone call from Student A.

Situation 1, Role-play card B (Tilbury et al. 2011: 120)

In this scenario, A and B have agreed to go to the movies together. However, as it turns out, each has understood that they would meet on a different day. In the role-play, A is instructed to call B and find out what has happened, giving the learners the opportunity to attempt to identify and resolve the point of misunderstanding.

Rather than using the supplementary pages from the textbook, the A and B versions of each scenario were presented on small slips of paper. At this point in the course, the students had largely become accustomed to sitting in the same seat each week and working with the same people whenever they were allowed to choose their own partners or groups. I wanted to create the opportunity for them to engage with partners with whom they did not usually work, so I would hand out the A slips to all the students sitting on one side of the room and the B slips to all the students sitting on the other side. The students would be asked to read their slips and spend a moment thinking about what they might want to say. They would then find a partner with the other letter on their slip and do the role-play together. Since this would involve pairing up with someone who was not sitting on their side of the room, it would largely require them to work with someone new. It would also get the students up and moving. The students would be instructed to return to their seats at the end of their conversation to signal that they had finished. We would then engage in a brief feedback round in which we would identify together what the misunderstanding had been in each situation and then listen to how the different pairs had resolved the situation. The students would also have a chance to comment on any issues with language that had come up. Then I would hand out new slips for the next scenario and we would repeat the process with a new partner.

The series of tasks from unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2* would provide an opportunity for us to consider how and why misunderstandings arise and to identify and practice some CSs for negotiating and resolving points of misunderstanding in conversation. However, the misunderstandings presented in unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2* are best described as situational or interpretational, and in most cases, they have arisen through mistake or miscommunication before the conversation in which they are identified and resolved takes place. By contrast, ELF research has largely focused on how interactants deal with communicative problems which arise directly within a stretch of discourse and which must be

resolved in order to ensure mutual understanding and allow the discourse to continue. Most often, this involves points of non-understanding, in which a listener is unable to make sense of what their interlocutor has said and needs to signal this non-understanding so that negotiation of meaning can take place and mutual understanding can be restored.

An interesting instance of non-understanding and subsequent negotiation of meaning occurs in a listening text from Walker (2010) entitled *Problems with listening* (Walker 2010, Track 6), which was used as part of classroom work on CSs for active listening in course session 9. In this text, speaker I, an L1 Arabic speaker from United Arab Emirates, and speaker J, an L1 Taiwanese speaker from Taiwan, are discussing difficulties they have with listening in English. About halfway through the text, speaker J uses a non-standard lexical item which is not readily interpretable for her interlocutor and which leads to a negotiation of the meaning of this item that lasts several turns:

Materials excerpt 32:

- 21 **J** [I I didn't] know lots of *vocabularies so it's a *upscare for me
 22 **I** [it's]
 23 **J** [for me] *upscare
 24 **I** *upscare
 25 **J** yeah *upscare for me to . to listen to oth others to catch the
 26 meaning
 27 **I** so it's difficult for you
 28 **J** [yes]
 29 **I** [you] mean right so you believe that this is a problem because of .
 30 the vocabulary
 31 **J** mm
 32 **I** I see
 33 **J** yes
 34 **I** right . apart for me I believe that I miss the . good skill .
 35 **J** mm
 36 **I** the skill of being a good listener ...

Track 6: Problems with listening, lines 21-36 (Walker 2010: 169)

In describing her struggles with listening in English, speaker J uses the non-standard lexical item **upscare* to describe the difficulties that lack of vocabulary causes her when listening. Speaker I signals her non-understanding of this item by repeating *it's*, the phrase that has come just before the problematic item (line 22). Other-repetition of preceding material is attested in ELF research as one of the strategies used to signal non-understanding, especially where the listener has not heard an item clearly (Kaur 2009a: 80-82), and indeed, Speaker J seems to interpret this other-repetition as a request for her to repeat the problematic item because speaker I has not heard it properly. She repeats an inverted version of her original phrase, *for me *upscare* (line 23), thus providing speaker I with another chance to hear the same information. Speaker I then repeats **upscare* herself (line 24), showing that she has now been able to grasp the sound-form speaker J has produced. However, her tone, and most likely her facial

expression¹²⁰, signal to speaker J that she still has not understood what is meant by this word. Speaker J thus repeats *yeah *upscare for me*, confirming that speaker I has heard correctly, but this time offers a paraphrase of **upscare* as well, saying *to . to listen to oth others to catch the meaning* (lines 25-26). Speaker I then offers a paraphrase of what she believes speaker J means by **upscare*, saying *so it's difficult for you* (line 27). This move could be interpreted as a confirmation request, in which Speaker I attempts to check her current level of understanding with her interlocutor. Speaker J agrees that this is what she meant (line 28), even as speaker I rephrases again what she believes speaker I has been trying to communicate: *you mean right so you believe that this is a problem because of . the vocabulary* (lines 29-30). Speaker J again confirms that this is what she meant (line 31), which is followed by a quick succession of agreement tokens between the two speakers (lines 32-34), signaling that the non-understanding has been resolved and mutual understanding has been restored. Speaker I then introduces a new problem she experiences with listening in English in line 34, and the conversation continues.

As a source of material for examining how non-understanding can be signaled and resolved in ELF talk, this exchange has a number of positive attributes. First, it is an actual instance of 'authentic' ELF communication, in the sense that it is an unscripted exchange between two non-native speakers of English.¹²¹ The non-understanding which arises due to speaker J's use of **upscare* is unscripted, as is the way it is negotiated and eventually resolved by I and J. Second, this non-understanding arises due to lexical issues, an area which has been attested as sometimes causing communicative problems in ELF talk, though not as frequently as the area of pronunciation (cf. Hülmbauer 2010, Deterding 2013). As such, it provides a reasonably representative example of the kind of communicative problems that may arise in actual ELF talk. Third, the non-understanding is signaled and resolved using CSs which are attested as commonplace tools for negotiation of meaning in such situations in ELF talk, including other-repetition, self-repetition and paraphrasing (cf. Kaur 2009a). And finally, even though it is never apparent whether speaker J ever realizes that she has used a non-standard lexical item, the conversation is ultimately successful in that speakers I and J are able to negotiate a level of mutual understanding that allows the conversation to continue smoothly. Non-understanding of a particular lexical item creates a bump in the road, but does not derail the conversation entirely, again making it an illustrative example of ELF talk.

¹²⁰ Because this text is audio- rather than video-recorded, it is impossible to say with any certainty what role extralinguistic signals may have played in resolving this non-understanding.

¹²¹ The exchange was, however, elicited for research purposes (cf. 7.2 for more discussion of the listening texts in Walker 2010).

I anticipated that the students would find this listening text more difficult to understand than they had the listening text from unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2* in course session 7. Likely, they would be unused to working with authentic texts in the language classroom, and they would therefore need extra guidance in noticing aspects of those texts. I certainly did not intend to engage the students in a full linguistic analysis of this stretch of *Problems with listening*. Rather, I planned to use a series of teacher-led questions to help the students describe in non-technical terms how and why a non-understanding arose at this point in the text and how it was ultimately resolved between the two speakers.

I planned to approach the instance of non-understanding and subsequent negotiation of meaning between speakers I and J with the students after we had discussed both the text's content and the strategies employed by the interactants in the text to show that they were actively listening to their interlocutor. These other aspects of the text would be part of classroom work on listener and speaker CSs for preempting communicative problems and securing mutual understanding, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 20. After we had concluded our discussion of these points, I would then draw the students' attention to the non-understanding and subsequent negotiation of meaning in lines 21 to 33 of the text. At this point, the students would have listened to the text at least twice. To further facilitate discussion of this stretch of the text, I planned to hand out copies of the transcript of the text to the students. We would therefore have both a visual and an auditory version of the text with which to work. I would begin by identifying the source of the non-understanding for the students by saying: *In the text, speaker J uses a word that isn't a standard word of English as she's talking, and this causes some confusion in the conversation.* The students would be asked to look at the text and identify which word is the source of the problem and where it first arises. Then I would use a series of questions to help them reflect on how this problem is identified and resolved by speakers I and J in the text: *What does the word appear to mean? How does I signal that she doesn't understand? How does I resolve the misunderstanding? Do you think J knows that she used a word that really isn't a word in English? Is it important for the rest of this conversation?* It was important that we keep this discussion moving and not allow it to become too dry and technical, running the risk that the students would lose interest and stop paying attention. I therefore planned to spend no more than 10 minutes on this series of questions.

In terms of function, the sequence planned around the text *Problems with listening* can be classified as focusing on raising the students' awareness both of the kinds of communicative problems that can arise in ELF talk and the ways in which speakers can employ CSs in order to identify and resolve these problems. In this sense, the sequence falls primarily into area 1 of Dörnyei's framework, 'raising learner awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs' (cf. Chapter 17). More indirectly, the listening text also 'provid[es] a model of the use

of certain CSs' (area 3) by real ELF users. Given in particular the lack of awareness of the problem displayed by speaker J, this may not necessarily be a model that learners would wish to copy, but it does show them how the use of CSs could contribute to communicative success by enabling the negotiation of meaning between the two speakers.

Having outlined the planning of the lesson sequence on CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding, the next three sections (18.2-18.4) will present analysis of classroom work with these tasks and materials. The final section, 18.5, will then provide a brief summary of this analysis and a reconsideration of the task sequence as a whole.

18.2 Raising awareness of CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding

As expected, the students had little difficulty with the awareness-raising and targeted practice tasks that constituted the first half of classroom work with CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding in course session 7. All the students agreed that they had understood the listening texts after one listening. In answering the comprehension questions in tasks 2 and 3 (cf. Materials excerpt 28 in 18.1 above), they were able to give comprehensive answers that showed that they had largely understood the details of the listening texts correctly. In one instance, a student's response uncovered a minor point of misunderstanding, but this was easily resolved with input from another student (T7: 784-796). The students were also able to quickly and accurately complete the vocabulary task in task 5 (cf. Materials excerpt 29 in 18.1 above). After three minutes, in which the students worked through this task in pairs, we briefly compared answers with the whole class. During this phase of the lesson, a wide range of students volunteered to share their solutions as to which word fit into each of the blanks in the task, and each of the nine students who were called on supplied the correct answer without hesitation (T7: 1042-1067). Thus, as expected, these tasks did not pose significant challenges for the students, but served primarily as an introduction to CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding.

As mentioned in 18.1 above, I was concerned that task 5 provided so few suggestions for linguistic realizations in the category *solving*. The task only presents three potential phrases which might be used to propose a potential solution to a misunderstanding (cf. Materials excerpt 29 above):

- What if I
- The logical thing is to
- The other option is to

I therefore asked the students to brainstorm more ideas for phrases that could be used to suggest solutions to misunderstandings after they finished filling in the gaps in task 5 (T7: 1010-1016). When the students were asked to share their ideas with the class, students from a number of different pairs volunteered. Their answers are listed below, along with the student who provided the answer and the point in the transcript in which the answer occurred:

- why not try (S8, T7: 1072)
- we could maybe (S2, T7: 1076)
- is it possible to (S4, T7: 1082)
- have you considered doing (S1, T7: 1086)
- I would suggest (S16, T7: 1089)
- my idea is to (S6, T7: 1096)

All of the suggestions fit well as possible linguistic realizations of the CS ‘suggesting a solution’. The range of answers given, the ease with which the students came up with these suggestions during the brainstorming round, as well as the confidence with which they presented their suggestions in front of the whole class, show that the students were already aware of a variety of possibilities for encoding this CS into English. Nevertheless, this exercise was valuable in activating this knowledge so that it was available during the communicative practice task later in the lesson.

As has been discussed in 6.2.1, the students also had no significant difficulties with nuclear stress placement. At the beginning of classroom work on this topic, they appeared to be less unaware of unmarked nuclear stress than of contrastive stress, but as soon as we had discussed where unmarked stress usually falls in English, the students showed no further difficulties in this area. They were generally able to complete all of the practice drills from Walker (2010) and Jenkins (2000) (cf. 6.1.5) accurately in pairs, though longer pauses between one partner’s input and the other partner’s response showed that the students required some processing time in formulating their responses, suggesting that they were not accustomed to thinking about nuclear stress placement consciously. Dörnyei noted in his discussion of practice tasks that speakers will only be able to use CSs “if their use has reached an automatic stage” (Dörnyei 1995: 64). He further noted that “this automatization will not always occur without specific practice” (Dörnyei 1995: 64). Thus, although these practice tasks may not have been overly challenging for the students, completing them may have helped the students move toward this automatic stage in using and interpreting contrastive stress as a pragmatic tool for communicating meaning in English.

Overall then, the phase of the lesson segment in which the focus was on awareness-raising of CSs for signaling and resolving misunderstandings, as well as targeted practice with nuclear stress placement, went very smoothly. The students already seemed aware of linguistic realizations of the strategies presented, though their knowledge of nuclear stress placement

appeared to be largely tacit before classroom work with this topic. Having (re-)activated the students' awareness, both of these strategies and of some of the linguistic possibilities for enacting them, we were then ready to move on to the communicative practice task in task 7, in which the students had the opportunity to try out these strategies in identifying and resolving misunderstandings in a series of role-plays.

18.3 Role-playing the identification and negotiation of misunderstanding

After completing the awareness-raising and targeted practice tasks discussed in 18.2 above, twenty minutes of course session 7 remained for the role-playing task (task 7) from Unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2*. This was enough time for the students to role-play two of the three situations provided in the task and to discuss each situation with the whole class after that round of role-playing was over.

Although a number of different types of communicative tasks had been incorporated into previous lessons, this was the first time that the students were confronted with either a role-playing task or an information gap task during this course. Despite my explanation of the task, some students initially did not understand that they had been given a different card than their partner, that their card contained information that their partner did not have and that they needed the information on both cards in order to complete the task (cf. T7: 1692-1699). At least one pair also seemed unfamiliar with role-playing tasks more generally and needed to check with me to make sure they had understood what they were supposed to do (T7: 1713-1719). In fact, most pairs needed some time to check and/or clarify the instructions and the parameters of the task with each other as they began the role-play of the first scenario. It was therefore beneficial that there was time for two rounds of role-playing and discussion. Having worked out their understanding of the task instructions during the first role-playing phase, the students were able to approach the second with more confidence. They also needed less of their processing capacity to monitor whether they were following the task instructions and thus had more processing capacity available to focus on the conversation itself.

Particularly during the first role-play, some of the students were very focused on the aim of the task without engaging with the subtleties of the role-play situation. In the first situation, student A is instructed to phone student B and ask why he or she is not at the cinema yet; thus, the students are asked to role-play a telephone call (cf. Materials excerpts 30 and 31 in 18.1 above). Telephone calls are a good example of a kind of recurring communicative situation that generally follows a conventionalized routine (cf. Kasper and Rose 2001: 5). Particularly

the opening and closing phases of a telephone call usually involve a relatively fixed sequence of speech acts that are often realized in conventionalized ways, though the precise sequence of acts and their conventionalized realizations are often linguaculturally specific (cf. Flöck and Pfingsthorn 2014: 183, Kasper and Rose 2001: 5). As I walked around the classroom, however, I observed that several pairs skipped the opening sequence of the telephone conversation altogether and commenced directly with trying to identify the point of misunderstanding in the situation. For example, I overheard speaker A in one pair begin his telephone call directly by saying *I'm standing in front of the cinema. Where are you?*¹²²

Although I had drawn the students' attention specifically to the fact that situation 1 called for the students to role-play a telephone conversation (cf. T7: 1689), I had not, e.g., taken the time to brainstorm with the students how they might open their role-played telephone conversations. This was largely due to the fact that the focus of the lesson was on identifying and resolving misunderstandings, rather than on conventionalized routines in telephone calls. While the absence of an opening sequence might appear to indicate that at least some of the students lacked pragmatic competence with opening routines in telephone calls, I tend to think that these students were simply more focused on the aim of the task, i.e. identifying and resolving a misunderstanding, than they were on the characteristics of the communicative genre in which the role-play was supposed to take place. This impression is reinforced by the students' reaction to the comments I made during the whole class discussion at the end of situation 1 regarding the lack of opening sequences I had observed in some pairs' role-plays:

Excerpt 35:

T7: 1887-1898 (01:22:02-01:22:20)

| | | |
|------|------|--|
| 1887 | T: | i i thought it was |
| 1888 | | interesting as i was walking around um (.) some of you have |
| 1889 | | interesting ways of starting phone conversations |
| 1890 | Sxx: | @@@ @ |
| 1891 | T: | the one group th- there y- you know there wasn't even like a |
| 1892 | | ring or a hello or anything |
| 1893 | Sxx: | @@@ |
| 1894 | T: | it was just like (.) where are you |
| 1895 | Sxx: | @@@@@@@@@@@@ |
| 1896 | T: | @@ <@> so </@> (.) you know feel free to think about this |
| 1897 | | a little bit more about whether that's what you would really |
| 1898 | | say |

The students' laughter in response to my comments, and in particular the protracted laughter in line 1895, indicates that the students recognized that skipping an opening sequence and

¹²² This incident was not picked up by the recording device and is therefore not in the transcript of course session 7; rather, it was documented in the post-course session journal entry.

beginning a telephone call directly with a phrase like *where are you* (line 1894) feels inappropriate in this context, thus suggesting that they were in fact aware that opening routines are a conventional part of telephone calls.

The students' behavior during the second round of role-playing also supports the position that the students omitted opening sequences during the first round due to their focus on the aims of the task rather than to a lack of pragmatic competence. In the second scenario, rather than speaking on the phone, speakers A and B meet by chance at a party about a week after B's birthday (cf. Tilbury et al. 2011: 119, 120). The situation is somewhat awkward for both speakers, since speaker A had sent speaker B a package for B's birthday, but had never heard anything from B about whether the gift had arrived or whether B liked it. As it turns out, the gift had arrived without the name of the sender on it, so speaker B was not sure whom to thank for the gift or even if A had acknowledged B's birthday at all (cf. Tilbury et al. 2011: 119, 120). Nevertheless, the two pairs whose conversations were captured by the recording device both began the role-play with an appropriate opening sequence before they began to try to identify and negotiate the misunderstanding that had taken place:

Excerpt 36:

T7: 1948-1952 (01:24:08-01:24:22)

- 1948 S16: how are you really (.) i haven't seen you (.) in a long time
1949 S3: yeah (.) me neither (.) eh: (.) happy birthday
1950 S16: oh thank you
1951 S3: @
1952 S16: it was my birthday

Excerpt 37:

T7: 1959-1964 (01:24:25-01:24:36)

- 1959 S15: hi friend happy birthday xx your birthday
1960 last night
1961 S11: oh: thank you very much
1962 S15: @ @ @ @
1963 S11: i'm so happy that you are here
1964 S15: i just wanted to ask you something ...

In both of the excerpts above, the opening sequence of each conversation includes not only conventional acts associated with greeting someone (e.g., asking how someone is (Excerpt 36 line 1948), expressing happiness to see one's conversational partner (Excerpt 37 line 1963)), but also involves the student who was role-playing speaker A in each pair (S3 and S15 respectively) wishing speaker B a happy birthday (Excerpt 36 line 1949, Excerpt 37 lines 1959-1960). This is a move that would have been strongly expected in the local culture if two speakers had not spoken to each other since one of their birthdays, to the point that failing to acknowledge a birthday could be interpreted as an affront to that person. Thus, the inclusion of this act shows both pragmatic awareness and pragmatic competence on S3's and S15's parts.

Likewise, the students role-playing speaker B (S16 and S11 respectively) both respond to these birthday wishes as would be expected in the local culture, by thanking student A, demonstrating that they are familiar with this conventionalized adjacency pair (Excerpt 36 line 1950, Excerpt 37 line 1961). Overall, these exchanges demonstrate that my remarks after the previous role-play seem to have been sufficient to draw the students' attention to the communicative contexts in which the role-plays were embedded. The fact that these two pairs were able to act out an appropriate opening sequence in the second scenario lends weight to the argument that the absence of an opening sequence in many pairs' first role-plays can be attributed to lack of attention to the communicative context in which the role-play was embedded rather than to lack of pragmatic competence with opening sequences.

At the end of each role-play, the students in each pair signaled to me that they had completed the task by returning to their seats. Most pairs finished role-playing each situation at about the same time, and no pairs indicated that they had not been able to identify a point of misunderstanding or to come up with a satisfactory solution. Interestingly, however, when we discussed the first situation with the whole class after the role-playing phase, we discovered that different pairs had reached at least two different interpretations of the point of misunderstanding in this scenario. Some students had understood that speaker B in the role-play was simply running late because B had lost track of the time while catching up with an old friend (cf. T7: 1806-1824). However, most of the students had caught that the misunderstanding hinged on which day A and B thought they were supposed meet (cf. T7: 1826-1828, Materials excerpts 30 and 31 in 18.1 above).

Generally, the students seemed eager to share the solutions they had negotiated in their pairs with one another. The recording device captured several instances in which students compared their pair's solution with their neighbor's when they returned to their seats at the end of the role-playing phases of the task (T7: 1753-1765, 1788-1793, 2005-2019). A number of different students also volunteered to share their pair's solution to a particular scenario during our whole-class discussion (T7: 1843-1844, 1857-1863, 1865-1866, 2048-2065, 2067-2072). Based on these responses, as well as the solutions I overheard while walking around the classroom during the role-playing phase of the task, all the pairs arrived at a fitting solution to each scenario, and each solution was slightly unique. The students showed genuine interest in hearing what the other pairs had decided to do.

During the whole-class discussion phases of the role-playing task, we did not really attempt to discuss how the students had gone about identifying the misunderstanding in each scenario or proposing a solution, i.e. what speech acts or CSs they had used and how exactly they had realized these in English. It was assumed that if a pair had been able to reach an understanding

of what had gone wrong and had been able to negotiate a solution, then they must have been able to successfully employ the CSs and speech acts they needed in this process. Even if I had asked the students to comment on their own CS and/or speech act use, I doubt that they would have been able to give particularly accurate or insightful answers. Analysis of another lesson phase, in which the students were asked to comment on their own use of paraphrasing strategies during a communicative task, shows that the students were relatively unaware of their own CS use during the task (cf. 19.3). They appear to have been more focused on the task itself than on the CSs they used to accomplish it, and it seems likely that the same would have proved true in discussing this task.

However, an analysis of the students' actual use of CSs and speech acts in this phase of the lesson could be useful from a pedagogical perspective. First, it might shed light on the relationship between linguistic input in the awareness-raising phase of the lesson and output during the role-playing tasks. Did the students make use of the CSs presented, or did they largely rely on others? If they did make use of the CSs presented in the earlier tasks, did they use the linguistic realizations featured in those tasks, or did they realize them in other ways? If the students used other realizations, were these effective in achieving the aims of the role-play? Second, an analysis of the task might also help to establish whether the role-plays truly supported the use of, and thus practice with, the CSs targeted by the whole task sequence in Unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2*. Were these CSs truly necessary and useful in navigating each role-play? Did the scenarios inadvertently encourage the use of other speech acts and CSs for which the students had not been prepared?

Unfortunately, very little data from the role-playing phases of this lesson segment is available for analysis. During this phase of the lesson, the students were up and moving about the room, and the pairs were all holding their conversations at the same time, resulting in relatively high levels of background noise. Due to these issues, the recording device only captured fragments of conversations between two different pairs during the first role-playing phase, as well as the opening turns plus one complete conversation during the second role-playing phase. The data thus provides a very incomplete picture of what went on in the various pairs, making it impossible to undertake conclusive and meaningful analysis of patterns of CS use across the learning group.

In terms of the limited data that is available from this lesson segment, the recording device did capture a few instances in which students in two different pairs tried to explain how a misunderstanding had arisen (T7: 1721-1722, 1729-1733, 1969-1982). In none of these instances did a student utilize any of the linguistic realizations from task 5 that they had completed earlier in the lesson (cf. Materials excerpt 29 in 18.1 above). Additionally, one

student, S17, was recorded proposing a potential solution to the misunderstanding he and his partner uncovered during the first role-playing scenario: *so ah: (.) yeah ah:: maybe we can go (.) to the cinema (.) a little bit later or: (.) yeah* (T7: 1742-1743). S17 used the phrase *maybe we can* to introduce the solution he wanted his partner to consider, that the two should go to a later showing of the movie they were planning to see. In terms of linguistic form, this is relatively close to the phrase *we could maybe* that was suggested by S2 during the whole-class discussion of task 5 earlier in the lesson (cf. 18.2 above). It remains unclear, however, whether the fact that S2 had proposed a similar structure earlier in the lesson actually influenced S17's choice of realization here.

Conceivably, the students could have used contrastive stress as a strategy for clarifying meaning during this task. For example, in role-playing the first scenario, Speaker A could have used a sentence like "I thought we were going to the movies **THIS** evening, not **TOMORROW** evening." However, no instances were recorded during this task in which a student made use of contrastive stress as a strategy for clarifying meaning. Since the recording device was only able to capture a small fraction of what was said during the role-plays, this does not necessarily indicate that contrastive stress was not used at all during these phases of the lesson. It is therefore not possible on the basis of this data to determine conclusively whether this task was capable of eliciting the use of contrastive stress as a strategy for clarifying meaning or whether it might be necessary to consider modifying this task in some way to increase the likelihood that learners would in fact employ this strategy.

Despite the limited amount of data collected during this task, the available data does seem to suggest that the second situation may not have been structured in such a way that it invited the students to propose a solution to the misunderstanding that had occurred in the same way that the first situation did. The misunderstanding in the first scenario hinges on the fact that speaker A and speaker B had understood that they were meeting to see a movie on different days, leading A to call from the theater to ask why B had not arrived yet. Once the students in the course had identified this point of misunderstanding, they generally proposed a solution in the form of a future course of action that would rectify the situation, as their responses in the post-task discussion show (cf. T7: 1841-1875). For example, one pair agreed that when the two characters in the role-play next went to the movies, B would buy A's movie ticket to make up for getting the date wrong this time (T7: 1843-1844). By contrast, the misunderstanding in the second situation arises from the fact that both speakers feel that the other has failed to acknowledge them: Speaker A has not received thanks or appreciation for the birthday gift sent to B, and speaker B could not know A had tried to acknowledge B's birthday since the gift arrived without information about the sender. Once the students had identified this point of misunderstanding during the role-playing phase of the task, they appear to have engaged

primarily in face-saving acts rather than trying to propose a future course of action that would solve the situation, as they had done when role-playing scenario 1.

This preference for the negotiation of a face-saving resolution to the misunderstanding rather than a solution in the form of a proposed future course of action is apparent in the conversation between S11 and S15, the only complete exchange between a pair captured by the recording device during the role-playing task. After S11 and S15 had established that the misunderstanding in situation 2 had arisen because speaker A's gift had arrived without a name on it, the conversation proceeded as follows:

Excerpt 38:

T7: 1976-1993 (01:25:13-01:24:41)

1976 S15: i um
1977 S11: so
1978 S15: had a lot of doubts because i didn't know if you really like it
1979 or not or if it's just <28> xx </28> xx shit @@@
1980 S11: <28> ye:s </28>
1981 S11: no: i really like (.) and i really wanted eh:: to know ah who
1982 gave it because it's so beautiful to me but (.) i didn't know
1983 S15: okay that was very stupid from me not to write down my
1984 name okay
1985 S11: @@ (.) no:: (.) it was no problem
1986 S15: my friend so you're not angry with me
1987 S11: no:
1988 S15: <@> all right </@> @@@@
1989 S11: i'm not angry thank you for the gift
1990 S15: @@@@
1991 S11: @@@
1992 S15: okay
1993 S11: okay

In negotiating a resolution to the misunderstanding, they have identified early on in their conversation, S11 and S15 produce a number of utterances that could be interpreted as face-saving acts in light of the embarrassment created by the misunderstanding. As speaker A, the speaker who had failed to write her name on her birthday gift for B, S15 makes the comment *okay that was very stupid from me not to write down my name okay* (lines 1983-1984). In a sense, she is accepting responsibility for causing the misunderstanding, but this utterance also seems to function as an indirect apology. This interpretation is supported by the way that S11 responds to this utterance. In saying *no:: (.) it was no problem* (line 1985), S11 downplays the seriousness of the offence for which S15 is apologizing, a politeness strategy commonly employed to accept an apology while saving the interlocutor's face (cf. Goffmann 1971; Holmes 1990, 1995; Robinson 2004). S15 also asks S11 indirectly whether she is angry with her for her mistake (line 1986), and S11 assures her that she is not (line 1987, 1989). As speaker B, S11 engages in two further kinds of face-saving act. First, she expresses admiration for A's gift, saying *i really like* (line 1981) and stating that she wanted to know who had sent it *because it's so beautiful to me* (line 1982). Then, toward the end of the exchange, she also thanks A for

the gift (line 1989), which could again be seen as an act addressing A's face in that it acknowledges that A has done something which B values positively. After this, S11 and S15 signal that they feel they have negotiated a satisfactory resolution to the role-play in the previous turns, as evidenced by their laughter and their use of *okay* in their final turns (lines 1990-1993). Thus, they appear to have been able to resolve the situation through the use of face-managing acts without ever proposing a solution in the sense of a future course of action.

The recording of the whole-class discussion after the second role play also provides other sources of evidence that the students may have preferred face-saving and face-managing acts such as apologizing, expressing admiration for the gift and thanking the giver rather than proposing a course of further action as they had done in role-playing situation 1. When I asked the students how they solved the problem they had identified in situation 2, several students responded with laughter (T7: 2046), indicating that they found my question odd. I immediately rephrased my prompt as *or what happened in your conversation* (T7: 2047), which acknowledged the fact that I also did not feel it natural to talk about 'solving' this scenario. The students generally seemed aware that the misunderstanding in situation 2 could be very embarrassing for both A and B and might require face work in order to resolve. This is particularly apparent in a comment by S16 when he was explaining to the group how he and his partner had resolved the situation:

Excerpt 39:

T7: 2067-2072 (01:27:49-01:27:58)

| | | |
|------|------|---|
| 2067 | S16: | ehm in my case he asked me directly if i got his present |
| 2068 | Sxx: | @ @ @ @ @ |
| 2069 | T: | <@> okay </@> |
| 2070 | S16: | and i- i was (.) i- it was (.) then a little embarrassing but |
| 2071 | T: | okay |
| 2072 | S16: | uh: (.) i said sorry |

In line 2070, S16 comments directly on the embarrassment he 'felt' as speaker B when his partner asked him if he had received his gift. He also reports making use of the speech act apologizing during the role-play (line 2072). The use of *but* between these two statements (line 2070) implies that he felt the need to apologize because of his feeling of embarrassment, suggesting that he apologized at least in part to acknowledge that he had failed to meet what he considered to be a reasonable expectation by A, that one should acknowledge receiving a present from someone. Afterwards, I called on S16's partner, S3, who commented that he had chosen to ask his partner whether he had received the present directly because, as speaker A, *ma- maybe i would be a little bit angry if [...] @@ i buy a:: nice watch and he uh don't say thank you* (T7: 2082, 2085). This prompted S16 to respond *i said he had a (.) a good taste for watches* (T7: 2091). Thus, S16 also appears to have engaged in the strategy of complimenting as a face-managing act in role-playing this scenario.

All in all, there seems to be some evidence, both in the transcription of the role-playing phase and of the whole-class discussion phase that followed, that the students generally made more use of face-saving and face-managing strategies than they did of proposing a solution in the form of a future course of action in negotiating a resolution for situation 2. There therefore appears to be something of a disconnect between the input in the awareness-raising tasks from earlier in the lesson and the output elicited by this scenario in the role-playing task; that is, the scenario appears to require pragmatic competence with a different range of speech acts than those the task sequence purports to target. Thus, this situation appears to be somewhat out of place in this unit of the textbook and might require modification or even replacement if the teacher is truly interested in a communicative task focused on CSs for explaining a misunderstanding and proposing a solution. Conversely, the situation might be very effective as the basis for a role-play in a lesson sequence targeting strategies for managing and resolving face-threatening situations. So, although there is generally too little data available for a comprehensive analysis of the CSs and speech acts employed by the students during the role-playing phases of this task, there does appear to be some evidence that at least one of the situations provided by the textbook did not actually elicit use of the strategies the learners were supposed to be practicing and might therefore be a candidate for modification or exclusion from the task in light of the aims of the overall task sequence.

18.4 Examining a point of misunderstanding in an ELF conversation

As discussed in 7.2, the listening text *Problems with listening* (Walker 2010, Track 6) was a considerable departure from the kinds of listening texts the students were used to working with in language courses, and this had a noticeable effect on classroom discussion. Although the students appeared to be interested and invested in trying to understand the text, and although about half the class participated actively in the discussion, the students still seemed somewhat hesitant and uncertain during this part of course session 9. This continued into our discussion of the point of misunderstanding that arises in *Problems with listening* due to speaker J's use of a non-standard word, **upscore* (cf. Materials excerpt 32 in 18.1 above). By this time, the students had had some time to adjust to listening to a more authentic text, but they were still unfamiliar with the kind of critical reflection on the use of CSs in authentic conversation that I was asking them to engage in, and it was generally apparent that they felt less comfortable and confident during this lesson segment than during many others in the course.

As we began our discussion of the point of misunderstanding in *Problems with listening*, I handed out the transcript of the listening text to the students. This was done primarily because the students would need to be able to closely examine how the conversation progressed from turn to turn in lines 21 to 36 of the text, in which the non-understanding arises, is signaled and is resolved (cf. Materials excerpt 32 in 18.1 above). We had worked with transcripts of listening texts found in textbooks at other points in the course (cf., e.g., Chapter 16), so the students were somewhat used to seeing spoken texts in written form. However, I failed to anticipate how confusing they would find the transcript of *Problems with listening*. Although I explained to the students that in this kind of transcript, *every single word and every single sound and every single pause is written down for you to see* (T9: 1817-1819), I did not take the time to explain all of the symbols used in the transcript. I only drew their attention to the purpose of the asterisk before the word **upscare* (T9: 1827-1834). It was not until the end of the task, when a student asked about the function of the brackets in the transcript (T9: 1970-1971), that I realized the students had generally struggled to make sense of the written form of the text. Thus, one reason the students may have appeared so hesitant during our discussion of the non-understanding caused by speaker J's use of **upscare* was simply because they did not feel confident in reading and understanding the transcript of the conversation.

This suggests that I may have needed to approach the transcript with the students more deliberately. Aware that the students would likely be unfamiliar with listening to texts like *Problems with listening*, I had built time into the task sequence for the students to become used to listening to a new kind of text and to comment on its features, a decision which appears to have been helpful for the students (cf. 7.2.1). I probably needed to do something similar when I handed out the transcript as well. Based on their feedback at the end of the lesson, the students would have benefited from some time to look at the transcript and gather impressions, compare it with the spoken text and ask questions about the transcription symbols used before we took a closer look at the misunderstanding arising around **upscare*. This probably would not have completely eased the students' hesitancy during this lesson segment, since they were not accustomed to the kind of analysis I was asking them to engage in, but it likely would have helped.

I planned to look at the point of misunderstanding hinging on speaker J's use of **upscare* with the students at the end of our work with *Problems with listening*, after we had done several other tasks involving looking more closely at the role of the listener in conversation (cf. Chapter 20). However, even before I drew the students' attention to this aspect of the conversation, one student, S7, used the part of the text in which **upscare* first occurs as an example of a point at which both listener and speaker engage in repetition (T9: 1705-1706). Although he failed to recognize the role of repetition in signaling non-understanding and asking for clarification at

this point in the text, he already seemed to be pondering what the speaker could have meant in using this word. When we shifted our focus a few minutes later from listener CSs to this moment of non-understanding and its resolution, S7 was the first student to offer his thoughts on what **upscare* might mean, adding further evidence that this was a point of the text that had already engaged his attention:

Excerpt 40:

T9: 1842-1860 (01:13:12-01:13:44)

- 1842 S7: eh maybe she wants to: explain that it's above scare its level
 1843 it's (.) like (.) ehm (1) oh i just know the german word (.) eh
 1844 (.) should i paraphrase it so <L1ger> steigerung {increase}
 1845 </L1ger>
 1846 T: try it if you can @ @ @ @
 1847 S7: @ @
 1848 T: try to paraphrase it if you can
 1849 S7: too late
 1850 T: it's good practice
 1851 S7: i- i just said it in german
 1852 T: okay
 1853 S7: it was <L1ger> steigerung steigerung {increase} </L1ger> of
 1854 T: okay so it's more of:
 1855 S7: yeah
 1856 T: whatever
 1857 S7: yeah
 1858 T: more scary more scary okay
 1859 S7: and she just like (.) want to (.) just to say that it's more that
 1860 it's the most scary thing from listening

In his explanation, S7 appears to treat **upscare* as a compound word, the meaning of which can be explained in terms of the meanings of its component parts, *up* and *scare*. While he seems to assume that *scare* will have its usual denotative meaning, as evidenced by the fact that he does not feel the need to explain its meaning to the group, he attributes a more metaphorical meaning to *up*. He first glosses **upscare* as *above scare* (line 1842). However, he seems dissatisfied with this explanation and goes on to say that he has a specific German word in mind (line 1843). He then says the word in line 1844. This word, *Steigerung*, can mean 'an increase', but also 'a progression', and the comparative form of an adjective is referred to as its *Steigerungsform* in German. I seem to have the latter in mind when I suggest *oh so it's more of: ... whatever* as a paraphrase of S7's explanation (lines 1854, 1856). S7 agrees with this paraphrase in lines 1855 and 1857 and finally glosses **upscare* as *the most scary thing from listening* (line 1860). In attributing a meaning to *up* as *above* or *most*, S7 thus appears to draw upon what Lakoff and Johnson (1980) refer to as the orientational metaphor MORE IS UP, in which increases, even of abstract notions such as scariness, are often associated with language expressing an upward direction (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 14-16).

S7's response shows that he was trying to use a combination of the (extended) lexical meanings of *up* and *scare*, plus the context of the conversation up until the point in the text in

which **upscare* is first used, to arrive at a possible meaning. However, the meaning speaker J appears to have had in mind only becomes apparent several turns after her initial use of this word, when speaker I provides a paraphrase of the word and speaker J confirms that this is what she meant (cf. Materials excerpt 32, lines 27-33, in 18.1 above). In these lines, it becomes evident that **upscare* could actually be glossed as *difficult*, rather than *most scary*. To help the students notice this, it was necessary for me to redirect their attention to these lines in the text (T9: 1861-1866). Yet even after I specifically referred to line 27, the students still needed more time to study the transcript before one student, S6, was finally able to identify the meaning that speakers I and J had negotiated (T9: 1868-1872). This lends weight to the argument that the students found navigating the transcript somewhat difficult.

After establishing what speaker J meant by **upscare*, we then shifted our attention to looking more closely at how speaker I signaled her non-understanding of this word and how speakers I and J resolved the problem by negotiating a mutual understanding of it. During this part of our discussion, individual students were able to answer the questions used to guide the class through this part of the text. However, there were often lengthy pauses between the end of a question and the student response. Additionally, responses were generally quite short and often delivered on rising intonation (T9: 1889, 1903), suggesting that the students felt insecure about their answers. Thus, although the students were ultimately able to identify salient aspects of the text, such as the use of repetition to signal non-understanding in lines 22 and 24 (T9: 1889) and the use of paraphrasing to clarify (lines 25-26) and confirm (lines 27, 29-30) meaning (T9: 1915), they did not appear particularly comfortable or confident during this part of the discussion.

In planning this lesson segment, I had anticipated that the students would need a significant amount of teacher guidance in identifying the non-understanding and the way in which a solution is negotiated in *Problems with listening*, since they were not used to engaging in this kind of critical reflection. This led me to choose a teacher-led discussion as the best method to help the students navigate this aspect of the text. While the students' insecurity during our discussion affirms this decision, I feel in retrospect that my guidance could have been even more structured so as to better help the students to notice and describe the process that speakers I and J engaged in to identify and repair the point of non-understanding. Were I to use this text for the same purposes again, I would propose a more detailed line of questioning:

- How does speaker I signal to speaker J that she doesn't understand in line 22?
- How does speaker J respond in line 23? Why do you think she responds this way? Is this helpful for speaker I?
- How does speaker J respond in line 25 when it becomes clear that speaker I still doesn't understand? Is this more helpful?

- What does **upscare* actually appear to mean in this text? How do you know? (Who actually explains what **upscare* means?)
- What happens after speaker I signals that she has understood what speaker J means by **upscare*?
- Do you think speaker J realizes that she has used a word that isn't a standard word of English? What makes you think this?

This set of questions attempts to help learners notice and articulate important aspects of the process of negotiating this instance of non-understanding by drawing their attention to very specific points in the text. It guides them toward describing in non-technical terms how this process unfolds, while continually drawing their attention to the strategies the speakers employ in this process. This should provide the learners with more scaffolding, thus better supporting their critical reflection on how and why the non-understanding arises and how it is ultimately resolved.

Finally, in engaging learners in critical reflection on instances in which communicative problems have arisen, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that, in spite of such problems, ELF communication is still usually successful. This is true for the conversation in *Problems with listening* as well. Speakers I and J are able to identify and negotiate the non-understanding that arises, thus reestablishing mutual understanding so that the conversation can continue to a successful conclusion. In retrospect, I do not think that the students in the pilot course were given enough opportunity to reflect upon this aspect of the text, nor the role that CSs played in it. Based on the students' reactions to this text, some of them became hung up on the dysfluencies and non-standard language in the text, aspects which stand in strong contrast to the polished, scripted texts most often featured in language learning materials. Follow-up questions would probably have helped them to notice that this conversation can be considered successful in the sense that the participants are able to achieve mutual understanding and to continue the conversation to a natural ending point. In future, I would therefore propose to end discussion of this text with the following two questions:

- Is the conversation between speakers I and J ultimately successful or unsuccessful? Why do you think so?
- What might have happened if speakers I and J had not been able to negotiate the meaning of **upscare* (e.g. because speaker I did not signal that she did not understand, because speaker J could not explain her meaning, because the two did not cooperate to try to understand each other)?

The first question invites the learners to consider the effect of the problematic stretch on the whole conversation. This is an important step in that it puts this moment back into its larger conversational context: despite the fact that speaker J uses a non-standard word that her interlocutor is initially unable to understand, the conversation is able to proceed to a successful conclusion because the two speakers are able to use CSs to identify and negotiate this non-understanding. In focusing on what might have happened if speakers I and J had not been able

to negotiate the meaning of **upscore*, the second question aims to draw the learners' attention to the importance of CSs in achieving successful communication. If the speakers had lacked competence in signaling and resolving non-understanding, the conversation might have ended very differently, and much less satisfactorily, for the participants involved.

In his recommendations for the teaching of pragmatics in the ELF-oriented classroom, Murray (2012) emphasized the importance of “*regularly* incorporating in the classroom reflective practices that help sensitize learners to breakdowns in communication, where they happen and why, and ways of resolving them” (Murray 2012: 322, emphasis added). This suggests that learners will benefit most from repeated exposure to such activities over a longer stretch of time. Given the short nature of the course, this was hardly possible here. The guided discussion of *Problems with listening* was the only opportunity to reflect on how a problem of understanding was signaled and resolved within an actual instance of communication, so that the students did not have the chance to gain more experience with this kind of task through repeated exposure. However, one would expect that where there is time to regularly engage in this kind of critical reflection, learners would become more accustomed to such analysis, so that these tasks would eventually take less time to complete. Additionally, one would also expect that, with practice, learners would begin to be able to notice and articulate more on their own as they became more meta-pragmatically aware. Thus, in learning groups in which learners are engaged in this kind of critical reflection regularly, it should also be possible to reduce the amount of guidance provided by the teacher and begin to engage in more learner-centered types of activities.

However, despite the fact that we were only able to work with one such authentic instance of the resolution of a communicative problem through the use of CSs, and despite the insecurities the students exhibited in working with *Problems with listening* at the time, the experience of working with this text still appears to have made a lasting impression on at least some of the students. As has been mentioned in 7.2.2, one source of evidence for this claim is that, independently of one another, two students specifically referred to this text, and more specifically to the moment of non-understanding arising from the use of the non-standard word **upscore*, during their final exams in connection with something they had learned about intercultural communication through this course (TFE S4+S7: 374-377, 393-399; TFE S13+S16: 299-337). In each case, their references to this text demonstrate that not only was working with this text memorable, but also that it contributed to increased awareness of the communicative potential of CSs in intercultural communication.

During his exam, S7 referenced *Problems with listening* at a point at which he was speaking about the biggest challenges of communicating internationally. One thing he focused on was

issues with vocabulary, and he specifically mentioned the point of non-understanding which arises in *Problems with listening* due to speaker J's use of the non-standard word **upscore*:

eh: there was an example like <pvc> upscore </pvc> (.) this was a word eh: the taiwanese girl just come to mind (.) ehm (.) eh: if this case happened you just (.) h-have to paraphrase the word just to: (.) describe the words in detail or using (.) other words (.) eh (.) or just (.) kind of use (.) gestures {geistf3:z} or:: you can write something down (TFE S4+S7: 393-398)

While S7 holds up this example as a problematic moment in this conversation, he immediately makes a connection to using CSs such as paraphrasing to negotiate mutual understanding and resolve the problem. Working with this text thus seems to have “sensitize[ed him] to situations where [CSs] could be useful” (Dörnyei 1995: 63). In using this instance of non-understanding to exemplify a point at which the use of paraphrasing strategies is necessary, S7 shows that he has developed some awareness of situations in which employing certain strategies might help to resolve a communicative problem and restore mutual understanding.

During his exam, S16 commented regarding the two speakers in *Problems with listening*:

well their english was (.) grammatically: very bad [...] but i think that they could understand what they were saying [...] i was just (.) astonished or surprised (.) that they could not talk that (.) their english was not that good but still they could communicate in english (TFE S13+S16: 317-319, 321-327)

S16's comment seems to hinge upon what, for him, was a disconnect between linguistic accuracy and communicative success. That is, he was surprised that the two speakers could apparently understand each other successfully considering how much non-standard language they used. This prompted his partner to introduce the non-understanding which arose in the text due to the use of **upscore*. After discussing this moment briefly (TFE S13+S16: 328-337), S16 then connected this example to the importance of using CSs in this kind of communicative situation:

i think (.) eh in language (.) language is more (.) y- there is there are rules and grammar and words but uh: eh when talking interna- i:nternationally (.) it's more important to be understood than to understand so i think you can (.) we can all agree that you don't need to know (.) eh:: much vocabulary (.) to be understood and the most important thing is to to be clear and that's why we also talked about those (.) what we are doing now trying to keep a conversation going and paraphrasing it's always- it's (.) it- you al- we learn new ways of trying to (.) be understood and understand and that is th- the most important part (TFE S13+S16: 338-358)

What S16 appears to have gleaned from the experience of working with *Problems with listening* was awareness of the important role that CSs can play in communicating successfully in intercultural situations. Although he does not refer directly to CSs, this seems to be what he has in mind when he references *what we are doing now trying to keep a conversation going and paraphrasing* and *new ways of trying to (.) be understood and understand* in the excerpt above. The fact that the two interactants from *Problems with listening* could achieve mutual understanding through the use of CSs, despite their non-standard usage of English, seems to

have impressed upon him that “these strategies could actually work” (Dörnyei 1995: 63). In fact, he goes so far as to claim that *learn[ing] new ways of trying to (.) be understood and understand [...] is...the most important part* of learning to communicate successfully in intercultural encounters.

According to Dörnyei (1995), both the awareness of situations in which CSs might be useful and the realization that strategies can effectively contribute to communicative success are more specific aspects of the kind of awareness described in the first area of his framework, ‘raising learner awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs’ (Dörnyei 1995: 63). Thus, the two excerpts above show that classroom work with the listening text *Problems with listening* was able to contribute successfully to learning in this specific area of Dörnyei’s framework, despite the students’ apparent discomfort at the time.

Beyond the first area of Dörnyei’s framework, S16’s response in particular also provides some evidence that working with this text may also have contributed to learning in the second area, ‘encouraging students to be willing to take risks and use CSs’. One important aspect of this area is that it entails encouraging learners “to manipulate the language without being afraid of making errors” (Dörnyei 1995: 63). In his comments, S16 mentions that working with *Problems with listening* helped to demonstrate for him that adherence to linguistic rules is not the most important factor in successful intercultural exchanges. Rather, he identifies *learn[ing] new ways of trying to (.) be understood and understand*, i.e. developing strategic competence, as *the most important part* of learning to communicate successfully in such situations. Although it is difficult to measure attitudes such as willingness to take risks, S16’s statement suggests that he also recognized the necessity of using the CSs in his repertoire even where he was unsure how to formulate their realizations in ‘correct’ Standard English, since he acknowledged the former to be more salient to communicative success than the latter. This is substantiated by the fact that S16 did employ a range of the CSs covered during Block 2 of the course during the second task of the final exam (cf. 21.4).

It would appear, then, that classroom work with the text *Problems with listening* in course session 9 did in fact contribute to learning related to at least two areas of Dörnyei’s framework for the development of strategic competence (cf. Chapter 17). As the two excerpts above show, working with this text helped to raise at least some students’ ‘awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs’ (area 1). More indirectly, the second excerpt suggests that working with this text also may have had the effect of ‘encouraging students to be willing to take risks and use CSs’ (area 2). Thus, although this was the only example in which the students were asked to work with such a text, this experience did contribute to the overarching learning objectives of Block 2 of classroom work on pragmatics.

18.5 *Summary and reconsideration of the task sequence*

In the lesson sequences described in the preceding sections of Chapter 18, the focus was on developing the students' strategic competence with CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding. These sequences were constructed around two sets of materials: a unit from a general English coursebook and an authentic listening text from a resource for ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching. Both lesson sequences took an inductive approach to introducing CSs, in which the observation of specific realizations of strategies in the context of a listening text led to the identification of underlying communicative processes and strategies. However, despite this similarity in overall approach, these two sets of materials were fundamentally different in a number of ways, and these differences had an influence on classroom instruction.

The initial tasks in the task sequence from Unit 2.1 of the coursebook *English Unlimited B2* (Tilbury et al. 2011: 14-15) were built around a listening text that was scripted for the textbook and exhibited many of the shortcomings that have been identified in such texts in the literature on teaching pragmatics. That said, work with the text remained fairly superficial. The text was largely used to introduce the topic of the lesson and raise initial awareness of both the need for CSs aimed at identifying and resolving points of misunderstanding, as well as a few possible realizations of the CSs themselves. Then the focus of the lesson sequence shifted to tasks aimed at providing targeted communicative practice. Thus, the unit offered a fairly balanced sequence of awareness-raising and communicative practice tasks, while the text itself served primarily as a starting point for the remainder of the sequence. The students were largely familiar with both the type of text and the types of tasks featured in this unit from their previous experiences as language learners, though some seemed less familiar with role-plays. The text itself, in which linguistic and pragmatic choices were both carefully controlled for pedagogical purposes, gave the students no difficulties. They also appeared comfortable with the demands placed upon them by the tasks in the sequence and were generally able to complete these tasks quickly and without significant difficulty.

Nevertheless, the ease with which the students were able to comprehend the text and complete the tasks does not necessarily suggest that the task sequence was too easy to contribute to the development of the students' strategic competence with CSs for identifying and resolving points of misunderstanding. The students may already have been aware of linguistic structures that could be used to enact specific strategies such as offering a solution, and were possibly even aware of the strategies themselves, but researchers into the area of strategic competence argue that learners will still require the chance both to develop an awareness of how and when particular CSs might be used in communicative contexts and to

practice deploying these CSs in communicative situations (cf. Chapter 17). Likewise, Dörnyei (1995) stresses the need to draw learners' "conscious attention" to CSs, even if they may already have these CSs in their repertoires (Dörnyei 1995: 63). As the very first lesson sequence in Block 2 of the strand of the course focusing on CSs, it was perhaps particularly important to begin with familiar task and text types, as well as a lower level of linguistic challenge, in order to allow the students to focus their attention on the pragmatic concepts that were the main focus of the lesson. Furthermore, the students themselves gave no indication that they were bored or unmotivated by the tasks. Rather, this part of the lesson sequence was characterized by active participation from a wide range of students during whole class interactions and by focused yet lively exchanges during pair and group work phases.

The data collected during the role-playing task analyzed in 18.3 also raised an important point that teachers must consider when selecting or developing communicative practice tasks, namely that it is important to ensure that such tasks are constructed so as to actually elicit the use of the CSs that are the focus of the lesson, rather than some other set of CSs or speech acts. In Unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2*, the focus of the lesson is on using CSs to identify the cause of a misunderstanding and to propose a potential solution. While recordings from the first round of role-plays suggest that the first scenario presented in the communicative practice task elicited the use of both types of strategy, recordings from the second round suggest that the second scenario did not. Rather than featuring a misunderstanding that elicited proposals for a solution in the sense of the preceding awareness-raising tasks, the misunderstanding in this scenario instead created a face-threatening situation that elicited face-saving and face-managing acts from the students. In that sense, there was a lack of connection between the focus of the lesson and the construction of this scenario. This suggests that teachers will need to approach even prepared practice tasks from language learning materials such as coursebooks critically to make sure that they create opportunities to practice the CSs or pragmatic acts that are the focus of classroom work.

In contrast to the text featured in Unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2*, the text entitled *Problems with listening* from Walker (2010) was much more authentic. Although it was recorded for research and pedagogical purposes, and thus cannot be said to be naturally occurring, it was not scripted. Rather, it featured an unscripted conversation between two non-native speakers of English who were discussing a prompt question. This type of more authentic text, with its features of natural conversation and unfiltered use of language, was objectively more difficult than the scripted text presented in *English Unlimited B2*. On top of this, the students had also had little, if any, previous exposure to such texts in their experience as language learners. Overall, they struggled much more to understand what was being said than when working with the scripted text from *English Unlimited B2*. However, this was expected,

and the lesson sequence included activities aimed at helping the students to adjust to the new listening experience before engaging in tasks aimed at developing their strategic competence.

In contrast to the sequence from *English Unlimited B2*, classroom work with *Problems with listening* was entirely awareness-raising. The task sequence developed around *Problems with listening* involved working very closely with the text to observe and analyze the role of CSs as the conversation unfolded. Thus, it involved more intensive work with the text than the sequence from Unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2*. This type of activity was also largely unfamiliar to the students, and I consciously chose to use teacher-led questioning in this part of the lesson in the knowledge that the students would likely require more support than in working with more familiar text and task types like the ones found in a coursebook series. Despite this guidance, the students were noticeably quieter and less confident in their responses during this part of the lesson sequence, although they also showed a genuine interest in understanding the text and the transcript we were working with. In terms of the learning aims related to this theme of classroom work on CSs, it has been suggested in 18.4 above that the students probably would have benefitted from an even more tightly scaffolded set of questions, given their lack of experience with both this type of text and this type of task. Had there been more time to regularly incorporate further work with these types of texts and activities into classroom instruction, the students would likely have developed the ability to work with them both more confidently and more independently as their familiarity with such materials and their meta-pragmatic awareness increased. Nevertheless, some students' comments during the final exam suggest that the experience of working with *Problems with listening* increased their awareness of CSs and their potential to contribute to communicative success in intercultural communication. Likewise, this work may have encouraged students to use CSs actively in their own communicative exchanges in order to facilitate the construction of mutual understanding. Thus, work with this text supported at least to some extent the development of the kind of strategic competence described in at least two of the areas of Dörnyei's framework for the development of strategic competence.

19 Dealing with vocabulary issues: Strategies for paraphrasing intended meaning¹²³ (course sessions 8 and 9)

Although cases of overt non-understanding and communication breakdown are generally rare in ELF talk, some researchers have found that issues of vocabulary do occasionally cause communicative problems (cf. Hülmbauer 2010, Deterding 2013). Problems may arise when one or more of the participants in a conversation has a limited vocabulary, when there is a mismatch in vocabulary (i.e. one person knows a word that another does not) or when a participant is unable to recall a particular vocabulary item in English. Problems due to vocabulary may be further exacerbated “particularly where speakers lack paraphrasing skills” (Seidlhofer 2004: 220; cf. also Meierkord 1996: 99, Hülmbauer 2010: 71). Conversely, the ability to paraphrase may help participants to solve vocabulary issues that arise before they can lead to more severe communicative problems or even communication breakdown. Therefore, this is an important type of CS to develop and practice in the ELF-oriented classroom.

The students in the pilot course already seemed to be aware that issues of vocabulary could potentially be problematic for ELF communication. One of their first assignments had been to prepare and hold a two-minute introduction for the rest of the class in course session 2 (cf. 3.1). In addition to information about themselves and their experiences communicating in English, they were asked to comment on what they felt might be challenging about using English to communicate internationally. Issues relating to vocabulary were mentioned by five of the sixteen students who completed this assignment (S1, S13, S14, S15, S18) as being a particular challenge in international communication (cf. T2: 77-609). Lack of vocabulary was also the first area to be proposed by the students earlier in course session 8 when they were asked to name factors that might cause communication to break down (cf. 20.2). Thus, the students

¹²³ A certain terminological inconsistency becomes apparent in the discussion of paraphrasing in this chapter. From an interactional perspective, paraphrasing itself is seen as a CS that can be used to fulfill a number of communicative functions. However, the SLA/interlanguage approach that has traditionally underpinned pedagogical approaches to CSs in the classroom has identified a number of different ways that paraphrasing may be carried out, generally involving descriptions of the types of linguistic forms used to realize them (cf. Chapter 19 below). These different ways to carry out or realize a more general CS like paraphrasing might also be seen as CSs in and of themselves, following the argument that “a *communication strategy* in the most general sense is a plan of action to accomplish a communicative goal” (Dörnyei and Scott 1997: 179, *italics original*). However, it remains clear that these different strategies for implementation exist at a level below the level of paraphrasing as a more general type of CS. It therefore seems awkward to use the same label for both levels. In this section, I will therefore refer to specific strategies for implementing the more general CS paraphrasing as *paraphrasing strategies* or simply as *strategies*.

seemed to be aware of the potential need for CSs to help them deal with any issues that might arise due to vocabulary.

From the traditional SLA/interlanguage perspective on CSs prevalent in mainstream L2 research and pedagogy, paraphrasing is most closely associated with the notion of achievement or compensatory strategies. Thus, strategies for paraphrasing have been interpreted primarily as speaker-oriented strategies which “offer alternative plans for the speakers to carry out their original communicative goal [...] thus compensating somehow for their linguistic deficiencies” (Dörnyei 1995: 25). Research in this area has primarily focused on identifying and categorizing the various linguistic forms that paraphrasing may take; the taxonomy of CSs included in Celce-Murcia et al.’s (1995) framework of communicative competence provides an overview of these different types of linguistic realization in the category labeled *achievement or compensatory strategies* (cf. 15.4). However, under the more functionally-oriented interactional approach to CSs, the role of paraphrasing has also been recognized in supporting the negotiation of meaning between interlocutors. Thus, paraphrasing may also be used as a listener-oriented speaker strategy in response to an indicator of non- or misunderstanding by the listener, or as a listener strategy to request confirmation of one’s understanding. These functions of paraphrasing are also included in the taxonomy presented in Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) under the heading *interactional strategies* (cf. 15.4).

As has been discussed in 15.4, the field of ELF studies has generally adopted an interactional rather than an interlanguage perspective toward CS use. Under the ELF perspective, CSs are viewed not as primarily compensating for linguistic deficits, but as integral tools in interactional communicative processes such as accommodation and the negotiation of meaning. Thus, while the point of departure for this lesson sequence was that paraphrasing strategies may be necessary to help interactants overcome vocabulary-related issues that might otherwise cause significant communicative difficulties, the focus of the tasks and activities used in this sequence was always on using paraphrasing strategies to support the negotiation of meaning and achievement of mutual understanding within the context of communicative interaction.

19.1 Tasks and materials for working on paraphrasing strategies

Given the importance ascribed to the ability to paraphrase in ELF communication in order to prevent or repair communicative problems caused by vocabulary issues, parts of course sessions 8 and 9 were reserved for work on paraphrasing. The main aim of this lesson sequence

was to raise the students' awareness of a variety of potential strategies for paraphrasing lexical items, as well as to give them the chance to try out and practice these strategies through communicative activities.¹²⁴

I planned to begin this lesson sequence near the end of course session 8 by reminding the students of the potential problems that vocabulary might cause in ELF communication, a point which had been raised earlier in course session 8 (cf. 20.2), and then asking them what they would do if they encountered a situation in which they could not remember a word or in which they used a word that their interlocutor(s) did not understand. This would lead to the idea of paraphrasing, though it was not expected that any of the students would be able to supply this term. After that, we would brainstorm some strategies for paraphrasing together as a class. Since the students were expected to be generally familiar with the concept of paraphrasing, it seemed likely that they would have a range of suggestions to offer. However, I prepared a list of possible suggestions in case prompting was needed to elicit more ideas. This list, which was by no means complete, included *describe the object (size, shape, material (made of...))*, *name something it's similar to (it's like)*, *say where you find it*, *say what you can do with it or what it does*, *say what letter it starts with*, and *name an antonym ("it's the opposite of...")*. Through this brainstorming activity, we would thus activate, and possibly add to, the students' previous knowledge of potential strategies for paraphrasing.

After raising the students' awareness of various ways to paraphrase intended meaning, the remainder of course session 8 would be used to give them the opportunity to try out and practice these strategies using the English-language version of Hasbro's *Taboo* (2000) game. This game is usually played in teams and involves paraphrasing words for others on one's team to guess, making it an excellent communicative task to support this lesson sequence. In the standard version of *Taboo*, a player on one team selects one of the 504 cards provided with the game. This card has a target word printed at the top, which the player must explain while the members of his or her team try to guess what the word is. As an added twist, each card also contains a list of five additional words that the player may not use in his or her paraphrase of the word to be guessed. If the paraphrasing player mentions one of these words or says the target word, then the team forfeits the card and the player must move on to the next card. The other team

¹²⁴ Studies such as Tarone and Yule (1989) and Dörnyei and Thurrell (1992) have suggested that learners may need to acquire "certain basic core vocabulary and sentence structures" before they will be able to realize paraphrasing strategies in the L2 (Dörnyei 1995: 64). Given the advanced level at which the pilot course was being offered, it was largely assumed that the students would already have the necessary vocabulary and structures in their active repertoires. Therefore, the explicit teaching of vocabulary and structures for paraphrasing was not one of the aims of this lesson sequence.

monitors that none of the ‘taboo’ words are said and keeps track of the time. The player doing the paraphrasing tries to help his or her team guess as many words as possible in the time allowed. When time is up, play moves to the other team. In the next round, a new player becomes the paraphraser. Play continues until all players have had a turn paraphrasing target words for their team to guess. Then the team that has guessed the most words is declared the winner.

I decided to modify the standard rules of *Taboo* somewhat for classroom use. I would break the class up into groups of four to five students. Each of these groups would be competing against the other groups to see how many words the group could successfully paraphrase/guess in five minutes. However, instead of play passing from group to group, the groups would play simultaneously in order to use instructional time more efficiently. The students would be on their honor to follow the rules of the game and not to use the words printed on the cards. Also, as soon as a player successfully paraphrased the word on one card so that his or her team was able to guess it, play would move to the next player in the group. I hoped this would allow each student the opportunity to paraphrase at least one word, and hopefully two or three, for his or her group. After five minutes, we would reconvene and the group that was able to paraphrase the most words successfully would be declared the winner.

I also preselected a subset of cards from the 504-card set included in the game that were linguistically appropriate for the relatively advanced English learners in the learning group, avoiding words which seemed too specialized or too culturally skewed toward the cultures of native English speakers for the students to be able to guess them. The words selected were primarily nouns, though the selection also included four verbs, two adjectives and ten words belonging to multiple syntactic classes (e.g. the words *smile* and *doodle*, both of which can function as either nouns or verbs). The nouns selected included both concrete nouns (e.g. *newspaper*, *cow*) and abstract ones (e.g. *disease*, *conversation*). Most were common nouns, with the exception of two brand names, *Starbucks* and *Birkenstock*, with which I felt the students would be sufficiently familiar. In total, the subset comprised 48 cards, a number which would ensure that no group would run out of cards during the five minutes the students would be playing the game.

I anticipated that many of the students would already be familiar with this game, though they might have played it in their L1 rather than in English. I therefore planned to introduce the game and then ask the students if anyone could briefly describe how it is played. After that, I would explain the modified rules we would be using during the activity. Then I would break the students into their groups, give each group their set of cards in an envelope and begin the game.

At the conclusion of the game, I would then call the whole class back together. First, we would determine which group had successfully paraphrased the most words and was thus the winner. However, the main purpose of this phase of the task would be to collect feedback from the groups about how difficult they found the game and, most importantly, what strategies they had used to paraphrase the different words they had encountered. In discussing the latter, we would be reinforcing one of the main aims of this lesson sequence, to help the students become more aware of a range of strategies that might be used for paraphrasing. The students would also have a chance to comment on which strategies they had found particularly useful in helping their teammates to successfully guess a paraphrased word during the game.

Classroom work on paraphrasing would be extended with an additional activity in course session 9. In preparation for this activity, the students would be given a homework assignment at the end of course session 8. They should look for two words, e.g. from their home environment or their field of studies, that they knew in their L1 but did not know the word for in English. They should then write a short paraphrase of each of these words and bring them to the next course session. At the beginning of course session 9, the students would then present their paraphrases to a small group of their peers, in the hopes that the group might be able to help them come up with the word in English. However, if no one could help them, the students would then be free to look up the word in English using a two-language dictionary or an online translation website.

This activity was chosen because it had real-life relevance for the students, which I felt would make it particularly motivational. Rather than engaging in textbook activities involving the paraphrasing of words they probably already knew, they would be extending their own vocabularies by looking for words they themselves wished to learn. Engaging with words in this fashion would hopefully also make those words more memorable in the long-term. And of course, the students would be practicing their paraphrasing skills in a more realistic fashion, since they would be engaging with words they actually did not know in English.

Having outlined the planning of the lesson sequence on paraphrasing strategies, the next five sections (19.2-19.6) will present analysis of classroom work with these tasks and materials. The final section (19.7) will then provide a brief summary of this analysis and a reconsideration of the task sequence as a whole.

19.2 Brainstorming and trying out paraphrasing strategies in a game of Taboo

When asked what they could do in a situation in which they were unable to remember a word or in which someone did not understand a word or expression they used, several students immediately raised their hands.¹²⁵ I called on S18, who answered *you can try to [...] describe [...] or just say it in another way* (T8: 1881, 1884, 1888). She thus provided a good explanation of paraphrasing, though as I had anticipated, she did not use the technical term. I then introduced the word ‘paraphrasing’ to the class, recasting S18’s explanation in the process: *you know we have a fancy word for that in english that word is paraphrasing (.) maybe you’ve heard that one before so we paraphrase we explain what we mean (.) we say it in other words* (T8: 1892-1895). I then called on another student, S5, who still had her hand raised. She suggested *um we can use synonyms?* (T8: 1896). Essentially, she was naming a more specific way to paraphrase intended meaning, and this made an excellent transition to the next point of the lesson, in which the plan was to brainstorm a list of strategies for paraphrasing with the class. I therefore picked up on this response and used it to introduce the notion of strategies for paraphrasing and the question of what other strategies the students were familiar with (T8: 1897-1904).

The students ultimately provided 6 suggestions in response to this prompt. I supplied another 7 based on the list I had developed in preparation for the course session (cf. 19.1 above), resulting in a total of 13 strategies. These strategies are summarized¹²⁶ below in the order they were proposed, with reference to the speaker who proposed each one and the point in the transcript at which it was suggested:

- Name a synonym (S5, T8: 1896)
- Describe an example situation (S1, T8: 1905)
- Describe the referent’s appearance (S8, T8: 1907)
- Use body language (S18, T8: 1916)
- Draw a picture (T, T8: 1922-1923)
- Describe what the referent is made of (T, T8: 1926-1928)
- Associate the referent with a location (T, T8: 1928-1930)
- Describe the referent’s function/purpose (T, T8: 1929-1930)
- Listener asks clarifying question (S6, T8: 1931)
- Listener makes a suggestion (S6, T8: 1931-1933)

¹²⁵ The fact that so many students were immediately able to offer an answer to this question may have been in part due to the fact that someone had suggested *it’s helpful to explain it in other words* as a useful CS for dealing with communication difficulties during another task at the beginning of course session 8 and I had mentioned that we would be returning to this topic later (cf. T8: 752-758, 20.2).

¹²⁶ It should be noted that, for the sake of clarity in the following analysis, the descriptors chosen for each category differ somewhat from the way the person suggesting the strategy originally worded his or her proposal. For example, in the case of the first strategy on the list, S5 suggested *um we can use synonyms?* (T8: 1896), and this suggestion has been recast as ‘name a synonym’.

- Name an antonym (T, T8: 1937-1939)
- Name the first letter of the word (T, T8: 1941-1942)
- Describe properties of the word itself (T, T8: 1944)

While some of the students' suggested strategies (e.g. 'name a synonym', 'describe the referent's appearance') were also on the list of strategies I had prepared in the planning phase of the lesson, the students also proposed several strategies that I had not foreseen. This included S18's suggestion 'use body language'. I had focused mainly on linguistic strategies rather than non-linguistic or paralinguistic ones¹²⁷, despite the fact that non-linguistic strategies have been identified and studied as one type of achievement or compensatory strategy (cf. Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 28, 15.4). However, we had been talking about using non-linguistic and paralinguistic resources to support successful communication earlier in course session 8 (cf. T8: 606-617, 20.2), so the suggestion of this strategy shows that S18 was able to transfer ideas from one phase of the lesson to another. It prompted me to propose a second non-linguistic strategy, 'draw a picture' (T8: 1922-1923), again referring back to an earlier point in the discussion in course session 8 (cf. T8: 742-751). Likewise, S6's suggestions 'listener asks a clarifying question' and 'listener makes a suggestion' were not on my prepared list, as I had focused exclusively on speaker rather than listener strategies. However, this contribution also provides evidence that S6 was transferring ideas from an earlier phase of the lesson, since one of the overarching points of Block 2 of the pragmatics strand of the pilot course was on the importance of active listening for achieving and ensuring mutual understanding in intercultural communication, and we had been working on developing strategies for active listening earlier in course session 8 (cf. 20.2, 20.3). In naming these strategies, S6 recognized that paraphrasing, like other types of CS, is employed in interaction, and a listener can play an active role in helping a speaker to get his or her meaning across. Given the context of the course, our list would hardly have been complete without the inclusion of listener as well as speaker strategies.

At the conclusion of the brainstorming session, the lesson then transitioned to a communicative activity, a round of the game *Taboo*. Again, this transition went quite smoothly. As anticipated, most of the students were familiar with the game (cf. T8: 1954-1958). Nevertheless, one student, S6, briefly summarized the rules for the class (T8: 1961-1964). I

¹²⁷ This inadvertent omission may have been due in part to the influence of what Block (2014) has termed the "lingual bias" in applied linguistic research, wherein most empirical analysis focuses on linguistic moves, and non-linguistic moves are generally considered only in terms of how they support or supplement linguistic ones (Block 2014: 56). Matsumoto (2018) has argued that this bias is generally apparent in studies of ELF pragmatics (Matsumoto 2018: 233). However, she identified a few studies which have begun to take a 'multimodal' approach to ELF interactions, focusing on both linguistic and non-linguistic interactional resources (cf. Matsumoto 2018: 233).

then used one of the cards to provide an illustration of the rules (T8: 1965-1978) before explaining the modifications I had planned for the pilot course version of the game (T8: 1980-2004). After this, the students counted off by threes to form groups (T8: 2004-2024). This method of group formation was chosen because most of the students had grown accustomed to working with the same people when they chose their own groups, and I wanted to disrupt those groups and get the students working with members of the class with whom they normally did not have as much interaction. This resulted in the following groupings:

Group 1: S1, S5, S6, S13, S14, S17

Group 2: S2, S7, S8, S11, S15

Group 3: S3, S4, S12, S16, S18

Once the groups were settled around tables, I handed out envelopes containing the card sets for the game (T8: 2040-2041). Then, when each group signaled that they were ready, I started the clock and the game began (T8: 2051-2054).

The students appeared to enjoy the game very much. All the students participated actively and seemed highly concentrated on the game. The tone in the groups was friendly and supportive, and the groups' interactions were often punctuated by laughter, particularly when a member of a group was able to guess a word correctly. It was quite loud in the classroom, as all three groups were paraphrasing and guessing at once, but the noise level did not appear to hinder the groups' interactions. Rather, it could be interpreted as part of the energy and excitement created by the game.

Although the audio recording device was placed to record Group 1 during this phase of the lesson, I found when I went to transcribe this group work phase that it had managed to record not only this group, but much of Group 2 and Group 3's discourse as well. However, the high levels of background noise did affect the transcription of these three groups to different extents. The transcription of the discourse of Group 1, the group targeted for recording, is most complete, with only four instances in which an utterance by an identifiable speaker was rendered unintelligible by background noise, while the transcript of Group 3's conversation includes several longer gaps in which I was unable to distinguish their conversation at all. Generally speaking, it was the most difficult to discern what was happening in Group 3, and while I am quite confident that the main utterances of their conversation were captured where they were intelligible, I am least certain that all the minimal responses involved in their

discourse were registered. Still, a fairly complete picture of this group work phase was available for analysis, in which it was possible to directly compare data from all three groups.¹²⁸

19.3 *Analyzing the students' use of paraphrasing strategies during Taboo*

As mentioned in 19.1 above, the main purpose of the lesson sequence on paraphrasing was to raise the students' awareness of a variety of potential strategies for paraphrasing lexical items. In the analysis of this phase of the lesson, I was therefore interested in trying to answer two questions: 1) To what extent did the students actually (successfully) make use of the strategies named in the brainstorming exercise during the group work phase? and 2) Did they stick to these strategies, or did they also employ others that were not named? In order to explore these questions, I examined the transcript of each group's discourse to see what strategies the students had actually used when paraphrasing each of the words that came up in the game. Since the focus of my analysis was on the relationship between input during a brainstorming phase and learner output during a communicative practice phase, it was necessary to adopt learner suggestions from the brainstorming activity as the starting point in identifying strategies actually used in the communicative phase in order to be able to compare the two phases at all. Thus, the list of the 13 strategies the class and I had come up with during the brainstorming phase of this lesson became the basis of initial analysis. As one might expect, adopting learner suggestions has resulted in some fuzzy and even overlapping descriptors. For example, in describing an example situation, one might very well associate the referent with a location. I chose not to double count strategy use, but rather to assign each instance to only one strategy descriptor, attempting to discern which seemed to be the primary strategy involved.

¹²⁸ Reorganizing this part of the transcript also proved fruitful for the analysis of this section. When I originally transcribed this lesson segment, I transcribed each group separately, listing the groups one after the other as they currently appear in the transcript of course session 8 (T8: 2057-2361). Later, when I began my analysis, I also rearranged the transcriptions of the three groups into a three-column format so that utterances made at approximately the same time appear in the same line. This was relatively straightforward, as only one recording device had been used to record all three groups; had multiple devices been used which had picked up less of the other groups' conversations, it would have taken more work to establish which utterances were made in parallel. This reorganization allowed for analysis of what was happening not only in a particular group, but also across all three groups at any given moment in the group work phase. It allowed me to notice evidence of what I have termed an *intergroup dynamic* – a level of awareness of other groups and what they are doing which may affect intragroup processes and outcomes, even as the group is primarily focused on its own task (cf. Heike 2016). However, as this relates more to the phenomenon of group work as a social learning form and what we might be able to learn about this form from recorded lesson segments than to the research questions investigated in this dissertation, I will not include discussion of this evidence here, and I will refer to line numbers in the original transcription (T8) rather than the modified arrangement.

During the communicative practice task, the students used all but two of the strategies proposed in the brainstorming round (cf. 19.2 above). Additionally, they also employed a number of strategies that had not been suggested. These included:

- Name a superordinate (hyponymy)
- Name a co-hyponym
- Describe key differences to something the referent is like
- Give a cultural reference
- Describe how the referent is made
- Associate the referent with an actor or activity
- Name a characteristic association
- Refer to the number of syllables in the word

This brings the total number of different strategies proposed and/or used during the lesson sequence to 21¹²⁹.

For analytic purposes, it proved useful to group strategies into several overarching categories according to their more general characteristics.¹³⁰ For example, ‘describe the referent’s appearance’ and ‘describe what the referent is made of’ can be grouped together in the category ‘refer to physical properties’, while ‘use body language’ and ‘draw a picture’ both represent ‘nonverbal strategies’. These categories and the more specific strategies that constitute them are listed in Table 16:

| Category • Strategy | Total uses | Successful uses |
|--|------------|-----------------|
| Refer to a semantic relationship | 19 | 13 |
| • Name a synonym | 2 | 1 |
| • Name an antonym | 1 | 1 |
| • Name a superordinate (hyponymy) | 10 | 6 |
| • Name a co-hyponym | 1 | 1 |
| • Describe key differences to something the referent is like | 3 | 3 |
| • Name a characteristic association | 2 | 1 |
| Refer to interlocutors’ experience | 19 | 10 |

¹²⁹ For a list of these strategies with corresponding examples from the transcript, see Heike (2016: 271-273).

¹³⁰ The descriptors used in this study represent a somewhat different approach to the categorization of strategies for paraphrasing than has traditionally been the case in taxonomies of achievement or compensatory strategies within the SLA/interlanguage research paradigm (cf. 15.4, 19 above). Such taxonomies have tended to focus on the replacement or reorganization of linguistic elements in paraphrases. While this is also true to a certain extent in the categories generated in the analysis of the data from the pilot course (cf. Table 16 here and Table 17 in 19.6), many of the strategies identified in this study relate to features of semantic meaning and associations to extralinguistic context rather than to features of the linguistic structures used. Thus, in keeping with the perception of paraphrasing as a tool for negotiating meaning, the focus was more squarely on alternative ways of communicating an intended meaning than on the linguistic means used to accomplish a paraphrase.

| | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe an example situation Refer to (common) personal experience Give a cultural reference | 9 3 7 | 8 2 0 |
| Create associations to context | 12 | 11 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associate the referent with a location Associate the referent with an actor or activity Describe the referent's function Describe how the referent is made | 4 3 4 1 | 3 3 4 1 |
| Refer to physical properties | 3 | 0 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the referent's appearance Describe what the referent is made of | 3 0 | 0 0 |
| Describe properties of the word itself | 4 | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name the first letter of the word Refer to the number of syllables in the word | 3 1 | 0 1 |
| Nonverbal strategies | 5 | 5 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use body language Draw a picture | 5 0 | 5 0 |
| Listener strategies | 5 | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listener asks clarifying question Listener makes suggestion | 5 -- | 2 -- |
| TOTAL STRATEGIES USED | 67 | 42 |

Table 16: Paraphrasing strategies by category and their instances of total and successful use

The total instances of use of each strategy were then counted, and this number appears in the next column of Table 16. The recording device captured a total of 19 attempts to paraphrase words across the three groups involved in the activity. Generally, students employed several strategies when paraphrasing a word, resulting in 67 total instances of strategy use recorded during the activity. However, two things should be borne in mind regarding this number. First, given that the course was audio- rather than video-recorded, it is impossible to say with complete certainty what role non-verbal strategies played during this activity. Students proposed two strategies in this category, 'use body language' and 'draw a picture'. While there is no evidence in the data that anyone employed the latter strategy, there are indicators that they did use the former. The strongest case is the word *headache*, which occurs in Group 2 in lines 2274-2278 in the transcript:

Excerpt 41:

T8: 2274-2278 (01:25:52-01:25:59)

2274 S15: okay (.) hurry up (.) e:hm it's my:
2275 S7: <55> hair head </55>
2276 S8: <55> hair head </55> (.) brain
2277 S15: yeah and if it's hurts
2278 S7: headache headache

Here, the paraphrasing student, S15, began her paraphrase by saying *it's my* (line 2274), and her group was immediately able to guess *hair* and then *head* with no further linguistic input (lines 2275-2276). It seems quite likely that S15 elicited these answers simply by touching or pointing to her head. She was then able to make the connection to *headache* by saying *yeah and if it's hurts* (line 2277), to which a member of her group immediately responded with the word *headache* (line 2278). Other cases are a bit more tenuous, but the use of body language appears to have played a role in at least four other paraphrases across Groups 1 and 2. Unfortunately, transcription and analysis of this lesson phase took place well after the course session itself, so that it was impossible to confirm whether body language was used in these or other cases through triangulation measures such as post-session interviews with the students. Therefore, the five total uses of this strategy listed in Table 16 are somewhat inconclusive.

Second, this count does not include the strategy 'listener makes suggestion' proposed during the brainstorming session. While this is a supportive and useful listener strategy when interacting with a speaker who is trying to paraphrase a word, the nature of the game of *Taboo*, in which listeners are under time pressure to guess words and therefore tend to make wild guesses before the speaker has given sufficient input, made me wary of counting listener guesses as actual instances of this strategy.

Two categories of paraphrasing strategy, 'refer to a semantic relationship' and 'refer to interlocutors' experience', were used particularly frequently in this activity, with 19 instances of use apiece. In each of these categories, one constituent strategy stands out from the rest, accounting for around half of all total instances of the category. In the case of the category 'refer to a semantic relationship', the strategy 'name a superordinate (hyponymy)' accounts for 10 of 19 uses. This is particularly interesting, as this was not a strategy generated in the brainstorming round. Each of the other five strategies in this category was used far less frequently, between 1 and 3 times respectively. In the category 'refer to interlocutors' experience', the strategy 'describe an example situation' accounts for 9 of 19 uses. 'Give a cultural reference' is not far behind with 7 uses, while the third constituent strategy, 'refer to (common) personal experience' was used only 3 times. One other category, 'create associations to context', was used significantly often, with 12 total uses. Here, the uses are distributed relatively evenly between three of the four constituent strategies, while the last strategy was used only once. The other categories show significantly lower total frequencies of use, with between 3 and 5 uses each. Two strategies mentioned in the brainstorming round, 'describe what the referent is made of' from the category 'refer to physical properties' and 'draw a picture' from 'nonverbal strategies', were never used.

Remarkably, the category ‘refer to physical properties’ attests the least number of uses, with only 3 total instances. This seems surprising, considering that both constituent strategies were mentioned in the pre-task brainstorming round. Moreover, ‘describe the referent’s appearance’ was mentioned third, which underscores its strong associations with paraphrasing in the minds of the students. Of course, this category is really only useful for describing concrete nouns. Yet several of the words selected during the *Taboo* game were concrete nouns (e.g. *cow*, *newspaper*, *window*, *spoon*), and students still chose other paraphrasing strategies rather than attempting a physical description. It would be interesting to explore why they made these choices and whether their choices are typical. Similarly, it seems surprising that ‘name a synonym’ from the category ‘refer to a semantic relationship’ was used only once, although it was mentioned first in the brainstorming round.

Beyond the question of frequency of use, however, it is also worth examining which strategies contributed to successful paraphrases and which did not. As mentioned above, the recording device captured 19 attempts to paraphrase words during the activity. Of these 19 attempts, 15 were ultimately successful, in that a group member was able to guess the correct word. In 3 cases where the attempt was not successful, the game ended before a successful paraphrase could be achieved. It is unclear whether the strategies used would ultimately have contributed to a successful paraphrase if the group had had more time. In only one case did a group abandon a word before a successful paraphrase was achieved. To illustrate which strategies ultimately contributed to a successful paraphrase and which did not, the total number of successful uses of each strategy is listed in the final column of Table 16 above.

The single most successful strategy in terms of total instances of successful use was ‘describe an example situation’ from the category ‘refer to interlocutors’ experience’, with 8 of 9 uses ultimately contributing to a successful paraphrase. This strategy was the second most frequently used overall; the first, ‘name a superordinate (hyponymy)’ from the category ‘refer to a semantic relationship’, attests the second highest number of successful uses. However, this strategy shows a much lower success rate than many others, with only 6 out of 10 of its uses resulting in successful paraphrases. Other strategies with lower total frequencies of use show a much higher proportional success rate, with several strategies reaching 100 per cent. Overall, the category ‘create associations to context’ shows the highest success rate, with 11 of 12 instances of use contributing to successful paraphrases. Three of the four strategies in this category, ‘associate the referent with an actor or activity’, ‘describe the referent’s function/purpose’, and ‘describe how the referent is made’, achieve a perfect success rate.

In contrast, four strategies show success rates of zero. The first is ‘name a synonym’ from the category ‘refer to a semantic relationship’. The second is ‘describe the referent’s

appearance' from the category 'refer to physical properties'. As already mentioned, these strategies were used surprisingly infrequently, considering the strong associations between them and the concept of paraphrasing in the students' minds. That their uses were also completely unsuccessful seems at least as surprising. Two other strategies, 'name the first letter of the word' from the category 'describe properties of the word itself' and 'give a cultural reference' from the category 'create associations to context', also have success rates of zero.

The analysis of this group work phase so far makes clear that the match between direct input in the preceding whole-class brainstorming round and actual student use of paraphrasing strategies in the communicative practice task was modest at best. While eleven of the thirteen strategies mentioned in the brainstorming phase were used in the group work phase, some of these were used only sparingly and with little or even no success. Again, the most surprising finding is the infrequent and unsuccessful uses of both the category 'refer to physical properties' and the strategy 'name a synonym'. At the same time, several highly successful strategies were not mentioned in the brainstorming round, including 'name a superordinate (hyponymy)', the strategy most frequently used.

At the time, I as the teacher was only partially aware of this modest match. During the communicative task, I did my best to monitor what was happening in each group. However, since it was impossible to be in three places at once, I was only able to collect impressions of strategy use and was forced to rely heavily as well on the students' own impressions of their strategy use in the whole-class feedback round following the communicative task. During this round, I asked the students to comment on which strategies had helped them successfully guess words during the game (T8: 2400-2401). Before I was even finished asking the question, S15 interjected the answer *body language*, which was followed by laughter from her and the other members of her group (T8: 2402-2403). As mentioned above, it is impossible to determine conclusively the extent to which non-verbal strategies such as the use of body language contributed to paraphrases in this activity, since the course was audio- rather than video-recorded. However, there is evidence that Group 2 made use of body language in several instances, two of which (the words *operation* and *headache*) were paraphrased by S15 herself.

However, after S15's almost premature answer, no other responses seemed immediately forthcoming. I therefore repeated and expanded upon my question (T8: 2400-2406). After another short pause, S8, who had been a member of Group 2, raised her hand and answered *describing it* (T8: 2407). She seemed to realize that this answer was very vague, and she immediately expanded upon it by mentioning two more specific strategies that had been proposed during the brainstorming round, 'describe the referent's function/purpose' and 'describe the referent's appearance' (T8: 2409-2411). Though 'describe the referent's

function/purpose' was used four times in the activity and always successfully, 'describe the referent's appearance' was never used successfully, as has already been discussed above. Additionally, it was never used by any member of S8's group at any point in the game. S8 seems to have assumed that she and her group used this strategy although this was not the case, further underscoring the strong association between paraphrasing and the category of strategy 'refer to physical appearance' in the minds of the students.

Finally, S1 gave the response *refer to the experience of the other (.) persons* (T8: 2417). This had not been mentioned as such during the brainstorming phase, but I ultimately adopted it, slightly reworded as 'refer to interlocutors' experience', as a category descriptor for the strategies 'describe an example situation', 'refer to (common) personal experience' and 'give a cultural reference'. S1's remark shows insight, since strategies belonging to this category were frequently used and, with the exception of the strategy 'give a cultural reference', highly successful.

Although it was one of the two categories of paraphrasing strategies most often used in the activity, the students seemed relatively unaware of the category 'refer to a semantic relationship'. In the brainstorming phase of the lesson segment, only the two most basic strategies, 'name a synonym' and 'name an antonym', were mentioned. None were mentioned as particularly useful or helpful in the post-task feedback round. The other strategies in this category were all identified during the analysis of the transcript itself. Most interestingly, there is no evidence that students were at all aware of the most frequently employed strategy, 'name a superordinate (hyponymy)', used a total of 10 times, 6 of them successfully, during the task.

All in all, then, the students seem to have been only partially aware of their own strategy use. While they were able to identify some strategies that led to successful paraphrases in the feedback round, they failed to name others and in one instance even named a strategy that was neither frequent nor successful in actual use. This suggests that, during the game, their focus may have been largely on the game itself, rather than on analyzing the paraphrasing strategies they were using. Additionally, they may have lacked the necessary skills to be able to identify their own language use as examples of realizations of one particular strategy or another. In other words, they may not have had the right tools in their meta-pragmatic 'toolkit' (cf. 15.4) that would have allowed them to recognize and name the strategies they had actually used.

19.4 Evidence for differing levels of competence with paraphrasing strategies within the learning group

The feedback round also helped to shed light on another aspect of this task. When the groups counted up their cards at the end of the *Taboo* game, there were remarkable differences in how many words each group had been able to successfully paraphrase/guess in the time allowed. Group 2 was the clear winner, having gotten through 11 words and thus successfully paraphrased at least two words apiece (T8: 2372). Group 1 came in second, with 5 words successfully paraphrased/guessed (T8: 2379-2381). Group 3, however, had only been able to successfully paraphrase/guess 2 words (T8: 2384). These results suggest that some of the students were much more effective at paraphrasing, and at guessing words based on others' paraphrases, than others. In other words, the students appeared to exhibit a range of ability levels in using paraphrasing as a strategy to enhance understanding.

The students themselves seemed surprised at the disparity in results between the three groups. One member of Group 1, S6, repeated Group 2's total *eleven?* in an incredulous tone (T8: 2375). Conversely, S7 from Group 2, the winning group, responded to Group 3's total with a loud *WHAT*, surprised that they had collected so few cards (T8: 2386). However, the students showed no animosity or frustration about these differences, but rather laughed over them (T8: 2387, 2391-2392).

In the analysis of this task, one student in particular stands out as an example of an especially weak student in the area of paraphrasing. This student, S12, was part of Group 3, the group that was only able to successfully paraphrase/guess 2 words. During the game, S12 attempted to paraphrase two words, *pretzel* (T8: 2299-2346) and *caterpillar* (T8: 2351-2357). His group was unable to guess either word; in fact, this instance of the word *pretzel* was the only case in which a word was abandoned before a successful paraphrase could be reached. S12 himself appeared to struggle more with paraphrasing than any other student in the course. His attempts to paraphrase words were marked by disfluencies such as false starts (e.g. T8: 2301), fillers (e.g. T8: 2301-2302), pauses (e.g. T8: 2302-2304) and repetitions (e.g. T8: 2303, 2306). He frequently commented on his own uncertainty using expressions such as *i don't know* (T8: 2301, 2306, 2308, 2341-2342) and qualifiers such as *i think* (T8: 2306, 2341). He also jumped from strategy to strategy, often abandoning a realization before he had really completed it. All in all, his paraphrasing skills appear to have been less well developed than those of his peers.

Interestingly, although he used strategies such as 'name a general category it belongs to' (T8: 2301-2302, 2330) and 'refer to (common) personal experience' (T8: 2353) that were both frequently and successfully used by his peers, S12 also chose to use some strategies that his

peers did not attempt to employ during the game. For example, he was the only student to attempt to use the strategy ‘describe the referent’s appearance’ from the category ‘refer to physical properties’ (T8: 2311-2312, 2352, 2355). He was also the only one to use the strategy ‘name the first letter of the word’ from the category ‘describe properties of the word itself’ (T8: 2318, 2326, 2338), although this strategy was actually introduced into the discourse when another student employed the strategy ‘ask a clarifying question’ to ask *is it with letter <spel> b </spel>* (T8: 2317).

It seems possible that S12’s lower proficiency at using paraphrasing to enhance understanding might help to explain his choosing different strategies than his more proficient peers. These students may have already learned that some of these strategies were less effective than others in their repertoires. However, S12’s choice of strategy may also have had something to do with the words themselves that he had to paraphrase. In the data, certain words seem to have invited the use of certain paraphrasing strategies. For example, the word *operation* occurred in both Group 1 (T8: 2118-2142) and Group 2 (T8: 2176-2194). In each group, the paraphrasing student led off with the strategy ‘give an example situation’, in which he or she provided a reason why a person would need an operation. Once the situation was established, each student then employed the strategy ‘associate the referent with an actor or activity’, directing their groups to the key role of doctors in performing operations. This combination allowed both groups to successfully arrive at the word *operation*. The word *pretzel*, on the other hand, seemed to invite the use of the strategy ‘give a cultural reference’. Both S12 in Group 3 and S14 in Group 1 attempted to use this strategy in their paraphrases (T8: 2299-2346 and T8: 2145-2169 respectively). S12 described *pretzel* as a *food (.) tha:t the americans like to eat* (T8: 2302), while S14 described it by saying *for americans this is typical: german food we always* (T8: 2145-2146), adding a few seconds later *we always drink beer and* (T8: 2149-2150). Neither paraphrase was successful, though as S14 ran out of time for her paraphrase, it is unclear whether she might eventually have achieved success if given more time. As the word *caterpillar* only came up in Group 3 (T8: 2351-2357), it is impossible to say whether a similar phenomenon might have been at work here.

Finally, other factors also seemed to contribute to S12’s lack of success. The most significant was his pronunciation, which caused particular problems in his use of the strategy ‘name the first letter of the word’ as he attempted to paraphrase the word *pretzel*. He first used this strategy in response to a listener strategy, ‘listener asks clarifying question’. One of his group members asked him if the word he was seeking began with the letter *b* (T8: 2317). S12 responded negatively and named the letter *p* in questioning intonation (T8: 2318). There was then a short gap in the recording, after which two group members proposed the word *bagel* as a solution (T8: 2324-2325). S12 reiterated *it’s not (.) with b*, accompanied by laughter (T8:

2326). Immediately, another group member suggested *bakery* (T8: 2327). S12 seemed unable to intelligibly pronounce the distinction between the consonant phonemes /p/ and /b/, so that his group remained convinced that he was searching for a word beginning with a different sound than he was trying to identify. A final instance of the same strategy a few seconds later further confirms this, when S12 repeated again that the word started with *p*, which clearly sounds like *b* on the recording (T8: 2338). As has been discussed in 4.2, the ability to pronounce consonant phonemes (with the exception of the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/) in a target-like way appears to be vital to intelligibility in ELF talk, and S12's inability to produce the voicing distinction between unvoiced /p/ and voiced /b/ appears to hinder his group's ability to understand him in this case.

Additionally, S12 seemed to have a more limited vocabulary than his peers. It would appear that he rejected attempting to paraphrase the target word on at least one card during the game because he was unfamiliar with it (T8: 2349). He was the only student to do this during the task, which suggests that he may have had a more limited vocabulary than others enrolled in the course. Lack of vocabulary may also account for some of the disfluencies in his speech described above, as they may point to the difficulty he was having in finding appropriate lexical items to use in his paraphrases.

All in all, S12 seemed to struggle with this task more than his peers. To some extent, this may have been because he was less proficient at paraphrasing than others in the course, but it would also appear that other factors, such as his pronunciation, his more limited vocabulary and even possibly the target words he attempted to paraphrase, may also have contributed to his difficulties with this task.

19.5 Presenting and discussing prepared paraphrases in small groups

In course session 9, the students had ten minutes in small groups to share the paraphrases of the words they had selected from their own environment that they had been asked to prepare for homework. This time, instead of assigning the students randomly to groups, as we had done during the *Taboo* game, they were allowed to choose their own. This had the effect that most students chose to work with those sitting nearest to them, and since the students often sat in the same seat from week to week, this meant that they were primarily grouped with other students with whom they frequently worked on group work tasks during the course. The class organized itself into three groups, which I will refer to in the following as Groups A, B and C respectively,

to differentiate them from the groups in the analysis of the *Taboo* task above. These groups were comprised of the following students:

Group A: S6, S8, S13, S16

Group B: S1, S7, S11, S12

Group C: S5, S14, S15, S17, S18

During this phase of the lesson, the recording device was again positioned to record one group, the group designated as Group A. However, when I went to transcribe this phase, I found that the recording device had again been able to capture most of what happened in the other two groups as well, though there are some longer gaps and more unintelligible words in the transcription of Group C's conversation. Thus, a relatively complete transcription of this group work phase, in which it is possible to compare data across the three groups, is again available for analysis.

All in all, the recording device captured 18 attempts to paraphrase words across the three groups, though given the gaps in the recording, particularly of Group C, it is possible that there may have been other attempts that were not recorded as well. The students chose an interesting range of concepts to paraphrase. Most were everyday items (e.g. *showerhead, drill, leggings, minute/hour/second hand, fire extinguisher, pedals, wheelbarrow*), but individual students also chose a scientific field (*food engineering*), a specialized sports term (*to take a dive*), and an abstract verb (*to experience/befall*). Remarkably, 4 of the 7 words presented and discussed in Group C came from the university context (*Ph.D., degree, to do a Ph.D./to work on your doctorate, notarization*). Since this was a field with which all the students in the course were in daily contact, it seems interesting that only Group C introduced paraphrases of concepts from this field.

The students generally appeared to be very motivated by this task. They listened attentively to one another and seemed quite invested in trying to help the paraphrasing student come up with the word he or she was looking for in English. The recording shows that all the students in each group participated actively in the task, with no one remaining passively on the sidelines. However, some interesting differences between the groups did emerge as well. First of all, it becomes apparent in listening to the recording of this lesson phase that groups varied widely in terms of how many students had actually done the assignment before class. In Group C, all the students appear to have completed the assignment, as all of them presented what appear to be prepared paraphrases to the group. There is also evidence that at least several of these students had prepared paraphrases for more than one word, as S5 and S15 both presented two paraphrases to the group. In Group A, however, only two students had prepared paraphrases in advance, and each of these students had only prepared one word. The group finished discussing these two paraphrases within the first three minutes of the task. However, instead of falling

into small talk, they cast around as a group for more words they did not yet know in English and created paraphrases for them before ultimately looking them up on an online translation website.

Another marked difference between the groups is in how many words each group was able to discuss in the ten minutes allotted for the assignment. While Groups A and C discussed 8 and 7 words respectively, Group B only got through 3 words. This appears to be because the first student to present his paraphrases to the group, S7, had chosen particularly difficult words. His first word was a specialized sports term (*to take a dive* (German: *Schwalbe*)), while his second was a rather abstract verb (*to experience/befall* (German: *widerfahren*)). His paraphrases were also comparatively long and complex, and his group needed quite a bit of time to negotiate the meaning of some of the words he used in those paraphrases before they were able to really make suggestions or search for the English words for the concepts themselves. In several instances, it became necessary for S7 to paraphrase words he had used in his original paraphrase. In both cases, the group eventually applied to me to supply the words, but I was unable to help them based on the paraphrases. Instead, I asked them to look up the words and report back to me on what they found. Looking up the words on an online translation website also turned out to be less than straightforward, especially in the case of *to take a dive*, since S7 was interested in a very specialized meaning of the German word *Schwalbe*. He and his group therefore needed more help from me in determining which translation was the appropriate one. Once Group B had finished with S7's paraphrases, they only had time for one additional student, S11, to present her paraphrase of one other concept.

19.6 Comparison of strategy use between the prepared paraphrase task and the Taboo game

In the *Taboo* task, the students had drawn a target word at random and had had to come up with a paraphrase on the spot. By contrast, they were able to prepare their paraphrases for course session 9 in advance, giving them time to consider and revise what they wanted to present to their groups. I was interested to see whether the prepared nature of this task might have had any effect on the strategies they chose to use in their paraphrases. Was strategy use largely similar to the *Taboo* round, or were there marked differences? Did the students introduce any new strategies that had neither been mentioned during the brainstorming round nor used during the game of *Taboo* in course session 8? I therefore decided to analyze strategy use in this task in order to be able to compare it with strategy use in the *Taboo* game. I chose not to attempt to

analyze how successfully strategies were used in this task, however, since the difficulty of the words being paraphrased was significantly higher and many groups did eventually have to resort to looking for an answer in a two-language dictionary or on an online translation website, or to asking me as the teacher for help.

As in the *Taboo* game, students generally used multiple strategies in paraphrasing a given concept. All told, the recording device captured attempts to paraphrase 18 different concepts involving 80 instances of strategy use during this group work phase.¹³¹ Thus, the number of paraphrases captured, as well as the total number of strategies used, are roughly comparable to the *Taboo* game, although the students were allowed ten minutes for this group work phase instead of the five they had for the *Taboo* game. The strategies used, as well as their total uses in both the *Taboo* game and the prepared paraphrasing task, are recorded in Table 17 below.

| Category • Strategy | Total uses <i>Taboo</i> game (CS 8) | Total uses prepared task (CS 9) |
|--|--|--|
| Refer to a semantic relationship | 19 | 11 |
| • Name a synonym | 2 | 1 |
| • Name an antonym | 1 | 0 |
| • Name a superordinate (hyponymy) | 10 | 2 |
| • <i>Name one or more hyponyms</i> | 0 | 3 |
| • Name a co-hyponym | 1 | 0 |
| • Describe key differences to something the referent is like | 3 | 0 |
| • Name a characteristic association | 2 | 2 |
| • <i>Name a holonym (meronymy)</i> | 0 | 2 |
| • <i>Name one or more meronyms</i> | 0 | 1 |
| Refer to interlocutors' experience | 19 | 7 |
| • Describe an example situation | 9 | 3 |
| • Refer to (common) personal experience | 3 | 3 |
| • Give a cultural reference | 7 | 1 |
| Create associations to context | 12 | 19 |
| • Associate the referent with a location | 4 | 2 |
| • Associate the referent with an actor or activity | 3 | 10 |
| • Describe the referent's function | 4 | 4 |
| • Describe how the referent is made | 1 | 1 |

¹³¹The transcriptions of two of the 18 concepts that were paraphrased during the task are too incomplete for analysis, while two others contain significant gaps. Therefore, the total number of strategies used during the task was actually somewhat higher than this total reflects.

| | | |
|---|-------------|--------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign a value to the referent (e.g. positive/negative, good/bad) | 0 | 2 |
| Refer to physical properties | 3 | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the referent's appearance Describe what the referent is made of | 3 0 | 0 1 |
| Describe properties of the word itself | 4 | 0 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name the first letter of the word Refer to the number of syllables in the word | 3 1 | 0 0 |
| <i>Speaker makes (tentative) suggestion</i> | 0 | 1 |
| Nonverbal strategies | 5 | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use body language Draw a picture | 5 0 | 1 0 |
| Listener strategies | 5 | 23 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listener asks clarifying question Listener makes suggestion | 5 -- | 8 15 |
| <i>Use plurilingual resources</i> | 0 | 17 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say the word/phrase for the referent in L1/Ln Codeswitch to L1/Ln to paraphrase/explain the referent Give an example of linguistic context in L1/Ln | 0 0 0 | 15 1 1 |
| TOTAL STRATEGIES USED | 67 | 80 |

Table 17: Comparison of paraphrasing strategies and their instances of use in the Taboo and prepared paraphrasing tasks

The three categories of strategy that had been used most frequently in the *Taboo* game – ‘refer to a semantic relationship’, ‘refer to interlocutors’ experience’ and ‘create associations to context’ – were again used significantly often in this task. However, while students made heaviest use of the categories ‘refer to a semantic relationship’ and ‘refer to interlocutors’ experience’ in the *Taboo* game, they made the most use of ‘create associations to context’ in their prepared paraphrases. One constituent strategy, ‘associate the referent with an actor or activity’ was used particularly often, accounting for 10 out of 19 overall uses of strategies from this category. The other strategies from these three categories that were used, were used between 1 and 4 times each. Interestingly, the strategy ‘name a superordinate (hyponymy)’, which was used most often in the *Taboo* game, was used only twice in this task. Likewise, the category ‘describe an example situation’, which was used almost as frequently as the previous strategy in the *Taboo* game, was used only 3 times here. In the case of the category ‘refer to a semantic relationship’, three constituent strategies which had been used in the *Taboo* game – ‘name an antonym’, ‘name a co-hyponym’ and ‘describe key differences to something the referent is like’ – were not used at all.

As in the Taboo game, the category of strategy ‘refer to physical properties’ was used extremely infrequently, with only 1 use recorded during the entire task. Interestingly, the strategy that was used, ‘describe what the referent is made of’, had been proposed in the brainstorming round, but had not been used at all in the game of *Taboo*. It occurred in Group A as one of the strategies used in S16’s paraphrase of *minute/hour/second hand*:

Excerpt 42:

T9: 576-577 (00:27:10-00:27:15)

576 S16: it’s the part **of metal or plastic** which shows the time in the
577 watch

In this paraphrase, S16 mentions that the concept he is trying to paraphrase is *of metal or plastic* (line 576). This is thus the first and only example of the use of this strategy in the whole data set. The other constituent strategy, ‘describe the referent’s appearance’, which had been employed only three times in the *Taboo* game, none of them successfully, was not used in this task at all. That this category was so infrequently used again seems surprising, since many of the concepts the students selected for paraphrasing were concrete objects which would have lent themselves to a physical description (e.g. *showerhead, fire extinguisher, wheelbarrow*).

Less surprisingly, the category ‘describe properties of the word itself’, which was employed 4 times in the *Taboo* game, was not used at all in this task. This seems logical, since the students had selected concepts to paraphrase for this task on the basis that they did not know the words for them in English. Therefore, they would have had no knowledge of the properties of the word they were seeking to elicit.

As in the *Taboo* task, it is again impossible to say with any certainty what role nonverbal strategies may have played in this task. There was one instance where Group A was searching for the next concept they might paraphrase, in which S16 used the expression *this thing* to introduce his next idea, the *minute/hour/second hand* (T9: 556, 560). It seems likely that he or another member of his group was wearing an analog watch, as S16 later referenced this concept as *the part [...] in the watch* (T9: 576-577, cf. Excerpt 42 above), and that S16 gestured to it to clarify the deixis in his utterance. However, this cannot be confirmed, since the course was audio- rather than video-recorded and transcription and analysis took place too long after the task for a reliable post-recording interview to be conducted. This is the strongest instance in which it seems likely that the strategy ‘use body language’ played a role, but there may have been others as well. No group appears to have used the strategy ‘draw a picture’.

As in the game of *Taboo*, the students listening to the paraphrases in this task also made use of listener strategies. There are eight instances in the transcript in which a listener attempted to negotiate successful understanding by employing the strategy ‘listener asks a clarifying question’. In three of these instances, I as the teacher was the one using this strategy when a

group asked me to help them find the English word or phrase for a concept a student in the group had paraphrased (T9: 978-980, 1036, 1046-1049). However, the majority was employed by the students themselves. In 7 instances, these clarifying questions were posed as interrogatives, but in one case, S8 made a more indirect request for clarification by saying *i don't know what you mean* in response to her classmate's attempt to paraphrase *road traffic regulations* (T9: 639).

Listeners also engaged in the strategy 'listener makes suggestion' a total of 15 times, making this the single most-used strategy during this task. This is not surprising given the parameters of the task, in which listeners were supposed to try to help the paraphrasing student find the English word for the concept he or she was trying to describe. In 6 of these cases, students were able to suggest the correct word without consulting a dictionary, as in the case of *showerhead* in Group A:

Excerpt 43:

T9: 428-439 (00:21:32-00:22:04)

428 S13: when i'm actually in the sh:ower (1) and the water comes
 429 from (3) yeah from
 430 S8: <L1ger> ach so {i see} </L1ger>
 431 S13: from the german <@> word </@> @@ that i cannot say now
 432 S6: again what? i didn't
 433 S13: ah when i'm in the shower (.) the water comes from where
 434 S6: **the showerhead**
 435 S16: the showerhead
 436 S13: the showerhead oh i- it's the showerhead (1) really? okay
 437 S6: i think so @
 438 S13: xxxx (.) <L1ger> das ist einfach {that's easy} </L1ger> it's so
 439 easy @@@@ (1) i can't just xx for it @@@@

This excerpt is typical of the instances in which a student was able to successfully supply the English word for a paraphrased concept. In these cases, the student was generally able to supply the word fairly quickly after the paraphrase was presented, as S6 does here (line 434). The suggestion was then often repeated once or twice by members of the group, as S16 and S13 do in this excerpt (lines 435, 436). These repetitions serve a number of functions in the different instances, including as a request for confirmation or as a token that the repeating student agrees, sometimes with a sense that the repeating student is experiencing an 'ah-ha moment' ("Ah-ha, *that's* the word I was looking for!"). Here, though, S13 first appears to signal his acceptance of S6's suggestion of *showerhead* (line 436), but then immediately questions whether this could in fact be the solution on the grounds that it seems too simple (lines 436, 438-439). Ultimately,

the group checked the word on an online German-English translation website to be sure¹³² (T9: 463, 477).

In 3 more cases, listeners suggested words that were then rejected by the paraphrasing student. This occurred, for example, in Group B:

Excerpt 44:

T9: 804-807 (00:26:15-00:26:25)

804 S12: these things happen and that like like a xxx you know? (.) about
805 the weather about the <14> xxx </14>
806 S7: <14> it's not the word </14> (.) it's not the word that i'm: (.) that
807 i was looking for

Although it is unclear on the recording exactly what word or phrase S12 proposes here (lines 804-805), S7 clearly rejects S12's suggestion, saying *it's not the word that i'm: (.) that i was looking for* (lines 806-807). In another case from Group A, a listening student, S13, made a suggestion and then immediately rejected it himself: *watch hands? no* (T9: 586). He then proposed the solution again one turn later, this time phrased as an interrogative, *can it be the watch hands* (T9: 588), in effect applying to his group members for confirmation or rejection of his suggestion. This time, his suggestion was not immediately rejected or accepted, but was used as a basis for continued negotiation of meaning. Using suggestions as the basis for continued negotiation of meaning also occurred in the remaining 5 cases of the use of the strategy 'listener makes suggestion' as well (T9: 645, 646, 736, 999, 1027).

In addition to the strategies that had already been named and/or used in the brainstorming and *Taboo* tasks in the previous course session, the students also employed several novel strategies in their prepared paraphrases. These strategies are listed in italics in Table 17 above to denote the fact that they were first observed in this task. Several of these strategies fit into the category 'refer to a semantic relationship'. While students had already used two strategies having to do with the relationship of hyponymy, 'name a superordinate (hyponymy)' and 'name a co-hyponym', in the *Taboo* task, S14 used a third strategy, 'name a hyponym', in her paraphrase of *degree*:

¹³² I decided not to count instances in which a student shared a translation he or she had looked up online as instances of the strategy 'listener makes a suggestion'. These appeared to be too closely related to the parameters of the task, similar to the way that listener suggestions in the *Taboo* game were not counted because the parameters of that task meant that students were prone to make wild guesses before they had sufficient input for an educated guess. I also did not count cases in which I made suggestions after a group applied to me for help in supplying a word, since my status as the teacher put me on a similar level with the dictionaries and translation websites the students were using in terms of linguistic authority.

Excerpt 45:

T9: 945-947 (00:23:22-00:22:38)

945 S14: mine (.) is um:: (.) in your um studies or time (.) at university (.)
946 you get a <L1ger> zertifikat {certificate} </L1ger> (.)
947 xxxxxxx like a: master <L1ger> zertifikat </L1ger>

In her paraphrase, S14 begins by associating *degree* with an actor or activity, saying *in your um studies or time (.) at university* (line 945). She then says the target word in her L1 German (line 946). After this, she adds something that is unclear on the recording. Finally, she gives an example of a more specific kind of the referent she had in mind, saying *like a: master <L1ger> zertifikat </L1ger>* (line 947). She thus names a hyponym of the referent that she is trying to paraphrase.

Interestingly, multiple students also used strategies based on another kind of semantic relationship which had not been referenced at all in the tasks in course session 8, that of meronymy. The first instance of a strategy that relies on this relationship came up in Group A in S16's paraphrase of *minute/hour/second hand*:

Excerpt 46:

T9: 576-577 (00:27:10-00:27:15)

576 S16: it's the part of metal or plastic which shows the time in the
577 watch

Here, S16 uses the phrases *it's the part [...] in the watch* to describe the referent he has in mind (lines 576-577). He thus names a holonym to which this referent belongs, specifying that the relationship between the two is a 'part of' relationship. Likewise, S11 from Group B used the same strategy to begin her paraphrase of *pedal*:

Excerpt 47:

T9: 898 (00:30:24-00:30:28)

899 S11: um:: (.) it's ah: a part of a bicycle

She again names a holonym to which the concept she is paraphrasing stands in a 'part of' relationship.

One student, S18 from Group C, also referenced the relationship of meronymy in the opposite direction in her paraphrase of *wheelbarrow*:

Excerpt 48:

T9: 991-992 (00:25:18-00:25:30)

991 S18: it's a container with a xxxx on it and um it has one wheel (.)
992 xxxxxx garden and xxxxx

Although not everything S18 said was clear enough on the recording to transcribe, it is evident that she begins her paraphrase of *wheelbarrow* by describing the parts that usually belong to a

wheelbarrow: *a container with a xxxx on it and one wheel* (line 991). She thus employs the strategy ‘name one or more meronyms’ as one of the strategies she uses to paraphrase this referent.

In retrospect, it seems somewhat surprising that the students did not use strategies involving meronymy at all in the *Taboo* game in the previous course session. One possible explanation for this is that the parameters of the *Taboo* game prevented them from using these strategies. They may have been dissuaded from naming common parts of a particular referent or naming something of which it was a constituent part by the list of prohibited words on the game card.

Another new strategy arose in Group B in S7’s paraphrase of *(to) experience/befall* (German: *widerfahren*):

Excerpt 49:

T9: 780-790 (00:25:05-00:25:41)

780 S7: should i read?
 781 S11: yeah (.) @@@
 782 S7: so i: (.) um: (.) make a: (.) presentation and in a lesson last
 783 week and this was a german word i didn’t know in english so
 784 it’s it’s eh (.) so it’s a: (.) scientific topic (.) eh it’s a passive
 785 aspect of an action (.) you don’t do something actively
 786 {æktarvli:} but the act of someone else is happening to you
 787 furthermore this includes unplanned circumstances or events
 788 (.) caused by nature (.) by nature li:ke a car accident (.)
 789 weather or that you can xx (.) it can be fate (.) **it can be**
 790 **positive or negative xx it’s neutral**

Much of S7’s paraphrase relies on the strategy ‘associate the referent with an actor or activity’, in that it hinges on the fact that this verb encompasses *a passive aspect of an action* (.) *you don’t do something actively but the act of someone else is happening to you* (lines 784-786). S7 also mentions *nature* as a potential actor (line 788). He then switches to the strategy ‘describe an example situation’, giving a short list of possibilities *li:ke a car accident* (.) *weather or that you can xx* (lines 788-789). At the end of this paraphrase, however, S7 attempts to draw his group’s attention to another aspect of this verb: *it can be positive or negative xx it’s neutral* (lines 789-790). In essence, he is describing the connotative value of the concept he is paraphrasing. I have therefore called this strategy ‘assign a value to the referent (e.g. positive/negative, good/bad)’. It is included in the category ‘create associations to context’, as value in this sense seems to relate to the kind of contexts in which one would expect the referent to occur. Interestingly, S7, who was the only student to use this strategy, also used it a second time in his paraphrase of *take a dive* (German: *Schwalbe*) (T9: 710-722).

Another new strategy occurred in Group A, in S6's attempt to paraphrase what her group eventually identified with help from an online translation website as *food engineering* (German: *Lebensmitteltechnik*):

Excerpt 50:

T9: 440-458 (00:22:08-00:23:00)

- 440 S6: um i thought of a word that i heard in german um it's the
 441 study of: ah: (.) grocery technology i guess you could say (.)
 442 it's (gotta) be like (2) ah (.) i know it's a german word but i
 443 don't know what you'd call it in english it's the study of (1)
 444 like eh chemistry an:d um: (.) how you develop (.) groceries
 445 the things you buy in stores (1) things xxxxx <@> xxxx
 446 english </@> (.) i saw it somewhere and i i couldn't xxx (.) x
 447 the word (.) for
 448 S8: no
 449 S13: so
 450 S6: xxxxxxxx
 451 S13: @@ xx er: in english
 452 S6: **food chemistry?**
 453 S8: food chemistry
 454 S6: yeah?
 455 S16: i don't know
 456 S13: ehm
 457 S16: xxxxxxxx
 458 S13: 'kay maybe

After S6 shares her paraphrase (lines 440-447), the members of her group indicate that they are unable to help her come up with the word (lines 448-449). Shortly thereafter, S6 tentatively makes her own suggestion, *food chemistry?*, in line 452. Her rising intonation and hesitant tone suggest that she is far from certain about this suggestion and is looking for input from her group about whether this might be the right word. They appear to consider this, but remain uncertain (lines 453-458), and the group ultimately decided to look up the translation of *Lebensmitteltechnik* online.

Throughout both the *Taboo* game and the prepared paraphrasing task, listeners often made suggestions, but this is the only instance in which a speaker hazarded a guess at the referent of her own paraphrase. I have therefore labeled it as a separate strategy: 'speaker makes (tentative) suggestion'. It does not seem to fit into any of the existing categories, so it was assigned to a category of its own, although this seems less than felicitous, as it is simultaneously the only constituent of this category. It is quite logical that this strategy did not come up in the *Taboo* game, as the paraphrasing speaker was always aware of the word that he or she wanted the other members of the group to guess. Therefore, the parameters of this task, in which the speaker selected a word for paraphrasing on the grounds that he or she did not know it in English, made the use of this strategy possible.

Finally, the students made use of a number of strategies drawing on their knowledge of languages other than English, in particular their knowledge of German, the L1 of the majority

of the students in the class and the local language outside the classroom. This category of strategy, which I have called ‘use plurilingual resources’, was used 17 times during the task, making it the third most frequently employed category. One constituent strategy, ‘say the word/phrase for the referent in L1/Ln’, constituted the majority of the uses of this category, accounting for 15 out of the 17 total uses.

That this strategy was used particularly frequently in the context of this task is unsurprising, considering the parameters of the task itself. First of all, the students had been explicitly instructed to look for words they knew in another language but not in English when the task was assigned at the end of course session 8 (T8: 2441-2443). Additionally, during the small group phase in course session 9, the students were encouraged to look up any words that the group was unable to come up with in a two-language dictionary or on an online translation website using their smartphones (T9: 400-404). This meant that at this step at the latest, it became important to know what word in their L1/Ln the person had originally had in mind.

Two of the groups exhibit interesting patterns in their use of the strategy ‘say the word/phrase for the referent in L1/Ln’. The first is Group A. In this group, as was mentioned in 19.5 above, only two students had done the assignment, and the group was able to arrive at the English words for the paraphrased concepts relatively quickly. They then spent the rest of the ten minutes they had for the group work phase of this task finding and paraphrasing other concepts for which they did not know the word in English. They very quickly fell into the pattern of introducing a new concept by saying the word for that concept in German. This pattern originated with S13 (cf. *leggings* (German: *Leggings*) (T9: 543-544), *in case of fire* (German: *Brandfall*) (T9: 607), *fire extinguisher* (German: *Feuerlöscher*) (T9: 623)), but was also picked up by S16 near the end of the task (*road traffic regulations* (German: *Straßenverkehrsordnung*) (T9: 630-631)). After the concept was introduced using the German word, someone in the group then used other strategies to paraphrase the word in English before the group looked up the English word on a German-English translation website. The use of the strategy ‘say the word/phrase for the referent in L1/Ln’ to introduce a spontaneously selected concept for paraphrasing in Group A thus accounts for 4 of the 15 instances in which this strategy was used during the task.

Interestingly, only three of the four members of Group A spoke German as L1. However, S16, who was an L1 speaker of Portuguese, was quite proficient in German, so that this strategy appeared to work well for the group. It is remarkable that S16 himself employed the strategy ‘say the word/phrase for the referent in L1/Ln’ using his Ln German in his paraphrase of *road traffic regulations*.

In Group C, a different pattern emerged. In this group, all the students had prepared paraphrases in advance, and, with one exception (*degree*, cf. Excerpt 45 above), these paraphrases did not involve the use of languages other than English. However, after the first three words, the group fell into the pattern of suggesting the word in the students' L1, German, for the concept the paraphrasing student was trying to describe. This first occurred in response to S18's paraphrase of *wheelbarrow*:

Excerpt 51:

T9: 991-1006 (00:25:18-00:26:00)

991 S18: it's a container with a xxxx on it and um it has one wheel (.)
 992 xxxxxx garden and xxxxx
 993 S14: ah::: yeah
 994 S15: @@@@ (1) <L1ger> schubkarre {wheelbarrow}
 995 </L1ger>
 996 S14: <L1ger> schubkarre ja {wheelbarrow yeah} </L1ger> (3)
 997 S18: okay
 998 S15: <L1ger> schubkarre {wheelbarrow} </L1ger> @@@@ (.)
 999 <17> <pvc> pushcar </pvc> </17>
 1000 S14: <17> <pvc> pushcar </pvc> </17>
 1001 S14, 15: @@@@
 1002 S15: <@> <pvc> pushcar </pvc> </@>
 1003 S14, 15: @@@@
 1004 S15: <@> <pvc> pushcar </pvc> <L1ger> xxxxx </L1ger> <pvc>
 1005 pushcar </pvc> </@> @@@@
 1006 S18: <pvc> pushcar </pvc>

In response to S18's paraphrase, S15 responds with laughter and then, after a one second pause, suggests the German word for the concept, *Schubkarre* (lines 994-995). S14 repeats this word in agreement, followed by a three second pause (line 996). S18's *okay* in the following line (line 997) seems to signal that she has accepted that no one in the group is familiar with the English word for this concept and thus the group will need to look it up in a dictionary or on a translation website. Interestingly, while the group waits to see what the word is in English, S15 repeats the German word *Schubkarre* and then proposes a literal translation, *pushcar* (line 998-999). This is repeated, with much laughter, by S14, S15 herself, and finally S18 (lines 1000-1006). There is then a small gap in the conversation on the recording, which ends with S18 sharing the English word she has found:

Excerpt 52:

T9: 1012-1018 (00:26:19-00:26:32)

1012 S18: wheelbarrow
 1013 S15: hm wh- wheelbarrow
 1014 S18: wheelbarrow
 1015 S15: xxxxxxx
 1016 S18: xxxx
 1017 S15: <L1ger> ich find <pvc> pushcar </pvc> viel geiler {i think <pvc>
 1018 pushcar </pvc> is much cooler} </L1ger> @@@@

After S15 and S18 repeat this word twice to confirm their understanding (lines 1013-1014), S15 finally comments, in her L1 German, that she thinks the word *pushcar* that she had come up with is much cooler than the actual word in English (lines 1017-1018).

After this point, the members of Group C responded to each new paraphrase by immediately saying the German word for the concept the speaker was paraphrasing (cf. *to do a Ph.D./to work on your doctorate* (German: *Promotion*) (T9: 1024), *notarization* (German: *Beglaubigung*) (T9: 1058)). Thus, 3 instances in which a student named an L1 word for the referent were actually offered as listener suggestions in response to a particular paraphrase. Because these 3 cases appeared to be instances of both the strategies ‘listener makes suggestion’ and ‘say the word/phrase for the referent in L1/Ln’, it was difficult to know under which category to list these 3 instances, but I ultimately chose to list them as instances of the latter, since the students did not treat these suggestions as final solutions to the paraphrases, but rather as part of the process of negotiating what the word might be in English.

The listening students’ use of the strategy ‘say the word/phrase for the referent in L1/Ln’ in Group C may have been motivated by the parameters of the task, since the group knew they would eventually need to look up the word in the dictionary if they could not come up with it on their own. Alternatively, it may indicate that the L1 word was the first thing that came into their minds, or that they were showing the paraphrasing student that they had understood the concept she was trying to paraphrase even if they did not know the English word for it. No matter the motivation, this pattern does illustrate that the paraphrases presented in this group were, in one sense at least, always successful: The students always found the correct German word for the concept being described, demonstrating that all the paraphrases offered in this group were effective in helping the members of the group to understand what was meant, even if the group was unable to come up with the word in English without additional assistance.

The strategy ‘say the word/phrase for the referent in L1/Ln’ also came up twice in Group B, once each in the two paraphrases presented by S7 (cf. *take a dive* (German: *Schwalbe*) (T9: 726), *to experience/befall* (German: *widerfahren*) (T9: 816)). However, S7 also used two additional strategies involving plurilingual resources in his paraphrase of *to experience/befall*. First, instead of saying only the word for the concept he was looking for in a language other than English, S7 code-switched entirely to German for one stretch of his explanation of this concept:

Excerpt 53:

T9: 815-819 (00:26:34-00:26:41)

815 S7: <L1ger> wollt ihr es wissen das deusche wort {do you want
816 to know the german word} (.) eh:: widerfahren ist bei uns
817 eigentlich {to befall is actually for us} <L1ger>
818 S1: <L1ger> widerfahren {to befall} </L1ger>

819 S7: <L1ger> widerfahren {to befall} </L1ger> is (.) xxxx

Before actually saying the word in German, S7 asks his group in German whether they would like to know the German word for his selected concept (lines 815-816). He then provides the word *widerfahren*, but immediately continues as though he is going to explain this word in German (lines 816-817). However, he is interrupted by S1's repetition of *widerfahren* before he gets very far (line 818). When he takes up the turn again, he appears to switch back into English to continue his explanation, although this part of the recording is not clear enough for a reliable transcription (line 819). Thus, S7 employs a new strategy here, one that goes beyond inserting one word or phrase in another language. I have called this strategy 'code-switch to L1/Ln to paraphrase/explain the referent'.

Directly after this instance of code-switching, S7 also employed one other strategy that involved the use of his L1 German: He provided an example of a linguistic context in which the German word for the concept he had in mind was used.

Excerpt 54:

T9: 821-828 (00:26:44-00:26:54)

821 S7: xxxxxxxx (.) **but in the <L1ger> vortrag {presentation}**
822 **</L1ger> it comes**
823 S12: <LNger> widerfahren {to befall} </LNger>
824 S7: **<L1ger> ihm widerfährt ein schlechtes schicksal {he is befallen**
825 **by a terrible fate} </L1ger>**
826 S1: yeah yeah yeah yeah
827 S7: <L1ger> widerfährt ein schlechtes schicksal {is befallen by a
828 terrible fate} </L1ger>

In this excerpt, S7 tells the group that he has heard this word used in a presentation in the context of the German sentence *ihm widerfährt ein schlechtes Schicksal*, which can be translated as *he is befallen by a terrible fate* (lines 821-822, 824-825).

At first glance, it seems a bit odd that S7 should employ more strategies drawing on the German language than students in the other groups, considering that he was working in a group in which not all of the members were very proficient in German. In addition to S7, S1 also spoke German as L1, but the other group members, S11 and S12, were L1 speakers of Portuguese who, in contrast to the other non-L1-German speaker in the course, S16, were not very proficient in German. Thus, these strategies would not appear likely to help S11 and S12 to better understand the concept S7 was trying to paraphrase. However, the group had already spent a comparatively long time negotiating their way through S7's paraphrase of *take a dive*, and S7 and S12 had just engaged in a lengthy exchange in which S12 had finally suggested an English word that S7 then rejected. In some ways, S7's use of the strategies 'codeswitch to L1/Ln to paraphrase/explain the referent' and 'give an example of linguistic context in L1/Ln' seems to have been almost an act of desperation, since all the other strategies he had employed

thus far had been relatively unsuccessful at helping his group to understand his meaning. Effectively, after these strategies were introduced, S11 and S12 dropped out of the conversation for over a minute while S1 and S7 attempted to look up *widerfahren* on an online German-English translation website, a process they negotiated entirely in German (T9: 834-841). When even that proved unsuccessful, S7 then applied to me as the teacher (T9: 847-871), though he did eventually find the translation (*to*) *experience* on the translation website (T9: 877).

As has been discussed in 15.3, research into ELF has shown that speakers in ELF situations make use of plurilingual resources from their L1(s) as well as Lns. This research has demonstrated that employing plurilingual resources can be quite successful, particularly where these resources are shared by one or more interlocutors. In using the three strategies ‘say the word/phrase for the referent in L1/Ln’, ‘codeswitch to L1/Ln to paraphrase/explain the referent’ and ‘give an example of linguistic context in L1/Ln’, the students were thus employing strategies which are in fact used in ELF talk. However, the pilot course did not represent an authentic ELF situation, since the learning group was largely linguistically homogenous, in the sense that most of the students were L1 speakers of German and those who were not were all L1 speakers of Portuguese who were at least somewhat familiar with German as the local language. Naturally, they would often have found it easier to achieve mutual understanding in German, but this would have severely limited their opportunities to develop their communicative ability in English for situations in which drawing on German would not have been helpful. I therefore generally encouraged the students to try to talk in English during course sessions as much as possible.

At the end of this task, though, having noticed that all the groups had drawn on their knowledge of German in one way or another, I felt the need to address this with the students. Therefore, after giving a short summary of the words I had heard the groups paraphrasing during the previous ten minutes, I ended work on this task by commenting on the use of plurilingual strategies in paraphrasing and its place in actual ELF communication versus in our classroom. I acknowledged to the students that *often [...] the first thing that we want to do when: we can't find a word in one language or the other (.) is to say the word that we know in our own language (.) or it happens to me even sometimes that i can find the german word but i can't find the english word* (T9: 1077-1081). Though I illustrated with a personal example that this strategy may not always be helpful where we do not share the additional language with our interlocutors (T9: 1084), I emphasized that in actual ELF situations, such strategies can be very helpful if our interlocutors share at least a partial knowledge of the same languages other than English with us (T9: 1088-1095). I then drew further attention to why I was not encouraging the use of such strategies in the pilot course, despite their potential usefulness in actual ELF communication: *the problem in this course is most of you (.) um: or i should say*

all of you speak <@> some german </@> (.) so it becomes dangerous if we start ah heh using a lot of german because then you don't get to practice as much english (T9: 1095-1099). I then concluded by encouraging the students to use strategies drawing on their plurilingual resources in ELF communication beyond the classroom even though I had not been promoting their use in the classroom context (T9: 1099-1104).

19.7 Summary and reconsideration of the task sequence

Overall, the analysis of the transcripts from the tasks in the lesson sequence addressing paraphrasing strategies reveals that students did in fact employ a wide range of strategies in the paraphrases they used both in the *Taboo* game and the prepared homework assignment. To a large extent, they were able to use these strategies successfully. In the *Taboo* game, the use of most strategies eventually led to the group's ability to guess the word being paraphrased. In the prepared paraphrase task, the groups were not always able to come up with an English word for the concept being described, but, with the exception of S7's paraphrases of *take a dive* and *(to) experience/befall* in Group B, they were generally able to successfully negotiate an understanding of the concept based on the provided paraphrase with relative ease.

However, the analysis of these tasks also shows that the students were relatively unaware of their own strategy use. In addition to the 13 strategies proposed in the brainstorming task in course session 8, the students used an additional 16 strategies in the *Taboo* and prepared paraphrase tasks that were never explicitly acknowledged or discussed. Particularly the feedback round after the *Taboo* game reveals that not only were the students unaware of some of the strategies that they actually used, but they seemed to assume that they had employed others which they associated strongly with paraphrasing, but which in fact they had not used at all. Finally, analysis of the tasks demonstrated that some students appeared to be better at paraphrasing and using others' paraphrases to come up with English words for concepts than others, though, as has been discussed in relationship to S12, this may not have been due to lack of ability or familiarity with paraphrasing strategies alone, but also to additional factors such as pronunciation and overall knowledge of vocabulary.

In essence, the tasks used in this lesson sequence helped to raise some initial awareness of strategies for paraphrasing in the students and then provided them with two opportunities to practice paraphrasing through performance in communicative tasks. The insights from the analysis of this lesson sequence, however, suggest that the students in this course would have benefited from tasks and activities which provided not just general practice through

performance, but also the kind of “specific focused practice” with strategies described in the sixth area of Dörnyei’s framework for the teaching of strategic competence (Dörnyei 1995: 64). Additionally, the students would also have benefitted from the opportunity for analysis of strategy use to help raise their meta-pragmatic awareness and develop their ability to verbalize this awareness. Consequently, some suggestions for ways in which the tasks used could be modified in order to provide these kinds of opportunities will now be discussed.

First of all, during the initial brainstorming phase before the *Taboo* game, the suggested strategies should have been recorded on the board. I had not planned to do this because I was fairly certain that the students were familiar with the concept of paraphrasing and would be able to come up with a range of ideas without difficulty. I thus viewed this as a task whose primary purpose was to activate prior knowledge. However, in retrospect, it would have been highly useful to have had a recorded list for the students to refer back to, for example during the feedback round at the end of the *Taboo* game. It is possible that one reason so few responses were offered in this feedback round was simply that the students had forgotten what strategies had been named earlier during the brainstorming round. Additionally, if the list had been recorded on the board, the students might have been more likely to take notes, which would have meant that they might have had the list to refer to when writing their prepared paraphrases at home. In any case, a visual representation of the ideas generated in the brainstorming round would likely have supported the students’ awareness of, and access to, the different strategies proposed in later stages of the lesson, thus supporting the development of meta-pragmatic awareness.

Another thing that we did not do in the pre-task brainstorming phase was to connect the strategies the students proposed to possible realizations they might use to achieve these strategies in English. Given the advanced level of the students enrolled in this course, I generally assumed that the students would have the linguistic means available to realize the strategies that were proposed, and this seems to be confirmed by the fact that students were largely able to realize the strategies they used effectively during the two different tasks involved in this lesson sequence. However, it might have been helpful for some of the students if the various strategies had been exemplified with one or two suggested realizations. This might have helped particularly the weaker students in the group, such as S12, to be able to use these strategies more effectively in the later tasks. And while this may not have been completely new information for most students, it would also have created opportunities for all the students to make connections between a strategy, which is in essence a more abstract concept, and linguistic items and structures which can be used to realize this strategy in actual communicative practice. This may also have facilitated the development of the students’ meta-

pragmatic awareness of these strategies, making it more possible for them to recognize utterances as realizations of particular underlying strategies.

Activities aimed at helping the students to make connections between specific paraphrasing strategies and potential realizations might have taken the form of inductive work with spoken or written texts, in which the students were encouraged to notice how specific paraphrasing strategies were actually realized in a communicative setting, to comment on their effect on the conversation and to collect or brainstorm additional realizations that might be appropriate in the same context. Such activities would fall into the third area of Dörnyei's framework, 'providing L2 models of the use of certain CSs' (cf. Chapter 17). Additionally, it might have been possible to include tasks aimed at 'teaching CSs directly by presenting linguistic devices to verbalize them' (Dörnyei's fifth area, cf. Chapter 17), not with the aim of helping the students to acquire new linguistic forms, but to foster their meta-pragmatic awareness of function-form relationships. However, given the advanced level of the students in the course, it might also have been possible to create such connections through systematic practice with specific strategies, a type of activity which falls into Dörnyei's sixth area (cf. Chapter 17). In order to give the students in the course this type of practice, the game of *Taboo* could have been modified so that the students were required not only to draw cards with target words to be paraphrased, but also to draw cards from another set to determine which strategies they had to use in their paraphrases. This would certainly have meant that more time would have been needed for the *Taboo* game in class, but it would have had the advantage that the students would have had to be more aware of their own strategy use in paraphrasing a word, fostering their meta-pragmatic awareness of these strategies. They might also have noticed that not all strategies lend themselves well to paraphrasing every concept. For example, describing something's appearance does not work well for abstract concepts. However, it also would have limited the students' actual use of strategies by preventing them from using strategies that had not been suggested. Here, it might have been useful to require students to use at least three strategies drawn from the card pile and then, if the group still had not been able to guess, to allow them to draw on their own ideas for further strategies.

In terms of helping students learn to evaluate their own and their peers' strategy use meta-pragmatically within focused practice tasks, it probably would have been necessary to do at least some of this with the whole class, since the students were obviously not used to engaging in this kind of activity. This would have allowed me to structure and guide the discussion more than I was able to do in a group work format. Therefore, we might have played a round of *Taboo* with the whole class, in which volunteers from the class could try paraphrasing a card as described in the preceding paragraph for the whole group. After the word on the card was successfully guessed, we could then have talked about which strategies the student had been

required (or had eventually chosen) to use, how they had realized each linguistically and how effective each strategy had been and why. This would have given the students some exposure to this kind of analysis, which could then have been expanded upon in a group work phase. Again, this would have taken considerably more time than playing the *Taboo* game in the way we actually did in course session 8, but it would have had much more potential for raising the students' meta-pragmatic awareness and developing their ability to think and talk about their own strategy use explicitly.

Instead of the prepared task assigned at the end of course session 8, in which the students were supposed to choose two words they knew in their L1 but not in English and write paraphrases to present to a group of their peers, the students could have been assigned a set of two or three pre-selected words and asked to write paraphrases for those words. In course session 9, the students could then have met in groups to present their paraphrases and analyze which strategies each group member had used. Alternatively, the paraphrases could also have been collected before the lesson and organized into a handout in which certain words and phrases were highlighted for the students. This could then have become the basis of a task to associate particular realizations used with specific paraphrasing strategies and to compare and contrast strategies used to paraphrase particular concepts. These tasks would have had the advantage that it would have been possible to compare and contrast how individual students had paraphrased the same words. This could have helped students to notice various possible strategies that could be used, to create connections between realizations and the use of particular strategies and to explore which strategies were more or less effective for paraphrasing certain concepts and why.

Additionally, it might also have been interesting to arrange this task so that each student received one of four different sets of words. In course session 9, the students would then have formed groups with the other students who had received the same set of words. After identifying and discussing the strategies each group member had chosen to use in his or her paraphrases, the group could then have been asked to present a group paraphrase of one of the words to the class to see whether the rest of the class could guess the word. Additionally, the group could have been asked to comment on which strategies they had chosen to use, as well as if there were any they had rejected. These group paraphrases could then be utilized as a chance to further discuss and analyze strategy use, linguistic realizations of strategies and effectiveness with the whole learning group. This would have provided the students with an additional opportunity for teacher-guided meta-pragmatic discussion of strategy use.

However, one of the reasons that I chose to have students find their own words for the prepared task was because it would allow them to practice their paraphrasing skills more

realistically, since they themselves did not know the English word for the concept they were paraphrasing, while also encouraging them to extend their vocabulary through the selection of words they wished to know in English. I felt that the task was likely to be more motivating for the students than having them paraphrase a set of given words. The students responded to the task in the group work phase with high levels of concentration and engagement, suggesting that they did in fact find value in it. I am thus somewhat reluctant to give up this aspect of the task entirely.

Instead of replacing this task, another step could have been added to it in order to spark more analytical discussion of the strategies the students had used. After the students presented their paraphrases to their groups and found solutions for each, either from each other or in a two-language dictionary, they could have been given the task to select one paraphrase that had proved difficult for the group to solve. They would then have been asked to edit this paraphrase. This would have involved discussing which strategies had been used, how effective the students felt these strategies were and which might be used in addition to or instead of those strategies. The students could then have been given the opportunity to post their paraphrases online on a translation website such as www.leo.org, which includes a forum for users to ask questions concerning how best to translate concepts. In the following course session, the students could have given feedback about whether others had been able to come up with any suggestions based on those paraphrases, as well as whether the proposed solutions matched their own or whether those responding made different suggestions. In addition to helping students to engage with meta-pragmatic analysis of paraphrasing strategies, this modification to the task would also have created a possibility to link classroom work to the real world, which may also have been particularly interesting and motivating for the students.

20 Preempting communicative problems and securing mutual understanding: Communication strategies (CSs) for the speaker and the listener (course sessions 8, 9 and 10)

In addition to using CSs to signal and resolve instances of non-understanding in ELF talk, empirical studies of ELF communication have shown that successful ELF users also regularly employ CSs proactively to ensure that mutual understanding is achieved and communicative problems do not arise in the first place. Given the importance ascribed to this function of CSs for the overall success of ELF interactions (cf. Cogo and House 2018: 221), instruction aimed at the development of strategic competence in the ELF-oriented classroom needs to address the preemptive use of CSs.

One way that successful ELF users proactively use CSs is to preempt communicative problems that, if left unchecked, might lead to communication breakdown: “During an interaction, speakers can anticipate that their utterances may create problems in understanding, and, therefore, they may try to prevent non-understanding beforehand” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 127). Thus, speakers may attune to an aspect of their own speech as potentially problematic for their listeners even though “no overt marker of a misunderstanding is in evidence” (Mauranen 2006: 135). Rather than waiting for their listeners to signal a problem with understanding, they may proactively take steps to address this aspect, e.g. by repeating a potentially problematic word or phrase to give the listener another chance to hear it or by rephrasing it so as to increase explicitness or clarity (cf. Kaur 2015a: 244-250). However, the proactive use of strategies may serve other important communicative functions as well:

Pre-empting strategies, though, may not only be used to prevent breakdowns in communication; they can also be seen as general strategies employed to facilitate understanding, to ensure interlocutors are following the point, or to support speakers in their meaning-making activity. (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 128)

Thus, the range of CSs that can be used in a proactive capacity also includes interactional strategies aimed at negotiating meaning and ensuring that mutual understanding is achieved throughout a communicative exchange.

Traditionally in ELT, the responsibility for achieving understanding in native speaker/non-native speaker encounters has been placed squarely on the non-native speaker.¹³³

¹³³ Both Hyninen (2014) and Pitzl (2015) argued that this viewpoint is evident in the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR), and that, given the ongoing influence of this document in language teaching and policy, it thus continues to be perpetuated in current ELT (cf. Hyninen 2014: 303, Pitzl 2015: 100-101).

Understanding has largely been conceived of as a “one-way process in which non-native speakers are striving to make themselves understood by native speakers whose prerogative it was to decide what was intelligible and what was not” (Bamgbose 1998: 10). This conception of understanding “places the burden of being understood on the speaker, without taking the listener into account at all” (Walker 2010: 18). However, more recently, research into intercultural communication in the fields of sociolinguistics and applied linguistics has begun to emphasize the interactive nature of understanding, in which “the responsibility for effective communication is shared by both the speaker and the listener. In a conversation, it is not the sole responsibility of the speaker to make himself understood. The listener must make an effort to understand” (Smith 2015 [1983]: 167). Thus, the process of arriving at mutual understanding is acknowledged to be a joint process in which meaning is negotiated between speaker and listener.

The joint construction of meaning in which both speaker and listener play an active role in the communicative process is precisely what has been generally observed in ELF talk. This has led Cogo and Dewey (2012) to claim that, from an ELF perspective, understanding is best conceived of “as an active (not passive) ability, as a joint enterprise, collaboratively achieved by the speakers in interaction [...] understanding is thus seen as a process by which participants engage in building common ground or joint knowledge” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 115). Likewise, on the basis of both data from her own study of misunderstanding in ELF interactions (cf. Pitzl 2010) and subsequent research in the field at large, Pitzl (2015) maintained that “understanding is clearly not a passive skill or the responsibility of any one speaker but always something that needs to be managed and shared by all parties involved in communication” (Pitzl 2015: 96).

Acknowledging the listener as equally responsible for the achievement of understanding in a conversation requires a shift in the way that listening in communicative situations has traditionally been understood:

Listening, we now know, is not a ‘receptive’ skill where the listener waits passively for the message to arrive and be understood. Rather it is an active process where the listener uses different strategies in order to understand the speaker, or in order to clarify understanding and jointly construct understanding together with the speaker. (Walker 2010: 18)

In light of observations of the interactive nature of understanding in intercultural communication, listening in such contexts is now acknowledged to be an active process in which listeners, like speakers, also make use of CSs to proactively ensure that mutual understanding is achieved and maintained throughout an interaction. This is alluded to in the quotation from Cogo and Dewey (2012) above where they stated that one of the roles of proactive strategy use is “to support speakers in their meaning-making activity” (Cogo and

Dewey 2012: 128). In addition to contributing to the co-construction of understanding, active listening is acknowledged to play an important role in accommodation in ELF talk, in that it is also used to “signal agreement, listenership and engagement in the conversation” (Cogo 2010: 259). For all of these reasons, the ability to employ active listening strategies is acknowledged as an important characteristic of successful ELF communicators (cf. Walker 2010: 18).

Given the importance of active participation by both the speaker and the listener for successful ELF communication, it appeared to be essential in classroom work on proactive uses of CSs to include not only speaker strategies, but also strategies for active and supportive listening and to raise the students’ awareness of the joint responsibility of speaker and listener for communicative success in ELF.¹³⁴ I thus planned to spend equal time on speaker and listener strategies in this part of the pilot course. This is a considerable departure from the usual emphasis in ELT, but it seemed justified in light of insights from ELF research, especially as the students were less likely to have focused on the role of the listener as equally responsible for the co-construction of understanding in previous language courses. 20.1 will describe in more detail how aims were developed for classroom work on proactive uses of CSs and how tasks and materials were selected to develop the students’ awareness of, and ability to use, both speaker and listener strategies.

20.1 Tasks and materials for working on CSs for preempting communicative problems and ensuring mutual understanding

In order to appreciate why it might be beneficial to employ CSs proactively in ELF talk, a speaker will need to have some awareness of the aspects of ELF communication that might potentially become sources of communicative problems if left unchecked. I therefore planned to begin classroom work on preemptive strategies by asking the students to brainstorm a list of things that could potentially cause communication breakdown in ELF talk. In their two-minute introductions at the beginning of the course (cf. 3.1), the students had been asked to comment on what they felt might be difficult about lingua franca communication. Those who addressed

¹³⁴ It should be noted here that, in normal conversation, the roles of speaker and listener are of course not fixed; they shift back and forth as participants take turns in conversation. This is one of the fundamental principles of turn-taking in Conversational Analysis. However, in order to facilitate the development of both the students’ awareness of the joint responsibility of speaker and listener to negotiate understanding and their ability to use strategies to effectively engage in this negotiation in each role, it was at times necessary in this strand of the course to treat these roles separately.

this point in their talks had generally included differing pronunciation and issues involving vocabulary as two of the things that might make communication in international situations difficult (cf. T2: 77-609). Additionally, we had already spent significant course time considering issues relating to pronunciation and culture in earlier course sessions. Thus, this task was in essence a review of issues that had already been raised during the course and was meant primarily to activate the students' prior knowledge.

In addition to drawing the students' attention to the reasons why they might need to use CSs proactively in ELF talk, I also wished to emphasize from the beginning that the speaker and listener are jointly responsible for the success of a conversation. As a second introductory activity, I consequently planned to introduce the English adage "It takes two to tango". This adage is generally used to emphasize that it takes two active participants to successfully engage not only in complex ballroom dances such as the tango, but also in other interactive activities as well. In asking the students to comment on the meaning of the adage and what it might have to do with communication, I hoped to raise the students' awareness that both the speaker and the listener have an active role to play in the communicative process. The listener is not simply passive in conversation; he or she can also use CSs to ensure that the conversation progresses smoothly, and that mutual understanding is achieved and maintained. Thus, subsequent work with pre-emptive strategies would focus not only on CSs for the speaker, but also on CSs for active and supportive listening.

The next lesson point featured a task from Module 6.9 of the *Intercultural Resource Pack*, entitled *Positive communication* (Utley 2004: 102-103). The first task in this module presents the learners with a series of strategies that can be used "[w]hen intercultural communication is in danger of becoming confused or of breaking down" (Utley 2004: 103) (cf. Materials excerpt 33 below). Thus, the task focuses on the role of CSs for pre-empting communicative problems. The instructions for this task ask the learners to consider the list of strategies and to rank each suggestion on a scale of 1 to 5 according to their perception of its usefulness in an intercultural communication setting (1 being 'useless', 5 being 'very useful'). The learners are also encouraged to add further strategies to the list. I planned to have the students work on this task in small groups and then to discuss their responses with the whole class.

This task was chosen for two main reasons. First, it would be beneficial to begin with a more general overview of the kinds of strategies it might be possible to employ proactively before focusing more specifically on individual strategies and how they can actually be deployed in conversation. Second, by inviting learners to rate the strategies presented on the worksheet, this task facilitates a critical approach to those strategies. The worksheet does not recommend that learners adopt these strategies as good practice on someone else's authority,

Materials excerpt 33:

| | | |
|----|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | Use good tone and tempo | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Emphasise the positive more than the negative | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Be human, show warmth | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Ask lots of questions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | Keep It Short and Simple (KISS) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | Structure things clearly and logically | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | Summarise often | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | Use body language | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 | Check that you are understood | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | Show that you are listening | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | Say exactly what you mean | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | Use humour where you can | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13 | Avoid sarcasm | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14 | Clarify any doubts you have | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15 | Look for signs from the person or people you are speaking to | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(Utley 2004: 103)

but instead invites them to consider and comment on the usefulness of such strategies in their own experience. Additionally, the task is open-ended, inviting the learners to contribute other strategies they are aware of to the list. Thus, the task is not overly prescriptive and also allows the teacher to gain some insight into the learners' previous experience with, and views on, preemptive strategies.

In keeping with the emphasis on the active roles of both speaker and listener in the communicative process, I planned to follow up this task by asking the students to look at the list again and to mark the strategies to indicate which ones could be used in the role of the speaker, which in the role of the listener and which in both roles. In a number of cases, a particular strategy might be useful for both speaker and listener, e.g. *3 Be human, show warmth* and *4 Ask lots of questions*. We would then quickly discuss the students' answers before we moved on to begin considering some specific strategies and their functions and realizations in conversation in more detail.

The rest of course session 8 would involve work with the first four tasks from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* (Dignen 2011: 16-17), a business-oriented textbook focused on intercultural communication. Although most of the units in this textbook are set in business contexts that would not have been particularly relevant to this learning group, and thus could not have been used without heavy modification, Unit 3B, entitled *Communicating effectively*, is an exception. This unit begins by focusing on raising learners' awareness of cultural differences between communication styles and then presents a model for intercultural

communication that is supposed to help smooth out these differences in intercultural interactions. This model is based on CSs for both the speaker and the listener, thus underscoring again the interactional nature of understanding in intercultural contexts. The unit also features a task introducing some possible linguistic realizations of the strategies presented. Thus, using the tasks in unit 3B would allow us both to highlight potential cross-cultural differences in communication styles and to consider linguistic devices for verbalizing specific CSs, aims related to the fourth and fifth areas of Dörnyei's framework for teaching CSs (cf. Chapter 17)

The first task in Unit 3B presents three communication styles based on the work of Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner in *Riding the Waves of Culture* (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1998). The communication styles are presented in three graphics (1-3) accompanied by three brief descriptive texts (A-C):

Materials excerpt 34:

- ① In their book *Riding the Waves of Culture*, Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner investigate differences in the way people speak and listen across national cultures.

Read the descriptions of three different communication styles based on their work and match each style to one of the diagrams.



A Speakers give their opinions briefly with just a little information – this is seen as more modest and less dominant. There is lots of silence to allow people time to think and reflect. People are not direct when giving an opinion because harmony in the group is seen as important. People may not disagree strongly. Not so much time is taken to clarify what was said. Professionals are expected to understand the first time.

B People can give opinions in a very emotional or creative way. They may move around many subjects and talk so much that the only way to stop them is to interrupt them, and this is acceptable. People speak as others are speaking. If you don't interrupt, you never get a chance to speak. Little time is allowed for clarification. It is more important to give an opinion than to check you have understood the other person's opinion.

C In discussions people speak for a long time when giving an opinion, and can be powerful and direct. It is seen as professional to be analytical, to give all the facts and to have a strong opinion. Interruption is seen as impolite. You wait until it is your turn to speak – you know when that is because the other person just stops talking. It is possible to start your turn with a strong and direct disagreement with the other person.

When these styles come together, the communication flow breaks down and misunderstanding increases as people begin to give their opinions in different ways: direct / indirect; long / short; and – as people listen in different ways – silence / interruption. As this flow breaks down, people judge each other negatively.

- ② Which style is closest to the style in your culture? Which do you think is most effective?

(Dignen 2011: 16)

In the first task, the learners are asked to read the texts and then match each text with the corresponding picture. While the pictures mainly focus on turn-taking (including the length of turns and the amount of silence or overlap between turns), the texts also address other issues, such as the expected level of directness and the amount of attention usually devoted to clarifying a message. A final short paragraph introduces the idea that, when divergent styles

come together, communication flow may suffer. Then, in the second task, the learners are invited to comment on which communication style is typical in their culture and which they feel is most effective.

Since the emphasis on turn-taking in these tasks was new territory at this point in the pilot course, I would briefly introduce the idea of turn-taking before beginning to work on the tasks from Unit 3B. This was done using a cartoon from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 7 in the general English textbook *English Unlimited C1* (Doff and Goldstein 2011: 73):

Materials excerpt 35:



(Doff and Goldstein 2011: 73)

This section of Unit 7 had already been used as the basis for Block 1 of classroom work in the pragmatics strand of the course, in which the focus had been on raising the students' meta-pragmatic awareness of general pragmatic principles and processes (cf. Chapter 16). The cartoon had appeared at the top of the materials used in this block, but we had not paid attention to it or to the task related to it, since turn-taking was not something we were addressing at the time.

The cartoon presents the notion of taking turns through a humorous example in that, although the man talks about how he and his brother hit each other as children, something that most adults would not condone, the older woman focuses instead on how positive she finds it that they were able to take turns, a behavior encouraged in children in activities such as sharing toys or playing games. It is accompanied by a set of questions for the learners to consider:

Materials excerpt 36:

- 1 What's the point of the joke?
- 2 Why are children often asked to 'take turns'? In what contexts?
- 3 In what other situations do you need to take turns in life? Why?
- 4 What is the opposite of taking turns in a conversation?

(Doff and Goldstein 2011: 73)

I would present the cartoon via the overhead projector and then ask the students the questions orally to spark discussion regarding what is meant by *taking turns* and how this applies to conversation. Once this basis was in place, the first task from unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* would then be introduced.

As discussed in Chapter 17, addressing cross-cultural differences in CS use potentially poses some significant challenges for the ELF-oriented classroom, since learners must be prepared to communicate with interlocutors from a wide range of cultures rather than from a specific cultural background. This raises the question of which ‘other’ cultures to use as points of comparison in the classroom. In light of this challenge, I found the first two tasks from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* to be a better fit for the pilot course than many others in that these materials focus rather generally on cultural differences in communication styles, rather than linking communication styles to specific cultural groupings. However, the materials do still have some weaknesses in light of an ELF-oriented approach to teaching both pragmatics and culture that needed to be addressed. First off, they treat culture as something linked to nation-states, in that the focus is on “differences in the way people speak and listen *across national cultures*” (Dignen 2011: 16, emphasis added). This focus on culture specifically and exclusively at the national level, which is characteristic of many language learning materials, is seen as problematic in light of the role that culture has been shown to play in ELF talk (cf. 8.3, 9). To counteract this perspective, I therefore planned to raise the point that communication styles may also vary from person to person within a cultural grouping in talking about the second task, in which the learners are invited to discuss which of the three communicative styles best fits their own culture.

Additionally, the descriptive texts (A-C) in the first task use a number of adjectives (e.g. *direct, powerful, modest, long, short*) to describe the three different communication styles presented. Thus, the texts make use of metapragmatic characterization, “a process which involves assigning attributes to ways of interacting” (McConachy and Hata 2013: 298). McConachy and Hata (2013) argue that materials using such descriptors should be approached with care. For one thing, they “may function to imbue learners with stereotypical views of members of a given culture” by implying that all members of that culture think and act in the same way (McConachy and Hata 2013: 298). Such characterizations also usually “leave unexamined the cultural logic that leads members of a culture to value certain features of discourse over others” (McConachy and Hata 2013: 298). Thus, such characterizations may provide general information about how members of a particular culture communicate, but they usually do little to illustrate why these communicative practices have developed. Furthermore,

simply labeling a culture as *direct*, for example, is not particularly helpful for the learner because the learner's understanding of concepts such as directness is based on his or her own cultural experience (McConachy and Hata 2013: 299). Rather, the learner will require plenty of examples of how directness is actually realized in conversation in order to understand what is really meant by *direct* and what significance directness has for the particular culture being described (McConachy and Hata 2013: 299).

In order to raise learners' awareness of their own cultural ideas about metapragmatic descriptors such as *direct* or *formal*, McConachy and Hata (2013) recommend using explicit teacher questioning, which might include prompts such as:

- For you, what does 'formal' mean?
- What would be the opposite of 'formal'?
- In your culture, when do people use 'formal' language? Why?
- In what situations is formality important? Why?
- Do you think the idea of formality may be different in other cultures? Why?
- How can you show 'formality' in English?

(McConachy and Hata 2013: 299-300)

The goal of such questioning is to help learners become aware not only of what they associate with particular metapragmatic characterizations, but also where these associations come from, in order to increase their awareness of the role of culture in perceiving such characterizations (McConachy and Hata 2013: 300). In the pilot course, I planned to use some of the questions proposed by McConachy and Hata (2013) to briefly explore the metapragmatic characterizations *direct* and *indirect* with the students, since this appeared to be the most problematic dichotomy featured in the descriptive texts from task 1 of Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures*.

The third task from unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* presents guidelines for what the author refers to as an "interactive communication style" (Dignen 2011: 17). These guidelines are meant to help learners develop a communication style that will smooth conversational flow and help them to avoid communication breakdown. The guidelines are presented as a set of tips and potentially useful CSs:

Materials excerpt 37:

- 3 One way to manage these different styles and create a clear flow of communication is to use an interactive communication style. Read and complete the guidelines opposite with the correct phrase(s) from the box.

I couldn't agree more on that. I think, and it's just my experience, that ...
 I'm not disagreeing with you. It's just that ... You mean that ...
 What's your experience with this? I may be wrong about this but for me ...
 What do you think? What's your take on this? What about you?
 What you said was very interesting ... Interesting. Yes, but ... Absolutely.

Interactive communication style: guidelines

When speaking:

Give an opinion briefly. Don't speak for too long before letting the other person speak (90 seconds maximum).

Don't be too direct when giving an opinion. Show modesty and openness, perhaps by saying the other person could be right, e.g. (1)

Make clear that your opinion is not negative about what the other person said, e.g. (2)

As you decide to stop talking:

Finish with a question such as (3) or *Do you see what I mean?* to hand over to the other person and to show you are interested in their point of view.

This handover question also helps to make the conversation flow more easily.

When listening:

Give feedback to the speaker. Do this with non-verbal communication, e.g. nodding or smiling, or verbally, e.g. *Aha, OK, I see what you're saying* or (4)

As the other person stops talking:

Don't disagree too quickly by saying (5)

Begin with a short summary of what was said, e.g. *If I understand you correctly ...* or (6) to make sure that you understand.

Focus first on areas of agreement, e.g. *You may be right* or (7)

If you want to disagree, be polite and ask a question to discover more about the opinion: *Why do you say ...?*

Finally, give your opinion briefly.

(Dignen 2011: 16-17)

These tips are divided into guidelines for the speaker and guidelines for the listener. Thus, working with this text would again emphasize the active function of both of these roles in communication, supporting one of the overarching goals for this part of classroom work on pragmatics. The guidelines for speakers recommend shorter turns and a medium level of directness in giving opinions, as well as using CSs such as checking that the interlocutor has understood (i.e. using comprehension checks) and smoothing turn handover through the use of questions. The guidelines for the listener involve CSs to signal active listening, e.g. through body language and minimal feedback; checking understanding by summarizing what the speaker has said; and focusing on agreement rather than disagreement when beginning the next turn.

In presenting the CSs recommended for an interactive communication style, the guidelines include seven gaps where learners are asked to insert sentences and phrases from a box that are to serve as examples of realizations of each kind of strategy. Thus, this task includes the kind of work described in the fifth area of Dörnyei's framework for teaching CSs, 'teaching CSs directly by presenting linguistic devices to verbalize them' (cf. Chapter 17). I planned to have the students work in pairs to read through the guidelines in the third task and then complete the gaps with the linguistic realizations from the box. I anticipated that this would likely take some time, as the task is rather challenging in at least two ways. First, some of the realizations appear to be quite similar but nonetheless differ in subtle ways that require close reading. Second, the number of realizations that fits into each blank varies from only one to as many as four, making the task somewhat more unpredictable and thus more complex.

While many of the strategies presented in task 3 of Unit 3B are in fact strategies attested in research into pragmatic practices and processes in ELF communication, the guidelines for an interactive communication style are largely presented in an uncritical fashion as recommendations that would appear to guarantee successful communication in intercultural settings. To balance this, it was important to make sure that a critical stance was continually adopted towards these guidelines as we began to discuss the solutions to the task with the whole class. Therefore, in addition to checking that the students had assigned the provided linguistic realizations to the correct blanks, I planned to ask the students to comment on how effective they believed each of these strategies would be in intercultural communication. In the interest of making sure that the students were meta-pragmatically aware of the kinds of strategies presented in this task, I also planned to ask them to give a short summary of the strategies recommended for the speaker and the listener respectively during the discussion.

The fourth task in Unit 3B asks the students to come up with two more ideas of their own for each gap in the text. By asking the students to draw on their own ideas, the parts of this unit focused on linguistic realizations of various strategies do not remain entirely prescriptive. As this task would take up too much class time, I planned to assign it as homework. Since the students would likely be working alone rather than in a pair or group, each student was asked to contribute one more possibility for each gap and to send me their suggestions via email by two days before the next course session. I would then compile these suggestions into a list to be distributed to the entire class. Thus, the students would be provided with an expanded list of suggested realizations of all of the strategies addressed in Unit 3B.

The third and fourth tasks from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* take a more deductive approach to CS instruction. That is, these tasks begin by presenting the learners with CSs and then ask the learners to first identify and then generate decontextualized linguistic

realizations of these strategies. By contrast, course session 9 was planned around tasks and materials that would facilitate a more inductive approach to CSs. This type of approach begins by presenting examples of strategies in communicative use and asks the learners to work out which strategies are involved. Linguistic realizations of strategies are often presented in the context of a recorded text, which allows learners to observe how particular strategies might actually be deployed in the context of a communicative situation.

The first set of tasks I planned to use in course session 9 came from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of the general English textbook *English Unlimited B2* (Tilbury et al. 2011: 76). According to a small box at the top of this section, the goals of this lesson are to help learners learn to *check that people understand*, *add more detail* and *ask people to clarify or repeat things* (Tilbury et al. 2011: 76). Thus, the focus of the lesson is on the development of interactive CSs that can be used to ensure that mutual understanding is achieved and maintained during a conversation.

The first two strategies, *check that people understand* and *add more detail*, are presented as speaker strategies. Comprehension or understanding checks are a type of CS that is attested in proactive strategy use in ELF to ensure that a listener is following the speaker's point (Kaur 2009a: 218-222). *Add more detail* could be seen as a strategy that would contribute to enhancing the overall clarity or explicitness of a message, particularly where the speaker engages in preemptive work due to the anticipation that something about his or her speech may not be entirely clear for the listener (cf. Kaur 2009a: 222-230, Kaur 2015a: 246-250). However, the linguistic realizations of this strategy presented in the task did not appear to mirror findings from ELF research very well. Therefore, this strategy was omitted from classroom work with these materials.

The final strategy of this *Explore speaking* section, *ask people to clarify or repeat things*, can be classified as a type of CS primarily for the listener. Requests for clarification and repetition by the listener are also attested in ELF talk and can function as proactive strategies as well as strategies that may be used to signal non-understanding. Requests for repetition are often made when the listener has not heard something clearly, or wishes to check whether or not he or she has heard something clearly; that is, they are often employed following perceived difficulties with hearing, e.g. due to background noise, unclear pronunciation or overlapping speech (cf. Kaur 2018: 245-246; Kaur 2010: 196-198). Requests for clarification, on the other hand, are more often used when a listener requires more input in order to be certain that he or she has understood what the speaker is trying to communicate; that is, they are usually employed when a listener believes he or she has heard what was said properly, but is either unable to satisfactorily establish what is meant or is unsure whether his or her understanding is

accurate (Kaur 2010: 202). Thus, requests for repetition and requests for clarification have been shown to serve slightly different functions in ELF communication. However, the textbook does not address this distinction, but includes both types of request in one category.

The strategies presented in the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2* are first introduced in the context of a listening text. In this text, a professional chocolate maker, Valeria, is explaining to her interlocutor, Sergio, how filled chocolates are made. After a brief task inviting the learners to talk together about what they already know about chocolate making, the second task asks the learners to listen to the text and to identify the parts of Valeria's explanation that Sergio does not understand at first. They are then invited to mark Valeria's clarifications in a transcript of the text provided in the textbook alongside the tasks (Tilbury et al. 2011: 76). Eight of the phrases used in this text are numbered, and, in the third task, the learners are asked to assign these phrases to the three different types of CS (reworded slightly as *checking your listener understands*, *adding more detail* and *asking for clarification or repetition*) that are the focus of the task sequence. In an additional step, they are provided with a box presenting more phrases and interrogative sentences and asked to assign these to the appropriate type of CS as well.

As mentioned above, I planned to focus on only the first and last of these three types of CS and to omit *adding more detail*, as the linguistic realizations presented did not seem to reflect ELF research on the ways in which speakers try to clarify their message or make it more explicit. I did not expect that the students would have difficulties either with understanding the listening text or with sorting the expressions from the text by the CS they realized. I therefore anticipated that we would be able to work through these tasks fairly quickly.

In presenting the use of three specific types of CS in context and then focusing on linguistic realizations, the first three tasks from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2* focus on raising the learners' awareness of these CSs and how they can be realized in English. In this sense, they can all be considered to be awareness-raising tasks (cf. Kasper 1997). As such, they address the first area of Dörnyei's framework for teaching CSs in the classroom, 'raising learner awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs' (cf. Chapter 17). Additionally, by presenting these CSs in the context of a listening text, the task sequence can be seen as addressing Dörnyei's third area, in which the focus is on 'providing L2 models of the use of certain CSs' (cf. Chapter 17). Finally, in focusing on specific linguistic realizations of these CSs, this task also addresses the fifth area of Dörnyei's framework, 'teaching CSs directly by presenting linguistic devices to verbalize them' (cf. Chapter 17).

By contrast, the final two tasks from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 are designed to provide the students with opportunities to practice these CSs through a speaking task. Thus, they can be classified as communicative practice tasks (cf. Kasper 1997), and they extend the task sequence to address the final area of Dörnyei's framework for CS instruction, 'providing opportunities for practice in strategy use' (cf. Chapter 17).

In the first part of task 4, the learners are asked to prepare for one of three scenarios described in the task:

Materials excerpt 38:

- 4 a** Work alone. Choose one of these situations or think of one of your own. Think about what to say.
- A colleague has promised to make dinner for someone but is a bit worried because he/she is not a very experienced cook. He/She asks you for a recipe – not too complicated! – for a dish you like.
 - You're watching sport on TV when a neighbour drops by. He/She is interested in the game but doesn't really understand what's going on. He/She asks you to explain the rules.
 - A colleague is thinking about buying his/her own house or flat and asks for your advice on how to do it and what's involved. What's the procedure? Is there a lot of paperwork?

(Tilbury et al. 2011: 76)

In each of the three scenarios, the learner is invited to step into the role of the expert on something that his or her interlocutor supposedly knows little about. In this sense, the speaking task is very similar to the listening text from the previous tasks, which also featured an expert explaining the process of chocolate making to a less knowledgeable layperson. After preparing to talk, the learners are instructed to form pairs and take turns giving their explanations. As they alternate between the roles of speaker and listener, they are encouraged to use the CSs introduced in the earlier tasks to ensure that mutual understanding is achieved. Finally, in task 5, they are invited to switch pairs and tell their new partner what they learned from their original partner, again making use of CSs to ensure that mutual understanding is achieved.

The task sequence from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2* was chosen largely because it focuses on two types of CS, comprehension checks by the speaker and requests for clarification or repetition by the listener, that are clearly attested as

used in successful ELF interactions. The learners are provided with the opportunity to notice these strategies in context and to focus on various linguistic realizations, as well as with the opportunity for structured communicative practice with these strategies. However, the listening text upon which this task sequence is based is not entirely ideal. First of all, it comes across as quite scripted and, as is typical of textbook dialogues, it features few of the hallmarks of natural conversation such as backchannels, overlapping turns, hesitations, etc. (cf. Limberg 2014: 218, 223). In that sense, it does not represent the kind of authentic input that Kasper (1997) claims ought to serve as the basis of classroom work on pragmatics (cf. Kasper 1997: 125-126). Second, although one of the characters in the listening text, Sergio, is supposedly from Russia and has an identifiably non-native accent, the accent is still fairly subtle, and Sergio's use of English is otherwise indistinguishable from that of his native-speaker interlocutor. Additionally, the native speaker, Valeria, is cast in the role of the expert explaining chocolate making to Sergio, which contributes to the feeling that she has the upper hand in the conversation (cf. 7.2.1). In this respect, the text does not really seem to portray an authentic ELF exchange. As a contrast to this more scripted text, I planned to introduce a recording of a more authentic ELF conversation as the basis for the next part of classroom work on preemptive CSs.

The next part of course session 9 would focus more specifically on listener behavior and the kinds of strategies listeners can employ in conversation, both to signal listenership and to support the processes of negotiating meaning and arriving at mutual understanding. To do this, I planned to use a recording from Walker (2010), entitled *Problems with listening* (Walker 2010: 168-169, audio track 6). This recording features an authentic ELF conversation – in the sense that the conversation is completely unscripted – between two speakers, designated speakers I and J in Walker's corpus. The two speakers were given a topic and asked to discuss it while being recorded. In that sense, it is very different from the listening text from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2*, in that it contains many of the characteristic features of authentic discourse: speech overlaps, interruptions, back-channels, pauses, hesitations, repetitions, false starts, etc. This makes it a more ideal text for examining what listeners actually do in conversation. Additionally, the speakers are both non-native speakers of English. Speaker I comes from United Arab Emirates (L1 Arabic) and speaker J from Taiwan (L1 Taiwanese). They are both proficient speakers of English, but their English retains more non-standard features than that of the non-native speakers generally used in coursebook series like *English Unlimited*. Thus, this text also provides a more authentic representation of ELF communication.

Since the text represented a major departure from the kinds of listening texts that we had been working with up to this point in the course, I expected that the students would probably

find it quite a bit more challenging to listen to than previous listening texts. I therefore planned to begin by playing brief excerpts from both the listening text about chocolate making from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2* and from *Problems with listening* and asking the students to simply compare their impressions of the two texts and comment on which they found more challenging to understand. This would help them adjust to the new kind of text and would ultimately help to build up their receptive phonological accommodation skills (cf. 7.2.2). After this, we would listen to *Problems with listening* again in its entirety and focus on the content of the text. This was in accordance with a principle of working with authentic texts, that classroom work should focus first on helping learners to understand the content of the text, because learners will be better able to focus on specific features of the discourse once a global understanding has been established (Gilmore 2007: 111, Walker 2010: 95). Therefore, I planned to identify the main topic of the conversation for the students and then ask them to collect specific examples of the problems with listening that the two speakers mention in the recorded conversation. We would then discuss these answers as a class to make sure that everyone had understood what the text was about.

Armed with an understanding of the content of the text, we would be able to focus on the main contribution this text was intended to make to classroom work on preemptive CSs: the behavior of the two interlocutors in the text when they were functioning as the listener in the conversation and the kinds of CSs they used in this role to actively support their interlocutor in achieving mutual understanding. I planned to play *Problems with listening* again and to ask the students to pay particular attention to what the participants do when the other person is speaking. Both speakers I and J are quite active as listeners in this conversation. They use backchannels (Walker 2010: 168-170, lines 4, 35, 38, 40) and agreement tokens (lines 44, 46) to signal that they are following along with the conversation. They also use partial repetition and paraphrase, both to request confirmation of understanding (line 16) and to signal non-understanding (lines 22, 24). One listener even directly encourages the speaker to continue speaking (line 18). We would discuss these behaviors and thus use the text as a way to identify further CSs that listeners use, both to signal that they are listening and invested in a conversation and to support the meaning-making process between speaker and listener.

I was not sure how aware the students would be of some listener behaviors such as backchannels, which tend to be attuned to more subconsciously, since they do not contribute to the main message. Therefore, I prepared copies of the transcript of the conversation, which I planned to distribute to the students so that they could see as well as hear these features of the text. This would also support the identification of specific examples of the CSs used by listeners in this text, since it would allow us to refer to line numbers and thus enhance referential clarity. I also planned to extend the activity a bit by discussing how the listener might look or act as

the speaker is talking. This would allow us to bring non-linguistic features such as body language and facial expressions into the discussion as well.

As the final activity with *Problems with listening* from Walker (2010), I planned to look with the students at a point of non-understanding that arises between the two speakers and is then resolved (Walker 2010: 169, lines 21-34). However, this task belonged to classroom work with CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding and is therefore discussed in Chapter 18.

Classroom work with *Problems with listening* could again be classified as focusing on raising the students' awareness of specific CSs through a structured inductive approach (cf. Kasper 1997). Like the initial tasks from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2*, work with this text primarily fell into the first and third areas of Dörnyei's framework for teaching CSs, in which the focus is on 'raising learner awareness about the nature and communicative potential of CSs' and 'providing L2 models of the use of certain CSs' (cf. Chapter 17). However, in working with this text, emphasis would not be placed on collecting potential linguistic realizations of the strategies we focused on, as we had done as part of the task sequence from *English Unlimited B2*. This was largely because, while I expected that the students might not be particularly consciously aware of certain supportive listener behaviors, I was nevertheless confident that they did in fact engage in them to a greater or lesser extent in conversation. Therefore, I chose to work on raising their awareness of these strategies in the belief that increased awareness would allow them to make use of these strategies more intentionally in communicative situations even without specific focus on linguistic realizations of these strategies.

One final task, a communicative practice task entitled *Keep the conversation flowing* (Dignen 2011: 23), was selected as a culminating task for the lesson sequence on preemptive CSs and was scheduled to take place at the very end of course session 9. For a number of reasons, including the significant amount of data generated, this task will be analyzed separately in the next chapter, Chapter 21.

Having outlined the planning of the lesson sequence on strategies for preempting communicative problems and proactively ensuring the achievement and maintenance of mutual understanding, the next three sections (20.2-20.4) will now present analysis of significant aspects of classroom work with these tasks and materials. This chapter will then conclude with a brief summary and reconsideration of the lesson sequence as a whole (20.5).

20.2 *Critically considering the potential usefulness of preemptive CSs for the speaker and the listener*

The two brief activities used to introduce the topic of preemptive CSs in course session 8 both went very smoothly. As anticipated, the students were able to name without hesitation several factors that, if left unchecked, might threaten intercultural communication. These included lack of vocabulary (T8: 96), unintelligible pronunciation (T8: 99), lack of conversational topic (T8: 103) and interpersonal problems due to an unintentional affront to one's interlocutor (T8: 113-116). When pressed to expand upon the ways in which vocabulary might contribute to communicative problems in intercultural communication, the students also mentioned inaccurate knowledge of the meaning of a word (T8: 128-129) and lack of vocabulary for specialized topics (T8: 134-135), to which I then added lack of overlapping knowledge of vocabulary items between interlocutors (T8: 141-144).

In the discussion of "It takes two to tango", one student, who had lived in the United States with her family for several years as a child, was already familiar with this adage; however, she was asked not to tell the class what it meant, but to let her classmates work out the meaning. The other students were quickly able to recognize that one needs a partner to dance the tango and that it is very difficult to dance the tango with a partner who is not cooperating (T8: 164-176). From there, they had little difficulty making the connection to conversation. The students acknowledged that conversation, like the tango, requires at least two people who are actively participating in order to be successful. One student even referred to the roles of these participants as *the speaker and the receiver* (T8: 199). This created a natural opening for me to introduce the idea that we would be addressing not only preemptive CSs for the speaker, but also for the listener as an active and integral contributor to conversational success. Thus, we would be looking not only at what speakers can do to preempt communicative problems and ensure mutual understanding, but how listeners can actively contribute to these processes as well.

With this basis in place, instruction then moved on to the task sequence based on Module 6.9 from the *Intercultural Resource Pack* (Utley 2004: 102-103), in which the students were confronted for the first time with a list of CSs. In the initial phase of this task sequence, they were asked to discuss with a partner how useful they felt these strategies might actually be in intercultural communication situations and to rate each strategy on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being 'useless' and 5 being 'very useful'. During this part of the lesson, the recording device captured the discussion between S2, S3 and S17, who were working together as a group of three due to an uneven number of participants in attendance at course session 8. The recording shows that the students in this group often initially expressed differing opinions about the value

of a particular strategy. This generally prompted discussion in which the students sought to justify their viewpoints and, in some cases, clarify their understanding of what the strategy entailed. In each case, the group was eventually able to agree on a rating and move on to the next strategy. These patterns are illustrated in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 55:

T8: 289-306 (00:14:57-00:15:46)

289 S17: <read> ask a lot of questions </read>
 290 S3: no @@
 291 S2: but (.) if you show interest it's always good for conversation
 292 (.) isn't it?
 293 S3: yes (.) but i think not all people have xxx the topic for (.) eh::
 294 (.) so the other one explains something very easy and <@>
 295 you always </@> @ asks a lot of questions i think it's
 296 S2: yeah maybe (.) if you only ask stupid questions then
 297 S3: @ yeah
 298 S2: what have you
 299 S3: @@
 300 S2: you used today?
 301 S3: @@@
 302 S2: ah:: (1) we call that xxx
 303 S3: @@@
 304 S2: then it's not useful but (.) i think it could be bad as well useful
 305 i would choose four
 306 S17: okay (3)

Here, S17 reads aloud the fourth strategy, *Ask a lot of questions*, as a way of introducing this strategy for discussion in the group (line 289). S3's immediate negative response seems to show that he does not feel that this strategy is very useful (line 290). S2 expresses disagreement with S3's opinion by offering a counterargument, saying *but (.) if you show interest it's always good for conversation (.) isn't it?* (lines 291-292). This causes S3 to defend his position by arguing that it may not be appropriate to ask a lot of questions when the topic of conversation is simple and straightforward (lines 293-295). S2 concedes this point and adds that it may also not be particularly useful *if you only ask stupid questions* (line 296). A few lines later, she sums up this position by saying *i think it could be bad as well [as] useful* (line 304). With this justification, she then proposes ranking *Ask a lot of questions* as a four, corresponding to the descriptor 'quite useful' (lines 304-305). S17, who has been rather quiet during this part of the discussion, promptly agrees, and the group apparently adopts this suggestion without further debate, as there is then a three-second pause (line 306) following which S3 introduces the next item. Overall, the group engaged in similar interactional patterns where they encountered differences in initial opinions when considering other items.

As this was the only group captured by the recording device during the pair work phase of the task, it is impossible to say conclusively whether the other pairs also encountered frequent differences of opinion and, if so, whether their attempts to arrive at an agreement on a rating followed similar conversational patterns. However, I observed as I walked around the

classroom during the pair work phase of the task that most pairs had rated many of the items on the list as ‘quite useful’ or ‘very useful’, but had rated very few items as ‘not very useful’ or ‘useless’, a tendency that I commented on at two points in the whole class discussion which followed the pair work phase (T8: 506-508, 667-668). Thus, there does appear to have been a general trend across all the groups to rate more items positively than negatively in considering their potential usefulness for intercultural communication.

In discussing the task with the whole class, I began by asking the students to name those items that they had identified as ‘very useful’ in their pairs. A number of the items mentioned during this phase of the discussion were uncontested, including *Use good tone and tempo* (T8: 503), *Avoid sarcasm* (T8: 596), *Show that you are listening* (T8: 602), *Use body language* (T8: 606) and *Check that you are understood* (T8: 618). However, we uncovered significant differences in the ratings that different pairs had given the items *Keep it short and simple*, *Ask lots of questions* and *Say exactly what you mean*, and this sparked some protracted discussion of these items.

The strategy *Keep it short and simple* was named by S18 as the second response to the question about which items the students had rated as ‘very useful’ during the pair work phase of the task (T8: 511). Trying to provoke more discussion, I asked the class if they agreed with this rating (T8: 513) and immediately got a negative reaction from S8 (T8: 514). She then told the group that she and her partner had rated *Keep it short and simple* as ‘useless’ (T8: 517). When asked to elaborate further, she responded *we thought if you want to keep the conversation going (.) and you want to:: a::hm (1) not confuse the other person you shouldn't be: too short you should explain it and (.) not keep it too short [...] and that's why we thought it's (.) useless* (T8: 523-528). In other words, S8 and her partner felt that being too terse might actually create communicative problems in at least two possible ways. First, it might hinder the ability of the participants to successfully keep up a conversation, and second, it might not facilitate the listener's understanding of the speaker's meaning. This response prompted further students to raise their hands and offer contributions to the discussion. S3 told the class that, like S18 and her partner, he and his group had rated *Keep it short and simple* as ‘very useful’, not because they felt that it was important to keep one's contributions short, but

because we said ehm: it's for the language you're using (.) so (.) a:hm not use- use difficult words or (.) something the other one maybe doesn't understand and not on the topic so you can talk (.) a lot on the topic but (.) with ah simple words and [...] short sentences (T8: 531-537)

This group applied the strategy in question more to the language used than to the length of a speaker's turn. They argued that in intercultural communication, it would be important to use simpler vocabulary and grammatical structures in order to ensure that the listener is able to

understand what the speaker is saying. Similarly, S7 agreed that *Keep it short and simple* should be applied to the language used rather than the length of the turns taken:

okay i agree with this short and simple in in meaning of the short sentences but i would also (.) eh: repeat it with different words maybe for better understanding so if it's not that short but it's maybe longer not longer but it's maybe more sentences (T8: 544-552)

In arguing for the need to *repeat it with different words maybe for better understanding*, S7 was arguing for the use of paraphrasing as a strategy to ensure that the listener was able to understand what was being said. Thus, the speaker might ultimately require a longer turn, but S7 and his partner still felt that using simpler linguistic structures was a useful strategy to support the overall construction of meaning and therefore rated *Keep it short and simple* as 'very useful'.

The strategy *Ask lots of questions* also generated considerable debate. S8 named this strategy as one that she and her partner had rated as 'very useful' (T8: 568). This triggered some quiet laughter from S3 (T8: 570). When I asked him to comment on why he had laughed, one of his group members, S2, responded that *eh: we also discussed because maybe you ask only stupid questions [...] to keep the conversation going and then the person thinks okay (.) he isn't interested in the topic* (T8: 573-577). This comment elicited some laughter from the rest of the class (T8: 575), but it touched on the idea that the quality of the questions might be an important factor, a theme that was further developed through the responses of other students. S18 responded that she and her partner had ranked this strategy as 'quite useful' rather than 'very useful' *because if you: always ask questions and the other person just answers with yes or no it's no real conversation that is going on so (.) it's maybe not a (.) a: (.) perfect strategy* (T8: 579-582). S18 and her partner recognized that yes/no questions would be unlikely to help one participant to draw another out in conversation, limiting their usefulness in facilitating conversation between interlocutors. Likewise, S7 stated that *we prefer not to say a lot of question but eh open questions so they cannot answer yes or no just you have to talk around the topic and not just say yes or no* (T8: 587-592). Thus, he and his partner felt that the potential of the question to elicit a more expansive response was more important than the quantity of questions employed.

Finally, *Say exactly what you mean*, which was proposed by S12 as an item he and his partner had identified as 'very useful' (T8: 620), also stimulated some discussion. In response to S12's answer, S15 raised her hand and said *i think i have to disagree* (T8: 622). She then stated that she and her partner had rated this item as 'neutral' because saying exactly what one means in every situation might potentially have a negative impact on interpersonal relationships between interlocutors (T8: 624-626). When I asked her to give an example of *a situation where it's maybe dangerous to say exactly what you mean* (T8: 634-635), S15

responded *yeah when my boss is in front of me maybe @@* (T8: 636). This alluded to the idea that it might not always be wise to be completely honest in situations in which there is a marked difference in power relationships between interactants, as this could have negative consequences for the person in the subordinate role. S16 then mentioned business interactions as another possible context in which saying exactly what one means might not be appropriate. At my prompting, he expanded upon this answer by saying

well um: (.) if you already have (.) if you are trying (.) to buy something and you already have another (.) person in mind who can give you a better price maybe you don't want to tell them or maybe you do it depends on your strategy (T8: 649-657)

In his example, S16 pointed out that it might be impolitic in business situations to tell a potential supplier that you think you can get a better price elsewhere. Like S15, S16 thus appeared to equate 'say exactly what you mean' with 'tell the whole truth' or 'say exactly what you are thinking'. However, 'say exactly what you mean' could also be interpreted in a different way, as a paraphrase of part of Grice's fourth conversational maxim, the Maxim of Manner (cf. Grice 1975: 46). In this sense, this item could be equated with 'avoid any obscurity of expression' or 'avoid ambiguity', and this might arguably be a sense in which 'say exactly what you mean' could be a useful strategy in intercultural communication. Research into the pragmatics of ELF attests that interactants in ELF conversation frequently employ CSs to enhance the clarity of what they are saying and thus attempt to avoid or clarify ambiguity as a potential threat to mutual understanding (cf. 15.3). It would be interesting to know whether S12 and his partner interpreted this item like their classmates, or whether they had this more Gricean interpretation in mind when they rated *Say exactly what you mean* as 'very useful'. However, this angle was not pursued any further during the discussion.

After identifying and discussing the items that they had rated as 'very useful', I then invited the students to share the items that they had identified as 'useless' or 'not very useful' (T8: 665-667). As I had anticipated based on my observations from the pair work phase of the lesson, this question generated fewer responses, as the groups had generally rated more strategies as 'quite useful' or 'very useful' than as 'not very useful' or 'useless'. Ultimately, three strategies were named: *Emphasize the positive more than the negative* (T8: 670-671), *Use humor where you can* (T8: 687) and *Summarize often* (T8: 714).

Interestingly, although this had not been the case with items that the students had rated as 'very useful', students who reported items they had rated as 'useless' or 'not very useful' always offered a spontaneous explanation of their rating as part of their response. For example, after introducing *Emphasize the positive more than the negative* as a strategy he and his group had rated as 'useless', S3 immediately qualified his answer by saying

because i mean it depends on the topic when i talk (.) to: e:hm (.) and say him how (.) stupid my boss is and then i don't use anything positive and then maybe his opinion is the same and so we can have a good conversation without anything positive (T8: 673-679)

This response made clear that S3 interpreted the terms *positive* and *negative* in this item in relationship to the participants' stance towards the topic of the conversation, rather than in relationship to the level of agreement between the participants in the interaction in question. Thus, he did not consider it necessary to avoid making negative comments about a topic if the other person agreed with the negative opinion. It seems likely that the students may have chosen to immediately explain their choice to rate an item as 'useless' or 'less useful' because they were aware that most groups had rated only a few items with these descriptors. For this reason, they may have perceived a negative rating as dispreferred and therefore requiring subsequent explanation.

Similar to several of the strategies that were named as having been rated 'very useful', the students did not always agree with their peers' ratings of particular items as 'useless' or 'not very useful', and this sparked some further discussion within the learning group. For example, S2 named *Summarize often* as something her group had rated as 'useless' and then added by way of explanation that *if you always summarize what is said it maybe sounds like the person's too stupid to understand what you said* (T8: 716-718). In response, S8 raised her hand and said that she and her partner had rated this item as 'neutral' *because it depends on who you're talking to and if: he didn't understand what you're talking about it's good to summarize it but if you do understand it (.) then it's (.) of course annoying* (T8: 722-732). Thus, while they acknowledged the drawbacks to overusing summarizing as a strategy, S8 and her partner also saw it as a useful strategy in circumstances in which it is clear that one participant in the interaction has not understood what has been said.

As a final question, I asked the students if they had come up with any additional strategies they would add to the list. This generated only two responses. S7 mentioned the strategy *Use body language* and suggested extending this strategy with other non-verbal CSs such as *maybe draw something [...] or point at something you don't know* (T8: 743, 746). S8 also suggested *it's helpful to explain it in other words (.) if the person is not understanding what you are saying* (T8: 752-753), thus proposing that paraphrasing should be added to the list as well.

Throughout the whole-class phase of this task, the students who contributed to the discussion showed an ability to support their positions with well-reasoned arguments and opinions. This confirms that the task was able to facilitate a critical rather than a prescriptive approach to the CSs presented, one of the reasons the task had been selected to begin with. The fact that many of the students referenced previous discussion of particular items with their partners when they stated their arguments in front of the whole class supports the supposition

that many pairs had in fact spent time discussing at least a few of the items during this part of the task. This may in turn have been the effect of initial differences of opinion in the pairs and the need to negotiate agreement, as was the case in the group captured on the recording of the pair work phase of the lesson.

In the final task of the task sequence, the students were able to quickly designate each strategy as useful in the role of the speaker, the listener or both in their pairs. When we discussed this task with the whole class, it became apparent that the students had generally come to the same conclusions about which strategies would be useful in which roles as I had. However, in two cases, a student named a strategy as being primarily for one role or the other where I had listed it as a strategy for both speaker and listener. In one case, after S7 suggested that the strategy *Summarize often* should be considered a strategy for the speaker (T8: 842), it was another student, rather than I as the teacher, who spoke up and argued that this strategy could be useful in both roles. S17 raised his hand and commented *i think (.) both can summarize even speaker and the listener* (T8: 846-849). To illustrate this point, he then gave an example of a way in which the listener might use this strategy: *so you maybe [...] you can say ah: d- (.) did you say that (.) or something like that* (T8: 849, 852-853). S17 argued that a listener might use summarizing in order to check that his or her understanding of the preceding discourse had been correct and complete, thus alluding to summarizing as one possible way to enact a confirmation request.

It is particularly interesting that S17 oriented to *Summarize often* as a strategy for both speaker and listener, because in debating the usefulness of this strategy with the whole class in the previous task, all of the students who contributed to that discussion had oriented to it as a strategy for the speaker in their responses. S2, in arguing that overuse of this strategy might give the listener the impression that his interlocutor thinks he is *too stupid to understand what [was] said* (T8: 718), implied that this strategy would be used by the speaker to recapitulate his own message. Likewise, in arguing for a more positive rating for this strategy, S8 also gave an example of a situation in which the speaker rather than the listener would be the one to use this strategy, in this case *if [the listener] didn't understand what [the speaker is] talking about* (T8: 727-728). Incidentally, S8 referenced this same situation, in which the speaker has the impression that the listener does not understand what is being said, to argue later for the addition of paraphrasing as a useful CS for intercultural communication, thus implying that she also perceived paraphrasing as a strategy for the speaker (T8: 752-753). This tendency to focus primarily on CS use by those in the role of the speaker suggests that at least some of the students may have initially approached these strategies from the perspective that speakers will require CSs because the onus for achieving understanding in a second language setting falls on the speaker. This is perhaps unsurprising, since this is the position that has traditionally been

propagated in ELT (cf. the opening of Chapter 20 above). However, it suggests that the follow-up task, in which the students were asked to reflect on whether each strategy could be used in the role of the speaker, the listener or both, was a necessary step in helping the students to become more aware that many of these strategies might also be useful for active and supportive listening as well.

In the other case in which a student at first proposed that a strategy would only be useful in one conversational role, S8 proposed *Ask lots of questions* as a strategy primarily for the listener (T8: 884). I then reflected this opinion back to the class and asked them if they agreed with it (T8: 887-888). This prompted S18 to raise her hand and respond that

for us it's both of them because it's (.) a thing you can: start uh (.) giving your feedback on or to show that you are listening you ask a question (.) and then a c- the conversation keeps on going (.) but also for the person who is speaking to:: (2) yeah to see if he's understood or: maybe something like that (T8: 890-901)

S18 argued that *Ask lots of questions* was a strategy that can be used in both the roles of speaker and listener. In emphasizing that her opinion was shared by her partner at the beginning of her turn, she indicated that she and her partner had already reached this conclusion during the pair work phase of the task, meaning that she had not changed her mind in response to my question. S18 then supported her answer by drawing attention to the different functions that questions might serve, depending on whether they are used by the listener or the speaker. She acknowledged that listeners might use questions as a means of keeping the conversation going by drawing the speaker out about a topic. However, she also identified questions as one potential way for speakers to realize a comprehension check, i.e. to check whether their listeners are following what they are saying.

In addition to these two cases, S15 also argued that the strategy *Avoid sarcasm*, which had been identified as a strategy for the speaker (T8: 831, 837), should also be considered a strategy for both speaker and listener (T8: 861). I was somewhat surprised by this answer, as I myself had listed this suggestion as primarily useful in the role of the speaker. When I asked how a listener could be sarcastic, S15 illustrated her claim by saying *if you say oh really*, delivering *oh really* in a sarcastic tone of voice (T8: 863). This opened the way for us to consider that listener behavior such as minimal feedback tokens and even non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and body language can in fact be used sarcastically (T8: 864-881), so that the class and I ultimately agreed with S15 in considering this a suggestion for the roles of both speaker and listener.

In all of the cases in which a student argued that a strategy could be used by both speaker and listener rather than by only one or the other, the students again showed an ability to reflect critically on the strategy in question and to present well-reasoned arguments in support of their

opinions. Thus, this task appears to have given the students the chance to reflect on the ways in which these strategies might be enacted in the complementary roles of listener and speaker in conversation, thus helping to raise the students' awareness of the active role of both speaker and listener in communication.

Overall, the tasks based on Module 6.9 of the *Intercultural Resource Pack*, in combination with the two brief preparatory activities used at the beginning of course session 8, provided a solid introductory sequence for consideration of the use of CSs in a preemptive function. These tasks both introduced the notion of CSs for preempting communicative problems and facilitated a critical and functional consideration of these strategies. They also helped to introduce and begin to develop an important theme in classroom work with this topic, that both the listener and the speaker may make use of CSs with the aim of preempting communicative problems and ensuring and maintaining mutual understanding. While the list of strategies provided in Module 6.9 was intended to give the students a general introduction to the topic and thus did not refer to actual realizations of these strategies, activities in subsequent lesson segments would provide a closer look at a number of these strategies and their potential realizations in English in subsequent lesson segments, and I drew the students' attention to specific strategies from the task that they could expect to encounter again at the conclusion of this task sequence (T8: 923-935).

20.3 Comparing communication styles cross-culturally and working deductively with realizations of specific preemptive CSs

In preparation for working with the tasks from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures*, I next introduced the cartoon on turn-taking from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 7 of *English Unlimited C1* (Doff and Goldstein 2011: 73). Somewhat to my surprise, most of the students in the course were unfamiliar with the phrase 'take turns'. When I initially asked the class what this phrase might mean, there was a pause, and then S15 interjected *i think it's a question for you* (T8: 951), signaling the lack of understanding in the group at large and requesting that I provide an explanation. Instead of complying with this request, however, I repeated my question, and this time S16 volunteered an explanation:

eh:: (.) like taking turns when (.) you do (.) when you're several (.) persons (.)
several people want to do the same thing (.) eh they don't do it all at a time one
goes first and the other (T8: 956-962)

Despite the accuracy of S16's explanation, many members of the class still seemed confused about the meaning of 'take turns'. Only one student, S6, was able to give an example of a

situation in which it might be necessary to take turns: *like kids on the playground so you (.) only have like one swing set and you should (.) take turns* (T8: 971-972). Following this example, the recording device captured a student quietly whispering *abwechseln*, a translation of ‘take turns’ in German, which was immediately echoed by his neighbor (T8: 979-980). Thus, it would appear that it was only at this point in the discussion that some of the students finally understood the meaning of ‘take turns’. However, no one else immediately volunteered other examples of situations in which it might be necessary to take turns. After an eight-second pause, I provided two more examples (T8: 981-989), and then the students were finally able to propose several more (T8: 995-1027). From there, we could successfully arrive at an understanding of the cartoon and then discuss how the notion of taking turns might relate to conversation. With an understanding of ‘take turns’ now in place, the students were immediately able to identify two possible counterparts to taking turns in a conversation, holding a monologue without giving the other person the chance to speak (T8: 1040) and constantly interrupting the other person (T8: 1043). With this in mind, we then transitioned to the first task from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures*.

In the first task from Unit 3B, the students were able to match the pictorial representations of each communication style to the corresponding descriptions quickly and accurately, resulting in the pairings 1-C, 2-A and 3-B (cf. Materials Excerpt 34 in 20.1 above). We then moved on to talk about which style was most typical of our own national cultures. The German students generally agreed that the communication style in Germany most closely corresponded to description 1-C, while S16, the exchange student from Portugal, felt that the communication style in his home country corresponded best to 3-B. When asked to explain how the communication style in his country typified the description he had chosen on the worksheet, S16 explained that, in Portugal,

if it's a:n important discussion or something that's (.) that is eh very personal people
(.) ah:: in my country tend to (.) talk (.) a lot (.) and very loudly and with very: (.)
many: (.) metaphors and so on [...] they are (.) rather (.) much more emotional than
rational (.) sometimes @ (T8: 1117-1126, 1128-30)

This answer oriented towards several of the characteristics of the communication style described in text B. Most directly, S16 referenced the tendency for speakers from his national culture to speak a lot and to be emotional in giving opinions. However, in describing the speakers as talking very loudly, he may also have been orienting to the claim in description B that speakers with this communication style often talk over one another. In defense of the position that the communication style in Germany most closely corresponded to the description in 1-C on the worksheet, S8 argued that *people talk (.) a lot try to explain what they meaning and the other person's listening and then it starts to explain what you are maybe thinking* (T8: 1138-1145). She thus oriented to the claims in description C that, while this kind of

communication style is also characterized by longer turns, interactants do not interrupt each other but instead wait until the current speaker is finished before beginning their turn. Additionally, in stating that speakers *try to explain what they [mean]* and *explain what [they] are maybe thinking*, S8 appeared to be referencing the claim in the text that in this communication style, “[i]t is considered to be professional to be analytical, to give all the facts and to have a strong opinion” (Dignen 2011: 16).

The data from this part of the discussion shows that the first two tasks from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* were able to facilitate reflection about the prevalent conversational style in the students’ own national cultures. Nevertheless, one of the concerns I had in choosing these tasks was the exclusive focus on cultural descriptions at the national level, in which the materials appear to treat all members of a national culture as uniformly adhering to a particular communication style. In order to facilitate critical reflection on this point, I had therefore planned to initiate some discussion of whether communication style might not vary from person to person and situation to situation within a cultural grouping. Before I could introduce this idea, however, S18, another student from Germany, offered the following comment:

yeah i think in our society in general it's (.) the first or the second [picture] but i think in most families it can be number three for example in my family when my sisters and my parents are and me are on a table then everybody talks across and it's (.) always very loud and uh but in a normal: (.) uh discussion [...] no in a normal discussion in a situation where you don't know the person or it's just (.) someth-eh someone you know (.) but not your family then it's you wait and you let him (.) talk (T8: 1151-1162, 1165-1170)

Although S18 recognized that the communication style in Germany generally corresponded to the descriptions in 1-C or 2-A, she felt that the communication style within many families, including her own, often more closely resembled the communication style described in 3-B. Thus, in her experience, while discussion outside family settings generally involved waiting for an interactant’s turn to end before speaking, conversation within families was often characterized by interactants talking over one another. This comment created a natural opening for us explore the idea that communication style is not only a national cultural phenomenon but may be a characteristic part of other cultural or social groupings and may even depend to some extent on individual personality. The fact that this issue was introduced by a student likely gave it more impact than if I as the teacher had been the one to introduce it.

Using S18’s comment as a springboard, it was possible to successfully engage in critical reflection on the exclusive focus on national culture that I had identified as problematic in light of ELF. However, in retrospect, the first two tasks from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* exhibit another weakness of which I was not aware enough at the time and therefore did not do enough to compensate through a critical approach. After the matching activity

introducing the three communication styles, task 1 concludes with the following statement: “When these styles come together, the communication flow breaks down and misunderstanding increases as people begin to give their opinions in different ways [...] As this flow breaks down, people judge each other negatively” (Dignen 2011: 16). In this statement, there is a strong assumption, worded almost as an inevitability, that communicative problems will arise when interlocutors come from national cultures characterized by dissimilar communication styles. Thus, this set of materials appears to orient strongly toward intercultural communication as an inherently problematic form of communication due to issues of cultural mismatch.

As has been discussed at length in 8.3, the assumption that intercultural communication, particularly where it involves the use of a lingua franca as in ELF talk, must be a particularly problematic type of communication because the speakers involved come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds was until recently quite prevalent in intercultural research. However, research into the role of culture in ELF communication has shown that cultural differences rarely, if ever, cause overt communicative problems in ELF talk. Rather, participants in such talk seem to be aware of the potential problems with relying on cultural norms of conversation in such settings and therefore expend considerable effort “to put aside cultural difference and seek out or create common cultural forms and practices that can contribute to shared understanding and successful communicative outcomes” (Kaur 2016: 149; cf. also Chapter 8). Thus, it would appear that the position conveyed in the final statement of the text upon which tasks 1 and 2 are based does not hold in actual ELF communication.

Although I did not draw particular attention to this statement during classroom work on tasks 1 and 2, the materials use this claim as the rationalization for the next task in the task sequence: Since communicative problems will arise where communication styles are different, interactants in intercultural communication will need to follow the guidelines offered in task 3 in order “to manage these different styles and create a clear flow of communication” (Dignen 2011: 16). For both these reasons, I ought to have encouraged the students to question the notion that differences of communicative style necessarily lead to communicative breakdown, rather than glossing it over and thus implicitly signaling acceptance of this position.

Such a critical approach need not have been particularly lengthy or complex. In fact, our discussion had introduced a logical starting point, in that we had identified that in our own learning group, students came from at least two national cultures characterized by different communication styles. We might have used this point of departure to talk about what kinds of problems we might expect to emerge in interactions between these two styles and whether any members of the class had actually experienced any of these difficulties during pair or groupwork activities. Additionally, S11, S12 and S16, as exchange students living and studying

in a culture with a different prevalent communication style from that of their own national cultures, might have been valuable as cultural informants here. They could have been asked to comment on whether they had noticed differences in communication style in their interactions with their interlocutors in Germany and whether these differences had ever caused communication to break down. If, as research into ELF suggests, communication had generally been able to continue successfully despite differences, we then could have used this answer to reflect on why communicative breakdown had not ensued.

It would have been equally possible to draw on student experiences with intercultural communication more generally by asking the class at large if anyone had ever had the opportunity to communicate with someone from a culture with a different prevalent communication style from their own beyond our classroom. I did pose a form of this question toward the end of task 2, asking the students if anyone had ever experienced communication in a culture that corresponded to the communication style described in 2-A, the only style that did not appear to be represented in the national cultures of the members of the learning group. S16 was the only student to respond to this question, citing his experience staying with friends in Denmark:

e:hm (.) i don't know if it's (.) {clears throat} eh always like that but i have a a few (.) danish friends and when i was with their families i (.) when i talk to their parents it was really short and preci- precise i don't know seemed like they (.) uh communicated very (.) quick and very (.) directly and very (.) they talked (.) they didn't talk very much (T8: 1181-1195)

Although he hedged his response by saying he was not sure whether what he had observed was typical of communication in Denmark in general, S16 thought that he had encountered this communication style while staying with the families of some Danish friends. This could have become another opportunity to explore the effect that the differences between S16's interlocutors' communication style and his own had had on his interactions with them. However, I failed to ask this sort of follow-up question, and therefore missed the opportunity to take the discussion in this more critical direction.

All in all, the discussion of tasks 1 and 2 from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* allowed the students to reflect on the notion of different communication styles and to identify the communication style most prevalent in their own national culture. In this sense, it provided an opportunity to reflect on cultural differences in communicative practices, thus addressing some issues related to the fourth area of Dörnyei's framework for teaching strategic competence, 'highlighting cross-cultural differences in CS use' (cf. Chapter 17). This consideration remained, however, both quite limited and rather abstract. Additionally, through the insightful and timely comments from one particular student, the learning group was able to engage in some critical discussion of the relationship between communication style and

national culture portrayed in the materials. Still, this critical perspective was not extended to the claim made by the materials that differences in communication style between interlocutors in intercultural communication generally lead to communicative problems, and thus the chance to reflect on the effects that differences in style between interlocutors may have on communication was lost.

Beginning with task 3, the focus of the task sequence in Unit 3B shifts from comparing communication styles in order to raise learners' awareness of potential differences between cultures to presenting a set of guidelines for smoothing over these differences in intercultural communication. These guidelines, presented as a text divided into tips for the speaker and tips for the listener, take a more deductive approach to learning about CSs. The text introduces a number of specific strategies. In task 3, the learners are asked to insert one or more phrases or sentences exemplifying how one might realize a particular strategy in English into the appropriate blank in the text. As I had anticipated, it took the students a fair amount of time to complete this task. During the subsequent discussion with the whole class, we also uncovered several cases in which pairs of students had assigned a particular phrase or sentence to different blanks. This was also anticipated, as several of the realizations differ in quite subtle ways. However, we were able to resolve these cases reasonably easily, so that all in all, this part of the task was ultimately unproblematic.

After arriving at a class solution to task 3, we then used the text presenting the guidelines to examine some of the CSs it introduced more closely. These guidelines were divided into two categories, guidelines to be used "[w]hen speaking" and guidelines to be used "[w]hen listening" (Dignen 2011: 16). Particular attention was also given to turn handover, specifically providing tips for the speaker "[a]s you decide to stop talking" and for the listener "[a]s the other person stops talking" (Dignen 2011: 16). This approach allowed us to explicitly address these two complementary conversational roles, thus providing another opportunity for the students to develop an awareness of the ways in which both listeners and speakers contribute actively to successful communication. For each of these roles, I began by asking the students to recapitulate the tips and CSs mentioned in the text. Once we had established which tips and CSs were involved, we then shifted to discussing how useful the students perceived these guidelines to be. As mentioned in 20.1 above, I felt that this was an important step, in that the guidelines were presented in a prescriptive fashion which needed to be counterbalanced by a more critical approach. In practice, we discovered that the students did have some reservations about the usefulness of some of the guidelines, particularly about those recommended for the speaker.

Although the students were able to summarize the CSs presented in the task relatively quickly, with a range of students contributing ideas to the discussion (cf. T8: 1593-1639, 1783-1826), they were much more hesitant when asked to give their opinion about the usefulness of these strategies. These points in the discussion were characterized by longer pauses as I waited for volunteers to share their opinions with the class (cf. T8: 1743, 1781, 1829, 1842). While a couple of students eventually answered that such guidelines might generally be *good to know* (T8: 1830) and could help to *avoid um problems* (T8: 1750-1751), another student, S16, expressed reservations specifically about the guidelines proposed for the speaker. In his opinion, they might be useful in some situations, but not when *trying to make friends or meet someone new* (T8: 1761-1765). S16 argued that in such situations, *sometimes it is better if you are (.) just natural* (T8: 1767) rather than trying to adhere to prescribed guidelines, because *maybe you'll have a better connection to that person* (T8: 1769-1770).

S16's objections to the guidelines appear to hinge largely on issues of identity. He seemed to be unwilling to adopt guidelines or CSs that he felt were inauthentic to his communication style because doing so might mask his identity and his personality as a speaker and thus undermine his ability to genuinely connect with his interlocutors. He felt that this would be particularly disadvantageous in social situations in which he was meeting new people. This seems quite insightful, given that the materials from which these guidelines were taken are aimed at teaching English for business communication, in which personal identity might largely be expected to take a back seat to efficient and effective business negotiations. Thus, there appears to be a disconnect between the purpose of these materials and the contexts in which S16 envisioned using his English beyond the classroom. This was likely true for others in the learning group as well and may have accounted for some of the hesitancy in commenting on the usefulness of the guidelines.

However, S16 may also have been reacting against the decidedly prescriptive way in which the guidelines for an interactive communication style are presented in task 3. These guidelines are introduced as a sort of formula for successful communication, in that they constitute a "way to manage...different communication styles and create a clear flow of communication" (Dignen 2011: 16). The guidelines themselves are all in imperative form (cf. Materials excerpt 37 in 20.1 above). They are thus phrased as relatively direct realizations of their function as recommendations, strengthening the impression that the reader should comply with these recommendations unquestioningly. In his contribution to the discussion, S16 voiced his reluctance to follow or adopt these recommendations without question in all contexts. In a sense, he seemed wary of these guidelines because of the unreflective and prescriptive way they are presented. Given the class's overall hesitancy to comment on the usefulness of the guidelines presented in task 3, it seems likely that other members of the learning group may

have felt similarly, although they were unwilling or unable to voice their concerns in front of the group.

In addition to discussing how useful the students found the guidelines presented in task 3, we also took some time in this phase of the lesson to talk about the implications of the word *direct*, a word which occurred several times in the texts featured in Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures*, both in characterizing communication styles in the text associated with tasks 1 and 2 and in the guidelines for an interactive communication style presented in task 3. As has been discussed in 20.1 above, McConachy and Hata (2013) argue that adjectives such as *direct*, which are frequently used in intercultural training materials, are generally insufficiently elucidated in such materials and are thus inadequate to help learners understand what is entailed in such metapragmatic characterizations, as well as how they may be affected by cultural factors. To compensate for this inadequacy, they recommend employing teacher-led questioning in the classroom in order to help learners explore how these metapragmatic characterizations actually manifest themselves in communicative practice, as well as what significance they may have for various social and cultural groupings. Since the tasks in Unit 3B make particularly frequent use of the adjective *direct*, I chose to employ teacher-led questioning to help the students explore this metapragmatic characterization in more depth in relationship to one of the guidelines proposed for the role of speaker, *Don't be too direct when giving an opinion*.

I began this discussion by asking the students what they thought was meant by being direct in the context of this guideline (T8: 1640). The students needed some time to think about this before anyone responded, as is evidenced by the seven-second silence following this question on the recording. Even after they had had time to think, the question only generated two responses. The first student to respond, S3, associated directness with making statements such as *everyone who's not [of] my opinion is stupid* (T8: 1641-1642). He thus focused on the speaker's orientation towards those with a differing opinion. The other student, S8, focused more narrowly on expressing disagreement with an interlocutor. However, rather than talking about how one might express disagreement directly, she instead described a strategy that could be used to avoid being overly direct when disagreeing: *maybe don't say no in the first place like yeah maybe you were wrong maybe you were right and just don't say no that's not true* (T8: 1652-1657). It seems likely that she may have been drawing here on two other tips given in the text in task 3, *Make clear that your opinion is not negative about what the other person has said* from the *When speaking* side of the guidelines and *Don't disagree too quickly* from the *When listening* side (cf. Dignen 2011: 16). However, her response did not really answer the question I had asked about what being direct might entail. Both this lack of relevance, as well

as the overall lack of responses to this question, suggest that the students were not particularly aware of what it meant to be direct in conversation.

I next asked the students whether they agreed with the tip *Don't be too direct when giving an opinion*. This question generated a few more responses than the last, some of which provide additional insight into the students' conceptions of directness. This is particularly evident in S15's contribution, in which she seemed to equate directness with truthfulness:

yeah i think being directly has also something to do with honesty [...] i love being directly but you have to say it in a right way and (.) maybe a little bit more polite but (.) there are also situations where (.) being directly is not so (.) such a good idea (T8: 1681-1687)

In her answer, S15 appeared to be most concerned with how appropriate or prudent it would be to be completely honest in a given situation. In stating that *i love being directly*, she appeared to mean *honest* or *truthful* rather than *direct* in a pragmatic sense. Likewise, in her claim that *there are also situations where (.) being directly is not so (.) such a good idea*, she appeared to mean that it is not always wise to tell the whole truth or say exactly what one is thinking in every situation. However, she also mentioned the need to phrase something *in a right way and (.) maybe a little bit more polite*, thus touching on issues of face needs. Indirectly, she seemed to be implying that attending to the face needs of one's interlocutors might involve formulating one's opinion in a less direct way.

Other students focused on situational context in determining the appropriacy of uttering opinions directly. S17 made a distinction between correcting factual errors and disagreeing with someone's opinion:

i think yeah if: yeah it's something like a date or something like this and he says and it was eh on this date and it you know it was really wrong so you i think you can say (.) so it's wrong it was then but eh: i think this is (.) maybe in in in stuff which is very (.) yeah concrete and and and ah opinions or something like this you can't say this (T8: 1667-1679)

In S17's opinion, it was more appropriate to directly contradict someone when the disagreement hinged upon factual information (e.g. on which date something had occurred) than when it hinged upon differing opinions. Another student, S8 suggested that a speaker might choose to be more or less direct *depend[ing] on who you're talking to* (T8: 1696). She then focused on the closeness of the relationship between interlocutors, saying that speakers may make different choices when talking *to friends or (.) foreigners* (T8: 1698-1699). However, she did not comment on which group she felt it would be more appropriate to be direct with, nor did she illustrate her point with any examples.

Finally, one student, S16, again suggested a way in which to avoid disagreeing too directly: *maybe you want to make a negative criticism and instead of saying directly what is wrong you can say: (.) ah you did this right and then you [say] what he did wrong* (T8: 1703-1711). This

suggestion is very similar to the response given by S8 in answer to my question about what it meant to be direct a few minutes earlier in the discussion, a response which, I have argued, appears to draw upon two of the guidelines presented on the worksheet. Again, this response does not really answer the question I had posed, but rather makes a concrete proposal for disagreeing less directly. This tendency to draw the conversation in a solution-oriented direction may have been underscored by the nature of the text under discussion. The fact that the text itself focused on suggestions for overcoming potential communicative difficulties may have led the students to look for solutions even where this was not entirely relevant to a particular line of questioning.

As the final point in our consideration of the concept of directness in communication, I introduced indirectness as being the opposite of directness (T8: 1714-1715) and then asked the students *is it possible to be too indirect (.) in the way that you say something* (T8: 1720-1721). Two students commented on potential problems that might arise if a speaker is too indirect. S5 noted that *if too indirect the other person (.) wouldn't understand what you mean* (T8: 1724-1725). She recognized that being very indirect may obscure the message that a speaker intends to communicate, making it more difficult for the listener to extract. S16 added that *it can also lead to misunderstandings uh (.) if you're trying (.) to say something and you don't say it directly and the other person may think you are saying something different* (T8: 1730-1736). Thus, S16 argued that not only might indirectness make it more difficult for a listener to extract the intended message, but it might lead the listener to believe that the speaker was trying to communicate something different than what was actually intended.

All in all, the students generally seem to have been more aware of some of the advantages and disadvantages to being direct versus indirect than of how directness and indirectness are actually enacted in conversation. Multiple students were able to contribute to the discussion on the appropriateness of the tip that advocated being less direct in intercultural communication, as well as the possible dangers of being too indirect. By contrast, the question about what it might mean to be direct in giving an opinion generated only one truly relevant response. Additionally, it became apparent as the discussion progressed that at least one student associated directness more closely with the truthfulness of an utterance than with the way in which an utterance is phrased. This suggests that the students did not really have a concept of the linguistic notion of directness that would allow them to understand the way the metapragmatic characterization *direct* was used in the descriptions of the communication styles and the guidelines presented in the tasks from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures*.

The main problem here may have been that the discussion of the term *direct* remained too abstract to help the students develop an understanding of its meaning. According to McConachy and Hata (2013),

[w]ithout seeing a considerable amount of evidence of how these metapragmatic categories [e.g. directness vs. indirectness] are actually realized in discourse, the nature of the alleged characteristics remains opaque, as does the culturally based significance that these features might have in discourse. (McConachy and Hata 2013: 299)

This suggests that the discussion of the concept of directness might have been more effective if, in addition to teacher-led questioning, it had included some work with linguistic illustrations of direct versus indirect ways of giving opinions and of disagreeing. This might have involved looking at a few examples, e.g. from dialogues in textbooks, in which someone gives an opinion or disagrees with someone else and then discussing which of these examples is more direct versus more indirect, as well as what effect this creates in each dialogue. The learners could then be given an additional dialogue featuring these same speech acts and asked to re-write these parts of the dialogue to make them more or less direct. These new versions of the dialogue could be presented to the class, and the effect of the learners' linguistic choices could then be discussed. However, while such activities might have been useful in helping to develop the students' awareness of the linguistic concepts of directness versus indirectness, they would have required a significant investment of time. This may not have been advisable, considering that the issue of metapragmatic characterizations was only tangentially connected to the overall goals of instruction on preemptive CSs.¹³⁵

The fourth task from Unit 3B of Communicating Across Cultures was assigned as homework to be completed between course sessions 8 and 9. All but one of the students completed this task and submitted one additional linguistic realization for each blank in the guidelines for an interactive communication style by email before the specified deadline. This allowed me to compile these suggestions into a master list, which was then distributed to the class at the next course session. Given that each student ultimately contributed a different possible realization for each of the seven blanks, this master list turned out to be some four pages long. Therefore, only the proposed answers to the first blank have been reproduced below as representative of the responses to the whole task:

¹³⁵ The sequence described here might actually have fit better into Block 1 of classroom work on pragmatics (cf. Chapter 16), in which the overarching aim was to raise the students' metapragmatic awareness of general pragmatic principles. In the pilot course, focus was placed on the speech acts *agreeing*, *disagreeing* and *giving your opinion*. In particular in relation to the latter two, a discussion of directness and the effect and relative appropriacy of being more or less direct in enacting these speech acts would have been quite relevant.

WS 3B Communicating Effectively #4 – Class solution

- (1) *Don't be too direct when giving an opinion. Show modesty and openness, perhaps by saying the other person could be right, e.g. ...*

Maybe you're right.

That could be true for me.

You are right, but I think that...

Your argument is coherent, but...

I think you are right, but we can additionally say that...

Sorry, I think you can be right about this, but what I know about this...

Sorry, I think you could be right about this, but from what I know about this...

I'm really not sure, but maybe...

It might be wrong, but I think it could also be like this...

I understand your point, but...

That's a good point, but I think...

You gave good arguments. I see it like...

You make good arguments. I see it like this...

It would seem to me that...

It's just my opinion that...

I see you point, but maybe we can add...

...is one point of view. Another would be...

(I will consider the points you made.)

(Definitely.)

In compiling the master list of the students' responses, I was faced with two challenges that required a solution. First, although the majority of the phrases and sentences proposed by the students were relevant to the prompt, a student occasionally missed the mark and proposed a phrase or sentence that did not fulfill the function of the particular strategy. Two such examples appear above in the students' responses to the first blank. As realizations for the tip *Don't be too direct when giving an opinion. Show modesty and openness, perhaps by saying the other person could be right*, one student proposed the sentence *I will consider the points you made*, which, while it might "show modesty and openness", fails to introduce the speaker's opinion. The other student proposed *Definitely*, which is a token of absolute agreement, rather than a hedge on disagreement. Rather than excluding such inappropriate suggestions, I chose to include them in the master list, but printed them in parentheses at the end of the list for that blank in order to alert the students to their inappropriacy as a realization of that particular tip.

Occasionally, individual students also proposed phrases or sentences that, while relevant and appropriate as realizations of a particular tip or CS, were not worded idiomatically in terms

of Standard English. For example, in the case of the first blank, one student proposed the sentence *Sorry, I think you can be right, but what I know about this...*, rather than the more idiomatic *Sorry, I think you could be right, but from what I know about this...* As has been discussed at length in 15.4, research has shown that ELF talk is generally able to be successful despite frequent lack of adherence to the norms of Standard English. This has led to recommendations that teachers should downplay the importance of formal accuracy in the ELF-oriented classroom in favor of more attention to other areas, such as the development of strategic competence. However, ELF scholars also generally agree that an ELF-oriented pedagogy should allow learners the choice as to how closely they may wish or need to emulate the norms of native speakers (cf. Jenkins 2012: 492), and this was a point I did not wish to ignore either. In an effort to unify these positions, I therefore reproduced a non-idiomatically worded solution in its original form and then inserted a version of the proposal in Standard English underneath the original, using italics and a lighter color in order to lessen the visual impact. I then made sure to explain to the students in the next course session what I had chosen to do and why, emphasizing that they had the choice whether to use the original version or the more idiomatically worded one (cf. T9: 337-353).

One of the reasons task 4 from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* was included in the lesson sequence was that I felt that, by drawing on the students' own ideas, this would weaken the prescriptive nature of the previous task. While having the students come up with additional utterances that could realize these tips and CSs might have helped to undermine the notion that the students needed to use the specific realizations presented in task 3, engaging in this task ultimately did not really weaken the prescriptive way in which the guidelines themselves were presented. Additionally, while generating additional linguistic realizations of various CSs may have been a useful exercise for the students, it was not directly connected to any form of communicative practice that would have given the students the chance to try out their own and their peers' suggestions in context. Thus, it remains questionable how much the students really gained from this task in terms of developing their strategic competence.

In summary, the task sequence from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* provided the students with the opportunity to reflect on the communication style prevalent in their own national culture. It also introduced some specific CSs and gave the students practice in identifying and generating potential linguistic realizations of them. Additionally, since it took an explicit approach to strategies for the speaker versus strategies for the listener, it created the opportunity for the students to continue to build up their awareness of the active part that both speaking and listening play in successful communication. However, despite these contributions to the overall aims of developing the students' competence with preemptive CSs, there were still some significant problems with this task sequence, problems that the analysis of classroom

work shows were not always overcome in spite of attempts to address them. First of all, despite the adoption of a critical approach in working with both texts upon which the task sequence was based, this approach was not able to adequately address either the orientation toward intercultural communication as inherently problematic or the prescriptive tone of the text presenting guidelines for communication in intercultural situations. Furthermore, the use of teacher-led questioning to address metapragmatic characterizations was not able to adequately help the students to understand the construct behind the materials' use of the adjective *direct*. This was exacerbated by the approach taken by the materials, in which descriptions, guidelines and linguistic realizations were all introduced without contextualized examples and without opportunities for any form of practice with the concepts being presented. Finally, although task 4 was selected on the grounds that it would provide an opportunity to counteract linguistic prescriptivism, this task alone did nothing to counteract the prescriptive way in which the tips and CSs themselves were presented and probably contributed little to developing the students' strategic competence, since it was not followed up by any form of targeted communicative practice.

20.4 Working inductively with preemptive CSs for the speaker and the listener

In contrast to the final tasks from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* used in course session 8, which took a deductive approach to teaching preemptive CSs, the materials used in course session 9 facilitated a more inductive approach. Both sets of materials featured listening texts including linguistic realizations of preemptive CSs situated in the context of a communicative exchange, and these realizations were used to identify and discuss the CSs they enacted in more detail. However, the texts themselves were quite different from one another. While one text was a scripted dialogue recorded by actors for a coursebook series, the other was an unscripted recording of an interaction between two non-native English speakers. While the latter text thus provided a much more authentic example of communication through ELF, it also posed a greater challenge to the students, who were not accustomed to working with such texts in the language learning classroom.

As anticipated, the students had little difficulty with the first three tasks from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2*. They were able to complete the comprehension tasks related to the listening text on chocolate making after only one listening, and they quickly and accurately sorted both the numbered phrases from the text and the extra phrases presented in task 3b according to the CS each phrase realized. Although these tasks

were not particularly challenging for the students, they nonetheless served the purposes they were selected to fulfill. They gave the students the opportunity to become more aware of two specific CSs, *checking your listener understands* (i.e. comprehension checks) and *asking for clarification or repetition*, one type of CS for the speaker and listener respectively. The tasks also provided the students with models of the use of these two CSs in a communicative context, as well as presenting them with specific ways to verbalize these strategies in English. They thus addressed the first, third and fifth areas of Dörnyei's framework for teaching CSs (cf. Chapter 17).

I had initially planned to do the fourth and fifth tasks from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 as well, which feature communicative activities to help the students practice the CSs introduced in the previous tasks. However, due to the fact that discussion of a homework assignment involving paraphrasing strategies (cf. 19.1, 19.5) at the beginning of course session 9 had run significantly over time, I chose to omit the practice tasks from Unit 9 in favor of saving this time for the other communicative practice task, entitled *Keep the conversation flowing*, that was planned for the end of course session 9 (cf. Chapter 21). In retrospect, though, this may not have been a wise decision. Dörnyei (1995) argues that "CSs can only fulfill their function [...] if their use has reached an automatic stage", an objective which is difficult to achieve "without specific focused practice" (Dörnyei 1995: 64). Tasks four and five from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 were constructed so as to elicit the specific CSs introduced in that section. They thus would have provided the students with the kind of focused practice with these strategies that Dörnyei claims is necessary for achieving automatization. By contrast, while the students certainly could have used these strategies in the other communicative task, *Keep the conversation flowing*, the focus of this task was primarily on practicing strategies for active and supportive listening. Thus, this task did not provide the same kind of specific focused practice of these strategies as the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2* and was therefore less likely to help the students develop the ability to use these strategies specifically.

While I had anticipated that the students would not find either the listening text or the related tasks from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2* particularly difficult, I fully expected that they would find the second listening text, *Problems with listening* (Walker 2010, track 6), more challenging to understand, since it represented a considerable departure from the kinds of texts that the students were accustomed to dealing with in language courses. This indeed proved to be the case, but the two preliminary tasks – first easing the students into the listening experience by contrasting features of the scripted dialogue on chocolate making from *English Unlimited B2* with the unscripted conversation between two non-native speakers

of English in *Problems with listening* (T9: 1461-1564)¹³⁶ and then listening again while focusing on the content of the text (T9: 1565-1626) – were beneficial in helping the students access and comprehend this more challenging text. By the time we arrived at the heart of the lesson in terms of classroom work on preemptive CSs, the students were ready to notice listener behavior in the text and identify the CSs employed by the listener to support the achievement of mutual understanding.

After listening to *Problems with listening* for the third time, this time with instructions to pay particular attention to listener behavior, the students were able to identify a number of CSs used by the interactants when they were functioning in the role of the listener at various points in the text. These included repeating parts of what the speaker had said (T9: 1683), summarizing the speaker's message (T9: 1750), commenting on things the speaker had said (T9: 1756-1759) and asking questions (T9: 1785). One student, S8, also mentioned *agreeing* (T9: 1762), which she then further qualified by saying *she was always like mhm mhm yeah* (T9: 1764-1767). She thus seemed to be remarking not so much on tokens of agreement, but more generally on the minimal responses given by the listeners in the text, and this gave me the opportunity to introduce the concept of backchanneling and its role in naturally occurring conversations (T9: 1771-1783). Thus, we were able to identify all of the most pertinent CSs employed by the interactants as supportive listener strategies in *Problems with listening*.

While the students proved fairly adept at noticing and identifying listener CSs used during the exchange captured in *Problems with listening*, they had more difficulty identifying and articulating the function that these strategies served in the conversation. For example, while the students appear to have recognized that repetition was primarily used by one of the interactants at the point in the conversation at which the speaker has just used a non-standard word, they had difficulty in explaining the function of this strategy at this point in the text:

Materials excerpt 39:

- 21 J [I I didn't] know lots of *vocabularies so it's a *upscare for me
- 22 I [it's]
- 23 J [for me] *upscare
- 24 I *upscare
- 25 J yeah *upscare for me to. to listen to oth others to catch the
- 26 meaning
- 27 I so it's difficult for you
- 28 J [yes]

Track 6: Problems with listening, lines 21-28 (Walker 2010: 169)

¹³⁶ Cf. 7.2.2 for a more detailed discussion of this phase of the lesson sequence.

Here, the listener, I, uses repetition primarily to signal her non-understanding of speaker J's use of the non-standard word **upscare*. She first repeats the phrase directly before **upscare* to signal that she has not caught the word in question. In response, J repeats an inverted version of the end of her previous turn, beginning where I had signaled non-understanding and again including **upscare* (line 23). This move implies that she believes she has used a word which ought to have been understandable and that I merely has not heard what she said. However, I then repeats **upscare* (line 24), signaling her non-understanding of this item specifically. This finally prompts J to expand upon her utterance in an effort to clarify her meaning (lines 25-26), which ultimately allows I to arrive at a successful paraphrase of J's meaning in line 27, resolving the non-understanding.

One of the students who offered an explanation of I's use of repetition here, S12, appeared to have been aware that speaker I was using repetition to signal non-understanding. When asked to comment on why listeners used repetition in this text, he stated that *sometimes you say like a:hm have like a feedback saying you misunderstand something like a word is a word like (.) ah: na (.) like mis- misunderstand sometimes* (T9: 1691-1696). The core of this response seems to be the claim that the listener can use repetition in the function of *giving a feedback saying you misunderstand something like a word*, i.e. to signal non-understanding as I does in the text. However, embedded as it was in a rather dysfluent utterance, the class and I had trouble understanding what S12 was trying to say, and I ultimately misinterpreted his meaning, thinking that he was suggesting that the listener had used repetition in order to signal that she was paying attention (T9: 1698). Thus, while S12 seems to have been able to correctly identify the function of repetition in this text, he was unable to articulate this function clearly for the rest of the group.

By contrast, another student, S7, suggested that the listener had repeated the word **upscare* at this point in the text *just to show [...] how it's pronounced correctly* (T9: 1700, 1703). In other words, he interpreted the use of repetition here not as signaling non-understanding, but as having a corrective function. This interpretation not only does not mirror the use of repetition in the excerpt of the conversation in question, but it also shows that S7 was not particularly aware of the pragmatics of ELF talk. Research has shown that interactants in ELF talk very rarely engage in direct correction of their interlocutors' pronunciation or use of grammatical forms (cf. Firth 1996). In an attempt to get the students to reflect critically on S7's comment, I asked the class whether they usually corrected their interlocutors' use of language during a conversation, and we spent a few minutes discussing different situations in which it would be more or less appropriate to do so (T9: 1713-1747). However, this response demonstrates how far off the mark some of the students were in identifying the functions of particular CSs utilized by the listeners in the text.

While it is certainly a positive sign that the students were able to correctly identify the CSs used by the listeners in *Problems with listening*, their inability to identify and/or articulate the functions these CSs actually served in the discourse indicates that this was an area that may have required a more structured approach. Particularly from an interactional perspective toward CSs, communicative function is considered to be an integral and even defining characteristic of CSs (cf. Tarone 1980: 422). From an ELF perspective, CSs are viewed as enacting specific functions in support of important interactional processes (cf. 15.3). Thus, awareness of function represents a vital aspect of strategic competence from these perspectives, since, in practical terms, developing an awareness of function and the ways specific functions can be enacted through CSs helps learners to recognize when it might be useful to deploy specific CSs in their own conversations. Although I tried to raise this awareness in the students by addressing function in the discussion of listener CSs, the students probably needed more scaffolding to help them notice function accurately and then articulate what they noticed successfully. In particular, the students probably needed more help making connections between the CSs they named and the realizations of these strategies in the text with which we were working. I asked the students to name CSs, but this was done in a very general way, without overtly linking them to specific utterances from *Problems with listening*. Creating more of these connections would probably have primed the students to notice function more successfully by providing them with specific examples to draw upon. Additionally, discussion of listener CSs relied exclusively on the students' memory of the listening text. Although I had prepared copies of the transcript of *Problems with listening*, it was not until we had transitioned to a different topic, in which we examined the process by which an instance of non-understanding in this text is negotiated between speaker and listener (cf. 18.4), that I handed these out to the students. Utilizing the transcript during the discussion of the function of listener CSs would have allowed the students to access the text both visually and aurally, as well as given us the ability to reference points in the text more precisely.

In light of the need for a more strategic approach to discussing the function of listener CSs, I would suggest a number of modifications to the task sequence in this part of the lesson. The sequence would still begin by asking the students to listen to *Problems with listening* and to identify the CSs used by the interactants when they were acting in the role of the listener, since the students were successfully able to do this based on the listening text alone. However, the strategies the students identified would be listed on the board so that the learning group would have a record of what had been discussed to refer back to. I would then hand out the transcript of the listening text and ask the students to identify at least one example of a realization of each of the CSs in the transcript. This would allow the learning group to connect these CSs to specific realizations in the text, as well as to check that all the students could identify

realizations of each CS. Given that the students were also unfamiliar with linguistic transcripts and exhibited some difficulties in understanding transcript conventions when working with the transcript later in course session 9 (cf. 18.4), we probably would have needed to take some time at this point to help the students understand how the spoken discourse was represented in written form. This might have involved playing *Problems with listening* a fourth time while the students followed along in the transcript to allow the students to compare the recorded conversation with the written transcript, and then addressing any questions that arose during this process. Finally, once we had connected each CS to at least one concrete example of a realization in the text, we would then consider the functions of these strategies at the specific points at which they occur in the conversation. Looking at a realization in its context of use would provide more concrete evidence to draw upon in exploring the function of the CS in question, thus increasing the likelihood that the students would be able to accurately identify, and successfully articulate, the function of the listener CSs that had been uncovered in the text, and this would ultimately serve to help the students become more aware of how to enact certain functions through the use of CSs.

Overall, then, the two inductive task sequences based upon listening texts from the *Explore speaking* section of *English Unlimited B2* and Walker (2010) were able to provide the students with opportunities to notice and identify uses of specific CSs in a conversational context. They thus supported the development of an awareness of these CSs and their potential uses in conversation (the first area of Dörnyei's framework, cf. Chapter 17). Beginning with the task sequence from the textbook *English Unlimited B2*, and thus with the kinds of texts and tasks familiar to the students from their experience as language learners, proved beneficial, as it allowed for a direct comparison of the listening text from this source with the listening text from Walker (2010) and thus helped the students to adjust to listening to a more authentic kind of text. However, while the students demonstrated the ability to notice and identify the CSs used by the interactants acting in the role of the listener in *Problems with listening*, they would have benefitted from a better-scaffolded approach to the text itself in order to help them develop more awareness of the functions of the CSs they had identified within the context of the recorded conversation. The students also would have benefitted from more opportunities to practice with preemptive CSs. Engaging in communicative activities like the ones in tasks four and five from the *Explore speaking* section of *English Unlimited B2* would have given the students the opportunity to actively practice using the preemptive CSs that had been introduced, thus supporting the development of the students' ability to actually use these CSs in conversational contexts.

20.5 Summary and reconsideration of the task sequence

The analysis of the transcripts from the lesson sequence described and analyzed in the preceding sections of Chapter 20 indicates that this sequence was able to facilitate the development of the students' strategic competence with preemptive CSs in a number of ways. First of all, data collected during the lesson sequence suggests that this sequence helped to raise the students' general awareness of preemptive CSs as potentially useful tools to support the co-construction of meaning between interlocutors. The sequence also appears to have increased their awareness of a number of specific CSs which can be used preemptively, as well as of the communicative functions these CSs can be used to fulfill. In particular, the lesson sequence appears to have helped the students to become more aware of the active roles of both speaker and listener in the communicative process and to develop their strategic competence with preemptive CSs for active and supportive listening. This was one of the explicit aims of the sequence, especially since the active role of the listener is an area which has traditionally been overlooked in ELT (cf. the opening section of this chapter).

Nevertheless, there are also a number of ways in which this lesson sequence could be improved. Perhaps the most significant shortcoming of the sequence was that it provided the students with relatively little opportunity for focused practice. Dörnyei has argued that learners require focused practice with CSs in order to ensure that the use of these strategies fully enters their repertoires (cf. Dörnyei 1995: 64). This suggests that more opportunities for focused practice with a limited number of specific CSs should have been built into the lesson sequence directly after tasks aimed at raising awareness of those CSs, their functions and their potential realizations. Integrating phases of targeted practice at multiple intervals after direct instruction may have helped the students in the course to achieve the automatic stage of use Dörnyei claims is necessary in order for a CS to become available to fulfill specific communicative functions in interaction.

Originally, one of the task sequences planned for course session 9 included this type of focused practice with a limited number of CSs directly after instruction. The task sequence from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2* focused on two specific preemptive CSs, the speaker CS 'comprehension check' and the listener CS 'request clarification or repetition'. The final two tasks in the sequence would have provided the students with the opportunity to practice using these CSs in a communicative scenario. However, during course session 9, these tasks were ultimately omitted because of issues with time (cf. 20.4).

Time was a particularly limited resource in this short course, and including more communicative tasks like the ones from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English*

Unlimited B2 to facilitate focused practice with specific CSs would of course have meant excluding or shortening something else. In retrospect, it would probably have been more beneficial to retain these practice tasks and instead omit the task sequence from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* used in course session 8 (cf. 20.3). While this task sequence did support the aim of helping students to become more aware of some ways in which both speaker and listener can use preemptive CSs actively in communication, and also represented the only task in the lesson sequence which addressed Dörnyei's fourth area for developing strategic competence, 'highlighting cross-cultural differences in strategy use', the sequence had some significant problems from an ELF-oriented standpoint. Most notably, these included the prescriptive tone of the guidelines introduced in task 3, the orientation toward intercultural communication as inherently problematic in the text from task 1 and the lack of contextualization both in the way that communication styles were described and the way that linguistic realizations of CSs were presented. These problems proved difficult to overcome despite the adoption of a critical approach, thus making the contribution of this task sequence to the overall aims of the course questionable. Given these weaknesses, it would thus seem that the time spent on this task sequence could have been used more advantageously for other learning activities such as the focused practice tasks from the task sequence in *English Unlimited B2*.

Removing the task sequence from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* from the lesson sequence used to address preemptive CSs in this course would significantly reduce the number of tasks featuring work with linguistic realizations of particular CSs. However, as the sequence from *Communicating Across Cultures* was relatively lengthy, omitting it would probably have created enough time to include not only the focused practice tasks from *English Unlimited B2*, but also another short task sequence featuring direct instruction and focused practice with a few other specific CSs. Analysis of the data from the communicative task *Keep the conversation flowing* suggests two candidates – the listener CS 'confirmation request' and the speaker CS 'increasing explicitness' – that might have been good choices, as both of these strategies were used a number of times in this task but the students appeared to be relatively unaware of them (cf. 21.5). Another alternative would be to focus on one or two of the types of CSs introduced in Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* that were not addressed elsewhere, such as strategies for smoothing turn handover.

Regardless of which strategies were ultimately selected, the task sequence developed to address them could follow the pattern of the task sequence used for the CSs 'comprehension check' and 'request clarification or repetition' in the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2*. Following this pattern, the selected CSs would first be introduced in an inductive task featuring a listening text or possibly a video clip. This task would serve as an

awareness-raising task helping the students to notice and identify these CSs, the communicative functions that motivated their use and their particular realizations in a communicative context. This could then be followed by a task involving working with or generating potential realizations of the particular CSs, similar to task 3 from the sequence in Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2* or tasks 3 and 4 from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* (cf. also 22.5 for further discussion of tasks for eliciting potential realizations of particular CSs). Finally, the task sequence would end with a communicative task designed to facilitate focused practice with the selected CSs, similar to tasks 4 and 5 from Unit 9 of the *English Unlimited B2* sequence.

In terms of its approach to teaching CSs, the task sequence used in the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2* has considerable potential for providing learners with the kind of systematic instruction described in Dörnyei's framework for developing strategic competence (cf. Chapter 17). The inductive approach to strategy use involving audio(visual) media facilitates not only awareness-raising "about the nature and communicative potential" of the selected CSs (area 1), it also provides learners with L2 models of these CSs in use (area 3). The third task working with additional potential realizations allows for some focus on the vocabulary and structures necessary for verbalizing these CSs in English (area 5) and could potentially be used as a starting point to compare CS use between the target language and the learners' L1(s) (area 4). Finally, ending with a communicative practice task to be completed in pairs or small groups not only gives learners practice with specific strategies (area 6), but could also provide encouragement and opportunity to "take risks and use CSs" in interaction (area 2). Thus, teachers might consider using this pattern when developing lesson plans and materials for work on other CSs, since it touches on all of the areas described in Dörnyei's framework within a relatively compact task sequence.

21 *Keep the conversation flowing: An in-depth analysis of a communicative practice task*

The preceding chapters have presented analysis and discussion of the lesson sequences used to address the three types of CSs that were the focus in Block 2 of classroom instruction in the pragmatics and communication strategies area of the pilot course. This chapter will now offer an in-depth analysis of the final task of this block, a communicative practice task entitled *Keep the conversation flowing*. This task took place at the beginning of course session 10, as can be seen in Table 18 below:

Table 18: Overview of Block 2 by theme

| | | Course session | | | |
|-------------------|----|---|--|---|---|
| | | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Time (in minutes) | 15 | | CSs for preempting misunderstanding and securing mutual understanding (cf. Chapter 20) | Paraphrasing strategies cont. (cf. Chapter 19) | Communicative practice: <i>Keep the conversation flowing</i> (cf. Chapter 21) |
| | 30 | CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding (cf. Chapter 18) | | | |
| | 45 | | | CSs for preempting misunderstanding and securing mutual understanding, cont. (cf. Chapter 20) | |
| | 60 | | | | |
| | 75 | | Paraphrasing strategies (cf. Chapter 19) | CSs for ident. and neg. misunderstanding, cont. (cf. Chapter 18) | |
| | 90 | | | | |

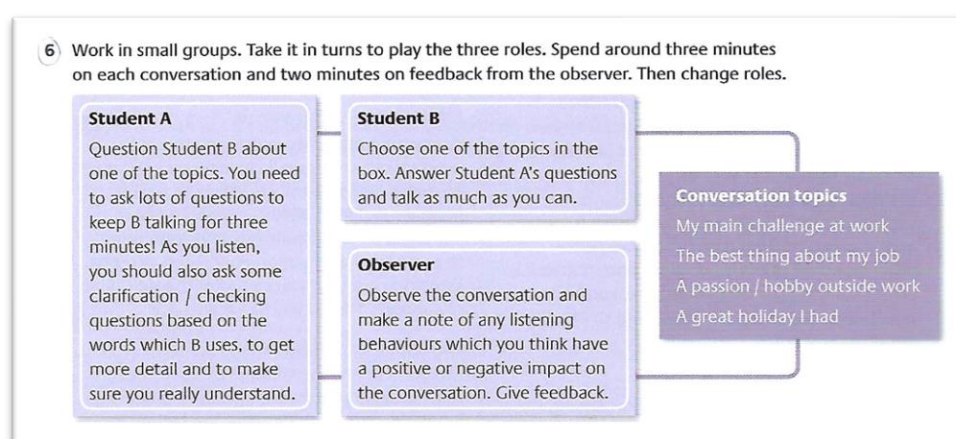
| Table key: | |
|------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Pronunciation |
| | Culture / intercultural communication |
| | Pragmatics / communication strategies |
| | Sociolinguistic awareness |
| | Administration / other |

The task was planned as the culminating task of the lesson sequence on preemptive strategies (cf. Chapter 20). It was selected primarily because it is constructed to provide an opportunity for communicative practice specifically with strategies for active and supportive listening. However, as the analysis of this task will show, it also elicited the use of some other types of strategies which were covered in Block 2, albeit to a lesser extent. In that sense, it ultimately functioned as a more comprehensive practice task for all of Block 2 and provided useful data

about the students' use of all three types of strategies that had been the focus of this block. Additionally, this task was subsequently reused as one of the three tasks that constituted the paired oral final exam for the course. Thus, it was employed not only as a practice task, but also as an assessment task. As these exams were also recorded, data from this version of the task was also available for analysis. Together, the data sets from both the in-class and the final exam versions of the task proved to be a rich source of data about students' actual use of CSs in communicative practice. They also provided evidence about the students' current levels of strategic competence post-instruction, as well as how the preceding instruction phases may have contributed to the development of the students' strategic competence during the course. Finally, the analysis of the two data sets revealed a number of issues with implications for pragmatics teaching, particularly related to ELF-oriented instruction.

The communicative practice task *Keep the conversation flowing* is the sixth task in Unit 5a of *Communicating Across Cultures* (Dignen 2011: 23):

Materials excerpt 40:



(Dignen 2011: 23)

In this structured conversational task, the learners work in groups of three. Each learner has a specific role in each round of the task. Two of the learners are asked to hold a conversation, in which one learner is designated the speaker and the other is designated the listener.¹³⁷ The speaker chooses a topic from a prepared list, and the listener must help to keep this student

¹³⁷ As was noted in footnote 134 in the introduction to chapter 20, the roles of speaker and listener usually shift back and forth during a conversation as interactants take turns at talk. Thus, the strict assignment of roles in this task is somewhat artificial. Nevertheless, this was viewed as pedagogically beneficial here, since it allowed each student to focus their attention on one role at a time during each round of the task.

talking about the topic for a specified length of time. As they talk, the observer is responsible for making notes about the use of CSs, in particular by the listener, and how these CSs affect the conversation positively or negatively. When the conversation is over, the observer then shares his or her feedback with the speaker and the listener. The activity can then be repeated until each member of the group has performed all three roles.

This task allows for the use of many of the CSs for preempting communicative difficulties and negotiating mutual understanding that had been discussed up to this point in this part of the pilot course. However, in placing the onus of keeping the speaker talking for a set amount of time on the listener, the task puts particular emphasis on strategies for active and supportive listening, some of which are suggested in the task instructions for the listener. To prepare for this task, I planned to briefly review all the preemptive CSs that had been introduced in course sessions 8 and 9, so that students would be freshly aware of the strategies they should have at their disposal and could make a conscious effort to use them.

Two modifications were made to this task in light of the learning group. First, the conversational topics provided in the task are all very business-oriented, so I developed a list of some alternative topics that were potentially more relevant for the students. These were:

- A project you are working on for your studies or at work
- Your plans for the lecture-free period this summer
- What you find most difficult about speaking English
- What you have learned in the course so far

I planned to briefly present these topics using the overhead projector before the activity began, then leave them up during the task so that the students could refer to them as needed. Second, the timing in the task was adjusted. The task calls for each conversation to last three minutes and each feedback round to last two minutes. In order to make sure we would have time for other activities as well as this task, I chose to ask the speaker and listener to talk for two minutes and the observer to give feedback for one minute. I would signal when each round of the task should begin and end in order to help the students keep track of time.

After each student had had the chance to perform all three roles in their group, I planned to reconvene the class to discuss the task. The students would be asked to comment on how the task had gone and which of the roles they had found most challenging. We would also discuss the strategies they had noticed their peers using and how effective these had been, since this was the real emphasis of the task.

The communicative practice task *Keep the conversation flowing* was originally planned for the end of course session 9, directly after completing the guided discussion of the listening text *Problems with listening* (cf. Chapter 20). However, as this discussion took somewhat longer than anticipated, there were only a few minutes left of that course session. Rather than

curtailing the task so that it would fit into those few remaining minutes, I decided to wait and do it at the beginning of course session 10. That way, there would be time for multiple rounds of the task, ensuring that each student had the opportunity to perform the roles of speaker, listener and observer, and there would also be sufficient time to discuss the students' experiences in a post-task feedback round with the whole class.

The following sections of this chapter will commence with an analysis of the in-class version of this task. 21.1 will begin by examining the pre-task discussion in terms of the evidence it provides of the students' awareness of preemptive CSs after instruction but before the communicative practice task itself. 21.2 will first provide analysis of the four rounds of the task which were recorded during course session 10 (21.2.1-21.2.4) and then discuss some of the patterns which arose in the data set in terms of the students' use of CSs (21.2.5). Finally, 21.3 will look at the post-task discussion with the whole class, again in terms of the evidence it provides of the students' awareness of preemptive CSs, this time post-task. After that, attention will shift in 21.4 to the data set from the final exam version of *Keep the conversation flowing*. The first four subsections of 21.4 will compare the students' use of CSs in this version of the task with their use of strategies in the in-class version (21.4.1-21.4.4). The final two subsections will then discuss the assessment of the students' performance on this task (21.4.5), as well as the content of some of their turns at talk (21.4.6), in terms of what these reveal about the students' demonstrated level of strategic competence and the development of this competence within the course itself. Finally, 21.5 will conclude the chapter with a discussion of the contributions of this task to Block 2 of pragmatics instruction in the course and the implications which analysis of the data raise for pragmatics instruction, in particular in the ELF-oriented classroom.

21.1 Evidence of awareness post-instruction: Brainstorming preemptive CSs

Since the discussion of preemptive CSs no longer came directly before this communicative practice task, the task itself was preceded by a pre-task activity in which the learning group brainstormed a list of CSs for preventing communication breakdown as a class. This task mainly functioned to reactivate the students' awareness of the preemptive CSs addressed in course sessions 8 and 9 before we began the task itself. However, it also gave me the chance to evaluate the students' level of awareness at this point in the course.

In the pre-task brainstorming round, the students were able to name a number of strategies that had been the focus of instruction in the previous two course sessions. The first strategy

suggested was *asking a lot of questions* (S15, T10: 126). In many ways, it is unsurprising that this was the first strategy to be proposed. It was listed as a tip for successful intercultural communication in both Module 6.9 of the *Intercultural Resource Pack* (cf. 20.2) and Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* (cf. 20.3), the two sources of materials used in the initial work with preemptive strategies in course session 8. Additionally, interrogative sentences had been featured as suggested realizations of many of the strategies introduced in both course sessions 8 and 9, particularly in the task sequences from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* (cf. 20.3) and the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2* (cf. 20.4). However, since interrogatives can serve many different functions, I immediately reminded the class that we had discovered *different reasons for asking questions* in our exploration of preemptive CSs and then asked them *what kinds of things can you DO with a question* (T10: 127-129). This prompted a number of responses, including:

- Get further information (S5, T10: 130)
- Show that you're interested (S5, T10: 133)
- Ask for the other person's opinion (S8, T10: 136)
- Show [the other person] that they can talk now (S8, T10: 139)
- Make sure you communicated right (S4, T10: 146-147)

These responses demonstrate that, after our discussion of preemptive CSs over the past two course sessions, the students were aware of a number of different pragmatic functions which interrogatives might serve in preempting communicative difficulties and keeping a conversation going.

At this point in the pre-task brainstorming round, I had not asked the students to differentiate between strategies for the listener and strategies for the speaker, and the students did not distinguish between the two in their responses. They named some functions of interrogatives that would more likely be employed by the listener (e.g. *get further information*) and some that would more likely be used by the speaker (e.g. *show [the other person] that they can talk now*) without overt reference to conversational roles. I drew somewhat more attention to the roles of the speaker and the listener in my follow-up comments on the last proposed function. S4, the student who proposed *make sure you communicated right* (T10: 146-147), seemed to be alluding to the function of interrogatives as comprehension checks by the speaker. I reminded the students that we had seen that this process could actually go both ways. It could involve the speaker *checking to make sure that you understand what [they're] saying* (i.e. a comprehension check), but it could also involve the listener *checking to make sure that they understood what*

you said (i.e. a confirmation request)¹³⁸ (T10: 148-150). However, this was really the closest we came during the brainstorming task to overtly differentiating between strategies for the listener and strategies for the speaker.

Having explored in more detail some of the possible communicative functions of interrogative sentences, we then turned our attention back to the original question and continued to brainstorm CSs that might be used to keep communication going. The next student, S8, proposed *maybe show interest in like nodding your head and saying ah yes mhm* (T10: 154-155). She thus alluded to using verbal and non-verbal backchannels to show listenership in the conversation, a listener strategy that had been addressed within the task sequence from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* in course session 8 (cf. 20.3), as well as during the discussion of listener strategies in the listening text *Problems with listening* from Walker (2010) in course session 9 (cf. 20.4). Another student, S2, suggested *don't interrupt the [other] person* (T10: 166), another tip for smooth intercultural communication suggested in the tasks from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* in course session 8 (cf. 20.3). S2 then immediately continued on to say *if you are saying something like eh: on no you are not right and...<soft> yeah </soft>* (T10: 168-171). This answer appeared to trail off before it was complete, suggesting that S2 was having difficulty formulating what she wanted to say, but she seemed to be referring to the discussion of how to express disagreement in intercultural communication during classroom work with the task sequence from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* in course session 8 (cf. 20.3). This discussion had hinged largely on some prescriptive tips presented in these materials for how to disagree while attending to the face needs of one's interlocutor(s), and the class had been somewhat critical that those tips would be both effective and necessary in intercultural communication. In my follow-up comments on this suggestion, I mentioned a particular point that members of the

¹³⁸ This comment to the students illustrates how close comprehension checks and confirmation requests actually are in terms of their function. Both involve an attempt to elicit feedback from one's interlocutor as to the level of on-going understanding between the participants; thus, both appear to constitute attempts to check understanding by eliciting confirmation from the interlocutor. However, these attempts take place from complementary perspectives: Comprehension checks "are employed by the speaker to elicit confirmation from the recipient that he or she has understood the speaker's prior utterance" (Kaur 2010: 218). Confirmation requests "are produced by the recipient [i.e. listener] to elicit confirmation of the accuracy of his or her hearing and understanding of the speaker's prior utterance" (Kaur 2010: 185). Thus, the difference in terminology primarily serves to distinguish the fact that comprehension checks are a speaker strategy, while confirmation requests are a listener strategy. Since the literature on communicative strategies generally differentiates between comprehension checks and confirmation requests (sometimes also referred to as confirmation checks) in this way (cf. Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 28; Kaur 2010: 185, 218), and since the course put considerable emphasis on the communicative roles of listener and speaker, I chose to retain these labels rather than, e.g., referring to both strategies as confirmation checks.

class had challenged, namely whether it is necessary to accentuate points of agreement when disagreeing with someone (cf. T10: 172-174). I then recast what I understood S2 to be alluding to in a general way as *being careful HOW we handle other people's opinions* (T10: 176-177). S8 then suggested a final strategy, *summarize what i just said to make sure that the other person understood it right* (T10: 179-182). Again, this was a speaker strategy that had been introduced within the task sequence from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* (cf. 20.3). Interestingly, it had also sparked quite a bit of debate as to whether frequent use of summaries was advisable or whether this might be more obnoxious than helpful. However, this disagreement was not alluded to here.

Overall, the strategies the students proposed in the brainstorming round of this task show that they had been paying attention during our work on preemptive CSs in the previous two course sessions and were aware of a number of the most important strategies that had been addressed. They also appeared to be fairly aware of the functions that these strategies could be used to fulfill in conversation. Having reviewed the preemptive CSs that had been the focus of previous instruction and thus reactivated the students' awareness of these strategies, we then proceeded to the task itself.

21.2 Analyzing students' use of CSs during the communicative practice task Keep the conversation flowing

The communicative practice task *Keep the conversation flowing* is designed to be done in groups of three learners. Each member of the group is assigned a different role in each round of the task, with one student acting as the speaker, one as the listener and one as the observer. However, there were thirteen students in attendance at course session 10 of the pilot course.¹³⁹ This meant that the learning group could not be organized neatly into the prescribed groups of three. Instead, there were three groups of three students and one group of four students. In the group of four, two students would function as observers during each round of the task.

Most of the members of the class had become accustomed to sitting in the same place each week and working in the same pairs or small groups with the other students who routinely sat near them. This meant that they had become fairly used to communicating with particular

¹³⁹ According to the attendance record, S7, S14 and S16 were absent at course session 10. By this point, S9 and S10 had dropped out of the course.

interlocutors over the preceding nine weeks of the course. In introducing *Keep the conversation flowing*, I informed the class that the task would be more effective if they worked in a group *with people that you don't talk to every week* (T10: 87-88). Doing this task with less familiar interlocutors meant that the students would not be able to rely on previously negotiated conversational norms or on acquired knowledge of each other's idiosyncrasies as interlocutors. This increased the likelihood that they would need to use CSs to preempt communicative problems and ensure that mutual understanding was achieved. Thus, while I allowed the students to pick their own groups, I asked them to form groups with other students with whom they had had comparatively little small group contact during the course (cf. T10: 91-101). The students readily complied with this request, and this resulted in the following groupings:

- Group 1:¹⁴⁰ S8, S12, S18
- Group 2: S1, S4, S6
- Group 3: S3, S11, S15
- Group 4: S2, S5, S13, S17

Each round of the task followed the same format. First, the student whose turn it was to be the speaker chose a topic from a short list I had prepared (cf. 21.1 above) and attempted to talk about this topic for two minutes, while the student designated as the listener tried to support the speaker and help him or her to continue talking. The observer was tasked with watching this exchange and taking note of the CSs used to keep the conversation going. Then, directly after the two-minute exchange ended, the observer was given one minute to share his or her observations with the speaker and listener, thus providing them with some feedback and a brief opportunity for reflection before the next round of the task began. The two phases of the task – conversation and feedback – were repeated until each member of each group had had the opportunity to act in each of the three roles. Because Group 4 had four members instead of three, this group required one round more than the other three groups. While this group completed their final round, Groups 1, 2 and 3 were asked to prepare for the post-task feedback round with the whole class by discussing which role they had found easier to perform during the task, the role of the speaker or the role of the listener.

During the task itself, I served as the official timekeeper, telling the students when to begin and end each phase of the task. This allowed them to focus all of their attention on their roles within the task itself. It also meant that each round began and ended at the same time in each group, which created an interesting opportunity for recording during this task. The brief

¹⁴⁰ For the sake of clarity of reference throughout the remainder of this section, each group has been assigned a number. However, it should be noted that this was done for analytical purposes only; neither I as the teacher nor the students themselves referred to the groups using these numbers during the lesson.

moment between rounds, in which the groups were busy organizing themselves for the next conversation, was used to move the recording device so that it would record the conversation of a new group. Since there were four groups and four rounds of the task, it was therefore possible to capture a cross-section of what happened across the different groups during the groupwork phase of the task. However, since the recording device only recorded one conversation from each group, the data does not allow a comparison of the different conversations that took place within a particular group across the different rounds of the task, nor an analysis of how any one student handled each of the three roles. It should also be noted at this point that, as an audio- rather than a video-recording device was used, it is not possible to establish conclusively from this data what role nonverbal strategies played in the recorded conversations.

Most, if not all, of the students chose to talk about the same two topics from the list provided for the task, their plans for the lecture-free period or a project they were currently working on. No one whom I observed during the task itself or who was recorded in the role of the speaker opted to talk about what they found most difficult about speaking English or what they had learned in the course so far. Overall, the students seemed to find it easier to talk about their plans for the lecture-free period than about a current project, and some students who chose the latter topic struggled to a greater or lesser extent, as will become apparent in the following analysis of the individual rounds.

The next subsections of this chapter (21.2.1-21.2.4) will begin by examining each exchange recorded during the four rounds of the task separately. This will allow an exploration not only of which CSs were employed in each of these conversations, but also of how these strategies were realized and what communicative effects they had. 21.2.5 will then discuss some observations, both quantitative and qualitative, regarding trends across all four of the exchanges recorded during the four rounds of the communicative task.

21.2.1 Round 1

During the first round of *Keep the conversation flowing*, the recording device was placed to record Group 1. In this round, S8 was acting in the role of the speaker and S12 in the role of the listener, while S18 functioned as the observer. Since S8 was an L1 speaker of German from Germany and S12 was an L1 speaker of Portuguese from Brazil, their conversation can be considered an instance of communication through ELF. S8 chose to talk about her plans for the lecture-free period, which was due to start in two weeks, as the initial topic for the exchange.

In his role as the listener, S12 primarily employed two CSs to support the conversation. One of these strategies was to ask S8 questions to get further information from her. In addition to posing the topic she had chosen to talk about back to her as a question at the beginning of the conversation (T10: 278-279), he used questions to elicit additional information at five further points in the conversation (T10: 287, 298-299, 306-308, 316-319, 332). During S8's responses to these questions, he then employed frequent verbal backchannels to show that he was listening and to signal that he was following what she was saying. Generally, these involved one-word tokens such as *okay* (e.g. T10: 281, 283, 285) and *yeah* (e.g. T10: 322, 325). However, in two places, S12 made slightly longer comments that nevertheless appeared to show listenership rather than acting as a bid to take over the turn (T10: 338, 350).

For the most part, S12's questions pertained to the topic that S8 had selected, her plans for the lecture-free period, in which she intended to travel with her boyfriend. However, at one point midway through the exchange, S12 asked a question that suddenly introduced a new and unrelated topic:

Excerpt 56:

T10: 329-337 (00:15:12-00:15:29)

| | | |
|-----|------|---|
| 329 | S8: | but i: even like |
| 330 | | the places around it (.) like the nature and jus:t the lakes or |
| 331 | | something like |
| 332 | S12: | and by the way wha- what do you study? |
| 333 | S8: | ah:: social science |
| 334 | S12: | ah social science |
| 335 | S8: | yes |
| 336 | S12: | yes |
| 337 | S8: | and i'm in my sixth term so (.) i will finish (.) in winter |

S12 and S8 have been talking about whether S8 would prefer to visit a city or to see natural sights. As S8 is finishing up her turn (lines 329-331), S12 suddenly asks her what she studies at the university (line 332). This question is unrelated to anything that has come before in their conversation. S12's use of the phrase *and by the way* signals that he is aware of the tenuous relevance between his question and what has preceded it, and simultaneously serves to prepare S8 for the abrupt change of topic (line 332). S8 employs a filler before answering, implying that she needs a moment to adjust to the sudden shift of topic. However, she is able to answer the question appropriately (line 333). This answer is then followed by a multi-turn confirmation sequence. First, S12 repeats S8's answer (line 334). While this repetition could function as a confirmation request, his intonation suggests that this is really an affirmation of his understanding. S8 reaffirms this affirmation by saying *yes* (line 335), and S12 also repeats this token (line 336). Only then does S8 continue on and add more detail about her studies (line 337).

It seems likely that S8 and S12 engage in this prolonged confirmation sequence in order to verify that mutual understanding has been achieved despite the abrupt change of topic brought about by S12's question in line 332. In this sense, S8 and S12 are involved in proactive pragmatic work. They have identified this change of subject as a potential danger point in the conversation in which understanding may be threatened and therefore both make moves to confirm that understanding has indeed been achieved before continuing on with the conversation. Thus, this part of the exchange can be interpreted as a display of strategic competence with preemptive CSs by the two interactants.

As the speaker, S8 is chiefly occupied in providing information about the topic she has chosen and in answering S12's questions. However, in addition to her turns in the confirmation sequence described above, she makes two conversational moves that involve CSs aimed at preempting miscommunication. First, she uses a confirmation request to make sure she has understood a question S12 has just asked her:

Excerpt 57:

T10: 306-312 (00:14:40-00:14:52)

| | | | |
|-----|------|--|-----------|
| 306 | S12: | which places eh usually go here in germany (.) you | |
| 307 | S8: | in germany | |
| 308 | S12: | like more <soft> in germany @ </soft> | |
| 309 | S8: | {sighs} um (.) i'm not sure maybe in the south | |
| 310 | S12: | | okay |
| 311 | S8: | | i haven't |
| 312 | | seen that much in the north or east | |

In line 306, S12 asks S8 what areas she usually visits when she travels in Germany. S8 repeats the phrase *in germany* (line 307) in an intonation that suggests she wishes to check that she has understood S12 correctly. This may have been prompted by the fact that, in formulating his question in line 306, S12 omitted the subject of the sentence, making it more difficult for S8 to decode his meaning. Additionally, this question represents a slight change of topic, since S8 had just been talking about weekend trips she had taken outside Germany (T10: 304-305). Thus, her repetition of *in germany* may serve as a check that she has understood the shift in topic correctly. S12, who appears to have realized even before S8's confirmation request that his turn may not have been entirely clear, rephrases part of his question, this time including the subject *you* (line 306, 308). As part of his rephrasing, he also includes the phrase *in germany*, thus using repetition of S8's turn to affirm her confirmation request (line 308). S8 then demonstrates her understanding of the question by answering it appropriately (lines 309, 311-312).

In addition to this confirmation request, S8 also employed a strategy aimed at increasing the explicitness of what she was saying:

Excerpt 58:

T10: 321-331 (00:15:05-00:15:18)

321 S8: eh::m i would like to see both: like
322 S12: yeah
323 S8: big cities like
324 munich or something
325 S12: yeah
326 S8: and we have been there
327 once and really liked **it the city**
328 S12: okay
329 S8: but i: even like the
330 places around it (.) like the nature and jus:t the lakes or
331 something like

In this excerpt, S8 is talking about whether she would prefer to visit a big city or to see natural attractions during her travels. She begins her turn by talking about her experience visiting *big cities like munich or something* (lines 323-324). Directly after this, she refers back to Munich using the pronoun *it*. She then immediately reinforces this pronoun with the noun phrase *the city* (line 327). This move appears to be motivated by the desire to make sure that S12 has understood the intended antecedent of the pronoun *it* in her prior utterance. Thus, S8's replacement of *it* with *the city* serves to make her utterance more explicit, and this use of increased explicitness appears to represent an effort to preempt potential misunderstanding. It thus demonstrates S8's strategic competence in using CSs to preempt problems that she anticipates her linguistic choices could potentially cause.

One more aspect of S8's talk is particularly interesting in this round of the task. About halfway through the exchange, she engages in an instance of self-correction:

Excerpt 59:

T10: 300-305 (00:14:25-14:40)

300 S8: yeah i like travelling so i travel a lot (.) the last years or (.)
301 yeah the last years so (.) but i haven't seen that much from
302 germany
303 S12: okay
304 S8: **usually i- i've: flow- i've flew away** (.) like
305 eh: a weekend in italy: or in spain or something like that

In talking about her previous experiences travelling during her free time, S8 begins to say *i- i've: flow-* and then changes this to *i've flew* (line 304). The hesitancy in this part of her turn, indicated by the false starts and the lengthening on the last sound of *i've:*, suggest that S8 is having difficulty remembering the grammatical form she wants to use here. She seems to be aware that *fly* is an irregular verb, but is momentarily unsure of its past participle form. Interestingly, she actually begins to utter the correct form in Standard English, *I've flown*, and then self-corrects to a non-standard form, *I've flew*. However, this does not appear to have any impact on S12's ability to understand S8's meaning, underlining the finding in ELF research

that adherence to the grammar of Standard English is less important for successful communication through ELF than other aspects such as the use of CSs.

The conversation between S8 and S12 appears to have been largely successful in the sense that S8 and S12 seemed able to achieve and maintain mutual understanding throughout most of the exchange. Nevertheless, just before the end of this round of the task, one of S12's turns showed that his understanding of S8's previous discourse had not been perfect:

Excerpt 60:

T10: 355-362 (00:15:53-00:16:05)

355 S12: okay but you have already decided when are you going to
356 travel (.) have already eh (.) bought the tickets <8> and stuff
357 </8>
358 S8: <8> no no </8> nothing (.) we didn't plan it so far
359 S12: okay
360 S8: we'll (.) be spontaneous so
361 S12: <9> xxx </9>
362 T: {to the whole class} <9> okay </9> time is up

In lines 355-357, S12 makes a statement in which he conveys his understanding of the status of S8's summer plans. This statement appears to be employed as a confirmation request, giving S12 the opportunity to check whether he has correctly understood that S8 knows when she will be traveling and has already purchased tickets. However, earlier in the exchange, S8 had already informed S12 that she and her boyfriend had not made any firm travel plans yet (cf. T10: 288-297). Either S12 had misunderstood S8 at this point in the conversation, a misunderstanding which was not apparent to either interactant at the time, or S12 had forgotten that he had already been given this information previously. Nonetheless, the misunderstanding is swiftly resolved. S8 responds negatively to S12's confirmation request and then clarifies that they have not yet completed their plans, but instead will *be spontaneous* (lines 358, 360). Although S12's response to this negation in line 361 is unclear on the recording, his positive backchannel in line 359 signals that he now understands S8's meaning and the misunderstanding has been resolved. Thus, the conversation appears to end successfully.

21.2.2 Round 2

In the second round of the task, the recording device was placed to capture the conversation in Group 2, which was comprised of S1, S4 and S6. As all three of these students were L1 speakers of German from Germany, the discourse recorded during this round cannot be considered as an authentic instance of ELF communication. This group needed significantly longer to begin their conversation during this round of the task than any of the other groups recorded during the other rounds. For the first thirty seconds of the two-minute round, they were still engaged

in negotiating whose turn it was for which role and who was responsible for choosing a topic (T10: 419-433). However, they finally established S1 as the speaker, S6 as the listener and S4 as the observer for this round of the task. S1 then indicated that he wanted to talk about a project he was currently working on as part of his studies, and he and S6 were finally able to begin the conversational part of the task.

Despite the fact that S1 had selected his own topic, and thus must have anticipated that he would be able to talk successfully about it, he almost immediately began to struggle as he tried to describe his project in English in his initial turn:

Excerpt 61:

T10: 434-450 (00:18:05-00:19:07)

- 434 S6: okay (.) um what project are you working on right <@> now
 435 </@> @ @
 436 S1: i'm working on a project right now eh i am: eh: (.) observing
 437 (.) and the: eh: some smartphone apps to um detect radiation
 438 (.) <13> so i ehm (.) do it </13>
 439 S6: <13> <soft> @ @ @ @ @ </soft> </13>
 440 S1: eh as a master thesis (.) i: just want to look how i can (.)
 441 eh::m (.) eh:: <pvc> variate {verify} </pvc> (.) some eh::m (1)
 442 eh:: (1) @ @ some ops so observa- observables
 443 {obserVAbles} (.) to: look how some (1) ehm (1)
 444 S4: <L1ger> deutsch {german} </L1ger>
 445 S6: <soft> @ @ @ </soft>
 446 S4: <soft> <L1ger> es ist doch egal {it doesn't matter} </L1ger>
 447 </soft> (4)
 448 S1: eh i look how i can <pvc> variate {verify} </pvc> (2) how i
 449 can make sure that some (.) ehm (.) loss of radioactivity can
 450 be proven by just eh handling the smartphones

S1's initial explanation of his project is characterized by frequent hesitations such as fillers and sound lengthening, as well as by numerous shorter and longer pauses. In trying to describe the technical aspects of his project, he also produces a non-standard word, *variate* (line 441). The meaning of this word is unclear in this context, but S1 later uses it again (line 448) and then paraphrases its meaning as *make sure* (line 449), suggesting that he might have been searching for the word *verify*. Shortly thereafter, he also uses the term *observables*, a term with a specialized meaning in physics, one of the subjects S1 was studying and the one in which he appeared to be doing his master's thesis. It seems likely that S6, who was studying social science, might not have been familiar with the sense of this word in the way S1 was using it. On top of this, S1 produces several false starts and then finally pronounces *observables* with the stress on the third syllable rather than on the second (lines 442-443). This may have created further difficulties for S6 as she was trying to comprehend his meaning.

Despite S1's struggles to explain his topic, S6, as his listener, produces almost no verbal responses to his talk during his whole first turn. The only token on the recording that she is present during this part of the conversation is some soft laughter in lines 439 and 445. Laughter

has been identified as potentially playing a number of different roles in word-search sequences (cf. Matsumoto 2018, Siegel 2018). In this instance, it may have been a signal of S6's inability to assist her interlocutor, stemming from her comparative unfamiliarity with physics as a scientific discipline. It may also have represented an expression of emotion such as embarrassment that she could not be of more help, or sympathy with S1's ongoing struggle to formulate his thoughts. However, it may also have been related to the fact S6 was aware that this round of the task was being recorded, since I had just placed the recording device near the group. Despite the multiple longer pauses in S1's turn (lines 441, 443, 447, 448), she does not attempt to use any CSs to try to help him along (e.g. utterance completions in response to obvious signs that he is searching for words, questions to get further information). Neither does she employ verbal backchannels to show active listenership as he talks. In addition, S6 also does not signal non-understanding, or even potential non-understanding, through any verbal responses that could be interpreted as requests for repetition or clarification or as confirmation requests. This may have stemmed from her desire to avoid interrupting S1 during his turn, but it may also have been a sign that she was unable to understand S1 well enough either to help him or to formulate any relevant responses to his explanation.

Interestingly, although S6 does not appear to give any overt verbal signals that she does not understand S1's use of the non-standard word *variate* in line 441, S1 chooses to paraphrase this word shortly after he uses it a second time in line 448. Thus, he appears to be aware that this item is problematic, or even that it is not a word in Standard English. Possibly, S6 was using non-verbal cues to show her lack of understanding, something which would not have been captured by the audio recording device during this round of the task. Potentially, though, this move stemmed from S1's monitoring of his own speech. He had had trouble coming up with the word *variate* the first time he used it, as is evidenced by the lengthened fillers and the small pause which precede its initial use (line 441), and he may have suspected that it was not actually the word he had been searching for, motivating his paraphrase in line 448.

After the first two longer pauses in S1's turn, S4, who was acting as observer during this round of the task, interjects the word *deutsch*, the German word for the German language (line 444). Based upon his intonation and tone of voice, he appears to be inviting S1 to code-switch to German, since S1 is obviously struggling to find words in English. S4 then strengthens the invitation by saying *ist doch egal*, German for *it doesn't matter*, implying that it would not be a big deal if S1 did choose to code-switch here (lines 446-447). In fact, since all three members of Group 2 were L1 speakers are German, this move would likely have been successful in efficiently and effectively helping S1's interlocutors to understand his meaning. However, even though we had talked about how speakers in ELF situations do sometimes use plurilingual resources when they cannot recall an English word, I had been encouraging the class not to use

German in this way during our course, since they were communicating in a classroom setting with the purpose of developing their English for use with others who would not necessarily share their L1 (cf. 19.6). Whether or not S1 had this in mind, he implicitly rejects this suggestion and perseveres in formulating an explanation of his project in English without recourse to code-switching (lines 448-450).

S1 completed his initial explanation of his project in line 450. After he finished speaking, S6 produced her first verbal response as listener, saying *okay* (T10: 451). This was followed by a two-second pause before she began to ask a follow-up question:

Excerpt 62:

T10: 451-465 (00:19:07-00:20:01)

- 451 S6: okay (2) so do different apps have different (.) types of
 452 radiation or what are you: (1)
 453 S1: ehm: i can i can detect radiation with the help of the eh
 454 camera sensors (.) so i have this <spel> c d </spel> or xx
 455 chips so they can just be being: eh: (.) eh:m (.) can be: used
 456 to: just take pictures or to: eh: (.) observe radiation (.) and
 457 eh:m (.) yes (.) different apps can do that in different ways so
 458 (.) yeah some of them use maybe an <pvc> extern {external}
 459 </pvc> sensor ehm (.) some of them use (.) as i said xxx
 460 S6: uh-huh
 461 S1: to xx
 462 S6: which like which ones (.) maybe use the most radiation have
 463 you figured that out
 464 S1: yeah: a:hm the: <pvc> extern {external} </pvc> sensors can
 465 do that for the best way

S6's hesitation before she begins her question in line 451 suggests that she requires some processing time to try to make sense of S1's explanation and then formulate a relevant question to help him continue talking. As it is, she seems to struggle in formulating this question, trailing off in line 452 with a lengthening on the final sound of *you:* followed by a one second pause. When S1 realizes that nothing more is forthcoming, he takes up the turn to try to answer S6's question.

In some ways, S6's question seems to be a summary or paraphrase of her understanding of what S1 has been trying to tell her about his project up to this point in the conversation. In that sense, her question in line 452 seems to function as a confirmation request. Based upon this question, she appears to have understood that S1 is looking at differences in the types or amounts of radiation produced by different apps on smartphones, and she is seeking confirmation as to whether this understanding is correct. However, it becomes apparent from the subsequent discourse that S1's project is actually about comparing the ability of different apps to measure the radiation that is generally produced when a smartphone is used (lines 453-459, 464-465). Thus, it becomes apparent that S6 has misunderstood S1's initial explanation of the purpose of his project.

S1 and S6 never seem to realize that a misunderstanding has taken place. Toward the end of S1's response to S6's question in Excerpt 62 above, S6 produces a positive backchannel, signaling that she feels she is following S1's point (line 460). However, in her next follow-up question, she asks S1 whether he has been able to establish which apps *use the most radiation* (lines 462-463). She thus still seems to be fixated on the idea that S1 is investigating the difference in radiation emissions created during the use of different apps on a smartphone. S1 does not seem to comprehend this, however. His response, *yeah: a:hm the: <pvc> extern {external} </pvc> sensors can do that for the best way* (lines 464-465), suggests that he is still talking about which apps are able to indicate radioactive emissions from smartphones most effectively.

Interestingly, in his second longer turn (lines 453-461), S1 again uses a non-standard word in his explanation of his project. In line 458, he uses *extern* rather than *external* to describe a kind of sensor he is using. This is a direct translation from his L1 German, in which such a sensor would be described as *ein externer Sensor*, where the final *-er* on *externer* is an inflectional suffix required by the rules of German syntax in the subjective case to agree with the gender of the singular masculine noun *Sensor* that it modifies. S1 then uses the word *extern* again in his response to S6's next question in line 464. Unlike with his second use of *variate*, he does not attempt to paraphrase *extern*, suggesting that he either remains unaware that he has produced a non-standard word or, if he is aware, is at least satisfied that S6 has understood his meaning. Since S1 had been assiduously avoiding code-switching to German earlier in the conversation, however, it seems likely that he was unaware that he had used a non-standard word that was a direct translation from his L1.

All in all, the exchange between S1 and S6 was the least successful conversation captured during the four rounds of the task *Keep the conversation flowing* in the sense that, while S1 and S6 were able to keep up a conversation, they were unable to achieve mutual understanding. S1 struggled to communicate what he wanted to say in English, and S6 did very little to help him. This may have been because she herself was unfamiliar with the highly specialized topic S1 was talking about, further complicating her ability to comprehend S1's laborious explanation. However, given that S6 was otherwise one of the most linguistically competent students in the learning group, it seems somewhat odd that she did not try to employ more verbal strategies to help her interlocutor. Additionally, even though S1 and S6 seemed to feel by the end of the conversation that they had reached a level of understanding that allowed the conversation to proceed smoothly, it is apparent in the analysis of Excerpt 62 above that the two speakers were actually basing their contributions to the exchange on different understandings of the topic being discussed. Thus, the conversation involved a significant misunderstanding that was never resolved during the task. Even in the feedback round that

followed this conversation, it never became clear that S1 and S6 had misunderstood one another, and this suggests that S4 as the observer had not picked up on this either. It would have been interesting to see if the misunderstanding would have eventually come to light, and if so, if the students would have been able to resolve it, had the round continued for longer than two minutes.

21.2.3 Round 3

In round 3 of the task, the recording device was placed to capture the conversation in Group 3. During this round, S3 functioned as the speaker, S11 was the listener and S15 observed their exchange. Like the conversation between S8 and S12 in the first round of the task, this exchange also represented a more authentic instance of ELF communication, as S3 was an L1 speaker of German from Germany with no knowledge of Portuguese and S11 was an L1 speaker of Portuguese from Brazil with a very limited knowledge of German. In this round of the task, S3 elected to talk about his plans for the lecture-free period. These included beginning a six-month-long internship in a nearby city, and this internship became the main topic of the conversation.

The exchange between S3 and S11 was distinctive compared to the exchanges recorded in the other groups during the other rounds of the task in several ways. First of all, communication almost immediately became problematic when S3 was unable to recall the English word *examinations*:

Excerpt 63:

T10: 531-548 (00:21:46-00:22:18)

531 S11: <17> a::hm </17> in free time? (.) a::hm oka::y now the
 532 summer is coming and what do you and (.) eh:: (.) w- w- what
 533 what's your plan for the summer: and vacations: (.) what do
 534 you want to do
 535 S3: yeah for the summer: eh the plan is writing: um (.) my:
 536 lectures (.) my <L1ger> klausuren {exams} </L1ger>
 537 S11: @@
 538 S3: i forget the word
 539 S11: @@@
 540 S3: i'm sorry
 541 S15: examinations
 542 S3: my examinations right
 543 S11: oh::
 544 S3: right
 545 S11: kay @@
 546 S15: @@@
 547 S3: and (1) and afterward i will start to make an: internship in:
 548 mannheim

In answering S11's initial question about his plans for the lecture-free period (lines 531-534), S3 starts to tell her that he will be taking some written exams in his other university courses. After some lengthening on the final sound of *my*:, the first signal that he is struggling to find an appropriate word in English, he produces the word *lectures* (line 536). He seems to immediately realize that this is not what he meant, but, unable to come up with the word in English, he paraphrases his meaning as *my klausuren*, using the word from his L1 German that expresses his intended meaning (line 536). While code-switching to German probably would have been effective if he had been talking to almost any other member of the learning group, it is not successful here. S11 responds with laughter (line 537). A number of studies have pointed to the role of laughter as a non-verbal strategy for indirectly signaling a lack of understanding by the listener (cf. Kaur 2009a, Pitzl 2010, Matsumoto 2018), as well as its role in word search sequences (cf. Siegel 2018). S11's laughter at this point in the conversation appears to signal that she is aware that S3 has used a German word, but that she is unable to understand his meaning. S3 then states overtly that he has forgotten the word in English (line 538), which could be considered as an indirect request for assistance from S11. However, S11 only responds with more laughter (line 539), again signaling – in a friendly way – that she is unable to understand what S3 has said and therefore cannot help him by providing the word he is searching for. S3 then says *i'm sorry* (line 540), which seems to function both as an apology to his group that the conversation is breaking down due to his inability to make his meaning clear and as an expression of embarrassment, since the word *examinations* is a fairly basic vocabulary item for a university student. At this point, S15, who is acting as the observer in the conversation and thus is not supposed to have an active role in the exchange at this point, enters the conversation and supplies the word *examinations* (line 541). In evident relief, S3 repeats *my examinations right*, confirming that this is the word he was searching for (line 542). His repetition of *right* in line 544 serves to further underline his confirmation of what S15 has suggested. S11's use of *oh::* and *kay* in lines 543 and 545 signals that the non-understanding has been resolved. She and S15 each laugh briefly (lines 545-546), this time possibly in acknowledgment of the fact that S15 has stepped outside her role as observer to help the conversation get off the ground. Only then is the exchange able to move forward. Secure that S11 now understands his plans for the first part of the lecture-free period, S3 proceeds to tell S11 that he will be starting an internship in another city later in the summer (lines 547-548).

This part of S3 and S11's exchange is unique in that, although there is evidence that mutual understanding was not always completely achieved between the interactants in a number of the conversations recorded during the four rounds of *Keep the conversation flowing*, this is the only recorded instance in which a listener signaled non-understanding of the speaker's meaning this directly. Moreover, this non-understanding was initially significant enough that it seems

likely that it might have ended in topic abandonment if S15 had not stepped in to supply the word S3 was searching for. Despite the fact that the students had just worked on paraphrasing strategies in the previous two course sessions (cf. Chapter 19), S3 was unable to paraphrase his meaning beyond his initial unsuccessful code-switch into his L1. However, once this problem spot had been resolved with S15's help, the conversation was able to continue quite successfully.

In addition to the instance of non-understanding that occurred and needed to be resolved right at the beginning, the exchange between S3 and S11 was also different from other conversations recorded during this task in terms of the interactional patterns between speaker and listener. This was largely due to S11's behavior as a listener. Like the other students acting in the role of the listener who were recorded during the various rounds of this task, S11 used some of her turns in the exchange to ask follow-up questions aimed at getting more information from S3 and helping him to continue talking (T10: 557, 559-561, 580). However, unlike the other listeners recorded in the other rounds of this task, she also occasionally used her turns for the purpose of expressing more substantial support for the content of S3's talk. This first occurred as S3 was completing his answer to her second follow-up question, in which S11 had asked him whether the purpose of his internship was to gain experience in a specialized area of his field:

Excerpt 64:

T10: 559-578 (00:22:38-00:23:15)

- 559 S11: ah okay and there eh:: (.) eh:: are you going to:: make some
 560 eh:::m esp- specialization {əspeʃəlaɪzəʃən} or something like
 561 this e::hm some e::hm
 562 S3: no it's for to getting an overview what
 563 S11: oh::
 564 S3: i will do
 565 and it's in uh special (.) special area of eh (.) of the: um (.) of
 566 the: company
 567 S11: mhm
 568 S3: and yeah i will see what they: i'm:
 569 no- i'm not really know don't really know which xxx um
 570 S11: yeah
 571 S3: what i will do there so
 572 S11: **it's not easy to know this**
 573 S3: i will have to see
 574 S11: **before you're going**
 575 S3: no
 576 S11: **in the company @@**
 577 S3: that's why i go there
 578 S11: yeah

Despite the dysfluencies in S11's formulation of her question, S3 apparently has no trouble understanding what she is trying to ask. As S3 is answering her question, S11 engages in some

verbal back-channeling¹⁴¹, showing that she is attending to S3's answer and can follow what he is saying (lines 563, 567, 570). However, as he completes his answer, rather than asking another follow-up question, S11 takes over the turn, remarking *it's not easy to know this [...] before you're going in the company @@* (lines 572, 574, 576). The purpose of this turn appears to be to show support for what S3 has been saying. The laughter at the end of S11's turn seems to be friendly, intended to underscore her agreement with S3's position and generally contribute to the friendly atmosphere of the conversation (cf. Meierkord 1996). Although it at first seems almost as though S11 has interrupted S3 before he was completely finished with his turn (line 573), his affirming back-channel in line 575 shows that he falls into the role of the listener at this point in the conversation where S11 temporarily adopts the role of the speaker.

S11 repeated this pattern at two other points in the conversation, taking up a longer turn to express her support for S3's previous talk. Interestingly, in one of these instances, S11 also struggled to find a word she was looking for in English. In this part of the conversation, S11 has just asked S3 about the duration of his internship:

Excerpt 65:

T10: 580-593 (00:23:17-00:23:51)

- 580 S11: and eh how long will you stay there?
- 581 S3: ah:: six months
- 582 S11: six months huh
- 583 S3: it's ah:: not possible to go sh- eh:: for a shorter time (.) firms
- 584 always say: you have to come six month if you want to come
- 585 (.) so
- 586 S11: yeah
- 587 S3: they have enough time for you
- 588 S11: **and they it's better because eh:: for example if you're in a**
- 589 **short time (.) then you::: are keep eh: when you started to**
- 590 **learn everything in the:: (.) in the::**
- 591 S3: in the beginning
- 592 S11: in the beginning then y- you have to come back so if stay
- 593 longer you can learn more i think

S3 answers that the internship will last *six months* (line 581). The intonation in which S11 repeats *six months huh* in line 582, as well as her tone of voice, indicate that this repetition is produced to express her surprise that the internship would last for so long. In response, S3 explains that this is standard practice in his field, because companies otherwise do not feel that

¹⁴¹ While S11 did use some verbal backchannels in her role as a listener to signal that she was interested in what S3 was saying and that she was following his meaning (e.g. T10: 549, 555, 563, 567, 570, 586), she used fewer verbal backchannels than, for example, S12 did in the first round of the task (cf. 21.2.1 above). However, during the feedback round of the task, S15, who had observed the exchange between S3 and S11, noted that S11 employed *lots of nodding* (T10: 616), implying that S11 also used frequent non-verbal backchannels to signal listenership and to support S3 in his role as the speaker.

they can invest enough time in their interns (lines 583-587). At this point, S11 then takes over the turn again. She is trying to show support for S3's position by introducing an additional argument for the value of a longer internship, namely that a longer internship means more opportunities for the intern to learn (lines 588-590, 592-593). However, she struggles to find the word *beginning* in the middle of this turn.

Whereas S3 overtly stated his difficulty in locating the word he was looking for in line 538 of Excerpt 63 above, S11 signals that she is searching for a word by repeating *in the::* after a hesitation marker in the form of a short pause and by lengthening of the final sound in the word *the::* both times (line 590). According to Cogo and Dewey (2012), these are typical means by which speakers engaged in communication through ELF may signal that they need help from their interlocutor in the form of an utterance completion (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 151). These signals are successful, in that S3 recognizes that S11 is searching for a word and completes her utterance with the phrase *in the beginning* (line 591). S11 repeats this phrase (line 592), confirming that this was in fact what she was searching for, and then proceeds to finish her thought (lines 592-593).

S3's provision of the phrase *in the beginning* is the second instance in which a group member has engaged in utterance completion in response to signals that the current speaker was searching unsuccessfully for a word. However, this is not the only way in which the interactants in this conversation used utterance completion as an interactive strategy. Toward the end of the conversation, S11 also used utterance completion to signal listenership and engagement:

Excerpt 66:

T10: 598-606 (00:23:55-00:24:03)

| | | |
|-----|------|--|
| 598 | S3: | so you the first time is to learn in (.) what you have to do and |
| 599 | S11: | and then= |
| 600 | S3: | =then |
| 601 | S11: | just so |
| 602 | S3: | later <20> you </20> can work |
| 603 | S11: | </20> practice </20> |
| 604 | S11: | yeah |
| 605 | S3: | and practice |
| 606 | S11: | exactly (.) <soft> @@ </soft> |

In line 598, S3 begins to explain that he will spend the first part of his internship learning about his responsibilities within the company. At this point, although there is no hesitancy to suggest that he is searching for a word, S11 jumps in to complete S3's utterance with *and then* (line 599), successfully anticipating what he was apparently about to say. This is confirmed when S3 does in fact say *then* in line 600. S11 continues to anticipate what S3 is trying to say, supplying the phrase *just so* in line 601 and then the word *practice* in line 603, following S3's use of the word *later* in line 602. In the latter case, her utterance completion actually overlaps

with S3's continued talk. However, she uses a token of affirmation in line 604 to show that she has still heard and agrees with what he is saying. In line 605, S3 likewise shows support for S11's contributions, in that he repeats the word *practice* that S11 has just used, prefaced by the word *and* to signal his agreement that this will be an important aspect of the later stage of his internship.

All in all, this stretch of the conversation is characterized by lively and fast-paced interaction, rather than the kinds of hesitation that typically signal that a speaker is searching for a word. Thus, S11's use of utterance completion appears to be motivated by her desire to show her engagement in the conversation, rather than as a response to signals of difficulty from her interlocutor (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012: 157). Both interactants are actively involved in developing the current topic of the conversation and at times, their contributions almost seem to diverge from one another. However, their use of agreement tokens and S3's adoption of S11's previous utterance in line 605 show that they are highly attuned to what the other is saying and are trying to support each other in the meaning-making process, even where there is overlap in their turns.

On the whole, then, the exchange between S3 and S11 was more collaborative than the exchanges captured during the other rounds of the task, due mainly to S11's behavior as the listener. Unlike in the other rounds, in which the students generally stuck to their assigned roles for the duration of the exchange, there was some crossover of roles in this conversation, with S11 occasionally taking a turn as the speaker and S3 falling into the role of the listener. The interactants also engaged in utterance completions, both in response to signals that a speaker was struggling to find a word and as a sign of listenership and engagement on the part of the listener. The latter sometimes resulted in overlapping speech, but this did not appear to impact the conversation negatively.

One possible explanation for the differences in S11's behavior as a listener compared to the behavior of the listeners captured in other rounds of the task might be related to the concept of communication styles that had been explored as part of classroom work with Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* (cf. 20.3). The majority of the learning group came from Germany, in which, according to the information from Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) provided in task 1 of this unit, the predominant communicative style is characterized by longer turns and avoidance of interruption or speaking over one's interlocutor. By contrast, S11 came from Brazil, where, as the class had discussed during classroom work with task 2 of Unit 3B, interruption and overlapping speech are considered more acceptable. This may help to explain why S11 engaged in strategies such as utterance completion, even where it was apparent that S3 was still speaking. However, it should be noted that S12, who was acting as

the listener in the conversation recorded during the first round of the task (cf. 21.2.1), also came from Brazil, and he did not employ these more collaborative listener strategies, but rather appeared to avoid interrupting his interlocutor.

According to the text in task 1 of Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures*, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner claim that when different communication styles come together, “the communication flow breaks down and misunderstanding increases as people begin to give their opinions in different ways” (Dignen 2011: 16). However, in the conversation between S3 and S11, the conversation actually appeared to be at its most successful in terms of the achievement of mutual understanding where S11 was employing interactional strategies which resulted in overlapping talk. It was certainly more successful than the earliest part of the conversation, in which S11 was unable to help S3 find the word *examinations*. Thus, this instance of ELF conversation appears to be successful despite the fact that one of the two interlocutors used interactive strategies uncharacteristic of the communication style of the other’s native national culture. By contrast, the two interactants appear to have been able to negotiate pragmatic practices together that resulted in successful communication.

Incidentally, in the feedback phase of the task directly after this conversation, the group talked at length about the difficulties that both S3 and S11 had experienced in finding some of the words they wanted to use during their conversation (T10: 627-651). After describing the frustration he felt when he realized he could not find the word he was looking for, S3 ended this part of the discussion with the remark *but i think that’s eh what we learned here just to making (.) eh not to be afraid and just eh talking and eh don’t need the exact word for that* (T10: 652-654). Dörnyei (1995) includes “encouraging students to be willing to take risks and use CSs, that is, to manipulate available language without being afraid of making errors” as the second area of his framework for teaching CSs (cf. Chapter 17). S3’s statement, and his group members’ subsequent affirmation (T10: 656-658), provide evidence that at least some of the students in the learning group may have gleaned this type of encouragement from the approach to CSs taken in this block of the pilot course.

21.2.4 Round 4

During the fourth and final round of the task, the recording device was placed to record Group 4, the only group with four members rather than three. In this round of the task, S5 was acting as speaker, S13 was the listener, and both S2 and S17 were observing. As in Group 2, all of these students were L1 German speakers from Germany. Therefore, the conversation recorded during this round of the task cannot be considered as an instance of authentic ELF

communication. For this round, S5 chose to talk about her plans for the lecture-free period. However, because her plans mainly involved working on her bachelor thesis, the conversation naturally led to S5's research project, and S5 and S13 spent most of the round discussing this topic.

Overall, S5 was able to speak fluently for longer stretches, both initially as she described her summer plans and then later as she talked about the topic of her bachelor thesis. She did not appear to need much help finding enough to say to fill two minutes. After his initial question based on the topic that S5 had indicated she wanted to discuss, S13 only asked two follow-up questions aimed at getting more information (T10: 707, 721). At the beginning of the conversation, S13 also let S5 talk without apparently engaging much in supportive listener behaviors such as verbal backchannels¹⁴²:

Excerpt 67:

T10: 697-710 (00:26:55-00:27:45)

- 697 S5: unfortunately: i (.) i won't have a lot of free time (.) um (.)
 698 i'm (.) i'm writing my: bachelor thesis at the moment and
 699 ehm: (.) until the end of august (.) i do my lab work and (.)
 700 the writing work (.) and so i will be finished (.) next
 701 september i think (.) and so (.) yeah (1) then i: i have to apply
 702 for my master master programs (.) and maybe i have to move
 703 so i (.) might have two: or three: free weeks that's (.) it
 704 S13: you have to look for some (.) apartments
 705 S5: yeah
 706 S13: and (.) okay.
 707 what is the topic of your bachelor thesis
 708 S5: ah i'm:: writing my bachelor thesis in neurobiology
 709 S13: okay
 710 S5: and eh:m i'm: working on the auditory brain stem so that's (.)...

In the excerpt above, S13 waits to speak until S5 signals that she has completed her turn (line 703). His first verbal move is then to paraphrase one of the points that he thinks S5 has been trying to make (line 704). His intonation suggests that he does this as a confirmation request to make sure that he has understood S5 correctly. This is possibly motivated by the fact that S5 has just taken an extended turn with a high informational content. S5 subsequently confirms S13's understanding (line 705). In line 706, it at first appears that S13 may be using the word *and* to continue the confirmation request. This implies that he might have had the strategy *summarize what your interlocutor has been saying* in mind, a strategy that had been named in the pre-task brainstorming phase of the lesson (cf. 21.1 above). However, he seems to change his mind and instead uses *okay* with falling intonation to signal that he is content with his

¹⁴² Since the exchange was audio- rather than video-recorded, however, it is impossible to ascertain the role that non-verbal cues may have played in the exchange.

understanding of S5's previous turn (line 706). He then asks a topically relevant follow-up question (line 707). S5 has mentioned that she will spend most of her summer break working on her bachelor thesis, and S13 asks her what topic she is writing about. This demonstrates his awareness of the main gist of what S5 has been saying. After an initial hesitation, S5 answers rather generally that she is working on a bachelor thesis in the area of neurobiology (line 708). S13 employs his first verbal backchannel in response (line 709). This backchannel signals that S13 is paying attention and can follow S5. It also serves as an encouragement for S5 to continue speaking. She then embarks on her second longer turn, describing her work in more detail, beginning in line 710.

Up until this point in the conversation, S13 and S5 appear to be satisfied that they have achieved mutual understanding and are communicating successfully. S13's scant use of verbal back-channels during S5's initial longer turn thus does not appear to signal lack of interest in, or understanding of, what S5 has been saying. However, this seems to change during S5's explanation of the topic of her bachelor thesis:

Excerpt 68:

T10: 710-720 (00:27:39-00:28:27)

- | | | |
|-----|------|--|
| 710 | S5: | and eh:m i'm: working on the auditory brain stem so that's (.) |
| 711 | | it's part of the of the brain stem the oldest part of the of the |
| 712 | | brain and um there are some (.) nuclei that are processing |
| 713 | | {proCESSing} information of of the (.) of hearing (.) and |
| 714 | | ehm (.) there are only: not only neurons but there are also |
| 715 | | some kinds of: (.) of cells and um they have different |
| 716 | | functions in: ehm (.) for example the:y build up the xx area |
| 717 | | and um have nutritional functions (.) and um (.) ah they form |
| 718 | | networks and i (.) observe the networks by checking the xxxx |
| 719 | S13: | that sounds really interesting |
| 720 | S5: | @@ yeah it's it's a really interesting topic |

In contrast to S1, the speaker from Group 2 recorded in the second round of the task (cf. 21.2.2 above), S5 is able to talk quite fluently about her project (lines 710-718). While this can undoubtedly be attributed in part to her generally high linguistic proficiency in English, her ability to talk fluently about this highly technical subject was probably also due to the fact that, as she told her group during the feedback round after her exchange with S13, she was writing her bachelor thesis in English (cf. T10: 754). She was therefore already used to thinking and writing about her topic in this language. Nevertheless, although S13's initial response, *that sounds really interesting*, expresses at face value his interest in what S5 has said, his tone of voice in making this statement also appears to indicate that he has not understood all of the details of the project (line 719). This is perhaps not surprising, as S13 was not a biology major like S5, but was studying mechanical engineering. He would have been unlikely to understand the subject-related elements of S5's topic, even though she had explained it fluently. S5's laughter at the beginning of her next turn appears to signal consciousness that S13's difficulty

in understanding the details of her project is reasonable, considering his lack of background in her field (line 720). It may also constitute an expression of embarrassment (cf. Pullin Stark 2009) or even an indirect apology for ‘losing’ S13 during her previous turn.

It seems likely that S13’s lack of verbal backchannels in this part of the discourse was not only due to the fact that S5 did not appear to need active encouragement to continue speaking. Rather, it may have been an indicator that he was not able to comprehend all of the details in S5’s explanation of her thesis topic. However, it also seems likely that S5 may not have registered this indicator, since S13 had also refrained from using verbal backchannels during her first turn and still demonstrated that he had been able to understand her satisfactorily. S13 certainly made no attempts to signal non-understanding or request repetition or clarification, despite the fact that these were strategies that had been the focus of classroom work during previous course sessions with CSs. One possible reason for this might be that he did not wish to interrupt S5, a tip that had been named as an important aspect of keeping communication flowing during the pre-task brainstorming round (cf. 21.1 above). Instead, he may have been waiting to see if he could fill in the gaps in his understanding as S5’s turn progressed, a strategy referred to as the ‘let it pass’ principle in ELF research (cf. Firth 1996¹⁴³).

S13’s comment in line 719 above had a profound effect on the rest of his exchange with S5 in this round of the task. Up until this point, S5 had taken lengthy turns and S13 had been fairly reserved in his use of supportive CSs. However, after S13’s acknowledgement that he had not understood everything S5 had been saying about her bachelor thesis, both speakers increased their use of interactional strategies aimed at checking that mutual understanding was being achieved and preventing misunderstanding. This is immediately apparent in the next few turns of the exchange:

Excerpt 69:

T10: 721-726 (00:28:27-00:28:34)

- | | | |
|-----|------|---|
| 721 | S13: | is there also an experiment of a:hm it’s part in this |
| 722 | S5: | yeah |
| 723 | S13: | ah okay |
| 724 | S5: | yeah |
| 725 | S13: | it’s not just theory (.) the theory |
| 726 | S5: | no no no [...] |

¹⁴³ In the earliest studies of ELF pragmatics, some studies indicated that this strategy was widely used in ELF talk (cf. Firth 1990, 1996; Meierkord 1996, 2002). However, many of these early studies were based on small corpora of informal conversations. More recent studies involving larger corpora and a wider range of communicative contexts have concluded that the use of the ‘let it pass’ strategy is less prevalent than early studies originally suggested (cf. Cogo and House 2018: 220, Mauranen 2006: 147-148). Thus, this strategy was not included as one of the strategies for focused instruction in Block 2 of the pilot course.

Although his understanding of S5's previous discourse has been incomplete, S13 nevertheless manages to formulate a logical follow-up question regarding her project, asking her whether her project also involves an experiment (line 721). S5 affirms this inquiry with *yeah* (line 722). This triggers an extended confirmation sequence between the two interactants. S13 first acknowledges that he has understood S5's answer to his question by saying *ah okay* (line 723). S5 then repeats *yeah*, reconfirming her affirmative response to S13's question. Despite these signals of mutual understanding, S13 employs an additional confirmation request. This confirmation request, *it's not just theory (.) the theory* (line 725), is in declarative form, but it is nevertheless clear that S13 intends for S5 to respond positively or negatively to this utterance and thus signal to him if his understanding is accurate. Because this request involves a negative statement, S5's response of *no no no* in line 726 is the expected response which confirms for S13 that he has in fact understood her correctly.

It seems very likely that the extended confirmation sequence, as well as S13's use of a confirmation request, in Excerpt 69 stemmed from the two interactants' realization that full mutual understanding had not always been achieved in previous parts of the discourse. In response to this realization, they increased the amount of attention they paid to negotiating meaning and ensuring the achievement of mutual understanding by increasing their use of preemptive CSs. This pattern continued as S5 proceeded to talk more about the experiment she was doing as the basis of her bachelor thesis:

Excerpt 70:

T10: 726-734 (00:28:34-00:28:54)

- | | | | |
|-----|------|---|-------------------------------|
| 726 | S5: | no no no um i'm i'm doing a pet scan experiment? | |
| 727 | S13: | | mhm |
| 728 | S5: | so i'm taking microbipeds | |
| 729 | S13: | | yeah |
| 730 | S5: | | and moving it onto a cell (.) |
| 731 | | then checked ehm a tracer (.) a dye that can (.) ah spread (.) in the | |
| 732 | | network (.) and ah then stains all the cells that are um (.) that are | |
| 733 | | coupled | |
| 734 | S13: | ah okay | |

In her previous turns, S5 had primarily talked fluently for longer stretches without many signs that she was attuning to S13's understanding. As she begins her description of her experiment, however, she immediately employs a comprehension check. She ends her first utterance in line 726 on rising intonation, inviting S13 to indicate whether the technical term she has just used, *pet scan experiment*, is comprehensible for him or not (line 726). This is a fairly minimal move, but it elicits a positive backchannel, *mhm*, from S13 in line 727, showing S5 that S13 is satisfied with his level of understanding at this point and that she can thus continue with her explanation. S13, who has previously been fairly reticent with verbal backchannels, then employs another one in line 729, after S5's use of the term *microbipeds* in line 728. In contrast to his backchannel

in line 727, this backchannel is unsolicited. S13 thus also exhibits a new pattern of interaction aimed at supporting the conversation by more frequently signaling that he is able to understand what S5 is saying even without an explicit invitation to do so.

In the next part of her description, S5 mentions that she will be using *a tracer*, then, after a brief pause, immediately expands upon this rather technical term, rephrasing it as *a dye* and then explaining what this dye is used to do in her experiment (lines 731-733). Her move to paraphrase this item may have been triggered by the fact that S13 does not respond with a positive backchannel after S5's use of *a tracer*, indicating to her that he is no longer following her as completely as in the preceding part of her explanation. Lack of uptake where it is anticipated can be an indicator of non-understanding, albeit an implicit and indirect one (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012: 119). Thus, S5's paraphrase of *a tracer* can be considered a reparative move aimed at ensuring mutual understanding by increasing the explicitness of her talk. S5's use of repair after such a subtle indicator represents a significant change in her previous interactional patterns. In her longer turns at the beginning of the conversation, she did not attune to unfilled pauses as signs of trouble. Now she appears to be orienting to her listener much more closely. S13's positive response, *ah okay*, at the conclusion of her explanation seems to signal that he is satisfied that he again understands what she has been trying to communicate (line 734), thus indicating that this move has been successful. The exchange ended here, as I signaled to the group at this point that the round was over.

In summary, while S5 and S13's exchange initially did not feature the use of many CSs either on the side of the speaker or of the listener, the interactants' use of strategies increased significantly in the latter half of the conversation. This appears to have been motivated by a signal from S13 as the listener that he was no longer able to follow everything that his interlocutor was saying. He thus indicated that communicative success between the two speakers was to some extent threatened, despite S5's highly fluent explanation of her project. From this point on, both interactants more frequently employed CSs aimed at securing mutual understanding, preventing misunderstanding and generally providing each other with feedback that communication was progressing effectively. In this sense, their ability to use CSs to negotiate mutual understanding was what ultimately allowed them to conclude their round of the task successfully.

21.2.5 Discussion of CS use across groups

The previous four sections (21.2.1-21.2.4) have looked individually at the exchanges which were captured during the four rounds of the communicative task *Keep the conversation flowing*

in terms of the CSs used in each. This section will now compare the analyses of these four rounds and draw attention to some broader trends in the data collected. In general, the analysis in the previous sections shows that CSs were in fact used preemptively in all four exchanges. However, there were significant differences in the frequency with which students acting in the role of the listener versus students acting in the role of the speaker employed preemptive CSs. Moreover, the frequency with which individual listeners employed preemptive CSs varied widely from exchange to exchange. Beyond these more quantitative trends, there are also some significant qualitative differences in the ways in which the students realized one particular strategy compared with the realizations of this strategy presented in the language learning materials used in the course sessions leading up to this task. Finally, there are several instances in which students employed CSs not to preempt potential communicative problems or ensure mutual understanding, but to signal that a problem had arisen.

In comparing the data across the four exchanges from the four rounds of the communicative task *Keep the conversation flowing*, it proved useful to distinguish between preemptive strategies used by the listener and preemptive strategies used by the speaker. Although this was a distinction that was not made in the pre-task brainstorming round, it was nevertheless a categorization that had been used in previous course sessions in which the focus had been on developing both an awareness of and an ability to deploy specific preemptive CSs (cf. Chapter 20). Although it was not entirely possible to separate cleanly between strategies used by the speaker and strategies used by the listener in the data, as will be discussed further below, categorizing strategy use by the role of the interactant who employed the strategy led to the observation that students who were functioning in the role of the listener generally employed a greater number, as well as a wider range, of preemptive CSs than those who were functioning in the role of the speaker over the course of a recorded exchange.

Table 19 below shows that each of the students functioning in the role of listener during the four rounds of the communicative task *Keep the conversation flowing* used a range of preemptive CSs during the task, although the total number of strategies used varied widely from exchange to exchange. Altogether, the recording device captured 51 instances of listeners employing CSs preemptively across the four rounds of the task. All of the listeners involved in these exchanges employed the strategies ‘asking a question to get further information’, ‘backchannelling (verbally) to show listenership/comprehension’ and ‘confirmation request’ at least once each in a preemptive capacity during their recorded exchange. By contrast, only one listener, S11 from the group that was recorded in Round 3, used the preemptive strategy ‘utterance completion to show listenership/engagement’. This is perhaps unsurprising, considering that the former three strategies had all been addressed during classroom work on preemptive CSs for active and supportive listening in the previous two course sessions and the

| Communication strategy (CS)¹⁴⁴ | Round 1 | Round 2 | Round 3 | Round 4 | Σ |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|
| Asking a question to get further information | 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 12 |
| Backchannelling (verbally) to show listenership/ comprehension | 17 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 31 |
| Confirmation request | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| Utterance completion to show listenership/engagement | - | - | 3 | - | 3 |
| Σ | 23 | 4 | 15 | 9 | 51 |

Table 19: Preemptive CSs used by the listener (in-class task)

students had demonstrated their awareness of these strategies by naming them during the pre-task brainstorming round (cf. 21.1 above). The strategy ‘utterance completion to show listenership/engagement’, on the other hand, had not been addressed as a potential strategy for the listener and was not mentioned during the pre-task brainstorming round. In that respect, it

¹⁴⁴ The labels used for individual strategies in this table and the following tables in 21.2.5, 21.4.1, 21.4.2 and 21.4.3 are perhaps not as consistent or “neat and tidy” as one could wish. A number of these labels stem directly from student responses in the pre-task brainstorming round (cf. 21.1 above). They generally follow the pattern of naming a type of realization and then linking it with a function (e.g. ‘asking a question to get further information’, ‘backchannelling (verbally) to show listenership/ comprehension’ in Table 19 above). However, a number of labels were selected because they are widely used in the academic literature on CSs, including research into ELF contexts specifically (e.g. ‘confirmation request’ in Table 19 above). In keeping with an interactional perspective on language use, these labels often express a function without naming specific types of realization. In fact, research has shown that these CSs may be realized in a number of different ways in ELF talk, and many of these types of realization (e.g. repetition, paraphrase, utterance completion) can also be used to enact other types of CS as well (e.g. indicating and repairing non-understanding) (cf. Kaur 2009a, Cogo and Dewey 2012). In most cases in the pilot course, these CSs had been introduced under more descriptive labels at some point during the course, and where they were mentioned in the pre-task brainstorming phase of the lesson, they were usually identified in much the same ways as the other student-driven labels, by linking a type of realization (e.g. *asking questions*) to a communicative function (e.g. *checking to make sure that [the listener] understood what [the speaker] said*) (cf. 21.1 above). During the task itself, however, these CSs were often realized in a number of different ways, and the data exhibits some patterns that had not been introduced or addressed in the course itself. Thus, for example, confirmation requests were more often realized by paraphrase or repetition than by the use of direct questions, as I will discuss later in this section and again in 21.4.1 below.

is possible that some students were not aware of it. However, as has been discussed in 21.2.3 above, this strategy led to some overlapping talk between S11 as listener and S3 as speaker where it was employed in the conversation in Round 3. It seems possible that other students may have instinctively avoided strategies like this one because they were generally trying to avoid interrupting the person speaking. This was a tip for successful intercultural communication that the students had encountered in classroom work with tasks from Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* in course session 8 and which had also been named during the pre-task brainstorming round, indicating that it was fresh in the students' minds. Nevertheless, the analysis in 21.2.3 shows that the use of this strategy was in fact successful in the exchange between S11 and S3 in Round 3 of this task, in the sense that overlapping talk did not lead to communicative problems.

With 31 total uses, the strategy 'backchannelling (verbally) to show listenership/comprehension' accounts for more than half of the total uses of preemptive CSs in the data presented in Table 19 above. By contrast, the other generally used strategies, 'asking a question to get further information' and 'confirmation request', were used only twelve and five times respectively. However, whereas the use of these latter strategies was fairly evenly distributed across the four exchanges, the frequency of the use of verbal backchannels by individual listeners varied widely across the four rounds of the task. S12, the listener recorded during Round 1 of the task, employed verbal backchannels most often, with seventeen recorded uses. This is more than twice the number of verbal backchannels used by S11 in Round 3, and more than three times the number used by S13 in Round 4. At the other extreme, S6, the listener recorded in Round 2, employed only one verbal backchannel during the entire exchange with her partner.

Overall, there was also significant variation in the total number of instances of strategy use between individual listeners. On average, the recorded listeners employed 12.75 CSs during one round of the task. However, in practice, the number of strategies used was distributed unevenly. S12 and S11, the listeners from Rounds 1 and 3 respectively, fall towards the higher end of the spectrum with 23 and fifteen total instances of use respectively. By contrast, S13 from Round 4 used preemptive CSs nine times, while S6 from Round 2 employed them only four times.

There generally seems to be some correspondence between the frequency with which the listener recorded in each round used preemptive CSs and the overall communicative success of the exchange in that round. The pairs recorded in Rounds 1, 3 and 4 were able to communicate successfully, in the sense that these three pairs were able to achieve and maintain mutual understanding during their conversations more or less successfully. Rounds 1 and 3 are

characterized by the highest instances of CS use by the listener. At first glance, the data for Round 4 might seem to contradict this trend. However, it should be noted that the listener's use of CSs was increasing toward the end of this round, after S13 and his partner realized midway through their conversation that mutual understanding was shaky and needed to be negotiated more closely (cf. 21.2.4 above). As increasing their use of CSs apparently resolved this situation, it seems likely that this trend would have continued if the conversation had not been stopped after two minutes. By contrast, the conversation recorded in Round 2, in which S6 as the listener employed the lowest total number of CSs, was characterized by a misunderstanding between the two interactants which was never perceived, let alone repaired, during the task.

While the paucity of CSs employed by S6 was certainly not the only factor that led to the communicative difficulties in Round 2 (cf. 21.2.2), the data does suggest that engaging in active and supportive listening through the use of preemptive CSs contributed positively to overall communicative success within the task. It also possibly suggests that, beyond the fact that some of the students were arguably more linguistically competent in English than others, some may also have been strategically more competent, and differences in the strategic competence of the listener may have made a significant difference in the overall success of the task. Comparatively speaking, S12 and S11, the listeners from Rounds 1 and 3 respectively, were not as linguistically competent in English as many of their peers, yet they were able to use CSs effectively when they were functioning in the role of the listener and were thus able to support their speakers and negotiate mutual understanding with them during their rounds of the task. On the other hand, S6, the listener from Round 2, was arguably one of the most linguistically competent members of the class, yet she proved unable to employ CSs in a way that supported her partner in his role as speaker or helped him to comprehend where she had difficulties in following him.

In comparison with the students functioning in the role of the listener in the four exchanges recorded during *Keep the conversation flowing*, the students functioning in the role of the speaker generally used fewer preemptive CSs during these exchanges. In total, Table 20, presented below, shows that preemptive strategies were used only four times by the students functioning as the speaker during the four recorded rounds of the task. Only three of the four students recorded in the role of the speaker engaged in any use of preemptive speaker strategies during their round, and two of these students employed preemptive strategies only once, while the third employed them twice.

| Communication strategy (CS) | Round 1 | Round 2 | Round 3 | Round 4 | Σ |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---|
| Increasing explicitness | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | 3 |
| Comprehension check | - | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| Summarizing message | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| Using questions to ask for the other person's opinion | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| Using questions to signal turn handover | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| Σ | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 |

Table 20: *Preemptive CSs used by the speaker (in-class task)*

In one of the four cases in which a speaker was recorded employing a preemptive CS, the speaker used a comprehension check to make sure that her listener was able to understand what she was saying (cf. 21.2.4 above). In the other three cases of preemptive CS use by a speaker, the speakers increased explicitness in order to proactively support mutual understanding and prevent misunderstanding from arising. In the case from Round 1, S8 enacted this strategy by reinforcing a pro-form with a more specific noun phrase (cf. 21.2.1 above). In the other two cases, increased explicitness was achieved by paraphrasing an item that the speaker attuned to as potentially problematic even before the listener signaled any problems of understanding (cf. 21.2.2 and 21.2.4 above).

While paraphrasing strategies were the focus of one of the major chunks of work on CSs in this strand of the course (cf. Chapter 19), the use paraphrasing as a means of increasing explicitness was not addressed in classroom work on preemptive CSs during the pilot course. However, studies of the pragmatics of ELF communication have shown that ELF users frequently engage in the replacement of a more general word or phrase with a more precise one in order “to increase specificity, and therefore preemptively avoid confusion” (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 129; cf. also 110). The data from this task corroborates this research, in that three of the four speakers recorded used ‘increasing explicitness’ preemptively as a means of making sure that their listener would be able to follow what they were saying.

In addition to the strategies the students functioning in the role of the speaker used during *Keep the communication flowing*, it is also interesting to note which CSs were not employed preemptively during this task, despite the fact that they had been addressed during previous

course sessions and had also been mentioned in the pre-task brainstorming round (cf. 21.1 above). The data shows no instances in which students used questions either to ask for the other person's opinion or to invite the other person to take up the turn. Additionally, while brief summaries were used in two instances by listeners as a means of checking their comprehension of a speaker's previous talk (cf. Table 19 above), no student functioning in the speaker role ever employed summarizing as a strategy to ensure that a listener understood what he or she had been trying to say.

The parameters of the communicative task itself seem to offer the most probable explanation of why the strategies 'using questions to ask for the other person's opinion' and 'using questions to signal turn handover' were not utilized in the task. First of all, in *Keep the conversation flowing*, the topics that the speakers could choose from primarily invited the speaker to talk about his or her personal plans, projects or experiences. Thus, they did not involve giving opinions so much as describing or reporting. This may help to explain why the speakers recorded during the task did not use questions to ask for the other person's opinion. Additionally, the emphasis of the task was on using CSs to keep one speaker talking as much as possible about a topic for a set amount of time. The focus was thus on one interlocutor's input, with the other interlocutor playing a supportive role, rather than on a more balanced dialogue. This may help to explain why the speakers did not utilize questions to signal turn handover or even to ask their interlocutors about their opinions. In a more balanced dialogue, in which the participants were expected to contribute more equally to the discourse, the students might have needed to engage in more negotiation of turn-taking, thus making these preemptive strategies more useful.

Although the parameters of the task *Keep the communication flowing* offer a compelling argument for the lack of certain speaker strategies with which the students were familiar during the task, these parameters nevertheless do not explain why students functioning in the role of the speaker did not employ summarizing as a strategy to ensure that their listener understood their message. This is a strategy that could have been used effectively within the parameters of this task, especially in cases such as the exchanges recorded in Rounds 2 or 4, where a speaker spoke for a longer period of time on a fairly technical topic. Summarizing would have given the listener another chance to hear the main points of the speaker's turn, thus increasing the likelihood that the listener would be able to understand what the speaker had been saying. However, the usefulness of summarizing as a speaker strategy had been contested when it was introduced during the task sequence from Module 6.9 of the *Intercultural Resource Pack* in course session 8. While some students recognized that summarizing might be a useful tool if an interlocutor signaled a lack of understanding of the previous talk, the students generally seemed to agree that frequent use of this strategy where non-understanding had not been

signaled would be likely to irritate the listener, and might even be perceived as an insult to his or her intelligence (cf. 19.2). Thus, it seems likely that students may have avoided using this strategy preemptively due to these concerns.

Finally, the interlocutors in three of the four groups recorded during the four rounds of the task *Keep the conversation flowing* also engaged proactively in confirmation sequences at a number of points in the task. These confirmation sequences generally involved multiple turns, making it difficult to maintain the listener/speaker strategy distinction in these cases. Thus, they are listed in a separate table, Table 21.

| Communication strategy (CS) | Round 1 | Round 2 | Round 3 | Round 4 | Σ |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---|
| Confirmation sequence | 1 | - | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Σ | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 |

Table 21: *Preemptive CSs - confirmation sequences (in-class task)*

The confirmation sequences listed in this table were not elicited by the use of a confirmation request by the listener or a comprehension check by the speaker, nor were they employed in direct response to overt signals of communicative difficulty by one interlocutor or the other. This is why they have been classified as examples of preemptive strategy use. However, interlocutors appeared to engage in such sequences at points in the conversation which they attuned to as potentially problematic for their interlocutors. For example, in the case of Round 1, S12 and S8 engaged in a three-turn confirmation sequence after S12, who was functioning in the role of the listener, introduced a question that represented a significant shift in conversational topic (cf. Excerpt 56, lines 334-336, in 21.2.1). Although S8 was able to answer the question after a brief pause, the two appeared to engage in a subsequent confirmation sequence in order to make certain that this topic shift had in fact been successfully navigated before moving on with their conversation. Likewise, S5 and S13 from Group 4 engaged in a multi-turn confirmation sequence after a point in the discourse where S13 had signaled that his understanding of S5's second longer turn had been incomplete. When S5 answered S13's next question, she and S13 engaged in a multi-turn confirmation sequence that included both repetition on S5's part and an additional confirmation request by S13 (cf. Excerpt 69, lines 723-726, in 21.2.4). In this case, the two students seemed to find it necessary to doublecheck that mutual understanding had really been achieved again before S5 followed up with more details.

Overall, then, the data shows that students functioning in the role of the listener generally used preemptive strategies more frequently than those functioning in the role of the speaker during the communicative task *Keep the conversation flowing*, and also employed a wider range of strategies. In large part, this was probably due to the nature of the task itself, in which the focus was on engaging in active and supportive listening in order to keep one speaker talking as much as possible. Additionally, the data suggests that the listener's ability to employ preemptive CSs did in fact have a positive effect on the overall success of the exchange.

Beyond this more quantitative analysis of the students' use of preemptive CSs, however, there was also an interesting qualitative difference in the way that one particular strategy, 'comprehension check', was realized in the data set compared with the potential realizations of this strategy presented in the tasks and materials used during preceding instruction. Although this strategy was mentioned as a potentially useful strategy for intercultural communication in several of the materials, the task sequence from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2* was the only set of materials which specifically introduced some potential linguistic realizations. In this set of materials, all of the suggested realizations of this strategy are formulated as interrogatives. These interrogatives are all rather generic in nature, e.g. *Do you see what I mean?*, *Does that make sense?*, *Do you follow me?* (Tilbury et al. 2011: 76). In the pre-task brainstorming round, the students indicated awareness that a function-form relationship had been set up between comprehension checks and interrogatives, in that one student responded that one possible function of questions could be to *make sure you communicated right*, i.e. to check that the other person has understood what you have been saying (cf. 21.1).

In the recordings collected during the in-class version of *Keep the conversation flowing*, however, the only student to employ a comprehension check used a very different kind of realization than those presented in *English Unlimited B2*. Rather than asking a question, this speaker produced a word she was unsure whether her interlocutor would understand with rising intonation, a much more minimal move than formulating a full interrogative sentence. Yet this was enough to elicit confirmation from her listener in the form of a minimal response, showing her that he felt he understood and she could continue with her explanation (cf. Excerpt 70 in 21.2.4).

During the pre-task brainstorming round, we had connected the use of questions *to make sure you communicated right* not only to the speaker strategy 'comprehension check', but also to the functionally related listener strategy 'confirmation request' (cf. 21.1). Confirmation requests were used a total of five times by four different listeners across the four exchanges recorded during *Keep the conversation flowing*, making them more frequent in the data set than

comprehension checks. However, despite the function-form relationship that had been established between questions and confirmation requests during the pre-task brainstorming round, not one of the students who employed this CS formulated their realization as an interrogative. In two cases, students used repetition of a keyword or phrase that their interlocutor had just mentioned to signal a confirmation request. Thus, similar to the realization of the only comprehension check in the data set discussed above, their realizations of this CS were more minimal than formulating an interrogative. Nevertheless, the analysis of these points of their exchanges show that their use of repetition successfully elicited confirmation from their interlocutors in both cases. In the other three cases in which a listener engaged in a confirmation request, the listener in question realized the confirmation request by paraphrasing, i.e. giving a ‘candidate reading’ (Heritage and Watson 1979, cf. also Kaur 2010: 200) or ‘interpretive summary’ (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 28) of what the speaker had just been saying. While these confirmation requests were more substantial than repeating a word or short phrase, they generally took the form of declarative sentences rather than interrogatives, making them a less direct way to enact this CS. Analysis shows that they were also all successful in eliciting confirmation from the speaker.

All in all, then, where students did employ comprehension checks or confirmation requests during *Keep the conversation flowing*, they generally seemed to favor realizations of these CSs that drew on the specific linguistic context of the point they wished to check, rather than relying on more generically formulated interrogatives such as those presented for realizing comprehension checks in the tasks from *English Unlimited B2*. One reason for this might have been that using CSs that drew attention specifically to the point that the student wanted to check left less room for misunderstanding, and thus was perceived as being more efficient than using a more generic realization. Additionally, the use of more minimal types of realization may have been perceived as less disruptive to the conversational flow.

Finally, the data shows some of the speakers and listeners involved in the four exchanges captured during *Keep the conversation flowing* employing CSs not only preemptively to avoid communicative problems and ensure mutual understanding, but also to signal that a communicative problem had in fact arisen. In the conversation recorded between S3 and S11 during Round 3 of the task, there were four instances in the data in which an interlocutor signaled that he or she was searching for a word and was unable to find it. Three of these involved S3 in his search for the word *examinations* (cf. Excerpt 63 in 21.2.3). The first two were unsuccessful, in that S11 signaled her non-understanding of S3’s meaning and thus her inability to help him find the word. After the third, the observing student, S15, entered the conversation and supplied the word. In the final case, it was S11, who had briefly taken over the turn as speaker, who struggled to find the word *beginning* (cf. Excerpt 65 in 21.2.3).

Although her signal that she was searching for a word was less overt than S3's, S3 was nevertheless able to supply the word she was looking for so that the conversation could continue. In both of these cases, the utterance completion providing the sought-after word sparked a confirmation sequence between the interlocutors (cf. Excerpt 63, lines 542-546; Excerpt 65, line 592), but since this was in direct response to an overt trouble spot in the conversation, these confirmation sequences would seem to be reparative rather than preemptive and are therefore not included in Table 21 above.

In Group 4, there was also one instance in which the listener, S13, signaled his incomplete understanding of S5's preceding talk, in which she had been explaining her bachelor project (cf. Excerpt 68 in 21.2.4). No steps were subsequently undertaken to try to identify and resolve more specific points of non-understanding in S5's preceding turn, which may have been largely due to the fact that the task did not hold the listener responsible for retaining the information he or she heard, but only for helping the speaker to continue talking. Thus, the two students may not have found it worthwhile to spend time clarifying which particular points S13 had had difficulty in understanding. However, this point in the conversation did have an interesting effect on the subsequent discourse with regard to the students' use of preemptive CSs. After it became apparent to both students that S13 was struggling to understand some of the more technical aspects of S5's explanation, despite her ability to talk fluently about her project without additional support, both interlocutors increased their use of preemptive strategies in their ensuing turns. The recognition that understanding had not always been complete in the past thus apparently prompted both students to use CSs proactively to ensure that mutual understanding was achieved and maintained as the conversation continued so that further problems with understanding could be avoided.

21.3 Evidence of awareness of CS use post-task: The post-task feedback round

After the students had completed the communicative phase of the task *Keep the conversation flowing* in their small groups, I called the class back together to collect some feedback about their experiences during the task. In particular, I was interested in discussing their experiences stepping into the roles of listener and speaker during the task and in asking them which CSs from the pre-task brainstorming round had actually been used in their small groups during the task itself.

When I asked which role they had found more difficult, that of the speaker or that of the listener, the class unanimously indicated that they had found the speaker role more challenging.

Two students offered more specific reasons for this opinion. S3 argued that being the listener had been comparatively easy because *when someone <@> talks about a topic </@> you are a little bit interested in then you always can (.) ask questions* (T10: 802-803). S1 further expanded upon the conversational demands placed on the speaker. He mentioned three specific challenges, including the *need to find the r- eh exact words* (T10: 810-811), the need to *make sure that the person understands what you're talking about* (T10: 814-815) and the need to monitor whether the listener *is interested in what you're talking about* (T10: 818-819). Given these conversational demands, S1 seemed to feel that the role of the speaker required more effort than that of the listener (cf. T10: 822).

When I asked the class if they found it easier to fulfill the role of the speaker or the listener in conversation in their own L1, most of the class still indicated that they generally felt that being the listener was less challenging. Only one student, S13, admitted to being more comfortable in the role of the speaker, at least in his L1 (T10: 841). He indicated that he found it easier to answer questions and talk about himself than to come up with questions to keep someone else talking (cf. T10: 847-849). Thus, with one exception, the majority of students in the learning group did not appear to orient to the role of the speaker as the more difficult role merely because the exchange was taking place in their L2/Ln.

Overall, the class agreed that interacting with a listener who was actively employing listener strategies had made it easier to function in the role of speaker during the communicative task *Keep the conversation flowing* (cf. T10: 860). Thus, as I phrased it in my response to the class, the task was able to help the students *discover...how important it can be in communication in international communication (.) to try to be an active listener and a good listener [...] so really helping [the speaker] to tell you what they have to tell* (T10: 861-865). In this sense, the task appeared to have raised the students' awareness of the active role that the listener can play in conversation, as well as the positive effect that active and supportive listening can have on communication. As was discussed at the beginning of Chapter 20, helping the students to appreciate that the listener and the speaker are both responsible for communicative success and that listening is an active rather than a passive process in communication was one of the overarching aims of classroom work with preemptive CSs. Thus, this task appears to have been able to contribute positively toward that aim.

After discussing their experiences with the roles of speaker and listener during the task, I then asked the students which CSs they had noticed themselves and their group members using. The first student to volunteer an answer, S2, mentioned *often asking questions about (.) the next part* (T10: 868-870). While her answer was phrased a bit vaguely, she seemed to be referring to the strategy 'asking a question to get further information', a strategy that was in

fact used multiple times by each of the students functioning in the role of the listener in the four exchanges recorded during the task. However, I did not have the chance to ask her to follow up on this comment because she immediately went on to say that she had felt somewhat uncomfortable using frequent backchannels while she was acting in the role of the listener. As she put it, *i found just nodding (.) something stupid because [i] sit here and {nodding} yeah yes yes mhm mhm* (T10: 872-874). However, she felt that her sense of discomfort might have arisen because the conversations were relatively short. In a longer conversation, she thought that *it would be more helpful to nod and show that you're still listening* (T10: 881-884).

Interestingly, although S2 mentioned her discomfort specifically with the nonverbal strategy of nodding to show active listenership, she also connected this nonverbal act with the verbal expressions *yeah*, *yes* and *mhm* in her explanation. She thus touched on both verbal and nonverbal backchannels, though she took a rather critical stance toward their usefulness in the communicative task. Because the course was audio- rather than video-recorded, it is impossible to establish how much the students actually made use of nonverbal strategies during the task, although one observer did refer to the listener's frequent use of nonverbal backchannels during the feedback phase of Round 3 (cf. 21.2.3). By contrast, the recordings show that all four listeners recorded during the four rounds of the task did make use of verbal backchannels, though the extent to which they did so varied widely from listener to listener. S2's comment suggests that this variation may have been due at least in part to the fact that some students felt more comfortable than others using frequent backchannels to signal listenership during an exchange of this length.

The next student, S1, focused more narrowly on issues of topic management. His answer appeared to hinge on one way in which the listener could generate new questions to get further information and thus keep the speaker talking: *when you feel that a topic is eh: (.) ehm empty or something [...] you can come back to another point that's been said before and that's your new topic* (T10: 887-891). Thus, S1 appeared to be saying that in his group, details from the previous discourse sometimes served to provide a starting point for a new topic when conversation on the current topic began to lag. In that sense, S1 was suggesting a practical way to maintain relevance and coherency in a conversation while employing strategies such as 'asking a question to get further information' to help the speaker continue talking.

Finally, the last student to offer a comment, S8, mentioned that she had observed *a lot of body language* (T10: 904), including gestures and facial expressions (cf. T10: 906-908). This again suggests that nonverbal strategies did play a significant role during this task, although this cannot be established on the basis of the audio recordings.

Overall, the students demonstrated only partial awareness of the strategies that the analysis shows were actually used in the recorded exchanges during the four rounds of the task. On the one hand, they generally seemed to be aware of the use of the listener strategies ‘asking a question to get further information’ and ‘backchannelling (verbally) to show listenership/comprehension’. They also did not mention any strategies that were in fact unattested in the data. However, they failed to mention some strategies such as ‘confirmation request’, ‘comprehension check’ or ‘increasing explicitness’ although the data shows that these strategies were used across most groups during the task. One explanation for this may be in the frequency of strategy use. While ‘asking a question to get further information’ and ‘backchannelling (verbally) to show listenership/comprehension’ were generally employed multiple times in each of the recorded conversations, ‘confirmation request’, ‘comprehension check’ and ‘increasing explicitness’ were used less frequently. Thus, they may have been less obvious to the students. Moreover, although ‘comprehension check’ had been the focus of classroom attention in previous course sessions, and both it and ‘confirmation request’ had also been mentioned in the pre-task brainstorming round, ‘increasing explicitness’ was not a strategy that had been introduced during the course or raised during the pre-task brainstorming round, making it less surprising that the students failed to notice its use during the task itself. Since this strategy is attested in successful ELF interactions and also proved useful as a strategy in the students’ own exchanges, this is a strategy that would have merited classroom attention, both in order to raise the students’ awareness and to help them develop competence in realizing this strategy.

It is interesting that the students who commented on actual strategy use during the task named primarily listener strategies in the post-task feedback round, although none of them mentioned the fact that the strategies they were naming were specifically used by the listener. This further supports the claim that the parameters of the task helped to raise the students’ awareness of the role of the listener as an active participant in the communicative process, thus indicating that the task was able to contribute to one of the specific aims for instruction on preemptive CSs in this part of the course.

21.4 Additional data from final exam task 2: Keep the conversation flowing

In addition to the data from the four in-class rounds of *Keep the conversation flowing* from course session 10, data is also available from this same task when it was employed as one of the three tasks that constituted the final exam (cf. 3.3). This section will present data from the

final exam version of *Keep the conversation flowing* and compare and contrast it with the data from the in-class version of the task discussed in the previous sections above.

Each of the final exams was recorded in its entirety, meaning that recordings and transcriptions of this task are available for analysis for each of the thirteen students who took the final exam¹⁴⁵ in both the role of speaker and the role of listener. Because the exam took place in a paired oral format, students had the same communicative partner for both rounds of the task. For the purposes of analysis, each of these pairs has been assigned a number in the order in which they took the exam. However, these numbers were assigned after the exam itself and strictly for analytical purposes. The pairs were as follows:

Pair 1: S6, S8
 Pair 2: S4, S7
 Pair 3: S11, S17
 Pair 4: S1, S5
 Pair 5: S2, S3
 Pair 6: S13, S16

This accounts for twelve of the thirteen students who took the exam. The thirteenth student, S12, was leaving for a trip on the day of the exam and needed to complete his exam early. I therefore chose not to assign him a partner from the learning group, but rather to act as his partner for the interactive tasks on the exam myself. Because of this difference to the other exams, the data from his exam is not included in the analysis.

Since each pair participated in two rounds of the task, in which their roles as speaker and listener were reversed, each round has been assigned the designation *a* or *b*, again in the order in which the rounds took place during the exam. Thus, the students' roles in each round of their exam were as follows:

| Pair and round | Speaker | Listener |
|----------------|---------|----------|
| 1a | S6 | S8 |
| 1b | S8 | S6 |
| 2a | S7 | S4 |
| 2b | S4 | S7 |
| 3a | S17 | S11 |
| 3b | S11 | S17 |
| 4a | S1 | S5 |
| 4b | S5 | S1 |
| 5a | S2 | S3 |

¹⁴⁵ As has been discussed in 3.3, only those students who needed or wanted a grade for the course participated in the final exam.

| | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 5b | S3 | S2 |
| 6a | S16 | S13 |
| 6b | S13 | S16 |

Table 22: *Final exam pairings*

In total, then, data is available from twelve rounds of the task recorded during the final exam, in comparison to the four rounds captured during the in-class version of the task. This means that considerably more data is available for analysis in this section than was available for the analysis of the in-class version.

While few modifications were made to the parameters of the task *Keep the conversation flowing* as compared to the in-class version of the task (cf. 3.3), the students were provided with a new set of topics to choose from during their turn as speaker (cf. Appendix C), all of which were related to course content rather than their personal plans or their studies. The motivations for this decision have been detailed in 3.3. It should be noted at this point that these course content-related topics were probably generally more difficult for the students to talk about than topics related to their personal plans or even their studies, and this may have potentially affected CS use during the task. Additionally, the exam situation may have had an impact on what happened in these conversations as well. While it is true that the students were aware that they were being recorded during the in-class task, since the recording device was moved physically closer to a particular group before each round of the task, the students were nevertheless only being directly observed and provided with informal feedback on their performance by their peers. The exam situation represented a higher-stakes context in which I as the examiner was both listening in close physical proximity to the pair taking the exam and using a recording device to record what was said, and the students were aware that I was assessing their performance in order to give them a grade that would contribute to their overall grade point average for their course of study. I will comment on how the choice of topic and the exam situation may have influenced the students' use of CSs at relevant points in the analysis below.

Having related how *Keep the conversational flowing* was implemented on the final exam and how the parameters compared to the in-class version of the task used during course session 10, the next sections of this chapter will provide analysis of the students' use of CSs during this task on the final exam. Due to the amount of data available from the final exam task, discussion in the first four subsections of 21.4 (21.4.1-21.4.4) will focus on comparing and contrasting major trends in this data set as compared to the in-class data set, similar to the discussion of overall trends in 21.2.5 above. These trends will be illustrated with qualitative

analysis of relevant examples from the final exam data set. 21.4.5 will then discuss the assessment of student performance on this exam task and what it might indicate about differences in the level of strategic competence within the pilot course learning group. Finally, 21.4.6 will present an analysis of some of the content of students' discourse during the final exam version of *Keep the conversation flowing* to demonstrate that instruction in this strand of the pilot course seems to have contributed positively toward increased awareness of the importance of CSs for successful communication in ELF settings.

21.4.1 Comparing the use of preemptive listener CSs

The strategies used preemptively by the listeners during the 12 rounds of *Keep the communication flowing* recorded during the final exam are recorded in Table 23 below.

| Communication strategy (CS) | Round / Listener | | | | | | | | | | | | Σ |
|---|------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| | 1a S8 | 1b S6 | 2a S4 | 2b S7 | 3a S11 | 3b S17 | 4a S5 | 4b S1 | 5a S3 | 5b S2 | 6a S13 | 6b S16 | |
| Asking a question to get further information | 3 | 3 | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 2 | 12 |
| <i>Providing a supportive impulse to keep the speaker talking</i> | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | 2 | 2 | 1 | 11 |
| Backchannelling (verbally) to show listenership/ comprehension | 17 | 27 | 8 | 3 | 10 | 13 | 16 | 21 | 7 | 1 | 23 | 2 | 148 |
| <i>Repetition to show listenership/ comprehension</i> | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 |
| Confirmation request | 2 | 1 | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | - | - | 4 | 14 |
| <i>Clarification request</i> | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 3 |
| Utterance completion to show listenership/ engagement | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| Σ | 22 | 34 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 14 | 19 | 23 | 10 | 4 | 25 | 10 | 191 |

Table 23: Preemptive CSs used by the listener (final exam)

Table 23 shows that, similarly to the data from the in-class version of this task, the total number of CSs used preemptively by the individual listeners varied significantly across the 12 rounds recorded during the final exam. As in the in-class version of the task, this can primarily be

accounted for by the wide variation in the number of verbal backchannels employed by the individual listeners. Just as in the data collected from the in-class version of the task, ‘backchannelling (verbally) to show listenership/comprehension’ was the most frequently employed strategy overall, accounting for 148 out of 191 total instances of strategy use. On average, listeners produced 12.33 verbal backchannels¹⁴⁶ per round. However, the actual number of verbal backchannels used in specific rounds ranged from 34 (S6 in Round 1b) to just one (S2 in Round 5b). By contrast, individual listeners used the other listener strategies attested during the task between zero and four times each during the final exam. Overall, listeners averaged 15.90 total CSs used during the final exam version of the task, as compared to the average of 12.75 total CSs used during the in-class rounds of the task.

Table 23 also shows that all four of the strategies used by listeners in the in-class rounds of *Keep the conversation flowing* – ‘asking a question to get further information’, ‘backchannelling (verbally) to show listenership/comprehension’, ‘confirmation request’ and ‘utterance completion to show listenership/engagement’ – were also employed by at least some listeners during the final exam. However, in contrast to the in-class version of the task, only verbal backchannels were used by every listener across the 12 rounds of the task recorded during the final exam. ‘Asking a question to get further information’ and ‘confirmation request’, which had been used by all the listeners recorded during the in-class version of the task, were not used by every listener during the final exam. And whereas ‘confirmation request’ was used by a majority of the listeners, ‘asking a question to get further information’ was only used by about half. As in the in-class version of the task, ‘utterance completion to show listenership/engagement’ was used very infrequently during the final exam task. However, the fact that it was used by two different listeners in two separate rounds, S7 in Round 2b and S5 in Round 4a, shows that its use as a preemptive CS was not merely idiosyncratic in the in-class version of the task.

Beyond this more quantitative analysis of CS use, an interesting pattern also emerged in the final exam data regarding the way in which listeners realized the strategy ‘confirmation request’. In the in-class data, this strategy was employed five times, twice by repetition and three times by paraphrase, i.e. providing a ‘candidate reading’ or ‘interpretive summary’ of the previous turn (cf. 21.2.5 above). Thus, these two types of realization were used almost evenly. By contrast, in the data from the final exam, paraphrasing was used in thirteen of the fourteen

¹⁴⁶ As in the in-class version of the task, the fact that the final exam version was audio- rather than video-recorded means that it was not possible to ascertain with certainty where listeners employed non-verbal strategies. However, comments recorded on some of the assessment rubrics (cf. 21.4.6 below) indicate that at least some listeners did employ non-verbal feedback such as nodding during this task.

cases in which a confirmation request was employed by a listener, making it by far the more preferred means of realizing this CS in the data set. Confirmation requests by paraphrase were often employed after the speaker had taken a lengthier turn, as is exemplified in the following excerpt from round 6b, in which S13 was functioning as speaker and S16 as listener:

Excerpt 71:

TFE S13+S16: 395-415 (00:11:30-00:12:26)

- 395 S13: <18> mm:: </18> (.) i don't think {fink} that's really
 396 important (.) to try to speak like an (.) eh (.) to- to s- speak
 397 like a native english people (.) because (.) mm it's good when
 398 somebody hears that you are not not from england (.) kay
 399 somebody hears okay you're from china (.) then it's also a
 400 culture in it (.) and they know the culture and they know how
 401 to: respect or talk to you (.) if this is maybe a a: (.) conference
 402 you you don't see the other people (.) okay you know the c-
 403 the other culture (.) and you have some stereotypes
 404 {sti:ri:autai:ps} (.) but (.) then (.) mm ehmm then eh (.)
 405 doesn't doesn't be it does not be that bad (.) you know?
 406 S16: yeah
 407 S13: it's good to see from where you're from (.) mm
 408 S16: **s- so you think**
 409 S13: so
 410 S16: **because (.) eh: (.) i (.) it's when**
 411 **you see that i'm talking in a: different ah: way that you**
 412 **recognize that i come from a different place and**
 413 S13: yeah
 414 S16: **it's better for understanding**
 415 S13: yeah i- i think that this would be true

This excerpt comes from the very beginning of round 6b in which S13, as the speaker, has opted to talk about whether or not he feels it is important to speak English like a native speaker in lingua franca situations. S13 begins the round by taking a rather long turn (lines 395-405, 407), interrupted by a brief check that S16 is following him (lines 405-406). At the end of this turn, S16 does not proceed straight to asking a question to get further information, but instead engages in a confirmation request in which he paraphrases what he understands the main gist of S13's turn to be (lines 408, 410-412, 414). Thus, his paraphrase could also be classified as a summary of S13's message. S13 confirms this summary through the use of the agreement token *yeah* in line 413 and the somewhat longer utterance *yeah i- i think that this would be true* at the conclusion of S16's paraphrase (line 415). S16's use of a confirmation request leads to confirmation for both himself and S13 that mutual understanding was thus far being achieved in the conversation.

Confirmation requests by paraphrase were also employed in some cases after a speaker changed topic in the middle of a turn. This is exemplified in the following excerpt from Round 5a, in which S2 is functioning as the speaker and S3 as the listener:

Excerpt 72:

TFE S2+S3: 298-315 (00:11:20-00:12:06)

- 298 S2: yeah maybe this (.) even if the person doesn't understand it
299 would be helpful to (.) e:hm repeat it in other words so that (.)
300 if a word is not clear or if he doesn't know it ehm he (.)
301 maybe understand with the new words (.) you use (.) and
302 maybe communication problems you ca:n prevent them if
303 you: (.) talk slow (.) a little bit slow not this ye::s @ and loud
304 and (.) maybe sometimes with more easier words than (.) you
305 (.) usually (.) use
306 S3: okay
307 S2: if you know that the other person is maybe not at the same
308 level of speaking ability
309 S3: **so you mean when the other person's level is lower than**
310 S2: yeah
311 S3: **yours (.) you: use easy words**
312 S2: yeah it'd be helpful then
313 S3: okay
314 S2: the person understands
315 you easier (.) maybe @@

In this excerpt, S2 has been talking about why it might be useful to paraphrase in lingua franca communication through English (lines 298-301). Beginning in line 302, she shifts to talking more generally about strategies for preventing communicative problems. After listing a number of strategies in lines 302-305, she then comments that these strategies might be particularly useful *if you know that the other person is maybe not at the same level of speaking ability* (lines 307-308). In response to this rather abrupt topic shift, S3 engages in a confirmation request by paraphrase to make sure that he has understood S2's message correctly. He recasts S2's talk about this new topic as *when the other person's level is lower than yours (.) you: use easy words* (lines 309, 311). S2 confirms this interpretation at two points through the use of the agreement token *yeah* (lines 310, 312), thus signaling to S3 that he has understood where the conversation is heading.

The two excerpts above both exemplify another trend in the way confirmation requests by paraphrase were realized in the final exam data: in all but two cases, this type of confirmation request was preceded by the discourse marker *so*. As it happens, *so* was also used by S6 to introduce one of the three confirmation requests by paraphrase in the in-class version of the task (cf. Excerpt 62 in 21.2.2 above). As a discourse marker, *so* has received relatively little research attention, compared with other markers such as *well* and *you know* (cf. Müller 2005: 61¹⁴⁷). However, a number of studies have explored its use in ENL talk (Schiffrin 1987; Blakemore 1988; Fraser 1988, 1990, 1996; Redeker 1990), as well as in EFL talk (Müller 2005)

¹⁴⁷ Müller (2005) noted that several of the more in-depth studies of discourse markers (e.g. Schourup 1985, Östman 1981, Aijmer 2002) do not even mention *so* (Müller 2005: 61).

and ELF talk (House 2013), and several of the functions of *so* identified in these studies may help to shed light on what is ‘going on’ in the use of *so* to preface listener confirmation requests in the data from the pilot course. First of all, *so* as a discourse marker has been discussed most extensively in its function of “showing a logical or causal connection” (Swan 2016: 301.2) between an utterance and a previous utterance, or an utterance and the larger communicative context (cf. Schiffrin 1987: 201-202; Blakemore 1988: 185, 188; Fraser 1990: 394¹⁴⁸; Müller 2005: 71-74). Two studies have also demonstrated that it may be used to introduce summaries, paraphrases and/or examples within a speaker’s turn (Redeker 1990: 372, Müller 2005: 76). In both of these functions, *so* can be viewed as serving an overarching textual function, in which it “structures the content of the interaction” (Müller 2005: 89). In addition to this function, House (2013) drew attention to the predominantly speaker-serving function of *so* in her study of ELF talk. She found that participants in her data often used *so* as a time-gaining strategy for “helping the speaker bridge formulation problems” (House 2013: 62). Finally, Schiffrin (1987) and Müller (2005) in particular also highlighted the interactional functions of *so* as a discourse marker in their data, in which *so* served the overarching purpose of “organizing the participation of speakers” in various ways (Müller 2005: 89). In both studies, *so* was used as a speech act marker to mark requests (Schiffrin 1987: 208-209, Müller 2005: 81-84), including “requests for confirmation” (Schiffrin 1987: 219). Thus, it was used to mark a type of speech act which set up an expectation of a response from the hearer (cf. Müller 2005: 82). Additionally, both Schiffrin and Müller demonstrated how “*so* function[ed] in the organization of transitions in participation” in their data (Schiffrin 1987: 217). On the one hand, *so* often served to preface a speaker’s first utterance after self-selection, i.e. where a speaker had taken over the turn without explicit invitation to do so from the previous speaker (Müller 2005: 83, Schiffrin 1987: 219). On the other, *so* was also used “as a turn-transition device which mark[ed] a speaker’s readiness to relinquish the turn” to another participant in the conversation (Schiffrin 1987: 218; cf. also Müller 2005: 86).

Müller, drawing upon both her analysis of her own data and the examples discussed in Schiffrin (1987), argued that different functions of *so* were not necessarily mutually exclusive,

¹⁴⁸ Each of the studies listed here uses slightly different terminology to describe the type of connection established by using *so*. According to Schiffrin 1987, *so* “conveys a meaning of ‘result’” (in contrast to *because*, which “conveys a meaning of ‘cause’”) (Schiffrin 1987: 201-202). Fraser (1990) describes *so* as indicating “that the speaker takes the message following to have a consequential relationship to the prior material” (Fraser 1990: 394). Finally, Blakemore (1988), who studied discourse markers including *so* from a relevance-theoretical rather than a grammatical-pragmatic perspective, described *so* as conveying the relevance of an utterance to the previous discourse (Blakemore 1988: 185). However, despite the differences in terminology and approach, the basic substance of all three descriptions appears to be summed up accurately and concisely in Swan (2016: 301.2).

but instead could co-occur. Thus, in discussing *so* in its function as a turn-organizing marker in her data, Müller maintained that using *so* to preface a turn could simultaneously signal both self-selection and the intention to relinquish the floor back to the other speaker (Müller 2005: 86). Likewise, in discussing *so* as a speech act marker for requests, she also contended, with direct reference to Schiffrin (1987), that “[a]s Schiffrin pointed out (Schiffrin 1987: 208), *so* not only marks the speech act, but also indicates that there is a resultative relationship between the request or question and some previous piece of discourse (i.e. the request/question is ‘motivated’)” (Müller 2005: 82). Thus, it would appear that not only can *so* be used to mark multiple interactional functions at the same time, but it can also mark a combination of both textual and interactional functions.

In the data from the pilot course, it would appear that *so* often fulfilled multiple functions simultaneously where it was used to introduce listener confirmation requests during the task *Keep the conversation flowing*. Within the context of this task, the interactants were assigned the roles of listener and speaker. The task explicitly instructed the speaker to speak as much as possible and the listener to support the speaker and keep him or her talking (cf. Dignen 2011: 23); thus, the listener was supposed to cede the floor to the speaker as much as possible during the main part of the task. Within this context, it seems quite possible that *so* used to precede a confirmation request was used to mark self-selection on the part of the listener at what he or she gauged to be a transition relevance place where a confirmation request could be appropriately inserted. However, especially in cases where a speaker appeared to be running out of things to say, as in Excerpt 71 above, this signal of self-selection might also have indicated to the speaker that he or she could relax for a moment as the listener took the burden of formulating a more substantial turn upon him- or herself. Additionally, it may have served as a time-gaining strategy for the listener, who, after all, needed to digest a long turn before producing a summarizing paraphrase of the speaker’s previous talk. This seems particularly likely in cases like Excerpt 71, where the listener’s confirmation request includes signs of processing effort, such as S16’s false start in producing *so* at the beginning of his turn (line 408), as well as filled and unfilled pauses and sound lengthening in the paraphrase itself (lines 410-411). It seems less likely in cases such as Excerpt 72, where the confirmation check was produced fairly fluently.

At the same time, the use of *so* possibly also signaled that the listener intended to relinquish the turn again imminently to the assigned speaker. In some ways, this function could be viewed as overlapping with the function of *so* as a speech act marker for requests. Confirmation requests, however indirect, represent requests for feedback regarding how well the listener has understood the speaker’s previous talk. As such, they set up the expectation that the original speaker will confirm or disconfirm understanding in the next turn (cf. Kaur 2010: 185-186).

Consequently, as a preface to a confirmation request, *so* may have served to mark the confirmation request as a request even as it alerted the speaker that the listener intended to turn the floor back over to him or her. By marking the type of speech act, it thus provided the speaker with more input regarding what kind of next turn was expected.

Beyond these overlapping interactional and, at least in some cases, time-gaining functions, the use of *so* to introduce confirmation requests also appears to contribute to the textual organization of the discourse. In the case of confirmation requests by paraphrase, these function as requests for confirmation of the listener's understanding as demonstrated in his or her paraphrase (i.e. 'candidate reading' or 'interpretive summary') of the previous talk. Thus, in the cases in the data in which it was used to introduce a confirmation request by paraphrase, *so* would appear not only to mark the function of the confirmation request as a request requiring a response, but also to indicate the connection between the listener's paraphrase and the speaker's preceding talk. In other words, *so* appears to serve both textual and interactional functions simultaneously. Finally, the use of *so* to introduce confirmation requests by paraphrase may also have been motivated by the fact that the confirmation request was accomplished *by paraphrase* – that is, *so* was used to preface a summary of what the listener understood the main gist of the speaker's previous talk to be.

All in all, then, the use of *so* to introduce a confirmation request by paraphrase in this data set appears to bundle a number of important discourse functions – textual, time-gaining and interactional – into a very compact form. Its multi-functionality combined with its formal brevity make it highly efficient as a discourse marker. It can thus be interpreted as demonstrating considerable (if tacit) pragmatic competence on the part of the listeners who used it to preface confirmation requests.

In some of the confirmation requests identified in the final exam data, *so* was used on its own (as in Excerpt 62 in 21.2.2), but in others, it was combined with *you think* or *you mean* (as in Excerpts 71 and 72 above). In her study of preemptive strategies for the co-construction of meaning in ELF talk, Kaur (2009a) identified the pattern '*you mean* + formulation' (i.e. paraphrase or 'candidate reading', cf. Kaur 2010: 200) as a prevalent realization of the listener strategy 'confirmation request' in her data (cf. Kaur 2009a: 187-192). In discussing this phenomenon, she noted that "[t]he use of the marker '*you mean*' emphasizes that the formulation constitutes an explicit attempt on the recipient's part to check and confirm that the sense that he or she has made of the speaker's prior talk is in fact the one intended by the speaker" (Kaur 2009a: 187). In the data from the pilot course, this appears to be accomplished by the discourse marker *you think* in addition to *you mean*. Thus, the use of *you think/mean* in conjunction with the discourse marker *so* to preface a confirmation request had the effect of

making the listener's intent of checking his or her understanding of the speaker's previous turn more explicit. In cases such as Excerpt 71 above, in which the listener was obviously struggling with the production of the confirmation check, the use of *you think/mean* in addition to *so* may also have helped to buy the listener more time to formulate his or her paraphrase, meaning that it also may have served as a time-gaining strategy.

Whether introduced by *so* alone or in combination with *you think/mean*, each enactment of a confirmation request involving *so* did in fact prompt an appropriate response from the speaker. This indicates that '*so (you think/mean) + paraphrase*' was an effective realization of the listener strategy 'confirmation request' in the context of this task. In fact, throughout the data from the final exam, all of the confirmation requests by paraphrase, whether introduced by '*so (you think/mean)*' or not, elicited an appropriate response from the speaker. In most cases, the speaker affirmed that the listener's paraphrase was correct, as in both of the excerpts above. Occasionally, the speaker indicated that the listener had misunderstood what he or she had said and then proceeded to explain his or her point again in other words. Yet regardless of whether the speaker ultimately confirmed or disconfirmed the listener's interpretation of the preceding message, the strategy can ultimately be considered successful in every case because the speakers always recognized that the listeners were enacting confirmation requests and responded appropriately.

Although paraphrasing was overwhelmingly used to realize confirmation requests by listeners during the final exam, there is also one instance in the data set in which another realization was used. In this instance, the listener used repetition (TFE S6+S8: 453), a realization that was also attested in the data from the in-class round of the task (cf. 21.2.5 above).

In addition to the four CSs attested in both the in-class and the final exam data from *Keep the conversation flowing*, the listeners recorded during the final exam also employed several preemptive CSs which were not attested in the four rounds of the task recorded during course session 10. These strategies are listed in italics in Table 23 above to indicate that they are novel in this version of the task. The most frequently employed of these novel strategies was 'providing a supportive impulse to keep the speaker talking'. The use of this strategy is exemplified in the following excerpt from Round 2a, in which S4 was functioning as the listener and S7 as the speaker:

Excerpt 73:

TFE S4+S7: 414-435 (00:14:12-00:14:02)

- | | | |
|-----|-----|---|
| 414 | S4: | ehm (.) do you think it's eh very difficult to paraphrase |
| 415 | | {pærəfraɪz} eh (.) missing words or |
| 416 | S7: | yeah it- i- if you if you don't have the basic (.) you don't have |
| 417 | | nothing at all you you don't just can describe the word |

418 correctly (.) if you don't have any vocabulary (.) and if the
 419 other person doesn't know the vocabulary you use to describe
 420 the word @
 421 S4: @
 422 S7: then you don't have any common words to share with
 423 S4: no
 424 S7: and then (.) it doesn't go on and you can't describe eh:
 425 anything
 426 S4: **and paraphrasing {pærəfraɪzɪŋ} is not just (.) the same thing**
 427 **than (.) saying the right word so (.) there are (.)**
 428 **misunderstandings after the paraphrasing {pærəfraɪzɪŋ} m-**
 429 **eh maybe**
 430 S7: yeah this can also happen that you paraphrase {pærəfraɪz}
 431 something and the person think that y- eh: she- he or she
 432 understands it
 433 S4: yeah
 434 S7: but it understands the wrong way
 435 S4: @

Directly prior to this excerpt, S7 had been talking about potential challenges for communication in lingua franca settings. As it became clear that he was running out of things to say, S4 employed the strategy 'asking a question to get further information' in lines 414-415 to direct the conversation toward a specific concept that S7 had already mentioned in passing, the concept of paraphrasing. This strategy thus supported S7 as the speaker by providing a new impetus for his next turn. In response to S7's answer, S4 then engaged in the strategy 'providing a supportive impulse to keep the speaker talking' in lines 426-429. In this turn, he again redirected the conversation toward a related aspect of the topic currently under discussion, but this time, he did so in the form of a declarative statement rather than an interrogative question. Nevertheless, he appears to make this statement not with the intention of taking over as the speaker, but as another way to support S7 in his role as speaker by providing him with additional topic-related input. In particular, S4's use of the discourse marker *maybe* at the end of his turn indicates that he is inviting S7 to give his opinion regarding his statement. Thus, this strategy generally appears to fulfill a similar function to the strategy 'asking a question to get further information', namely that of introducing a new impetus to keep the speaker talking so that communication does not break down due to lack of conversational topic. In that sense, it appears to provide an alternative strategy for accomplishing the same communicative function in the conversations recorded during the final exam.

Although the strategy 'providing a supportive impulse to keep the speaker talking' did not occur in the data from the in-class version of *Keep the conversation flowing*, its frequency and distribution of use during the final exam task was comparable to that of the strategy 'asking a question to get more information'. Overall, the strategy 'providing a supportive impulse to keep the speaker talking' was used a total of eleven times by eight different listeners across the twelve rounds of the task recorded during the final exam. By comparison, the strategy 'asking

a question to get more information’ was used a total of twelve times by seven different listeners. In five cases, listeners used both strategies within the same conversation, as S4 did in Excerpt 73 above.

It is of course possible that the strategy ‘providing a supportive impulse to keep the speaker talking’ was employed during some of the in-class rounds of the task that were not recorded. However, given how frequent and widespread the use of this strategy was in the final exam rounds, it seems likely that the choice of conversational topics available in this version of the task might have been a factor as well. In the in-class task, the students functioning in the role of the speaker during the recorded rounds all chose to talk about personal topics, either their summer plans or a project on which they were working. Thus, the speaker’s discourse was largely informative, providing unknown information of a personal nature to the listener. By contrast, the topics on the final exam were focused on course content. These topics were less personal, and the speaker and the listener could be expected to share at least some knowledge about them, since both had participated in the course. In the data, uses of the strategy ‘providing a supportive impulse to keep the speaker talking’ frequently feature the listener introducing an additional insight related to the course content, as S4 did in Excerpt 73 above.

The next novel strategy used by listeners during the final exam task was ‘repetition to show listenership/comprehension’. This strategy was used only twice in the data set, by S6 in round 1b and by S16 in round 6a. The latter is presented in Excerpt 74 to exemplify how this strategy was used in context:

Excerpt 74:

TFE S13+S16: 359-364 (00:10:45-00:10:53)

359 S13: that’s this ah paraphrasing is actually very
360 ah (1) funny because we also
361 S16: yeah
362 S13: try to play taboo
363 S16: yeah <16> **taboo** </16>
364 S13: <16> in english </16> and i also learned much better

In this excerpt, S13, who was actually functioning as the listener in this round, briefly takes over the turn as speaker to provide a supportive impulse regarding paraphrasing (line 359-360, 362, 364). Within this impulse, he mentions one of the activities used in the course to help the students practice their paraphrasing skills, a version of the game of *Taboo* (line 362). During S13’s turn, which is somewhat longer, S16 takes over the role of the listener, and he engages in verbal backchannelling to signal his ongoing listenership and comprehension (lines 361, 363). However, directly after S13 mentions *Taboo*, S16 follows his verbal backchannel *yeah* with a repetition of the name of the game (line 363). He thus repeats an important keyword in order to acknowledge that he understands S16’s reference.

In terms of function, this use of repetition by the listener is very similar to the verbal backchannels in the data from the final exam. Both are used to signal ongoing listenership and comprehension of the speaker's discourse. However, repetition provides the speaker with somewhat more specific feedback. In addition to indicating that the listener is generally following what the speaker is saying, repeating a key word or phrase shows that the listener is attuning to the most important parts of the message and is able to understand what has been said acoustically. Thus, as a preemptive CS, listener repetition has the potential to provide more definite input about whether mutual understanding is actually being achieved. In the case above, S16's repetition of *Taboo* confirms for S13 that S16 remembers the activity to which he has alluded, meaning that he does not need to explain further. However, where a listener's repetition does not match what the speaker intended to say, it could also potentially help interactants to uncover cases of misunderstanding more quickly, allowing them to resolve a problem before it could seriously threaten ongoing communication.

The final novel CS attested in the data from the final exam is 'clarification request'. This CS was used only three times, once by S6 in round 1b, once by S7 in round 2b and once by S3 in round 5a. Here, S3's use of a clarification request is used to illustrate how this CS was typically employed in the data:

Excerpt 75:

TFE S2+S3: 279-295 (00:10:37-00:11:14)

- 279 S2: and i think it would be helpful to: repeat what you said (.) if
 280 it's a (.) very (.) hard topic a topic which the other person (.)
 281 even don't know maybe (.) and then it would be helpful to
 282 repeat it and (.) show the main parts of the topic so that
 283 S3: mkay-
 284 S2: the other person
 285 S3: okay
 286 S2: xx
 287 S3: **ah what do you mean with (.) repeat like repeat it word for**
 288 **word or::**
 289 S2: no to summarize
 290 S3: it's:
 291 S2: everything that
 292 S3: <soft> okay </soft>
 293 S2: you have the main parts (.) which the person (.) should know
 294 (.) and um (.) maybe the (.) not a less:: eh important parts you
 295 can skip off (.) so that would be important

In this excerpt, S2 mentions that listener understanding might benefit if the speaker repeats the main points of the discourse, especially if the topic is a more difficult one (lines 279-282). S3 requests clarification of S2's use of the word *repeat* and then asks more specifically if she means that the speaker should repeat what had been said verbatim (lines 287-288). He ends on the word *or::* with lengthening on the final sound (lines 288), indicating that he is having difficulty finding the words to express a contrasting possibility. In response, S2 clarifies that

she meant that the speaker should summarize (line 289). She then goes on to explain that this summary should recapitulate the main points of the speaker's discourse but could leave out less important details (lines 293-295).

In all three cases, the CS 'clarification request' appears to be used not as an indication of total non-understanding of the speaker's previous turn, but as a request for further explanation in order to preempt a potential misunderstanding. In the above excerpt, S3 is obviously able to understand S2 acoustically, as he repeats the key word *repeat* in his clarification request. He even indicates that he has some ideas about what S2 might mean by adding *like repeat it word for word*. In this sense, clarification requests function somewhat similarly to confirmation requests. However, in the data, the use of a clarification request seems to indicate that the listener was more unsure that he or she had understood the speaker's intended message. By contrast, confirmation requests were used when the listener was somewhat more confident that he or she had interpreted the speaker's message correctly.

While the confirmation requests in the data from the pilot course were most often realized in the form of a declarative sentence presenting a candidate reading of the speaker's previous talk, the clarification requests were enacted through the use of interrogative structures. They followed two patterns, both of which are exemplified in Excerpt 75 above. In the first part of S3's turn *what do you mean with repeat* (line 287), the clarification request is phrased as an open-ended interrogative beginning with a question word and asking about the meaning of a word or phrase. Kaur (2009a, 2010) referred to this type of realization as a 'wh- clarification request' and identified it as the primary pattern for the realization of clarification requests in her ELF data (Kaur 2009a: 201; 2010: 202, 203). This pattern was also used in the clarification request made by S7 in round 2b (TFE S4+S7: 520). In the next part of his turn, S3 extends this more open-ended question with *like repeat it word for word* (lines 288-289). This part of S3's clarification request appears to be an elliptical question in which the word *like* is used to signal relevance with the previous part of S3's utterance. The full interrogative might be rendered as *Do you mean that the speaker should repeat it word for word?* Thus, this part of the realization appears to be an elliptical form of a yes-no question, another type of realization of clarification requests identified in Kaur (2009a: 201). The *or:* with lengthening on the final sound at the end of this turn (line 288) may suggest that S3 was trying to formulate an either-or question but could not complete his thought, or it may function more as an invitation to S2 to provide an alternative clarification. In her next turn, S2 begins by responding to the yes-no question directly by saying *no*, then continues on to clarify what she actually meant (line 289). The confirmation request produced by S6 in round 1b also followed this pattern and involved an elliptical yes-no question followed by *or:* with lengthening on the final sound (TFE S6+S8: 441). As in the above excerpt, S6's interlocutor also responded first by directly answering the

yes-no question and then providing the additional clarification that had been requested (TFE S6+S8: 442-443).

The students had been introduced to some potential linguistic realizations of the strategy ‘clarification request’ during work with materials from the textbook *English Unlimited B2* in course session 9. This set of materials had introduced two possible phrases to request clarification, both of which can be classified as wh- clarification requests:

- What do you mean by...?
- What’s ... exactly?

In the first part of his clarification request in Excerpt 75 above, S3 used a formal realization that is very close to the first of these options. However, rather than using the preposition *by*, as would be idiomatic in Standard English, he used the phrase *what do you mean with*. This difference is probably the result of a direct translation from his L1, German. In German, the same request might be phrased *was meinst du mit...*, and the word *mit* is generally translated into English as *with*. Likewise, in the other case in which an open-ended question was used to enact a clarification request, S7 also employed a phrase that appears to be a direct translation from his L1 German. In asking his interlocutor to explain what he meant by the phrase *a language platform*, he produced the phrase *what mean a lang- language platform* (TFE S4+S7: 520). This seems to be a direct translation of the German phrase *was bedeutet...* Idiomatically, this phrase would most likely be rendered as *what does ... mean* in Standard English, a phrase that was not supplied in the task from *English Unlimited B2*. Despite the non-standard formulations in both cases, neither speaker seemed to have any difficulty interpreting the listener’s question, quite possibly because both speakers were also L1 speakers of German.

In two of the three instances in the data in which a clarification request was used, the listener then employed a confirmation request directly after the speaker’s response to the clarification request. In the case of the conversation between S2 and S3, this occurred directly after S2’s explanation of summarizing (cf. Excerpt 75, lines 289-295 above):

Excerpt 76:

TFE S2+S3: 296-301 (00:11:14-00:11:34)

- | | | |
|-----|-----|---|
| 296 | S3: | okay (1) so ma- ma- maybe you mean (.) like tell it in other |
| 297 | | words or |
| 298 | S2: | yeah maybe this (.) even if the person doesn’t understand it |
| 299 | | would be helpful to (.) e:hm repeat it in other words so that (.) |
| 300 | | if a word is not clear or if he doesn’t know it ehm he (.) |
| 301 | | maybe understand with the new words (.) you use |

Following a positive backchannel indicating that he is able to follow S2’s turn, S3 employs a confirmation request to help him ascertain whether his understanding of S2’s explanation of summarizing is accurate (lines 296-297). This confirmation request is somewhat hesitant, as

indicated by the false starts and S3's use of *maybe* and *or* to frame his turn. Nevertheless, the fact that S3 is now seeking confirmation about the correctness of his interpretation rather than requesting clarification suggests that he is feeling somewhat more confident that he has been able to understand S2's intended meaning. Thus, the use of a confirmation request after a clarification request would seem to be a positive sign that the speaker's response to the clarification request has been successful in preempting a more serious communicative problem. However, the fact that clarification requests were often followed by confirmation requests in the data also suggests that the clarification request alone was not able to fully reestablish the listener's confidence that mutual understanding was being achieved between speaker and listener. The listener still felt the need to check his or her interpretation of the subsequent explanation.

In contrast to the strategy 'providing a supportive impulse to keep the speaker talking', both 'repetition to show listenership/comprehension' and 'clarification request' were used very infrequently during the final exam task. However, while these CSs were used only two and three times respectively, each use occurred in a separate round of the task. Thus, the use of each of these strategies does not appear to be merely idiosyncratic, since each CS was used by different listeners in different listener-speaker combinations.

21.4.2 Comparing the use of preemptive speaker CSs

Students functioning in the role of the speaker largely employed the same strategies during the final exam task as in the in-class version. Strategy use by the speakers in the final exam is recorded in Table 24:

| Communication strategy (CS) | Round / Speaker | | | | | | | | | | | | Σ |
|--|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----|
| | 1a S6 | 1b S8 | 2a S7 | 2b S4 | 3a S17 | 3b S11 | 4a S1 | 4b S5 | 5a S2 | 5b S3 | 6a S16 | 6b S13 | |
| Increasing explicitness | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 5 |
| Comprehension check | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Summarizing message | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| Using questions to ask for the other person's opinion | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| Using questions to show the other person they can talk now | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| Σ | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 10 |

Table 24: Preemptive CSs used by the speaker (final exam)

As in the in-class version of the task, speakers used preemptive CSs significantly less frequently than listeners during the recorded conversations. In fact, only six out of twelve speakers used any preemptive speaker strategies during the final exam task, and five of these six engaged in only one use of a strategy during their turns. All of these cases involved two CSs that had already been observed in the in-class version of the task, ‘increasing explicitness’ and ‘comprehension check’. However, although the CSs themselves were not novel, the speakers in the final exam data set sometimes realized these strategies in ways which are not attested in the in-class data set.

In some cases, speakers who used the CS ‘increasing explicitness’ during the final exam realized this strategy very similarly to the ways it was realized in the in-class version of the task. This is illustrated in the following example from Round 1a, in which S6 was functioning as the speaker and S8 as the listener:

Excerpt 77:

TFE S6+S8: 297-304 (00:07:59-00:08:14)

- 297 S8: so you would like it if you can hear an accent from that
 298 person who’s talking to you
 299 S6: yeah just like a like a v- very faint one it doesn’t have t- i
 300 mean if it’s too thick (.) **too thick of an accent like too strong**
 301 then it’s
 302 S8: mm
 303 S6: of course it’s difficult to (.) understand that
 304 person...

In this excerpt, S6 is responding to a follow-up question from S8 about whether or not she sees it as a positive thing if someone speaks with a noticeable accent in English. While she initially responds that she likes to be able to hear an accent (line 299), she also acknowledges that a pronounced accent may cause problems for intelligibility in a conversation. In formulating this acknowledgement, she uses the phrase *if it’s too thick* (line 300). After a brief pause, she then adds *too thick of an accent like too strong* (line 300). This serves to increase the explicitness of her previous utterance in two ways. First, S6 repeats an inverted version of her original phrase, in which the pro-form *it* is replaced with the more specific noun phrase *an accent*. She then paraphrases *too thick* as *too strong*, thus replacing the adjective *thick* with a synonymous adjective that is also frequently used to describe pronounced accents. She links these two descriptors together with the word *like*, indicating that they are used as synonyms. In this example, S6 thus achieves increased explicitness using both types of realization observed in the data from the in-class version of the task. She replaces a pro-form with a more specific noun phrase, and she paraphrases an item she attunes to as potentially problematic for her listener.

In addition to the two ways of realizing the CS ‘increasing explicitness’ which had already been observed in the data from the in-class version of *Keep the conversation* flowing, one additional pattern also emerged in the data from the final exam. This pattern is apparent in Round 4a, in which S1 is speaking and S5 is listening:

Excerpt 78:

TFE S1+S5: 293-305 (00:09:42-00:10:16)

- 293 S1: we had to (.) eh we needed to use in the eh daily: (.) eh
 294 conversations we had so (.) when (.) for example my eh
 295 roommate **my second roommate** moved in (.) eh i asked
 296 him how about eh to (.) eh how would it be to: bring some
 297 new stuff in here so (.) **new devices new kitchen devices** or
 298 S5: hm
 299 S1: eh:m (.) something like eh:m (.) i needed a bowl you
 300 know? it something (.) eh something you: you can make
 301 salad in
 302 S5: yeah
 303 S1: you know?
 304 S5: okay mhm
 305 S1: so i didn’t know the word so e:hm

In this example, S1 is describing a situation in which he had difficulties communicating with one of his roommates, an international student from Pakistan, due to lack of vocabulary. He seems to struggle to find the lexical items he wants for his description, and he employs the strategy ‘increasing explicitness’ three times as he attempts to compensate for lexical gaps by paraphrasing. In each of these cases, he modifies a noun phrase he has just uttered, replacing it with a more specific noun phrase. This first occurs in lines 294-295, where S1 says *my eh roommate* and then immediately rephrases this as *my second roommate*. This modification helps to make S1’s reference more precise for his listener, since he has previously mentioned that he has had two different roommates. It is somewhat different than S6’s replacement of *too thick* with *too strong* in Excerpt 77 above, in that it adds semantic content to the utterance, rather than rephrasing the existing content. It thus provides the listener with additional, rather than alternative, information. As such, this might be considered an example of the kind of utterance-developing repetition identified by Lichtkoppler (2006, 2007) in her study of repetition and paraphrase in ELF talk.¹⁴⁹ According to Lichtkoppler, “[u]tterance-developing repetitions occur when words and phrases are reformulated until a [...] satisfactory utterance is reached” (Lichtkoppler 2007: 53). Such repetitions may serve a production-oriented function “in that they help a speaker to find an expression that he or she is satisfied with” (Lichtkoppler

¹⁴⁹ In keeping with Tannen (1989), Lichtkoppler treats repetition as existing along a formal “scale of fixity” (cf. Lichtkoppler 2007: 43). Thus, repetition may be classified as exact repetition, repetition with variation or paraphrase, depending on how much of the original form of the utterance is repeated (cf. Lichtkoppler 2007: 43-44, Tannen 1989: 54).

2007: 53), but Lichtkoppler also stresses their comprehension orientation in ELF talk as one way “to make an utterance more intelligible” to one’s listener (Lichtkoppler 2007: 54), thus preempting potential communicative problems before they arise.

S1 then employs ‘increasing explicitness’ two more times in a similar way a few lines later. In lines 296-297, he talks about suggesting to his roommate that they buy *some new stuff*. After a brief pause, he rephrases *new stuff* as *new devices* (line 297), replacing the highly generic noun *stuff* with a noun with a slightly narrower meaning. He then modifies this noun phrase again to *new kitchen devices* (line 297). In both of these cases, his modifications again provide additional semantic content, making them examples of enacting the strategy ‘increasing explicitness’ through utterance-developing repetition.

The other speaker strategy, ‘comprehension check’, was employed a total of five times by four different speakers during the final exam. It thus provides more possibilities for analysis and comparison of uses than the in-class data set. During the in-class version of *Keep the communication flowing*, the strategy ‘comprehension check’ was used by a speaker only once. In terms of its realization, this instance was much more minimal than realizations presented in the materials used to introduce this strategy in course session 8 (cf. 21.2.5). The five instances collected during the final exam task show that this realization was perhaps rather unusual, as other, less minimal realizations were generally employed during the final exam.

There is one instance in the data set from the final exam in which the speaker strategy ‘comprehension check’ was realized in the same way as in the in-class data set. Interestingly, it involves the same speaker, S5, as in the in-class version of the task, although she is now talking to a different listener:

Excerpt 79:

TFE S1+S5: 400-408 (00:12:43-00:13:00)

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|---|-----------|
| 400 | S5: | i: think (.) that’s very important and ehm (.) i also learned | |
| 401 | | some (.) ah pronunciation stuff so i think ahm | |
| 402 | S1: | | mhm |
| 403 | S5: | | it’s also |
| 404 | | (.) helpful if you don’t have such a strong accent so | |
| 405 | S1: | | yeah |
| 406 | S5: | people can understand (.) you better? | |
| 407 | S1: | exactly | |
| 408 | S5: | in some way... | |

During this part of the conversation, S5 is talking about the role of accent in intelligibility. After speaking about this point for several seconds, she then engages in a comprehension check at the end of line 406. Just as in the example from the in-class task, she accomplishes this by using rising intonation on the final syllable of her utterance. Although her listener, S1, has been providing her with fairly regular verbal backchannels indicating that he is both listening and

able to follow her point (lines 402, 405), this use of a comprehension check seems to imply that S5 is looking for more substantial reassurance that mutual understanding is being achieved at this point in the conversation. Despite the minimalism of this signal, her listener is able to recognize her intention, and he provides a more substantial affirmative in response (line 407). Apparently satisfied, S5 then continues on with her turn (line 408).

S5 realizes the strategy ‘comprehension check’ in the same way here as in the in-class version of the task, through rising intonation on the final syllable of a word, yet there is a subtle difference in how she deploys this strategy in this excerpt. In the in-class version, she seemed to be checking whether her listener could understand a single linguistic item, the rather technical term *pet scan experiment* (cf. Excerpt 70 in 21.2.4). In the context of Excerpt 79 above, however, she appears to be checking not her listener’s ability to comprehend the word *better*, but rather his understanding – and possibly also his approval – of her entire previous turn (lines 400-406). Thus, while this type of realization can be used to check comprehension of a very specific point in an utterance, it appears able to facilitate a broader comprehension check as well. However, although both these uses were successful in eliciting confirmation of understanding from the listener, the fact remains that this type of realization was used by only one speaker across both data sets. Further data would be necessary to show whether the use of this realization was idiomatic to this speaker or whether this realization is used successfully by other speakers in authentic ELF contexts as well.

The other four instances in which a speaker used the strategy ‘comprehension check’ in the final exam data set were realized in formally less minimal ways. Nevertheless, only one featured a fully formed interrogative structure similar to the ones presented in the textbook materials used to introduce this strategy during classroom instruction (cf. 20.1). This occurred in Round 6b, in which S16 was functioning as the speaker and S13 as the listener:

Excerpt 80:

TFE S13+S16: 297-309 (00:09:04-00:09:24)

297 S16: ah i think
 298 S13: <soft> xx </soft>
 299 S16: the week we (.) we did eh: a task
 300 once (.) eh there was that recording of a (.) eh: of real eh of a
 301 real
 302 S13: yes
 303 S16: cos- eh
 304 S13: mhm
 305 S16: conversation **do you**
 306 **remember**
 307 S13: yeah i re<13>mem</13>ber
 308 S16: <13> **that** </13> (.) and there was a a: (.) a woman from: ehm the
 309 united arab emirates or something...

In this excerpt, S16 is talking about a listening text that the learning group had listened to during a previous course session. After his initial reference to this lesson, S16 asks S13 *do you remember that* (lines 305-306, 308). This interrogative structure serves as a check that S13 has followed S16's reference and can recall the details of a specific event at which both had been present. In that sense, it functions as a comprehension check, in that establishing common memory of this event is crucial for comprehension of S16's continuing turn. The realization itself is quite lengthy. S13 actually begins to respond (line 307) before S16 has even completed his turn. However, as soon as S16 receives S13's affirmative response, he then continues to talk about the referent he has just confirmed with his listener, using this common experience to illustrate a point he wishes to make about accents and intelligibility (lines 308-309).

The other three comprehension checks fall somewhere between S5's minimal realization and S16's use of a full interrogative in terms of their formal realization. All three feature the same realization, using the phrase *you know?* on rising intonation. Two of these three instances occur later in Excerpt 78 from S1's turn as speaker that was analyzed in the discussion of the strategy 'increasing explicitness' above:

Excerpt 78:

TFE S1+S5: 293-305 (00:09:42-00:10:16)

- 293 S1: we had to (.) eh we needed to use in the eh daily: (.) eh
 294 conversations we had so (.) when (.) for example my eh
 295 roommate my second roommate moved in (.) eh i asked
 296 him how about eh to (.) eh how would it be to: bring some
 297 new stuff in here so (.) new devices new kitchen devices or
 298 S5: hm
 299 S1: eh:m (.) something like eh:m (.) i needed a bowl **you**
 300 **know?** it something (.) eh something you: you can make
 301 salad in
 302 S5: yeah
 303 S1: **you know?**
 304 S5: okay mhm
 305 S1: so i didn't know the word so e:hm...

As S1 has been struggling to paraphrase a lexical item in lines 293-299, his listener has been rather quiet, producing only one verbal backchannel that is not necessarily indicative of understanding (line 298). In the next part of his turn, S1 employs the phrase *you know?* as a comprehension check (lines 299-300). He does not really seem to wait for a response, however, but immediately adds more detail to his description of the "kitchen device" he has in mind. When he finishes, S5 offers a verbal affirmation that she understands (line 302). However, S1 checks again, using the same realization, *you know?* (line 303). His listener then reaffirms her understanding more substantially with two verbal backchannels instead of one (line 304). This seems to satisfy S1 that mutual understanding has in fact been achieved, and he proceeds with his turn (line 305).

Like S5 in Excerpt 79 above, S1 appears to employ these comprehension checks not to check his listener's comprehension of a specific part of his utterance, but rather of his turn as a whole. It seems that S1 is aware that his turn has been lengthy and somewhat disjointed due to his difficulties in finding the precise words he wants. Thus, he employs the strategy 'comprehension check' here to make sure that mutual understanding is being achieved before he continues with his anecdote. In this particular instance, *you know?* may even serve a double function. It may also represent an invitation for S5 to supply the word for which S1 is searching. However, S5's double affirmation of comprehension in line 304 appears to satisfy S1, and he then continues with his turn.

The phrase *you know?* was also used in the final instance in which a speaker employed a comprehension check. This occurred in Round 6b, in which S13 was the speaker and S16 the listener:

Excerpt 81:

TFE S13+S16: 395-408 (00:11:30-00:12:13)

- 395 S13: <18> mm:: </18> (.) i don't think {fink} that's really
 396 important (.) to try to speak like an (.) eh (.) to- to s- speak
 397 like a native english people (.) because (.) mm it's good when
 398 somebody hears that you are not not from england (.) kay
 399 somebody hears okay you're from china (.) then it's also a
 400 culture in it (.) and they know the culture and they know how
 401 to: respect or talk to you (.) if this is maybe a a: (.) conference
 402 you you don't see the other people (.) okay you know the c-
 403 the other culture (.) and you have some stereotypes
 404 {sti:rioutaips} (.) but (.) then (.) mm ehmm then eh (.)
 405 doesn't doesn't be it does not be that bad (.) **you know?**
 406 S16: yeah
 407 S13: it's good to see from where you're from (.) mm
 408 S16: s- so you think...

In many ways, S13's use of *you know?* as a realization of a comprehension check is very similar to S1's. He employs *you know?* at the end of a substantial turn during which his listener has not produced a single verbal backchannel (lines 395-405). Thus, he also seems to employ *you know?* as a more global comprehension check to make sure that his listener was in fact able to follow him despite a lack of (verbal) feedback. This comprehension check also follows a stretch of talk that is marked by some dysfluencies (lines 404-405), indicating that S13 is aware that he might have been more difficult to follow at this point. However, it also seems likely that *you know?* may again serve a double function in this excerpt, in that S13 may also be signaling to his listener that he is running out of things to say on the current topic. After S16's affirmative *yeah* in line 406, S13 produces only one more short turn, ending with an *mm* that seems to signal that his ideas are exhausted. Given the parameters of the task, *you know?* may have served here not only as a comprehension check, but also as an indirect request for his listener to help him find more to talk about. This help is not immediately forthcoming, but as the excerpt

ends, S16 is embarking on a confirmation request in which he paraphrases S13's long turn to make sure that he has caught the gist (line 408; cf. also Excerpt 71 in 21.4.1 above). This not only gives S16 the chance to check his own understanding, but also provides S13 with some new input to comment on in his next turn.

In the context of these exchanges, the phrase *you know?* might be interpreted as a truncated form of the interrogative *Do you know what I mean?*. Both syntactically and semantically, this question is very similar to the interrogative *Do you see what I mean?* presented in the materials from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2* that had been used to introduce some realizations of the speaker strategy 'comprehension check' during course session 8 (cf. 20.1). Both of these questions are fairly generic, in that they refer back to previous talk in general rather than to co-text specific terms. In this sense, the use of *you know?* as a realization of the strategy 'comprehension check' comes perhaps the closest to the examples given in the materials, given that it is also used as a more generic comprehension check.

Alternatively, *you know?* could also be viewed as a discourse marker. The phrase *you know* is a common discourse marker in English and has been attested as serving a number of functions in different contexts. Regarding the use of *you know* in ENL talk, Müller (2005) notes that "[i]n the research literature on *you know*, we find almost thirty functions accorded to it; more than half of these are supported by at least two authors" (Müller 2005: 147). In determining the function this discourse marker plays in a given context, intonation contour and the place of *you know* in relation to the informational content of a turn are generally regarded as important factors. A number of researchers (Crystal and Davy 1975, Östman 1981, Schourup 1985, Holmes 1986, Schiffrin 1987, Crystal 1988, Watts 1989, Stubbe and Holmes 1995, Erman 2001) identify *you know* as serving an interactional function, particularly when used with rising intonation (*you know?*) after the informational content in a turn. The use of *you know?* sets up a fairly explicit expectation of a response from the listener (cf. Östman 1981: 26) – though, as Schourup (1985) noted, this may take the form of a backchannel response rather than "a full change of turn" (Schourup 1985: 135) – and one type of anticipated response which has been identified in the literature relates to the listener's understanding of previous talk (cf. Crystal 1988, Watts 1989, Erman 2001). As Crystal (1988) put it, the use of *you know?* following informational content "often functions as a kind of tag question – as a check that the listener is understanding what is being said" (Crystal 1988: 47). Thus, there would appear to be ample evidence of the use of *you know?* on rising intonation following informational content as a realization of a comprehension check by the speaker in ENL data. Likewise, a number of the examples presented in Müller (2005) show *you know?* being used in similar ways in her native speaker/non-native speaker data (cf. Müller 2005: 172-173, 176-177).

Interestingly, the use of *you know?* with the function of checking the listener's understanding of previous talk is not attested in House (2009), the only study which has to date been carried out investigating the use of *you know* as a discourse marker in ELF talk. Despite briefly mentioning issues of intonation contour in her theoretical discussion of *you know* in the literature (cf. House 2009: 173), House provided little discussion of intonation patterns in the analysis of her own data. In House's data, the vast majority of the uses of *you know* occurred mid-utterance rather than post-informational content and were used primarily "to help bridge formulation difficulties and to support arguments [the speaker] had brought forward" (House 2009: 190). In fact, House claimed that, in cases in which *you know* occurred as a discourse marker in her data, "the interactants in these ELF encounters are not addressed personally as it were, and no response from them is expected or given" (House 2009: 188). This led House to observe that in ELF talk, the use of *you know* as a discourse marker predominantly appeared to serve a speaker-oriented, textual function, rather than an interactional one. However, given the limitations of her study, she conceded that

my analysis cannot be taken to mean that the previously proposed and well-documented interpersonal function of *you know* in native English discourse is totally unimportant in ELF talk. My analysis simply suggests that – in stark contrast to native English talk – this function seems to recede into the background in the case of the ELF talk here examined. (House 2009: 190-191)

Given both the nature of the corpus being examined in the current study and the fact that this study does not seek to undertake an exhaustive exploration of the use of *you know* as a discourse marker in that corpus, the current study is in no position to counter House's claim that interactional functions of *you know* take a back seat to other types of function.¹⁵⁰ However, the excerpts discussed above demonstrate that, at least within the context of the task *Keep the conversation flowing*, two of the participants in the pilot course used *you know?* on rising intonation at the end of a longer turn to enact a check of their listener's understanding, much the way that speakers in ENL and EFL contexts have been shown to do.

In all three of the comprehension checks involving *you know?* in Excerpts 78 and 81 discussed above, the rising intonation on the word *know* clearly marks the phrase as a request for a response from the listener. The rising intonation on *know* thus serves as an important

¹⁵⁰ As it happens, in Excerpt 81 above, S12 actually uses *you know* twice in his long turn, once as a comprehension check with rising intonation at the end of his turn in line 405, and once just before that in line 402. In this other instance, *you know* occurs mid-utterance and is produced with continuing intonation. It appears to function as a time-gaining device as S12 tries to formulate the point he is trying to make. He initially produces *you you don't see the other people*, then pauses and inserts *okay you know* before reformulating his previous utterance as *the c- the other culture*. Thus, this instance appears to be a good example of the use of *you know* "to help bridge formulation difficulties", one of the most prevalent uses of this discourse marker identified in the ELF talk examined in House (2009).

marker in communicating the speaker's illocution, helping the listener to distinguish this function of *you know* from other functions. Rising intonation was also the crucial element in S5's more minimal realizations of the strategy 'comprehension check' in Excerpts 70 (cf. 21.2.4) and 79 above. It served as the primary signal to her listeners that she was requesting feedback about her listener's ongoing comprehension of her talk. In contrast, rising intonation was absent in S16's full interrogative realization in Excerpt 80 above. Instead, this utterance seems to rely mostly on its interrogative form and semantic content to convey its illocutionary force as a comprehension check. Thus, there appears to be a negative correlation between the explicitness of the form in communicating the illocutionary force of a comprehension check and the perceived need to signal this illocution through prosody. While *you know* is arguably more explicit in its function than merely producing a word with rising intonation, it is still perceived as in need of prosodic marking in order to communicate its intended function as a comprehension check.

One possible reason that speakers may have used *you know?* more frequently than the other types of realization identified in the data from the pilot course is that it strikes a balance between the other two. It is more explicit in its function as a comprehension check than simply employing rising intonation at the end of one's turn. However, it is less verbose than a full interrogative, meaning that it is less disruptive to conversational flow. Its comparative brevity means that it also requires less effort to remember or produce than a full interrogative, issues which might well play a role with non-native users of English. Given its commonness, as well as its usefulness in fulfilling a variety of functions as a discourse marker, it would likely exist as a lexicalized chunk (cf. Mauranen 2009) in many users' mental lexica, thus making it relatively easy to access and employ.

Beyond the strategies 'increasing explicitness' and 'comprehension check', a number of speakers engaged in spontaneous self-repair during the final exam version of *Keep the conversation flowing*. This is exemplified in the following excerpt from Round 3a, in which S17 is functioning as the speaker and S11 as the listener:

Excerpt 82:

TFE S11+S17: 224-231 (00:07:08-00:07:26)

- | | | | |
|-----|------|---|------|
| 224 | S17: | eh::m yes something like this i was in in french france | |
| 225 | S11: | | yeah |
| 226 | S17: | ah (.) um yeah f- f- few months- months ago and eh there i | |
| 227 | | spoke with s- ah some {zəm} people where z- they came | |
| 228 | | from asia and from france and from | |
| 229 | S11: | | mm:: |
| 230 | S17: | | eh: |
| 231 | | england and some<10>where else </10> | |

In this excerpt, S17 spontaneously corrects himself three times. The first correction is lexical. He produces the phrase *i was in french*, then immediately self-repairs to *france* (line 224). The other two are both phonological. S17 begins to say the word *some*, producing the initial unvoiced [s], then stops himself and replaces this sound with its voiced counterpart, [z], resulting in [zəm] (line 227). Likewise, a few words later, he begins to pronounce *they* with an initial [z], then stops himself and produces an initial [ð] instead (line 227).

Such spontaneous self-repair shows that the speaker in question was monitoring his or her own speech production. Self-repair could be considered a preemptive speaker CS if the speaker engaged in this correction out of the desire to preempt communicative problems even where the listener had not signaled that an item was either ‘incorrect’ or problematic (cf. Tarone 1980). However, given the fact that the students were in an exam situation, it seems likely that they may have engaged in self-repair less out of a desire for the achievement of mutual understanding with their listener than from a perceived need for accuracy because they knew their English was being assessed. In S17’s case, one of the phonological adjustments he made involved the contrast between /s/ and /z/ in word-initial position that he had been working on as part of the pronunciation strand of the course (cf. Table 5 in 5.2). I had told the students explicitly that I would be listening in particular for those sounds that had been targeted in the course, not only in the pronunciation paragraph that constituted the final task of the exam, but also in their spontaneous speech during the other exam tasks (cf. 6.2.4). It is therefore highly likely that S17 was monitoring these sounds in particular because he was aware that they were important for the assessment. In this case, however, he actually got the substitution backwards, substituting voiced [z] for the standard non-voiced [s] at the beginning of *some*.¹⁵¹

Although S17’s lexical correction did not involve specific course content, it still seems likely that this correction may have stemmed as much from the perception that accuracy was important for doing well on the exam than from a desire to be intelligible to his listener. Although the course had generally downplayed the role of accuracy as compared to intelligibility and comprehensibility for successful international communication, in keeping with findings from ELF research, ELT has long engrained in learners that accuracy is of paramount importance, and many students may still have retained this mindset more or less consciously. Given the exam situation, I have therefore chosen not to regard spontaneous self-repairs as instances of preemptive CS use in this data set, since it is not possible to establish to

¹⁵¹ Overall, S17 showed no improvement in producing /s/ instead of /z/ in word-initial position during the final exam, neither on the standard text task nor in the spontaneous speech he produced during his turn as speaker in the communicative task *Keep the conversation flowing* (cf. Table 8 in 6.2.4).

what extent the knowledge that they were being assessed influenced the students' use of this strategy. However, self-repair has been attested to be a useful preemptive CS in other studies of ELF communication (cf. Mauranen 2006: 138-140, 147).

As in the data from the in-class version of *Keep the conversation flowing*, none of the speakers engaged in the CSs 'summarizing message', 'using questions to ask for the other person's opinion' or 'using questions to show the other person they can talk now'. In one case, S7, who was the speaker in round 2a, began to ask his listener for his opinion, but then backpedaled, saying *i shouldn't ah really ask him questions i just have to talk* (TFE S4+S7: 378-379). This move supports the claim made in the analysis of the in-class data in 21.2.5 that the parameters of the task may have dissuaded speakers from using some CSs that would have signaled their intention to relinquish the turn to their interlocutor. However, this again does not explain why the CS 'summarizing message' was not employed by any speakers during either version of the task.

21.4.3 Comparing the use of preemptive confirmation sequences

A few pairs of students also engaged in the same kind of preemptive multiturn confirmation sequences that were attested in the data set from the in-class version of the task. These instances of strategy use are listed in Table 25:

| Communication strategy (CS) | Round / Speaker/Listener | | | | | | | | | | | | Σ |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------|----------|----------|------------|------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|------------|---|
| | 1a | 1b | 2a | 2b | 3a | 3b | 4a | 4b | 5a | 5b | 6a | 6b | |
| | S6 S8 | S8S 6 | S7S 4 | S4S 7 | S17 S11 | S11 S17 | S1 S5 | S5 S1 | S2 S3 | S3 S2 | S16 S13 | S13 S16 | |
| Confirmation sequence | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| Σ | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |

Table 25: Preemptive confirmation sequences (final exam)

Despite the comparatively larger size of the data set, such confirmation sequences occurred less frequently during the final exam, with only three total instances of use compared to the four attested during the in-class version of the task. In each of these three cases, the confirmation sequence can be considered preemptive, in that it was not elicited by a confirmation request or a comprehension check, nor by an overt signal of communicative difficulty. Nevertheless, as in the examples from the in-class version of the task, these confirmation sequences tended to occur at points in the conversations that were perceived as

potentially problematic. This is illustrated in the following example from Round 1b, in which S8 was functioning as the speaker and S6 as the listener:

Excerpt 83:

TFE S6+S8: 474-489 (00:12:38-00:12:58)

- 474 S8: i don't know it's (1) sounds (.) weird <17> sometimes </17>
475 S6: <17> @@@@ </17> @@@ yeah
476 S8: it's
477 S6: yeah the vocabulary and like the (.) <18> tempo like i think
478 the tempo's </18> different too
479 S8: <18> how they p- yeah (.) yeah </18>
480 S8: yeah and how they pronounce the words (.) <19> cause
481 sometimes </19> i just don't <20> know </20> what they (.)
482 mean
483 S6: <19> yeah that's </19>
484 S6: <20> definitely </20>
485 S6: @@@@
486 S8: and what they are talking about
487 S6: <@> what are you talking about </@>
488 S8: **yeah**
489 S6: **yeah**

In this excerpt, S8 and S6 engage in a multi-turn confirmation sequence in lines 488-489 after a longer stretch of talk that is highly co-constructed. The speaker-listener distinction breaks down somewhat here, and both S8 and S6 contribute ideas to the conversation. This results in a number of instances of overlapping speech, though these appear to be supportive rather than competitive (cf. Cogo and Dewey 2012: 157-159). This stretch of the conversation ends with S6 echoing a slightly altered version of S8's preceding turn (line 487), which can be considered an example of the listener strategy 'repetition to show listenership/comprehension', followed by alternating *yeahs* from each interactant. While there is a sense in which S6 and S8 express agreement with each other's opinions in these last three turns, they seem to be doing more than just agreeing. They are also confirming for each other that they are satisfied with the result of their co-constructed talk and that mutual understanding has been achieved, despite the overlaps in some of their preceding turns. Thus, they can be said to be engaging in proactive work to confirm that understanding has been achieved at a point in the conversation which they both attune to as potentially treacherous, very much in the same way that S8 and S12 did in Excerpt 56 in 21.2.1 above.

21.4.4 Comparing the use of CSs for signaling and resolving communicative problems

As in the in-class version of *Keep the conversation flowing*, some students used CSs not only preemptively, but also to signal that a communicative difficulty had arisen. In particular, there are several instances in which a speaker indicated that he or she was searching for a word. In all of these cases, word-searches were indicated either implicitly or indirectly through an

admission that the speaker had forgotten the word, rather than through direct requests for assistance. Both types of realization are exemplified in the following excerpt from Round 3b, in which S11 is the speaker and S17 the listener:

Excerpt 84:

TFE S11+S17: 296-300 (00:08:57-00:09:21)

- 296 S11: okay (.) a::hm (.) i want to say something ah::: (.) basis what
 297 i:'m: (.) i:: a::hm (.) what i can: (.) a::hm (.) i forget the word
 298 (.) what about eh:: basis on my experience
 299 S17: mhm yeah
 300 S11: yeah (.) a::hm (.) if i didn't know english for example ...

At the very beginning of her turn, S11 struggles to formulate her very first utterance on the topic she has chosen. Her difficulties in finding the right words first become apparent in the use of fillers, frequent pauses and sound-lengthening in lines 296-297. However, when this does not elicit any help from her listener, S11 then states *i forget the word* (line 297). She thus names the communicative problem more explicitly, though she stops short of directly asking for help. Since this is early on in her opening turn, it seems unlikely that S17 would have enough idea of what she might be trying to say to offer her any assistance even if she had asked him directly. Ultimately, S11 is able to find a way to say what she has in mind, using the phrase *basis on my experience* (line 298). This phrase seems to be a non-standard formulation of the idiomatic phrase *based on my experience*. S11 is thus trying to introduce the idea that she will be talking about her selected topic from the perspective of her own experience, as she in fact begins to do at the end of the excerpt (line 300). Although S17 is unable to help S11 by providing the words she is looking for, he still indicates listenership and comprehension by way of a verbal backchannel in line 299 after S11 has finally produced a complete utterance. He thus supports her by showing that he is prepared to move forward with the conversation on the basis of the phrase she has provided.

In the above excerpt, S17 is unable to provide S11 with any assistance as she struggles with a word search, despite a number of signals. This is also the case in other examples, such as in Excerpt 78 above, in which S1 was searching for the word for a specific piece of kitchen equipment and could not find it. The fillers, pauses and sound lengthening in his turn are all implicitly indicative that he was searching for a word, but his listener never attempted to supply him with one. However, there are also cases in the data where a listener recognizes an indirect signal and attempts assistance. This occurred in another excerpt from Round 4b, in which S1 is speaking and S5 is listening:

Excerpt 85:

TFE S1+S5: 339-344 (00:11:08-00:11:18)

- 339 S1: right i (.) n- not i not that i can't just hear anything but ehm
 340 really (.) eh the real low ehm (.) <9> volume </9>
 341 S5: <9> frequencies? </9>

342 S1: <10> vol</10>ume
 343 S5: <10> oh </10>
 344 S5: oh okay yeah

In lines 339-340, S1's repeated use of the fillers *ehm* and *eh* implicitly signal to his listener that he is searching for a word. S5 responds to these signals by supplying the word *frequencies*, though she does so on rising intonation, indicating that she is not sure whether this is the right word (line 341). This occurs at the same moment that S1 finally finds the word *volume* for which he has been searching (line 340). In response to this overlap, he then repeats the word *volume* (line 342), which again overlaps with S5's next turn (line 343). Her *oh* indicates that she now understands what S1 means and that her suggestion was not appropriate in this context. She then follows up with three affirmation tokens, *oh okay yeah*, to signal her understanding of S1's meaning (line 344).

In this excerpt, S5 recognizes that S1 is searching for a word and tries to help, but ultimately does not propose a word with the meaning S1 is looking for. The overlapping talk which results from her move ultimately requires some negotiation to make sure that mutual understanding has been achieved. Still, S5's move to provide the word she thinks S1 may be looking for is a highly cooperative and supportive one aimed at assisting her interlocutor in his turn as speaker.

Interestingly, S1's word-search in the excerpt above is directly preceded by another trouble spot in Round 4b which also has its roots in lexical choice:

Excerpt 86:

TFE S1+S5: 332-344 (00:10:46-00:11:18)

332 S1: ehm (.) and that's sometimes (.) mm: (.) eh: very hard for me
 333 because i: just have ehm (.) an <pvc> auditive </pvc>
 334 problem i (.) sometimes can't hear and ehm (.) i can't ehm (.)
 335 ehm
 336 S5: s- so y- so you just (.) can't hear anything or what- what is the
 337 S1: ehm
 338 S5: problem
 339 S1: right i (.) n- not i not that i can't just hear anything but ehm
 340 really (.) eh the real low ehm (.) <9> volume </9>
 341 S5: <9> frequencies? </9>
 342 S1: <10> vol</10>ume
 343 S5: <10> oh </10>
 344 S5: oh okay yeah

Up until this point in the conversation, S1 has been talking about how lack of vocabulary, pronounced accents and a quick rate of speech can complicate understanding in lingua franca situations. On a more personal note, he then adds that understanding is further complicated for him because he has some trouble hearing. Here, he also runs into problems finding the word he wants. He first produces a non-standard formulation, saying that he has *an auditive problem* (line 333-334). He seems immediately aware that this might not be comprehensible for his listener and attempts to rephrase, saying *i (.) sometimes can't hear* (line 334). As he tries to

continue, his use of the filler *ehm* and frequent pauses implicitly signal that he is unable to find the word he wants. S5 tries to come to his aid by paraphrasing what she thinks he means in line 336. She begins somewhat hesitantly with several false starts, signaling that she is in fact struggling to grasp S1's meaning. However, her initial utterance, preceded by *so*, appears to be a confirmation request, suggesting that she is at least trying to piece together an interpretation of S1's meaning. Midway through her turn, though, she changes the nature of her utterance, asking *or what- what is the problem* (lines 336, 338). While this interrogative indicates that S5 is aware that S1 is describing a problem, she seems to have switched strategies from checking her comprehension to asking for clarification. In 21.4.1, I have argued that confirmation requests seem to indicate more confidence that comprehension is being achieved than clarification requests. The listeners who used clarification requests preemptively in the final exam data often followed up with a confirmation request, indicating a progression from a more insecure to a more secure perception of their level of comprehension. S5's move in the opposite direction, from confirmation request to clarification request, suggests that she felt increasingly insecure regarding her ability to understand S1's meaning. In fact, this move indicates at least partial non-understanding of S1's previous turn. S1 is able to provide more clarity for S5 by responding negatively to her unfinished confirmation request (line 339). As he tries to explain the nature of his problem, he again begins to search for words, cueing S5's attempt to help him, which has been analyzed in Excerpt 85 above.

It would seem, then, that S5's final turn in this excerpt, in which she utters the affirmative tokens *oh okay yeah* (line 344), may apply not only to her understanding that S1 was looking for the word *volume*, but may indicate more generally that she now feels confident that she has understood what S1 has been attempting to say throughout the whole exchange captured in Excerpt 86. In other words, S5 is indicating that her problems understanding S1's previous talk have been resolved and mutual understanding has again been achieved, meaning that the conversation can now move forward.

This part of the exchange between S1 and S5 represents one of the most challenging moments in the data set from the final exam in terms of problems of understanding. A shift in topic, from course related content to more personal details, and S1's obvious struggles to find the words he wanted combined to create a serious challenge for the comprehensibility of his turn. Yet S1 and S5 were able to employ CSs that ultimately allowed them to resolve these problems and continue with the conversation, rather than being forced to abandon the topic or even the entire conversation. This is representative of the data set from the final exam as a whole. In this data set, there were no instances of communication breakdown; where indications of communicative difficulties arose, speaker and listener were able to signal, negotiate and resolve the problem, allowing the conversation to continue. Additionally, and in

contrast to the data from the in-class version of the task, each pair of students appeared to achieve mutual understanding by the end of the round. There were no indications that any of the pairs actually misunderstood each other's meaning despite their apparent belief that mutual understanding was being achieved, as was the case in Round 2 of the in-class version of the task (cf. 21.2.2).

Nevertheless, although each of the exchanges recorded during the final exam can be considered communicatively successful, there were still qualitative differences in the success with which each of the twelve students involved in the data set from the final exam enacted their roles as listener and speaker during the task. This is reflected in the marks they received for the task and will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

21.4.5 Assessment of student performance: Evidence of levels of strategic competence

This next section now moves away from a comparison of the data from the in-class and final exam versions of the task to consider what the formal assessment of student performance on this task during the final exam suggests about variations in the level of strategic competence across the members of the learning group. As has been noted in 3.3, the students were assessed on their performance in the roles of listener and speaker separately on this task. The assessment criteria for each role have been discussed in detail in 3.3. Additionally, the assessment rubric used during this task is included in Appendix D to this dissertation.

Overall, the marks for this task were quite high; since each of the exchanges was communicatively successful, all the students received a passing mark for the task. One student, S16, received full marks for his performance on both halves of the task. Seven others received full marks for their performance as either speaker or listener. Only one student scored below ten points in total; this student, S4, achieved a total of seven points, three as speaker and four as listener. Thus, although he achieved a passing score, he scored significantly lower than the rest of the learning group.

Each of the students demonstrated an ability in their turn as speaker to recognize and respond appropriately to input from their listeners. They all showed themselves capable of gauging their interlocutor's level of understanding and responding appropriately. Where problems arose, they were able to employ CSs to resolve the issue in cooperation with their listener. Thus, each of the students demonstrated strategic competence in this area, resulting in full marks for all students on this criterion of the task.

In several cases, students who did not achieve full marks during their turn as speaker lost points on the criterion relating to their ability to maintain a long turn. In most of these cases,

the speaker struggled to find enough to say about a topic but was able to use a question or a supportive impulse from the listener as a source of new input to continue speaking. This resulted in minimal loss of points. However, S4 had difficulty finding enough to say despite several listener attempts to draw him out through the use of questions, and this was one of the reasons for his significantly lower score on this part of the task.

A number of students were marked down somewhat for their ability to employ proactive CSs to ensure mutual understanding in the role of speaker. In the majority of these cases, the loss of points was accompanied by the comment that the student should consider using comprehension checks more frequently where he or she encountered a lack of feedback from his or her listener. Again, S4 was an exception here. Rather than neglecting to employ comprehension checks, he struggled to realize a comprehension check linguistically when he attempted to enact one, leading him to abandon the attempt.

Three students, again including S4, also received reduced marks on the criterion relating to language use and its impact on intelligibility during the conversation. In all three cases, issues arose at the level of lexis, rather than pronunciation or grammar. In these cases, the use of non-standard lexical items or the vague use of language resulted in difficulties of understanding which then needed to be negotiated between speaker and listener.

By comparison, no student acting in the role of listener was marked down for issues related to language use. There were no points in any round of the task in which a listener's pronunciation, lexical choices or use of grammatical structures resulted in problems of understanding for his or her interlocutor. Neither were there any cases in which a student was marked down for demonstrating an unresolved lack of understanding of the preceding talk. Where listeners asked questions or provided supportive impulses, their input was always relevant and appropriate to what had come before. All students thus received full marks for each of these criteria.

Where students did not achieve full marks in their turn as listener, this was most often due to underutilization of supportive strategies, either to signal listenership, to encourage the speaker to continue or to signal (non-)understanding. In many of these cases, underutilization occurred either at the beginning or the end of the conversation. Some listeners refrained from any verbal input, even minimal responses and backchannels, during much of their partner's initial turn. This was the case with S6 in Round 1b, even though she eventually used the greatest number of verbal backchannels overall. She initially allowed her partner, S8, to talk for 23 seconds before providing her first supportive backchannel. This stretch included a two-second pause in which S8 was obviously searching for a word, but during which S6 made no attempt to support her in her search or encourage her to continue (cf. TFE S6+S8: 387-392). In other

cases, underutilization of proactive CSs occurred near the end of the conversation. In these cases, the speaker was obviously running out of things to say about the current topic, but the listener did not attempt to ask a question to get further information or to give a supportive impulse, even if he or she had already provided such input previously in the conversation. This seemed to indicate a lack of further ideas.

In the case of S4, underutilization of proactive strategies was apparent at both the beginning and the end of his turn as listener in Round 2a. Initially, he let S7 speak for nearly a full minute without providing any verbal input, except for a brief confirmation sequence where S7 clarified the terms of task (TFE S4+S7: 372-400). By the end of this minute, S7 was struggling perceptibly to continue speaking, even exclaiming *o gott {oh god}* in his L1 German (TFE S4+S7: 399) and then commenting on how he was struggling to find the words he wanted shortly thereafter (TFE S4+S7: 405). Around this point, S4 finally began to provide some supportive backchannels to show listenership (TFE S4+S7: 404, 409). However, he waited another 30 seconds, as S7 continued to struggle, before enacting the strategy ‘asking a question to get further information’ and finally providing S7 with more substantial support for his continuing turn as speaker (TFE S4+S7: 414-415). He then followed this question up with a supportive impulse (TFE S4+S7: 426-429). After employing these two strategies, however, his input again began to diminish, and although he continued to provide occasional verbal backchannels (TFE S4+S7: 445, 449, 457, 462), he made no further moves to support or encourage his interlocutor even as S7 again began to struggle to maintain his long turn. In all, S4 engaged in only ten uses of proactive CSs, eight of which were verbal backchannels, during this round of the task. This was despite the fact that I allowed the round to continue beyond the two-minute time limit in order to give S4 more opportunity to provide evidence of his strategic competence as a listener. This general lack of support for his interlocutor resulted in his receiving the lowest score of any examinee on this part of the task.

Although underutilization of proactive listener strategies was more common in the data set, two students were also marked down for using strategies inappropriately. In both cases, the listeners in question interrupted their speakers mid-turn with a follow-up question. This seemed to demonstrate that they were not really listening closely to what the speakers were actually saying at these points. There was a sense in both cases that the listeners were anxious to show that they were capable of active listening, since they knew they were being assessed on this point. Therefore, the exam situation may have influenced their behavior at these points in the task.

The analysis of the in-class data indicated a correlation between the number of listener CSs used in a particular round and the overall success of communication during that round (cf.

21.2.5). However, this correlation is not necessarily substantiated by the data collected during the final exam. On the one hand, all of the communicative exchanges recorded as part of this data set were successful, in the sense that communication did not break down and mutual understanding was achieved. This was accomplished despite a wide range in the total number of CSs used by individual listeners. Nor did higher instances of listener strategies used necessarily correlate to a higher overall score for the listener on that round of the task. S4 used a total of 10 listener strategies in Round 2b. This was one of the lower totals, but certainly not the lowest. By contrast, S6, who in employing listener strategies a total of 34 times tallied the highest number of uses, did not score as well as others in her performance as listener. Despite the high total number of CSs she employed, she still failed to respond to signals that her listener required support. Thus, the effectiveness of listener strategy use would seem to be more complex than simply employing them as often as possible.

In summary, while each of the twelve conversations captured during the final exam was successful in the sense that there were no cases of conversation breakdown or topic abandonment in any round of the task, some students were more successful in enacting the roles of listener and/or speaker than others. Regarding the role of the speaker, this was largely due to differences in linguistic competence and the ability to maintain a long turn in English. However, in this role, and even more so in the role of the listener, students also demonstrated somewhat different levels of strategic competence in deploying the kinds of proactive CSs that had been the focus of previous instruction. While most of the learning group demonstrated a relatively high level of strategic competence, one student in particular stood out from his peers in terms of his comparative lack of competence. Combined with issues of language use, he thus scored significantly lower on this task than his peers.

21.4.6 Content of students' answers as evidence of learning

Due to the fact that no pre-instruction assessment of strategic competence was administered at the beginning of the course, it is difficult to say whether the students' high level of success on this task during the final exam was due to the instruction and practice they received during the course, or whether they had already developed a high level of competence with CSs before enrolling. However, the content of the students' responses to the four prompts provided for this task do indicate that instruction had made at least some students more aware of the potential that CSs have for enhancing communicative success in ELF situations. In her turn as speaker, S5, for example, chose to speak about the most important thing she had learned in the course. Her answer to this prompt began as follows:

S5: ah: i expect to: have to speak (.) english a lot in the future ahm [...] ahm especially these ahm (.) ah- (.) conversation techniques are very helpful because (.) sometimes (.) if you (.) don't understand what the other person is saying it's (.) good to have [...] these instruments to keep the conversation flowing and (.) to ask again and to: [...] ahm show that you are interested (TFE S1+S5: 388-398)

S5 mentioned CSs, which she referred to as *conversation techniques* and *instruments*, as one of the most important things she had learned in the course. In her answer, she specifically mentioned these CSs as being useful in situations in which *you don't understand what the other person is saying*. Thus, she seemed to primarily have in mind listener strategies for signaling problems with understanding. However, she also mentioned three functions of CSs: *to keep the conversation flowing*, *to ask again* (i.e. to ask for repetition or clarification), and *to: [...] show that you are interested* (i.e. to show listenership). While CSs supporting these functions might be used to aid the identification and repair of problematic stretches of talk, strategies serving the first and last function might be used preemptively as well.

S16 also chose to talk about the most important thing he had learned in the course. In his initial response, he said the following:

S16: mm (.) throughout this course eh: i realized that eh:: (.) when talking to other people in english [...] the most important thing is not really to: (.) speak very (.) to know many (.) eh words or (.) to speak in a correct way (.) the most important thing is (.) to get your (.) message across [...] so to make sure that the other (.) person understands [...] so i think (.) that's one very important eh thing you have to do when using english as a lingua franca (TFE S13+S16: 271-282)

In other words, S16 had learned that, in lingua franca communication at least, achieving mutual understanding was more important than accuracy or a high level of grammatical competence. He later returned to this idea and linked it to CSs:

S16: <15> the most </15> important thing is to be clear and that's why we also talked about those (.) what we are doing now trying to keep a conversation going [...] we learn new ways of trying to be understood and understand and that is the most important part (TFE S13+S16: 344-348, 352-358)

Like S5, S16 also acknowledged the important role of CSs for successful international communication through English. However, while S5 focused more on situations in which understanding was challenged, S16 saw these strategies as useful to increase clarity of message and ensure mutual understanding between interlocutors. Thus, he seemed to have preemptive CSs in mind in formulating his answer, rather than trouble-signaling or reparative CSs.

In talking about how misunderstandings and communicative problems might be prevented when using English for lingua franca communication, S2 also focused on the preemptive role of CSs in such communication:

S2: a:hm (.) i think you can prevent misunderstandings pretty easy if you often ask many questions or (.) if you repeat everything you said (.) that's easier for the other person to understand you correctly and maybe y- you can: ahm (.) see if the persons

really understand so (.) you ask and then you get to know if (.) you've told the right thing if you use the right words (TFE S2+S3: 266-273)

S2 specifically mentioned two CSs – *ask many questions* and *repeat everything you said* – that might be useful in preventing misunderstandings from arising in the first place. In contrast to S5, S2 seemed to have speaker strategies in mind more so than listener strategies. In the latter half of her turn, she focused in particular on comprehension checks. In explaining how the CSs she named might preempt misunderstanding, S2 mentioned their usefulness for uncovering whether the listener has really understood (*if the persons really understand*) and thus providing feedback to the speaker as to whether his or her meaning had been communicated clearly (*if you've told the right thing, if you use the right words*).

These excerpts from the final exam data set show that instruction helped to raise awareness in at least some of the course participants of the potential that CSs have for enhancing communicative success in ELF situations. The three students from these excerpts all acknowledged that they had become more aware of the importance of developing strategic competence in order to become more effective communicators through ELF. In two of the three cases, the students indicated that this was one of the most significant things they had learned during the course. Thus, while it remains somewhat unclear whether the students improved their strategic competence during the course or whether they entered the course with a relatively high level of strategic competence already in place, the course does seem to have contributed positively to students' awareness of the importance of CSs and strategic competence for communicative success in ELF communication. And this in turn may have led them to consciously use CSs in their own conversations (cf. Nakatani 2005: 87).

21.5 Contributions of the communicative task Keep the conversation flowing to the lesson sequence in Block 2

The communicative task *Keep the conversation flowing* was selected primarily for its potential to give students communicative practice with preemptive CSs, in particular those facilitating active and supportive listening (cf. the opening section of Chapter 21 above). The analysis of the transcripts from the in-class and final exam versions of this task shows that every student recorded in the role of the listener did indeed make use of preemptive listener CSs during the task. Seven different preemptive listener CSs were identified, which were used a total of 142 times across the 16 rounds recorded during the in-class and final exam versions of the task. Though CS use varied considerably from listener to listener, and some CSs were used more frequently and/or by a wider range of listeners than others, at least three different listener CSs

were used at least once each in a preemptive function in each recorded round of the task. This shows that the task successfully elicited the use of preemptive listener CSs from students, substantiating its usefulness as a task for practicing, as well as for assessing, this type of strategy. Moreover, the students generally agreed during the post-task discussion phase after the in-class version of the task that, while they found the role of the speaker more difficult than that of the listener, engaging with a listener who used preemptive CSs made their turn as speaker easier (cf. 21.3). Through this experience in a communicative situation, the task thus also contributed to the development of the students' awareness of the importance of engaging in active and supportive listening through the use of preemptive CSs.

Although students functioning in the role of the listener used a total of seven different preemptive listening CSs across the 16 recorded rounds of *Keep the conversation flowing*, only four of these CSs occurred in the rounds from the in-class version of the task. The other three were novel in the final exam version of the task. This raises the question as to why these CSs only occurred in the final exam data set. Overall, the task parameters remained largely unchanged between the two versions of the task; the exception was the list of conversational topics the students could choose to talk about. In the in-class version of the task, all of the speakers recorded chose to talk about either their personal plans or a project on which they were working. By contrast, in the final exam version, all of the available topics were related to course content. Thus, it would appear that listening to a speaker talk about course-related topics seems to have elicited the use of some listener CSs that were not employed when listening to a speaker talk about more personal topics. This suggests that teachers might tailor this task toward eliciting specific CSs, or perhaps a larger or smaller range of CSs, in part by adjusting the topics available for discussion. However, further research would be necessary to establish which topics might reliably elicit the use of which kinds of CSs from learners.

Analysis of the transcripts from the two versions of *Keep the conversation flowing* shows that the task was less effective at eliciting the use of preemptive CSs by the speaker than by the listener. Students functioning in the role of the speaker employed only two different CSs preemptively across the entire data set, and these two CSs were used only fourteen times in total. In fact, in seven of the total 16 recorded rounds of the task, no use of preemptive CSs by the speaker occurred at all. This is perhaps unsurprising, considering that the original task was constructed specifically for practicing listener rather than speaker CSs. The task instructions for the listener are more detailed than those for the speaker and clearly encourage the use of preemptive listener CSs to fulfill a range of functions, such as checking understanding, asking for clarification and getting more details. By contrast, the speaker is simply directed to “[a]nswer [the listener]’s questions and talk as much as you can” (Dignen 2011: 23; cf. also Materials excerpt 40 in the opening section of Chapter 21 above). This may be one reason why

the task was more effective at eliciting both a higher frequency of CS use and a wider range of CSs from listeners than from speakers. Because the instructions for the listener directed the students' attention to certain communicative functions they should fulfill, students functioning as the listener were more likely to use CSs to fulfill these expectations.

Additionally, while the clear division of roles between speaker and listener in the task seems to have contributed to the task's effectiveness in making the students aware of the importance of active listening, analysis of the data suggests that it actually dissuaded speakers from using preemptive CSs related to smoothing turn handover, despite evidence that the students in the course were aware of these strategies. In the pre-task brainstorming phase before the in-class version of the task, the students demonstrated awareness that questions could be used by the speaker in at least two different ways to proactively smooth turn handover, yet neither of these strategies was actually employed during any round of the task. This was most likely due to the fact that the students were aware that they were expected to maintain the same communicative role throughout the round rather than passing the roles back and forth, as is generally the case in many forms of naturally occurring conversation. Thus, although they were aware of strategies for smoothing turn hand-over, they refrained from using them due to the parameters of the task.

While the clear division of roles created by this task would continue to inhibit the use of speaker strategies related to turn hand-over, adjusting the task instructions somewhat could increase the effectiveness of the task in eliciting other types of preemptive speaker CSs. In parallel to the instructions for the listener, the instructions for the speaker could be modified to direct speakers toward proactively avoiding miscommunication, e.g. by periodically summarizing their message or checking that the listener is able to follow and understand what they are saying. Such modifications would create a more balanced focus on the roles of both listener and speaker in the task without negatively impacting the task's ability to raise awareness of the positive effect that active and supportive listening can have on communication.

In addition to shedding light on which CSs were actually used during the task, analysis of the data collected during *Keep the conversation flowing* suggests that the students were more aware of their use of some CSs than of others. Overall, the students showed a relatively high level of awareness of many of the CSs that had been addressed in the course, as is evidenced in the pre-task brainstorming phase before, and the post-task discussion phase after, the in-class version of the task (cf. 21.1 and 21.3). This suggests that classroom instruction preceding this task had been effectual in raising the students' awareness of these CSs. However, the students demonstrated limited awareness of two particular CSs used during the task, the speaker CS

‘increasing explicitness’ and the listener CS ‘confirmation request’. The speaker CS ‘increasing explicitness’ had not been addressed during instruction, making the students’ lack of awareness unsurprising. However, as has been noted in 21.2.5 above, it is attested as an important preemptive CS in ELF research, and this has led some ELF scholars, particularly Kaur (2015a) to recommend that it should receive attention in the ELF-oriented classroom (Kaur 2015a: 243, 251). Direct instruction in a preceding course session could have helped to make the students more aware of this CS, increasing the chance that those who already had it in their repertoires would employ it more deliberately in communicative settings and that others would attempt to use it in the first place. In terms of the listener CS ‘confirmation request’, the students appeared to be more aware of comprehension checks as a potential speaker CS while overlooking the role confirmation requests can play as a listener CS. This too is perhaps unsurprising, since the students received direct instruction on comprehension checks but not on confirmation requests. This suggests that they might have benefitted from activities focusing specifically on requesting confirmation of understanding as the listener.

Nevertheless, lack of awareness alone may not have been the only reason why both the speaker CS ‘increasing explicitness’ and the listener CS ‘confirmation request’ were not employed by as wide a range of students as other CSs. Some students may have lacked the ability to realize these CSs in English. Such students might have benefitted from activities facilitating the development of a repertoire of potential realizations of these CSs. This could involve the kind of direct instruction described in the fifth area of Dörnyei’s framework for the development of strategic competence in the language learning classroom, ‘teaching CSs directly by presenting linguistic devices to verbalize them’ (cf. Chapter 17). However, it might also involve ‘providing L2 models of the use of certain CSs’ (area 3) for students to model their own CS use on. Alternatively, some students’ use of these CSs may not yet have reached the automatic stage that Dörnyei claims is prerequisite for their ability to actually employ CSs to fulfill communicative functions (Dörnyei 1995: 64). In this case, the students may have benefitted from more targeted practice with these CSs aimed at helping strategy use to become more automatic before engaging in more complex communicative tasks such as *Keep the conversation flowing*. This is the type of practice that Dörnyei describes in the sixth area of his framework, ‘providing opportunities for practice in strategy use’ (cf. Chapter 17).

Analysis of the transcripts from the two versions of this task also reveals some patterns in the ways that students realized two specific CSs. Particularly in the final exam version of the task, the vast majority of listeners who enacted the CS ‘confirmation request’ did so using the realization ‘so (you think/mean) + paraphrase’. In these cases, *so*, either alone or in combination with *you think* or *you mean*, served as a multi-functional discourse marker, supporting the listener’s illocution, namely that of requesting confirmation or disconfirmation of their

understanding of the previous talk, both textually and interactionally. Likewise, in the final exam version of the task, the majority of speakers who employed the CS ‘comprehension check’ also used a particular linguistic realization, the phrase *you know?* with rising intonation following the content of a turn. The students’ preference for this realization is particularly interesting, since they had received direct instruction introducing a number of potential realizations of this strategy during a previous course session. All of these proposed realizations had been in the form of full interrogative sentences. On the one hand, this might suggest that the students required more targeted practice with comprehension checks in order to make the use of the proposed realizations automatic. However, I have argued in my analysis in 21.4.2 above that *you know?* appeared to be quite effective within this communicative task for a number of reasons. It is shorter than the kinds of full interrogatives presented in the learning materials, meaning that it poses a less significant interruption to the conversational flow and is also easier to remember and produce than a full interrogative. Yet, like the full interrogatives presented in the textbook, it is also generic enough to be used in a wide range of contexts. Additionally, its illocution is marked both semantically and prosodically, making its function more explicit for the listener than other more minimal realizations of this strategy. Thus, the students’ use of *you know?* would appear to be a demonstration of their strategic competence, rather than evidence of a lack of learning. Their communicative success with this realization suggests that *you know?* might be a viable, and even possibly a more preferable, realization of the preemptive speaker CS ‘comprehension check’ than the kinds of full interrogative structures presented in the learning materials, at least in some communicative circumstances. However, this would require more research, since the limitations of the current study make any generalizations about the use or effectiveness of particular patterns of CS realization beyond the data set untenable.¹⁵² As has been discussed in 21.4.2 above, the use of *you know?* on rising intonation post-informational content is attested in empirical studies of ENL and EFL talk as a means of requesting feedback from the listener about his or her level of understanding; however, it is not attested in the only study on the use of *you know* in ELF talk to date.

¹⁵² It is perhaps worth noting at this point that the portion of *Problems with listening* (Track 6), the listening text from Walker (2010) which was used to support classroom work on CSs for signaling and resolving problems with understanding (cf. Chapter 18), as well as awareness of supportive listener CSs (cf. Chapter 20), includes two instances in which the listener enacts a comprehension check using the pattern ‘*so (you think/mean) + paraphrase*’ as part of the resolution of a non-understanding which occurred during that conversation (cf. lines 27 and 29 in Materials excerpt 32 in 18.1). This provides at least some evidence that this pattern has been used in actual ELF encounters. It would be interesting to undertake a study of the functions of *you know* as a discourse marker in one of the larger existing corpora of ELF talk, e.g. VOICE, and to compare the results of such a study with those of House (2009). However, this is beyond the scope of the current project.

As mentioned above, the focus of *Keep the conversation flowing* was on communicative practice with preemptive CSs, in particular CSs for the listener. However, analysis of the transcripts also shows that opportunities arose during this task for some students to employ CSs aimed at signaling and resolving communicative problems. The construction of the task did not include any parameters aimed at creating communicative problems between interlocutors or ensuring that such problems would arise *per se*, but in some rounds of the task, interactants encountered difficulties which arose naturally as a result of the communicative situation. In some cases, listeners signaled non-understanding of a speaker's talk, leading to the use of CSs to negotiate meaning and reestablish mutual understanding. Signaling and negotiating points of miscommunication was the focus of the lesson sequence described and analyzed in Chapter 18. Thus, some students at least were able to gain some practice with this type of CS use through this task. In other cases, students signaled difficulty in finding the words to express what they were trying to say. This led to attempts by interlocutors to suggest possible words, as well as attempts by the student experiencing the difficulty to paraphrase his or her meaning. In this sense, the task also created some opportunities to practice paraphrasing their intended meaning, a type of CS which was the focus of the lesson sequence described and analyzed in Chapter 19. In both types of situation, the interactants were generally able to use CSs to successfully negotiate understanding and resolve the problem, allowing the conversation to move forward rather than breaking down. Thus, although it was most successful at eliciting preemptive listener CSs, the task facilitated both practice and a chance to assess the students' competence with a wide range of the types of CSs introduced during Block 2 of the pragmatics strand of the course.

Analysis of the transcripts of the 16 recorded rounds of *Keep the conversation flowing* generally shows that the use of CSs, both preemptive and trouble-signaling/trouble-resolving, contributed positively to the communicative success of these exchanges. With only one exception, in which a misunderstanding between listener and speaker remained undetected at the close of the round, each pair of interactants also appeared to achieve mutual understanding by the end of the round. On the whole, there was no evidence of communicative breakdown, such as topic abandonment or the premature ending of a conversation. Rather, the students were able to use CSs to prevent communication breakdown and successfully negotiate and complete the task with their interlocutors.

Overall, the students' use of CSs during *Keep the conversation flowing*, whether to avoid potential miscommunication proactively or to signal or resolve a communicative problem, can be viewed as evidence of their developing strategic competence (cf. Baker 2018: 33, Murray 2012: 322, Cogo and Dewey 2012: 135-136). Through the use of CSs, the students demonstrated their ability to accommodate to the (perceived) needs of their interlocutors to

ensure that mutual understanding was in fact being achieved and maintained throughout the conversation. Many students demonstrated a relatively high level of strategic competence during the communicative task *Keep the conversation flowing*, as is corroborated by the generally high scores on this task during the final exam. Nevertheless, analysis of the various rounds of this task shows that some students exhibited a higher level of strategic competence than others. For example, some were adept at employing preemptive listener CSs such as ‘backchannelling (verbally) to show listenership/comprehension’ or ‘asking a question to get more information’ before the speaker showed signs of struggling to find more to say. Others did not engage in the use of such CSs until the speaker had begun to struggle noticeably to continue speaking. This suggests that for some of the students, the use of some CSs addressed in the course had not yet reached an automatic stage. Dörnyei suggests that this automatic stage may not be achievable for at least some learners without targeted practice (cf. Dörnyei 1995: 64), an argument which would further support the revision of the lesson sequences in Block 2 to include additional opportunities for targeted practice with specific CSs.

22 Discussion and reevaluation of Block 2

In Block 2 of the pragmatics strand of the course, the primary aim of instruction was to develop the students' strategic competence with CSs which facilitate central processes such as accommodation and negotiation of meaning in ELF communication. On the basis of empirical studies of ELF talk, three functions of CSs – CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding, CSs for paraphrasing intended meaning, and CSs for preempting misunderstanding and securing mutual understanding through proactive work – were identified as the focus of this block. Drawing upon applied linguistics literature regarding teaching CSs in the language learning classroom, insights from empirical and conceptual work related to the use of CSs in ELF talk and their implications for the ELF-oriented classroom, and the ELT materials available at the time, lesson sequences were then developed around each of these functions. The three resulting lesson sequences, as well as the communicative task *Keep the conversation flowing*, which ultimately served both as the culminating task of this block of instruction and as an assessment task on the final exam, have been presented and analyzed in detail in Chapters 18 through 21. This final chapter will now consider the block as a whole and reevaluate the approach to teaching CSs taken in this part of the course.

In keeping with recommendations from the area of applied pragmatics, the three lesson sequences were constructed upon the principle of a direct and explicit approach to the teaching of CSs featuring a balance of awareness-raising and communicative practice tasks. The planning of these sequences was further informed by Dörnyei's more detailed framework for teaching CSs in the language learning classroom, which breaks down classroom instruction into six areas of pedagogical focus. This framework was selected for its potential to ensure that the lesson sequences would take a balanced approach to the development of the various facets of strategic competence. However, in developing the lesson sequences for Block 2, it was also necessary to adopt a number of guiding principles to address dissonances between insights from research into the role of CSs in ELF communication and a number of the underlying tenets of more mainstream approaches to the teaching of CSs, including some reflected in Dörnyei's framework. First, rather than drawing upon native speaker data, the selection of which specific CSs to include in each lesson sequence was primarily informed by research into the kinds of strategies that ELF speakers have been shown to use to facilitate the communicative functions that were the focus of the sequence. Second, the successful multilingual, multicultural user, rather than the native English speaker, was recognized as the most appropriate model for instruction. Third, CSs were viewed as expanding the students' communicative options in lingua franca situations, rather than as compensating for a lack of proficiency in other areas. And finally, a non-normative approach to the use of CSs was adopted. Where potential

realizations were introduced, emphasis was not placed on learning to reproduce these specific realizations according to a standard norm of language usage. Instead, the aim was to enhance the students' repertoires of potential ways to enact various strategies and thus facilitate the kind of flexibility that has been shown to be an important feature of ELF pragmatics.

Overall, the analysis of the three lesson sequences constituting Block 2 suggests that the approach taken to classroom instruction on CSs was at least partially effective in helping the students in the pilot course to further develop their strategic competence for intercultural communication through ELF. To a certain extent, it is difficult to ascertain how much the students' strategic competence actually developed during the course itself, especially since there was no pre-instruction diagnostic assessment with which to compare the students' post-instruction performance. Nevertheless, there is evidence in the data collected, both during classroom activities from this block of instruction and during the final exam, which suggests that the students did in fact gain an increased level of awareness of the important role which CSs can play in supporting successful intercultural communication in lingua franca situations, as well as of a range of specific strategies which might potentially be used. In the communicative practice tasks in the sequence, including the task *Keep the conversation flowing*, the students also demonstrated an ability to use the types of CSs addressed in the block to a greater or lesser extent.

However, the data from *Keep the communication flowing* and the game of *Taboo* used in the sequence on paraphrasing suggests that not all of the students were equally capable of employing CSs effectively in conversation by the end of the course. Furthermore, this data also indicates that individual students' levels of strategic competence did not necessarily mirror their levels of grammatical competence. Some students who could be described as grammatically more proficient as learners of English demonstrated a less developed level of strategic competence, and vice versa. Thus, it would appear that, as in the area of pragmatic competence more generally, a learner's development of grammatical competence in a language does not necessarily guarantee a corresponding level of strategic competence without specific pedagogic support (cf. 15.2). This suggests that at least some of the students in the pilot course, including some of the more grammatically proficient members of the learning group, would benefit from continued exposure to direct instruction in the area of CSs in future language courses.

That the lesson sequences used to teach CSs were only partially successful in helping the students enrolled in the pilot course to achieve the aims of this block of instruction raises the question of whether these sequences could be improved to better facilitate the development of the students' strategic competence for ELF communication. Indeed, the analysis of the data

from this block of instruction brings to light a number of aspects that appear to require some reconsideration in light of classroom experience in the pilot course. Many of these aspects pertain to the overall approach adopted to the teaching of CSs in this block of instruction, in particular in light of the ELF orientation of the course. However, some also involve specific methodological decisions which were made in planning this block of instruction. The following sections of this chapter will reevaluate six specific aspects in light of insights gained from the analysis of data from the pilot course: the role of practice within CS instruction (22.1), raising learner awareness of cross-cultural differences in CS use (22.2), selecting listening texts to facilitate learning activities (22.3), fostering the development of learners' meta-pragmatic awareness by creating connections between CSs and linguistic realizations (22.4), selecting or generating realizations of CSs for direct instruction (22.5) and emphasizing the appropriacy and effectiveness of realizations of CSs over formal accuracy (22.6).

22.1 *The role of practice within CS instruction*

The first of these areas relates to the role of practice within CS instruction. As has been mentioned above, in keeping with pedagogical recommendations from the area of applied pragmatics more generally (cf. Chapter 16) and Dörnyei's framework for the teaching of CSs more specifically (cf. Chapter 17), one of the underlying tenets adopted in this strand of the pilot course was to create a balance between phases of awareness-raising and phases of communicative practice during instruction. In his discussion of his framework for teaching CSs in the language-learning classroom, Dörnyei (1995) placed particular emphasis on the need for "specific focused practice" in CS instruction because, he claimed, it is only through this type of practice that strategy use becomes automatic and strategies thus become fully available for communicative use (Dörnyei 1995: 64). However, while specific focused practice may be necessary in order to help learners add new strategies to their repertoires, the analysis of this block of instruction suggests that more open-ended, comprehensive types of practice can fulfill important functions in the learning process as well.

This is particularly well-illustrated in the data from the communicative practice task *Keep the conversation flowing* used in course session 10 (cf. Chapter 21). Although it placed somewhat more emphasis on preemptive listener strategies, and thus provided more specific focused practice for this type of strategy, the parameters of this task also created opportunities for students to use many of the other types of strategy that had been covered during the three lesson sequences. Thus, this task acted as a sort of comprehensive practice task for the whole

block of instruction on CSs. It provided more integrated practice, in which the students had to recognize a number of different kinds of situation in which the use of CSs might be helpful, select an appropriate strategy to fulfill the desired function and then enact the strategy linguistically. This gave the students not only the chance to try transferring what they had previously practiced to a more complex communicative situation, but it also allowed the students, as well as me as the teacher, to informally assess how far strategies had actually entered their repertoires at this point in the course. The more integrated nature of this task likewise made it useful as a formal tool for assessing the students' level of competence with the CSs taught in this block of the course in the context of the final exam.

The analysis of the task *Keep the conversation flowing* suggests, then, that more integrated and comprehensive communicative tasks can be useful in the language learning classroom, not with the aim of building up learners' competence with specific strategies, but as an opportunity to gain practice in performing their competence. Such tasks allow learners to practice using strategies they have been exposed to in more complex communicative situations and to evaluate, whether formally or informally, how well they are actually able to do so. Researchers such as Taguchi and Roever (2017) have also suggested that this kind of practice plays a key role in helping learners to develop the kind of "flexibility and adaptability" required for ELF communication (Taguchi and Roever 2017: 255). They highlight the importance of providing learners with practice "in authentic, less controlled dialogic activities, where they have choices to adapt their pragmatic resources to ongoing interactions" (Taguchi and Roever 2017: 255). Thus, while I would agree with Dörnyei that learners will likely need a certain amount of specific focused practice, especially following the introduction of new strategies through direct instruction, I would argue that lesson sequences focusing on the development of strategic competence should also include tasks that allow learners to practice performing their competence in more complex and integrated contexts.

Dörnyei's claim that it is the more specific focused type of practice which enables strategies to enter learners' repertoires and become available for communicative use suggests that this type of practice should generally precede more integrated performative practice. Analysis of the data collected during the pilot course indicates that, in two of the three lesson sequences which constituted this block of instruction, the students were not given enough opportunities for this type of specific focused practice before they were exposed to more integrated comprehensive task types. In the lesson sequence on CSs for preempting misunderstanding and securing mutual understanding through proactive work (cf. Chapter 20), opportunities for this type of practice were simply too infrequent. The students were introduced to a range of different strategies over significant portions of course sessions 8 and 9, but were ultimately not given any opportunity to practice with these strategies until the communicative practice task

Keep the conversation flowing in course session 10. I have suggested in the discussion of this lesson sequence (cf. 20.5) that, before engaging in this more comprehensive form of communicative practice at the end of the lesson sequence, the students would have benefitted from more frequent phases of targeted practice with two or three specific strategies at a time in closer proximity to direct instruction.

Similarly, although the lesson sequence on CSs for paraphrasing intended meaning (cf. Chapter 19) included more frequent opportunities for communicative practice, analysis indicates that the practice tasks incorporated into this sequence remained too open-ended to help the students increase their competence with less familiar strategies. While the parameters of both the *Taboo* game and the prepared paraphrasing task successfully created situations in which the use of paraphrasing strategies was necessary, they were not designed to elicit the use of specific paraphrasing strategies. Instead, because the students could choose from a wider range of strategies, they could fall back on more familiar strategies rather than being pushed to practice with less familiar ones. I have argued in the discussion of this lesson sequence (cf. 19.7) that the inclusion of tasks that required the students to practice consciously deploying specific types of paraphrasing strategy would have been helpful for developing their competence with less familiar strategies before they encountered the more comprehensive task types actually included in the lesson sequence. A number of potential tasks which might facilitate this more focused kind of practice with paraphrasing strategies were also proposed in this discussion.

By contrast, the lesson sequence on CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding (cf. Chapter 18) provided more opportunities for specific targeted practice before engaging the students in integrated comprehensive forms of practice. The lesson sequence itself featured two phases of focused practice directly following the introduction of specific CSs through inductive tasks. The first phase featured a set of tasks aimed at helping the students to practice using contrastive stress to communicate particular meanings (cf. 18.2), while the second gave the students the chance to practice using CSs to identify situational points of misunderstanding and propose solutions (18.3). Later on, in course session 10, the more complex communicative situation created by the parameters of the task *Keep the conversation flowing* (cf. Chapter 21) also created opportunities for many of the students to practice using some of these CSs again where they noticed that issues of understanding had arisen between themselves and their partners. Thus, in addition to the focused practice tasks which took place within the lesson sequence itself, the students also had the chance to practice with these CSs in a more integrated way at the end of the whole block of instruction. In this sense, then, the progression of tasks involving practice of CSs for identifying and negotiating

points of misunderstanding was better constructed to help the students develop their strategic competence than those in the other two lesson sequences.

Overall, then, the data from this block of the pilot course suggests that learners will need different types of practice at different stages of learning. When CSs are first introduced, they will primarily require specific focused practice with those CSs to help the strategies enter their productive repertoires. Then, in later stages of the learning process, learners can be exposed to more integrated forms of practice that create opportunities to practice with a wider range of strategies.

However, while the general categorization of practice tasks as either specific and focused or integrated and performative may be useful in helping teachers to select an appropriate task to fit their learners' current stage of learning, the distinction between these two types of tasks may not always be that clear-cut. The data from the task *Keep the conversation flowing* shows that a single task may potentially be useful as both a specific focused practice task and an integrated comprehensive one. *Keep the conversation flowing* was designed as part of a unit focused on listener strategies for active and supportive listening (cf. Dignen 2011: 22-23), and the task parameters proved to be particularly effective at eliciting practice with this kind of strategy. In that sense, it could be categorized as a specific focused task. Nevertheless, the task was complex and open-ended enough that it also created opportunities for the students to practice using several other types of strategies that had been covered during the three course sessions constituting this block of the course. Thus, as argued above, it was also useful as a more comprehensive and integrated task that allowed the students to practice using a wider range of strategies in a more complex communicative situation. In light of these different aspects, this task could be used to fulfill either function, or perhaps even both at the same time, as I would contend was the case in the pilot course.

Data from this block of the course also indicates two further aspects of task design which may contribute to a task's effectiveness in fulfilling a particular practice function. First, analysis of the task *Keep the conversation flowing* suggests that task instructions play a significant role in drawing learners' attention toward the specific CSs which are meant to be the focus of a practice task. Data from *Keep the conversation flowing* shows that this task was more effective at eliciting the use of preemptive CSs from students in the role of the listener than those in the role of the speaker (cf. 21.2.5, 21.4.2). One reason for this appears to be that the task instructions for the listener are much more specific than those for the speaker. They draw the learners' attention to the specific functions that listener strategies can and should be used to fulfill during the task. Consequently, altering the instructions for the speaker to make them equally detailed in terms of the communicative functions the speakers should attune to

would likely have encouraged the students acting in this role to use more of the preemptive CSs for speakers that they had been introduced to in the course (cf. 21.5). By modifying the task instructions, it would be possible to place more emphasis on practicing not only with preemptive listener CSs, but also with at least some types of preemptive speaker CSs¹⁵³ as well. Additionally, in light of the discussion of the different roles of focused and specific versus integrated and comprehensive practice tasks above, I would argue that the degree to which a task serves to fulfill either of these functions may also be influenced by modifications to the task instructions. In *Keep the conversation flowing*, emphasis on practice with preemptive CSs could, for example, be downplayed altogether by asking the listener to listen to the speaker talk about a particular topic for a set amount of time without explicitly drawing the learners' attention to any specific aspects of communication that they should attune to in their particular roles during the task. In general, then, teachers may be able to influence not only the specific focus of a particular task by modifying the task instructions, but also the type of practice it provides.

Finally, analysis of the practice tasks included in this block of the course suggests one other area of task design that is relevant for the effectiveness of practice tasks: Tasks must be constructed so as to elicit the use of the CSs they purport to target. In the case of a role-playing task from Unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2* used in the context of the lesson sequence on CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding (cf. Chapter 18), analysis of the data uncovered that only one of the two scenarios the students were asked to role-play actually elicited the use of both of the CSs that were the focus of the lesson. Instead of eliciting proposals for solutions, the second scenario created a face-threatening situation which elicited face-saving and face-managing acts from the students (cf. 18.3). This lack of connection between the CSs that were the focus of the lesson and the CSs that were elicited in the practice task suggests that teachers need to examine practice tasks critically, even those provided in well-established language learning materials, to make sure that opportunities for focused practice of specific CSs are truly being created.

¹⁵³ I have, however, noted that the parameters of this task do not create opportunities to practice with all of the different preemptive CSs for the speaker that were introduced during instruction. For example, the clear division of roles between speaker and listener seems to have deterred the use of speaker strategies related to smoothing turn handover, despite evidence that the students in the course were aware of these strategies (cf. 21.2.5, 21.4.2, 21.5).

22.2 *Raising learner awareness of cross-cultural differences in CS use*

Another aspect of the overall approach to teaching CSs in the ELF-oriented classroom which deserves reconsideration in light of the analysis of this block of instruction relates to the fourth area of Dörnyei's framework for the teaching of CSs, in which the focus is on 'highlighting cross-cultural differences in CS use'. It was noted in Chapter 17 above that this area poses some significant challenges for the ELF-oriented classroom. The primary issue raised in that section was the problem of determining which linguacultures should be the focus of comparison. Not only does ELF research indicate that the traditional focus on cross-cultural differences between the cultures of native speakers of the learner's L1 and native speakers of English is unlikely to be helpful for the development of strategic competence for ELF communication, but it is not possible to identify all of the future linguacultures with which a learner may come into contact, let alone address the cross-cultural differences of each in terms of strategy use in the classroom.

Ultimately, this block of instruction in the pilot course included only one brief task sequence aimed at cross-cultural comparison. This task sequence, taken from Unit 3B of the business coursebook *Communicating Across Cultures* (Dignen 2011: 16-17), was selected on the grounds that the two tasks addressing this topic focused on cultural differences in communication style in general, rather than linking differences to particular linguacultures. However, even at the planning phase of this lesson, a number of drawbacks to the cultural representations presented in these materials were identified as requiring a critical approach in the classroom (cf. 20.1). These included the focus on culture at the national level apparent in the texts included in the tasks, as well as the use of broad metapragmatic characterizations of the different communication styles presented.

Despite the adoption of a critical approach on these two points, analysis of classroom work with these tasks shows that this approach was insufficient to overcome certain aspects of the way in which intercultural communication was presented in these materials. Most notably, this included the abstract way in which communication styles were characterized, as well as the underlying assumption apparent in the materials that intercultural communication is an inherently problematic form of communication (cf. 20.5). Thus, this attempt to take a more ELF-informed approach to cross-cultural comparison of CS use ultimately proved to be one of the least successful aspects of this block of the pilot course. It failed to yield any practical pedagogical insights for approaching this area from an ELF-informed perspective, though it perhaps served to underscore again some of the issues involved in adapting this area of Dörnyei's framework to the ELF-oriented classroom.

22.3 *Selecting listening texts to facilitate inductive learning tasks*

An additional aspect of the overall approach to teaching CSs in the ELF-oriented classroom which deserves reconsideration in light of the analysis of this block of instruction is the issue of the selection of listening texts, in particular to facilitate inductive learning tasks. As has been restated at the beginning of this chapter, the overall approach to the teaching of CSs in this course included the premise that the successful multilingual, multicultural user of English, rather than the native English speaker, represents the best model for instruction in the ELF-oriented classroom. To this end, where recordings were used to facilitate inductive tasks, an attempt was made to include recordings featuring non-native speakers of English, preferably in settings in which English was being used as a lingua franca. However, despite the fact that many more recently published ELT materials often claim to include non-native speakers in the recordings they provide, it proved to be difficult to find suitable examples of ELF communication in mainstream materials. The recordings from the coursebook series *English Unlimited* that were ultimately included in two of the lesson sequences in this block were both identified at the planning stage of the lessons as less than ideal in a number of ways (cf. 18.1, 20.1). Both texts were scripted and recorded for pedagogic purposes, and both featured native speaker/non-native speaker interactions that did not appear to take place in ELF settings. Additionally, while the non-native speakers featured in the recordings both had identifiable, if somewhat subtle, non-native accents, their use of English was otherwise indistinguishable from that of their native speaker interlocutors.

As has been addressed in the discussion of ELF-oriented pronunciation teaching in this dissertation, these shortcomings are typical in the kinds of recorded texts that are generally included in existing ELT materials (cf. 7.2.2). Yet literature on teaching pragmatics underscores the importance of the authenticity of pragmatic input (cf. Kasper 1997: 135, Gilmore 2007: 100-101, Murray 2012: 321, Flöck und Pfingsthorn 2014: 196-197). Thus, a teacher who wishes to base inductive work with CSs on more authentic examples of ELF communication will probably need to look beyond traditional ELT materials to find such texts. And while ELF research shows that competent users regularly employ CSs in ELF communication, there are, to the best of my knowledge, currently no published resources available aimed at supporting the ELF-oriented teaching of CSs which feature a collection of potentially useful recordings. The teacher is largely on his or her own to identify and select appropriate¹⁵⁴ video or audio recordings featuring the use of those specific CSs that constitute

¹⁵⁴ The use of the word *appropriate* here glosses over another complex of pedagogical issues. Not only must the teacher find texts which feature examples of the use of the CSs which are the focus of classroom

the focus of classroom instruction, and this may prove to be a time-consuming process (cf. Gilmore 2007: 112).

Despite the paucity of resources for the ELF-oriented teaching of pragmatics and CSs available at the time I was planning the pilot course, I found a useful listening text in the collection of recordings for the ELF-oriented teaching of pronunciation in Walker (2010). This text, entitled *Problems with listening* (Track 6), featured an unscripted and unrehearsed conversation between two non-native speakers of English in which I saw the potential to inductively explore aspects of two of the types of CSs that were the focus of instruction during this block of the course. First, as an unscripted conversation featuring many of the hallmarks of natural discourse, this text could be used to examine listener behavior and to identify some of the CSs that listeners use to actively support their interlocutors as part of the lesson sequence focused on strategies for preempting communicative problems and securing mutual understanding (cf. 20.1). Additionally, the text contained an example of a naturally occurring non-understanding resulting from the use of a non-standard word, which would allow an examination of how the interlocutors were able to identify and negotiate this communicative problem using CSs (cf. 18.1).

However, while *Problems with listening* provided a more realistic example of the use of CSs in ELF talk, working with this recording also posed some significant challenges for the students. They were unaccustomed to listening to this type of unscripted text, with its features of natural conversation and unfiltered use of language, as well as to the more intensive type of work with the text in which they were asked to engage. Although I had anticipated these difficulties to a certain extent in the planning phase of the lesson, the analysis suggests that the students could have used even more scaffolding to help draw their attention not only to specific CSs that were used by the interactants, but also to the functions that these CSs served and their effects on the discourse (cf. 18.4, 20.4). Thus, while the recording itself held considerable potential for raising the students' awareness of these two types of CSs, this potential was not fully realized in the approach to this material adopted in the classroom. This illustrates a second

study, but he or she must also take into consideration the linguistic appropriacy of the text (i.e., whether the learners will be able to cope with vocabulary and grammatical structures found in the text) and the appropriacy of its content (i.e., whether the topic is appropriate to the learners' developmental stage, their interests, the themes of the course, etc.). In the pilot course, the students were already relatively advanced learners of English with fairly well-developed knowledge of the vocabulary and structures of the language. Additionally, the topic of the text selected to facilitate learning about CSs in the pilot course fit well with topics we had been considering during the course, and the students had already shown some awareness of the issues with listening that were going to be addressed in the text. Thus, I was confident that, although other aspects of the text would prove challenging, the students were overall equipped to deal with the linguistic and thematic content of the text.

significant challenge of incorporating more authentic recordings into ELF-oriented CS instruction: in addition to finding appropriate texts featuring the use of specific CSs, teachers must also become proficient in developing a “structured inductive approach” (Dörnyei 1995: 63) to these texts that makes them accessible to learners, particularly where learners have had little previous experience with such texts, and this will likely also pose a significant challenge for many teachers who are themselves unused to teaching with this type of material.

Despite the challenges of working with this more authentic type of text, data collected during both course session 9 itself and the final exam suggests that the experience of working with *Problems with listening* was both motivating and enlightening for the students. Although the students were noticeably more hesitant in their responses during this part of the lesson sequence, they appeared interested in understanding the content of the conversation, as well as how communication functioned between the two speakers. Two students also mentioned this text specifically during their final exams in connection with something they had learned during the course (cf. 18.4). Beyond demonstrating that the text itself had made a lasting impression on these students, these comments indicate that working with *Problems with listening* may have contributed to the development of at least two aspects of strategic competence mentioned in Dörnyei’s framework. First, it appears to have increased at least some students’ awareness of CSs and their potential to facilitate communicative success in intercultural communication. Additionally, it may have encouraged students to try using CSs in their own communicative exchanges as a means of supporting mutual understanding. Thus, although the students may have benefited from a more tightly scaffolded line of questioning during their work with *Problems with listening*, the task sequence developed around this text was still able to contribute positively to some of the overall aims of the block of instruction.

22.4 Fostering meta-pragmatic awareness by creating connections between CSs and linguistic realizations

A further aspect of the overall approach to teaching CSs in the ELF-oriented classroom which deserves reconsideration in light of the analysis of this block of instruction relates to the development of the students’ metapragmatic awareness of their own strategy use. As has been noted in both 19.7 and 21.5, the students in the pilot course demonstrated only partial awareness of their own strategy use in communicative activities, including the game of *Taboo* and the communicative practice task *Keep the conversation flowing*. However, there were some significant qualitative differences in the type of partial awareness they demonstrated after these

two tasks. In the post-task discussion phase following *Keep the conversation flowing*, the students displayed relatively high levels of awareness of CSs for active and supportive listening, the type of CS which was the overt focus of the task. Additionally, they demonstrated more awareness of CSs that had been introduced in previous direct instruction, e.g. the preemptive listener CSs ‘asking a question to get further information’ and ‘backchannelling (verbally) to show listenership/comprehension’. They showed less awareness of CSs that were used in the task but had never been directly introduced in preceding lesson segments, e.g. the preemptive speaker CS ‘increasing explicitness’ (cf. 21.5). By comparison, after the game of *Taboo*, the students generally demonstrated a very limited awareness of their own use of paraphrasing strategies overall. Not only did they fail to mention most of the CSs that had actually been used during the task in the post-task discussion, they also claimed to have used CSs which in fact had not been employed at all (cf. 19.7).

In 19.7, it was argued that one reason for the students’ comparative lack of awareness of their own CS use after the game of *Taboo* may have been that preceding instruction failed to create enough connections between specific paraphrasing strategies and potential linguistic realizations. This communicative practice task was preceded only by a brief phase in which the class was asked to orally brainstorm paraphrasing strategies with which they were familiar. No attempt was made to connect the strategies that were proposed in the brainstorming round to potential linguistic realizations in English. Instead, it was largely assumed that the students would be familiar with both the concept of paraphrasing strategies and the English structures and vocabulary they might need to realize them. Thus, the students were largely left to make these connections on their own.

The data from both the *Taboo* game and the prepared paraphrasing task that followed confirms that many students were in fact able to successfully enact a larger range of paraphrasing strategies than were actually identified in the post-task discussion. However, by failing to help the students create connections between form and function during direct instruction, this instruction may ultimately have remained too abstract to facilitate the development of the students’ meta-pragmatic awareness of their own use of these strategies. By contrast, before engaging in the communicative practice task *Keep the conversation flowing*, the students were exposed to a number of activities introducing preemptive CSs for the listener and the speaker. They were given opportunities to observe how these CSs were realized in conversation through inductive work with recordings, and they were also introduced directly to a number of potential linguistic realizations in some of the materials used in this lesson sequence. In other words, more connections were made in this lesson sequence between CSs and the linguistic means that might be used to realize them in English, and this may help to explain why the students were more meta-pragmatically aware of their own use of the

targeted CSs during *Keep the conversation flowing* than during *Taboo* or the prepared paraphrasing task.

The importance of the development of meta-pragmatic awareness for ELF communication has been discussed in 15.4. According to scholars such as McConachy (2018) and Murray (2012), it is this type of awareness which ultimately facilitates the kind of pragmatic flexibility that makes it possible for ELF users to accommodate to a wide range of interlocutors. The above observations from the pilot course suggest that, even in classes comprised of advanced learners who are largely able to enact strategies linguistically in practice, there is still a need to include activities that help learners to connect function and form in order to support the development of their meta-pragmatic awareness of these CSs. To this end, I have made a number of suggestions for how the lesson sequence on paraphrasing might have been improved in order to better foster the development of this type of competence in 19.7.

22.5 *Selecting or generating realizations of CSs for direct instruction*

As mentioned in 22.4 above, it was assumed in the pilot course that the students, who were all advanced learners of English, would be familiar with the vocabulary and structures they might need to enact specific paraphrasing strategies, and indeed, the analysis of communicative tasks from this block of the course shows that the majority of students were able to successfully use paraphrasing strategies despite their limited awareness of their own strategy use. However, in less advanced courses, it may be necessary to spend considerably more time introducing learners to the vocabulary and structures needed to realize paraphrasing strategies in English. Dörnyei (1995) noted that using paraphrasing strategies, for example, requires “certain basic core vocabulary and sentence structures” (Dörnyei 1995: 64; cf. also Tarone and Yule 1989, Dörnyei and Thurrell 1992). Thus, “being familiar with a strategy in L1 might be an insufficient condition for efficient strategy use in L2” if these more basic elements are either “missing or not automatized properly” (Dörnyei 1995: 64). In less advanced courses, then, it might be necessary to spend more instructional time on activities which fall into the fifth area of Dörnyei’s framework for teaching CSs, ‘teaching CSs directly by presenting linguistic devices to verbalize them’.

The argument that learners may require a certain amount of exposure to linguistic realizations of CSs, whether to raise their meta-pragmatic awareness of function-form relationships between strategies and realizations or to help them acquire the vocabulary and structures that they may require in order realize CSs in the first place, raises another issue for

an ELF-oriented approach to the teaching of CSs. Pragmatics scholars generally agree that any pragmatic input presented in pragmatics learning materials should be based upon empirical evidence from relevant communicative contexts; for the ELF-oriented classroom, this suggests that pragmatic input should be “based on what we have learnt from empirical studies on pragmatic aspects of ELF communication” (Murray 2012: 321). As has been discussed at length in 15.3, there is by now a fairly sizeable body of empirical research into the pragmatic processes of ELF, including the use of CSs in ELF talk. The focus of more recent research has been primarily on identifying and describing “the underlying processes that motivate the use of one or another form at any given moment in an interaction” (cf. Jenkins et al. 2011: 296). With regard to CSs, then, attention has primarily been paid to the kinds of strategies that ELF users use to fulfill particular communicative functions. This meant that in the planning phase of the pilot course, there was a solid base of empirical findings upon which to make pedagogical decisions about which types of CS to focus on in this block of the course (cf. Chapter 17). However, in light of the high degree of variability and fluidity in the use of forms that has been observed in ELF talk, ELF research has largely moved away from the identification of lexicogrammatical patterns. Since abandoning this research aim, the field has consistently distanced itself from making specific recommendations regarding what vocabulary and grammatical structures should be taught in the ELF-oriented classroom (cf. Seidlhofer 2011: 198, Jenkins 2012: 492). And this complicates the practical pedagogical question of how to identify useful vocabulary and structures for realizing the specific CSs that have been selected as the focus of instruction in the ELF-oriented classroom.

In contrast to pedagogically-oriented literature from the field of ELF research, mainstream ELT materials generally offer a ready supply of input in terms of realizations of the CSs they introduce and the vocabulary and structures that learners might need to acquire in order to use them. However, there are some disadvantages to drawing heavily on these types of ELT materials for potential realizations of CSs in the ELF-oriented classroom. As has been discussed in 15.4, the mainstream approaches to the teaching of pragmatics which are generally reflected in ELT materials have been criticized by ELF scholars for placing too much emphasis on the pragmatic norms of native English speakers, as well as on the importance of sentence-level accuracy in realizing pragmatic functions, neither of which appears to contribute positively to the development of the kind of flexible strategic competence exhibited by successful ELF users. Additionally, as has been discussed in Chapter 16, the types of pragmatic input which traditionally appear in ELT materials have been criticized for their lack of authenticity. Texts used to introduce pragmatic concepts such as speech acts or CSs are often scripted around a set of target realizations, many of which are based on native speaker intuition

rather than empirical data, and studies have found that these scripted texts often present inaccurate and idealized representations of these acts and strategies in use.

Teachers thus find themselves in a challenging position when it comes to the question of how to identify vocabulary and structures that may be good candidates for direct instruction in the ELF-oriented classroom. On the one hand, there is very little guidance available on the basis of empirical evidence from ELF studies. Using recordings or transcripts of authentic ELF conversations might yield some examples of realizations of particular CSs, but as has been discussed in 22.3 above, it may require a significant investment of time, as well as some practice in pragmatic analysis, to find appropriate texts featuring the use of certain strategies (cf. Gilmore 2007: 112). It may therefore not be practicable to generate sets of potential realizations in this way. On the other hand, though activities presenting realizations, as well as the vocabulary and structures learners may need to acquire in order to use them, are readily available in mainstream ELT materials, these may not provide the best source of input for direct instruction relating to the realization of CSs in the ELF-oriented classroom.

In regard to similar issues involving language input for the ELF-oriented classroom, Seidlhofer (2011) has argued that “what matters is not the language content but how it is exploited for learning” (Seidlhofer 2011: 201; cf. Seidlhofer 2011: 198-199, Gilmore 2007: 98; cf. also Baker 2015: 196 for a similar argument regarding cultural input). Following this argument, then, what really counts in an ELF-oriented approach to ‘teaching CSs directly by teaching linguistic devices to verbalize them’ is the contribution that any input can be used to make toward the development of the kind of flexible pragmatic competence with CSs that ELF users appear to require. Where this input comes from less than ideal sources in terms of an ELF-oriented approach to language teaching, adopting a critical approach in the classroom can make up for some of the shortcomings of the input itself. In particular, examining input critically with learners can help them to become more aware of contextual factors that may influence both the choice of CS and the way it is realized (cf. McConachy 2018: 16). Thus, taking a critical stance toward realizations can foster the development of the learner’s meta-pragmatic awareness of the connections between CSs and potential realizations, an aspect that I have argued above is important in helping learners to develop the kind of conscious awareness of their own pragmatic choices which allows a user to select contextually appropriate realizations based upon perceptions of interlocutors’ needs and to monitor the effects of these realizations in ELF talk.

At the time I was planning the pilot course, I was well aware of the challenges involved in making pedagogical decisions about which linguistic forms might need to be taught in the ELF-oriented classroom in order to facilitate the teaching of CSs. However, since the pilot course

was being offered to relatively advanced learners, it was possible to circumvent this issue to some extent within this study. In the planning phase of this block of the course, materials were selected largely on the basis that they focused on strategies, and functions of those strategies, that were attested as important for ELF communication. While this included a recording of a relatively authentic conversation from an ELF-oriented pronunciation resource book for teachers, many of the materials selected for lesson sequences in this block were drawn from other types of ELT materials, including a general English textbook series and an intercultural business English coursebook. Realizations of CSs that were presented in these materials, either indirectly in inductive tasks or more directly in vocabulary-oriented tasks, were treated as potential realizations that students could draw upon, without explicit focus on acquiring specific structures or vocabulary items or on reproducing these realizations according to a standard norm of language use.

Although I was largely aware of the shortcomings of mainstream ELT materials in light of ELF and took steps to counteract them in the way that such materials were used in the pilot course (cf. 18.1, 19.1, 20.1), the analysis of this block of instruction uncovered some additional issues which stemmed from working with the realizations of CSs presented in this type of resource. First, analysis of the data collected during the communicative practice task *Keep the conversation flowing* revealed a certain incongruity between some of the realizations of specific CSs that were introduced using ELT materials in this block of the course and the ways in which the students actually realized these CSs during the task. In realizing the preemptive speaker strategy ‘comprehension check’, it was observed that most of the students who employed this strategy did not realize it using the types of full interrogative structures that had been introduced through tasks from the *Explore speaking* section of Unit 9 of *English Unlimited B2* in course session 9. In two of six instances of use, the speaker realized this strategy in a more minimal way by using rising intonation at the end of a turn (cf. 21.2.5, 21.4.2). In the final exam version of the task, the phrase *you know?* with rising intonation accounted for a further three instances of the realization of this strategy (cf. 21.4.2). I have argued in the analysis of this data that the use of these alternative realizations appeared to be quite effective within this communicative task for a number of pragmatic reasons (cf. 21.2.5, 21.4.2). In that sense, it represented a display of the students’ strategic competence rather than a lack of learning. Thus, although no generalizations about the use or effectiveness of this pattern of CS realization can be made on the basis of this study, both the students’ preference for, and their success in using, the structure *you know?* and other more minimal types of realization to enact the speaker CS ‘comprehension check’ suggests that there may be a need to reexamine the necessity of focusing primarily on the kinds of full interrogative structures typically presented in materials like *English Unlimited B2* in the ELF-oriented classroom.

Additionally, classroom work with one specific set of materials, Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* (Dignen 2011: 16-17), proved significantly less fruitful in practice than anticipated. This was the only task sequence included in this block of the course that took a deductive, rather than inductive, approach to the introduction of potential realizations. These materials seemed particularly attractive during the planning phase of this block of instruction because they included a task that took a more student-centered approach to generating additional realizations of specific CSs without necessarily deferring to native speaker norms of use. While the third task of the sequence took the more traditional approach of providing the students with a set of potential realizations for the specific CSs that were introduced, the final task invited them to expand upon these suggestions with ideas of their own (cf. 20.1). In spite of this, analysis of classroom work with these materials uncovered two significant issues with this task sequence (cf. 20.3). First, the realizations in this task, both those provided as examples in task 3 and the ones generated by the students, remained completely decontextualized. Neither were any chances provided to observe the realizations which were introduced in communicative use, nor did the lesson segment include any opportunities for communicative practice with these CSs and their potential realizations. Additionally, while having the students come up with additional realizations might have helped to undermine the notion that the students needed to acquire and use the specific realizations provided in the previous task, the student-centered nature of task 4 was unable to sufficiently offset the highly prescriptive way in which the CSs themselves were introduced in task 3. Therefore, I ultimately concluded in 20.5 that this set of materials was not able to contribute adequately to the aims of the course and probably should have been replaced with another task sequence.

Finally, as has already been discussed in 22.4 above, simply avoiding the issue of which realizations to introduce by not introducing any potential realizations in direct instruction proved to be problematic, since it appears that failing to create connections for the students between CSs at an abstract level and some of their potential realizations at a more concrete one negatively impacted the development of the students' meta-pragmatic awareness of their own CS use. Thus, although the students in the pilot course were more advanced in terms of their knowledge of English structures and vocabulary and could actually use this knowledge to realize CSs in practice, circumventing the issue in this way did not contribute to the type of learning that would aid them in developing the kind of flexible strategic competence that is necessary for ELF communication.

Despite the adoption of a critical, non-normative approach to the realizations provided in mainstream ELT materials, then, it was not entirely possible to overcome the shortcomings in the materials of this type used in the pilot course. Even in combination with the use of more authentic sources of ELF communication, the students were not always provided with enough

input in terms of potential realizations to help them make connections between form and function that would help them to develop a conscious awareness of their own use of strategies. This raises the question as to whether there may be other potential sources of input that teachers could use to augment their pedagogical repertoire for teaching ways to verbalize specific CSs, sources which might even help to counterbalance some of the issues involved in relying on ELT materials and authentic ELF data.

Dörnyei (1995) provides only one concrete suggestion for the fifth area of his framework, ‘teaching CSs directly by presenting linguistic devices to verbalize them’, but this suggestion appears to provide such a potential alternative technique. When seeking to generate useful vocabulary and structures for realizing CSs in the classroom, Dörnyei suggests that “[o]ne good way to collect such sets is by asking the learners to perform strategies in their L1 and then trying to find L2 equivalents for the structures and core lexis they used” (Dörnyei 1995: 64). In this technique, the learners’ own pragmalinguistic competence in their L1 becomes a resource for the classroom. In terms of its appropriacy for the ELF-oriented classroom, the technique has the particular advantage of allowing learners to transfer their own knowledge from their L1 into English without necessarily referencing English native speaker norms. The focus can thus be placed on learning to express the learners’ already existing strategic competence through a new medium, rather than on learning how native speakers of English would realize particular CSs. Additionally, this technique encourages learners to actively examine realizations and the way they function, rather than passively receiving the suggestions made in a set of learning materials. This type of active and critical enquiry is more likely to foster the overall development of the learners’ meta-pragmatic awareness of CSs, not only in the L2, but also in the L1. This is largely in keeping with current recommendations from mainstream applied pragmatics research, which stress the need to help learners become more consciously aware of their pragmatic competence in their L1 and of the potential for transfer from the L1 to the L2 in order to promote the development of pragmatic competence in the L2 (cf. 15.2). And finally, where a learning group is composed of learners from more than one linguistic background, it may be possible to engage in some level of cross-linguistic comparison of the ways that CSs are realized in two or more different languages. This might offer a more ELF-appropriate opportunity to incorporate some activities related to the fourth area of Dörnyei’s framework for teaching CSs than the activities which were included in the pilot course (cf. 22.2 above).

Dörnyei’s suggestion of drawing upon learners’ performance of CSs in their L1 may be particularly apposite where learners have not yet developed many linguistic resources in English. Based upon the level of the learning group, the teacher may primarily provide suggestions for equivalent expressions of particular realizations, or the learners could be given

the task of using materials such as bilingual dictionaries or internet-based translation services to find potential realizations. For more advanced learners, however, I would argue on the basis of the analysis from this block of the course that it may also be possible to start directly with the L2. This was largely the approach taken in task 4 of Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* mentioned above, where the learners were asked to generate one or more additional possible realizations directly in English for each CS introduced in the previous task (cf. 20.3). This approach was also used in the lesson sequence on CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding to augment the rather brief list of possible realizations for proposing a solution to a misunderstanding provided in task 5 from Unit 2.1 of *English Unlimited B2* (cf. 18.2). For the most part, the students in the pilot course proved themselves capable of providing functionally appropriate alternative realizations of these CSs directly in English. The tasks ultimately generated a wide range of potential realizations, and, while not all were phrased idiomatically according to the norms of Standard English, all were readily understandable and most were appropriate. In that sense, both tasks were successful and productive as a means of generating sets of possible realizations of specific CSs.

However, as noted above, both the realizations introduced in Unit 3B of *Communicating Across Cultures* and the realizations proposed by the students remained almost completely decontextualized. Thus, rather than working entirely deductively when generating realizations of specific CSs, it might be more profitable to integrate this type of activity into lesson sequences involving a spoken or written text. This technique could be used to extend inductive work with texts from either more traditional ELT materials or more authentic examples of ELF communication. After identifying examples of the use of specific CSs in the text, learners could then be asked to generate alternative potential realizations in English that would fit into this particular communicative context. In order to further foster their meta-pragmatic awareness, they could then be asked to perform the text with their alternative realizations for their learning group, who would be invited to comment on their choices in terms of pragmatic appropriateness in the specific context of the communicative example. Additionally, it was also suggested above that such generative tasks should then be connected to phases of focused practice with specific CSs. Using CSs in the context of a communicative task would give the learners the opportunity to practice using the realizations they have proposed in a communicative context and to notice the effects of their suggestions on the communicative situation.

Beyond having learners generate alternative realizations of CSs directly in English, the analysis of the data from the pilot course also indicates that it might be possible to use learner performance in the L2 during communicative tasks as a further source of potential realizations of particular CSs. For example, as has been discussed above, analysis of the data from the communicative task *Keep the conversation flowing* led to the identification of a number of

patterns in the structures that the students in the pilot course used to realize the speaker CS ‘comprehension check’ and the listener CS ‘confirmation request’. These patterns exhibited significant differences compared to the structures which were presented in the ELT materials used in preceding direct instruction, but they proved to be pragmatically effective as realizations of these CSs in the context of the communicative task. Thus, it may be worth paying attention to patterns like these in the classroom when building sets of potential realizations for various CSs. Again, this technique may be more useful in more advanced learning groups like the one from the pilot course, in which learners already have fairly well-developed repertoires of vocabulary and structures to draw upon. However, it is possible that such patterns might also emerge in less advanced learners’ use of CSs in communicative practice phases of lessons. Even incomplete or not entirely successful attempts to realize a particular CS might provide a productive basis for reflection on more appropriate ways to phrase particular realizations.

One particular challenge of collecting realizations of CSs from learners’ L2 performance during communicative tasks is that these realizations may be hard for teachers and learners to identify in the moment, particularly if, as was frequently the case in the pilot course, such communicative tasks are taking place in pairs or small groups. As has been pointed out a number of times in the analysis of this block, the students in the pilot course were not always particularly aware of their own CS use. Moreover, many of the patterns attested in the data from this block of the course only became apparent to me as the teacher-researcher during close analysis of the recordings of these tasks. Indeed, a number of the most notable patterns of use only emerged during the final exam version of *Keep the conversation flowing*, meaning that it was too late to incorporate these patterns back into instruction, since the final exam represented the end of this particular course. Nevertheless, I would argue that, with some practice, teachers could train both themselves and their learners to notice the use of specific CSs and the ways in which these strategies are actually realized in a concrete communicative situation. After all, this is essentially what learners are asked to do in the kinds of inductive tasks involving audio recordings which are widely recommended as the basis for pragmatic work in the language learning classroom (cf. Chapter 16).

It may be advantageous to use recordings to facilitate this process, rather than trying to collect examples in real time during the task itself. Groups could be recorded while engaging in a communicative task, and the teacher could then listen to these recordings with the intent of noticing how one or two specific CSs were realized and to what conversational effect. The teacher could then select relevant examples to present to the class for further exploration. Alternatively, the learners could be involved in the process of noticing and transcribing relevant examples. After recording a communicative task, they could be asked to listen to the recording

and notice whether any of the group members actually used one or two specific CSs that were currently the focus of instruction. Where they notice the use of a particular strategy, they could then note down exactly when on the recording it occurred and exactly what words were used to realize it. The learners could then present their findings, and this input could become the basis for discussion with the whole learning group.

In many ways, these suggestions are similar to the suggestions offered in Walker (2005, 2010) for the use of recordings in practicing and assessing learner pronunciation of the core sounds of the LFC (cf. Walker 2005; Walker 2010: 93-94, 149-156). Walker argued that the process of analyzing such recordings may be somewhat time-consuming at first, but with a bit of practice and the development of clear, focused listening goals, teachers can learn to do this fairly efficiently (cf. Walker 2010: 150, Walker 2005: 155-156). Likewise, learning groups might need to be guided through the process of noticing their own use of particular CSs and writing down the particular words or phrases they used to realize them when they are first introduced to this technique, but as they become accustomed to this process, Walker's experience with similar pronunciation-oriented activities suggests that they should be able to engage in such tasks with increasing independence (cf. Walker 2005: 554). Involving learners in the analysis of their own performance may be more feasible in longer courses, in which there is more time to hone the learners' ability to recognize their own CS use in recordings of their performance on practice tasks. However, while there may not have been enough time to practice this technique with the students in the pilot course, I as the teacher could still have looked for patterns in the students' use of CSs that could then have been used as input in a subsequent session if I had been aware at the time of the potential of using learners' own use of CSs as a source of classroom input.

Beyond working with recordings, Gilmore (2007) also argues for the place of transcriptions of spoken discourse in CS instruction. In this context, Gilmore maintains that working with transcriptions is particularly important in that it "allows us to 'freeze' the interaction and highlight salient features for the learners that would otherwise be lost in the normal, transient flow of communication" (Gilmore 2007: 102). Thus, working with transcriptions of their own CS use may help learners to better notice and evaluate their own strategic choices within the communicative context in which they occurred. Gilmore also supported the notion that learners can be involved in "recording and transcribing their own discourse" (Gilmore 2007: 102), a suggestion which he noted has been recommended in a number of previous sources including Brown and Yule (1983), Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) and Schegloff et al. (2002). Again, this might be a technique better suited to longer courses, in which the techniques of transcribing from a recording and analyzing that transcription could be honed with the learners.

The use of learner performance as a further source of potential realizations of specific CSs suggests the potential of taking a more cyclic approach to CS instruction. In a lesson sequence, learners might first be exposed to awareness-raising tasks in which they are introduced to certain CSs and to some potential ways to realize them, e.g. through inductive work with a recorded text from ELT materials or a more authentic example of ELF communication. A succeeding phase of communicative practice could then not only provide the learners with opportunities for specific targeted practice with those CSs, but it might also be used as the basis for a new phase of awareness-raising, in which the examination of the learners' own realizations of particular CSs might lead to the identification of further structures and vocabulary to add to the learning group's repertoire of building blocks for potential realizations. This could be followed by another phase of specific focused practice in order to allow the learners to practice incorporating new realizations into their performative repertoire. In the pilot course, a cyclic approach like this might have been particularly beneficial in the lesson sequence on paraphrasing strategies, where the students did in fact use a wider range of paraphrasing strategies than they were aware of (cf. Chapter 19). Using the students' own input might have been one way to create more connections between these CSs and some potential vocabulary and structures for realizing them without necessarily relying on preexisting ELT materials or trying to find relevant examples of strategy use in recordings of ELF interactions.

Like the realizations presented in traditional ELT materials, realization patterns identified in learner performance of CSs need to be approached critically, particularly since classroom contexts may not represent authentic instances of ELF communication and this may have an impact on the effectiveness of certain structures or even strategies. For example, within the pilot course, a case occurred in the third round of the communicative practice task *Keep the conversation flowing* in course session 10 in which a speaker's attempt to code-switch into his L1, German, proved ineffective in his efforts to paraphrase the meaning of a word for his Portuguese interlocutor (cf. 21.2.3). As I have argued in the analysis of this case, this move would likely have been successful with just about any other member of the learning group, since the majority of the students enrolled in the course spoke German as their L1. However, in this particular case, the two interactants' lack of shared linguacultural background prevented the use of code-switching to the speaker's L1 from being successful. Likewise, it seems conceivable that the use of some vocabulary or structures which result from direct transfer from a particular L1 into English may be more effective with interlocutors from the same or similar linguacultural backgrounds than with those from significantly different linguacultures. This suggests that, particularly in linguaculturally homogenous learning groups, it may be necessary for the teacher to act at times as a lens that helps learners to determine whether a particular realization of a CS was in fact successful largely due to a shared linguacultural background

with interlocutors or whether the same realization would likely be effective with interlocutors from other linguacultural backgrounds as well.

22.6 *Emphasizing the appropriacy and effectiveness of realizations over formal accuracy*

The three alternative techniques that have been introduced and discussed above – using learners’ realizations of CSs in the L1 to identify vocabulary and structures that may be used in the L2, generating alternative realizations of CSs directly in the L2, and using learners’ performance in the L2 to identify realizations of CSs – all provide opportunities to generate potential realizations of CSs without necessarily referencing norms of native speaker usage. In that sense, they provide a possible answer to one of the major issues which has been raised regarding the use of mainstream ELT materials to teach CSs in the ELF-oriented classroom. However, there is a second issue concerning the approach taken in such materials that needs to be considered when using the alternative techniques that have been proposed above, and that is that mainstream ELT materials also traditionally place considerable emphasis on the importance of sentence-level accuracy in realizing CSs. As has been discussed in 15.3, empirical studies of ELF have shown that it is not the accurate use of specific linguistic patterns, but rather the ability to adjust flexibly to the needs of one’s interlocutors that contributes most to success in the use of CSs in ELF talk. In fact, some scholars maintain that overemphasis on linguistic accuracy may actually have a negative effect on the development of the particularly flexible kind of pragmatic competence which appears to contribute to success in ELF communication (cf. 15.4). Thus, even where teachers have addressed the issue of focusing on native speaker norms of usage by choosing an alternative technique, failing to adopt a non-normative approach to the vocabulary and structures that are generated through that technique may undermine its contributions to the development of the kind of flexible strategic competence needed for ELF communication.

Rather than focusing on training learners to use vocabulary and structures in the realizations of particular CSs correctly according to some predefined norm, ELF research suggests that instruction needs to draw more attention to issues of appropriacy and effectiveness, since awareness of these aspects of communicative performance can contribute positively to a learner’s developing ability to consciously deploy his or her strategic resources in response to relevant contextual factors. Ultimately, then, in the assessment of performance with these CSs, learners should be rewarded for making effective and appropriate use of their pragmalinguistic resources, whether or not they do so in ways that formally conform to the input they have

received. According to Jenkins and Leung (2014), an ELF-appropriate language assessment needs to “move away from [a] narrow focus on native-like correctness” and instead look for “effective ways of testing the receptive and productive skills relevant” to ELF usage, since these are the features which help to determine “whether ELF users’ English is fit for ELF use” (Jenkins and Leung 2014: 1614). To this end, Jenkins (2020) argues that “regardless of what particular skill is to the fore, assessment should be concerned with whether, and how effectively, a successful outcome is reached in a spoken exchange” (Jenkins 2020: 476). This should include “reward[ing] the successful use of accommodation strategies even where the result would be an error in native English”, as well as assessing “the extent to which contingent uses of ELF in context have facilitated communication” (Jenkins and Leung 2014: 1614; cf. also Jenkins 2006b, Taguchi and Roever 2017: 255-256). Thus, accuracy is deemphasized in favor of the effectiveness and appropriacy of the learner’s use of language during the assessment.

In the pilot course, this principle of emphasizing appropriacy and effectiveness over formal accuracy guided the creation of rubrics for the assessment of student performance on the final exam version of *Keep the conversation flowing* (cf. Appendix D). In a number of the criteria for both speaker and listener, the emphasis is squarely placed on the appropriacy of the student’s strategic and pragmalinguistic choices. By contrast, there is no emphasis on linguistic accuracy according to a standard norm. Rather, the final descriptor of each rubric assesses the student’s use of language in terms of whether or not particular aspects impacted the interlocutor’s ability to understand the student. Thus, rather than taking a normative approach to issues surrounding the use of linguistic forms to realize CSs, the assessment tool took a more emic approach, in which the student’s performance was assessed in terms of its appropriacy and effectiveness within the context of the communicative encounter in which it took place.

While the rubrics developed for the pilot course demonstrate one way in which the principle of emphasizing appropriacy and effectiveness over accuracy might be translated into classroom practice during phases of assessment, the practical application of this principle in phases of direct instruction dealing with realizations of particular strategies may not be as straightforward as it sounds at first, particularly in less advanced learning groups. Dörnyei (1995) has stated that learners may only have recourse to the vocabulary and structures they need to realize strategies if these elements are “properly automatized” (Dörnyei 1995: 64). This implies that learners who are still acquiring such elements will need a certain amount of focused practice with them in order to help their use to reach this automatic stage. Where exactly the line might fall between enough focused practice to allow learners to adopt new vocabulary and structures into their available repertoires and an overemphasis on formal accuracy remains unclear. This study has little to contribute, since this issue was largely circumvented due to the advanced

level at which the course was offered. Since the students had already reached a certain level of grammatical proficiency through previous English courses, it was possible to work on their strategic competence without focusing on the systematic introduction of vocabulary or grammatical structures. However, especially given the shift in thinking required of teachers in distancing themselves from the traditional focus on norm-based formal accuracy in ELT, this may be an area in which teachers feel a particular need for more guidance if they are to adopt an ELF orientation toward teaching English.

23 Conclusion: Central findings and their implications for research and practice

The research project presented and discussed in this dissertation sought to explore how emerging theories about ELF and ELF-oriented language teaching might contribute to English courses that would better prepare university-level students studying a range of subjects to use English in ELF settings beyond the language learning classroom. As such, it aimed to contribute toward bridging the gap between empirical research into ELF and actual ELF-informed ELT practice. Following an exploratory action research design, the heart of this project was a pilot course, designed and taught by the author of this dissertation as part of the language program at a technical university in Germany. In keeping with the qualitative, applied linguistic focus of the study, the primary instrument of data collection was a 185,000-word corpus comprising all of the spoken interactions which took place during the pilot course, as well as during the final oral exam. Supported by data drawn from additional research instruments, ‘telling’ moments in this spoken classroom discourse were identified and analyzed, primarily using an ethnographically-informed CA approach, in order to explore and evaluate the course in terms of the overarching research question.

The main body of this dissertation has examined in turn three major strands of instructional content addressed during the pilot course: pronunciation (Chapters 4-7), culture and intercultural communication (Chapters 8-14) and pragmatics and communication strategies (Chapters 15-22). This final chapter presents some concluding discussion of the findings from these three areas in relationship to the research questions guiding the study, as well as the implications of these findings for further research and practice. 23.1 begins with a brief summary of the most significant findings from each of the three major strands and their potential implications for ELF-informed ELT. 23.2 then offers some discussion of the pilot course as a whole and the extent to which its design was able to support successful, ELF-oriented language learning. Next, 23.3 offers a reevaluation of the design of the pilot course in light of conceptual literature on ELF and pedagogy which has been published since the pilot course was held. After that, 23.4 considers some wider practical implications of the study for ELT and classroom practice. Finally, 23.5 proposes some possible directions for further research.

23.1 Summary of central findings and their implications for ELT practice

The following three sections provide a brief summary of the most significant findings from each of the strands which constituted the particular foci of analysis in the current dissertation: pronunciation (23.1.1), culture and intercultural communication (23.1.2), and pragmatics and communication strategies (23.1.3). They also highlight some of the implications of these findings for the implementation of an ELF-oriented approach in each of these areas.

23.1.1 Findings from the pronunciation strand

The pronunciation strand of the pilot course was split into two major areas, each of which yielded some noteworthy findings. The first area focused on helping the students to improve their ability to produce those specific features of pronunciation that have been identified as important for intelligibility in ELF settings, based upon Jenkins' Lingua Franca Core (LFC). In order to use limited instructional time effectively, diagnostic assessment was used to provide each student with personalized feedback about which features of the LFC he or she needed to improve. Over the next four course sessions, each of these areas was then addressed through classroom instruction, either in parallel sessions in which small groups of students worked on different sets of features independently or through whole-class activities in which a number of features were combined to facilitate teacher-led instruction. Analysis showed that, after instruction, all students demonstrated at least some improvement in at least one area of the LFC that had been identified for them through diagnostic testing at the beginning of the course. Moreover, several had improved significantly in all the areas that had been identified as problematic for them. Thus, the targeted, learner-centered approach adopted in this strand of instruction appears to have been generally successful in helping the students to improve salient aspects of their pronunciation, even over the relatively short duration of the pilot course. This would thus appear to substantiate claims made by Jenkins (2000, 2002) and Walker (2010) that the LFC represents not only a more relevant, but also a more achievable target for pronunciation teaching in the ELF-oriented classroom than the more traditional focus on native-like pronunciation of all features.

While the ability to produce pronunciation features of the LFC in a target-like way is considered a vital prerequisite for intelligibility, the ability to adjust phonologically to the needs of one's interlocutor(s), both productively where one's own pronunciation proves problematic and receptively where one encounters significant differences in an interlocutor's pronunciation, is considered more important for successful ELF communication than learning to produce target-like pronunciations of these features absolutely consistently. Thus, in addition to work

on specific pronunciation features, the development of the students' productive and receptive phonological accommodation skills was also an important area of focus in the pronunciation strand of the pilot course. However, work in this area was complicated by the overwhelming linguistic homogeneity of the pilot course learning group, since learners in such groups are not naturally exposed to opportunities to practice accommodating towards speakers from a range of other L1s, as they would be in a more linguistically heterogeneous setting. The question of how – and even whether it is in fact possible – to teach ELF-oriented productive phonological accommodation skills in linguistically homogenous learning groups has largely been left unresolved in ELF literature to date.

Analysis of spoken data from the pronunciation strand of the pilot course showed that a number of the practice tasks used during instruction were in fact able to elicit successful phonological accommodation toward more target-like pronunciation of specific features, despite the fact that students were often working with peers who shared their L1. In these tasks, two particular aspects of task design appeared to play a key role in the elicitation of this type of phonological accommodation. First, these tasks were designed around a limited set of (contrasting) pronunciation features. Second, the students were given adequate preparation for the task in the form of instruction and practice in how to produce those particular features. This served both to make target-like pronunciation more achievable and to raise the students' awareness of the targeted features in the subsequent practice tasks. Thus, the findings in this particular area of the current study not only suggest that it is in fact possible to use communicative tasks to practice productive phonological accommodation skills in linguistically homogenous learning groups, but also led to the identification of specific aspects that appear to contribute to the effectiveness of such tasks in linguistically homogenous learning groups. While tasks will generally require tighter parameters than in linguistically diverse learning groups, attending to these aspects could help teachers and materials writers to design effective tasks for practicing productive phonological accommodation toward more target-like pronunciation in linguistically homogenous classroom settings.

In addition to fostering productive phonological accommodation skills, instruction in the pronunciation strand of the pilot course also aimed to develop the students' ability to adjust their phonological expectations in order to accommodate receptively towards different accents and pronunciations they might encounter beyond the classroom. Since the students in the pilot course would not naturally be exposed to a range of different L2 accents because of the linguistic homogeneity of the learning group, recorded texts provided the basis for this strand of instruction. More authentic recordings of L2 speakers of English were included in classroom tasks, particularly in the second half of the course, with the goal of helping the students to learn to deal more effectively with unfamiliar accents. Analysis of this area of the course showed

that working with authentic ELF listening texts fostered the students' awareness of accent diversity and the importance of intelligible pronunciation for successful ELF communication. These are positive findings, in that both of these types of awareness are considered to be important prerequisites for developing the motivation to engage in the processes of both productive and receptive phonological accommodation, as well as the motivation to develop lasting pronunciation habits. However, findings from the study also suggested that the approach taken to the more authentic listening texts used in the pilot course could have gone farther towards developing the kinds of 'bottom-up listening skills' (cf. Kiczkowiak and Lowe 2018: 29) which would help the students to deal more effectively with the unfamiliar accents or non-standard pronunciations they encountered.

23.1.2 Findings from the culture and intercultural communication strand

In the strand of the course focused on culture and intercultural communication, instruction centered around the development of skills, attitudes and knowledge that would help the students to cope with ELF as a form of intercultural communication, as presented in Baker's Intercultural Awareness (ICA) framework. Classroom instruction was designed to cover a range of the elements of the ICA framework, including at least some belonging to Level 3, the level representing fully-developed intercultural awareness. To facilitate this, lesson sequences were developed around four central topics which were derived from the literature on culture and its role in intercultural communication through ELF. Within each topic, lower-order elements of the ICA framework were linked to higher-level ones as the lesson sequence progressed, in order to support the development of the kind of nuanced and flexible awareness of culture and its role in intercultural communication which research into ELF suggests is necessary within the short timeframe of the pilot course.

Analysis of this strand of the course upheld findings in Baker (2012c, 2015a) that the ICA framework can be effectively used to inform an approach to the development of intercultural awareness in the classroom. While ICA generally appears to require a longer timeframe to develop than is available in a one-semester course, the analysis of this strand of the pilot course nevertheless yielded evidence that the students had become more aware of, and open to, the complexity of the relationship between culture and intercultural communication through instruction. Perhaps most significantly, the study also demonstrated that it was possible to work towards developing at least one of the elements at Level 3 of the ICA framework through classroom instruction. While this level comprises the kind of fully-developed intercultural awareness considered necessary for successful interaction in ELF settings, instruction targeting elements at this level has often been excluded from subsequent studies of the applicability of

ICA for the ELF-oriented classroom. While at least two studies, Yu and Van Maele (2018) and Abdzadeh and Baker (2020), have corroborated the usefulness of ICA as a framework to inform an ELF-oriented approach to developing the skills needed for intercultural communication through ELF in the classroom, both sets of researchers consciously decided against including elements at Level 3 of the framework in their studies. The fact that it was possible to work at this highest level in the pilot course may have been due to the higher level of previous experience with intercultural communication that the students enrolled in the course brought with them to instruction. Nevertheless, this study offers some of the first corroborations of Baker's own findings that this level of ICA can be developed, at least to some extent, through classroom intervention and provides detailed description and analysis of how this was accomplished.

As a secondary aim, the current study also sought to explore the claim that adopting a critical approach might allow teachers to compensate for the problems which have been identified with the cultural representations in many published ELT materials such as textbooks to date. To test this claim, the lesson segments comprising each topic were constructed around tasks selected from a range of currently available teaching materials. These tasks served as the basis for individual segments, but were modified or extended to better account for the nature of culture and intercultural communication through ELF. The analysis of classroom work with these tasks showed that tasks which drew on learner experience were most often successful in helping the students in the pilot course to examine cultural representations critically. By contrast, tasks featuring representations of cultures with which the students were unfamiliar were least effective in facilitating the development of critical cultural awareness. These findings harmonize well with calls in subsequent conceptual literature regarding ELF-oriented ELT to accentuate the local in ELT materials relating to culture and intercultural communication (cf. Kiczowski and Lowe 2018: 105, Rai and Deng 2016, Baker 2015a).

Finally, although the use of cultural informants was not planned as one of the resources for instruction in this strand of the pilot course, due in large part to the linguaculturally homogenous make-up of the learning group, the current study provides evidence that even a relatively small number of non-local perspectives can still be a valuable resource for teaching and learning about culture and intercultural communication in the ELF-oriented classroom, at least in learning groups in which learners are mature and experienced enough to be able to articulate their own cultural experiences and their insights into the local culture. While the students in the pilot course also responded favorably to insights that I as the teacher shared about my own experiences as a non-native of the local culture, they showed the most interest at those points in the course in which the non-local students enrolled in the course provided insights into their own cultures or their perceptions of the local culture. Thus, the use of peer

cultural informants had a particularly positive effect on student engagement and motivation in the pilot course.

23.1.3 Findings from the pragmatics and communication strategies strand

Like the pronunciation strand of the pilot course, the pragmatics and communication strategies strand was also divided into two major areas. The primary aim of the first block of instruction was to raise the students' meta-pragmatic awareness of some general pragmatic principles and processes. Additionally, it also aimed to extend the students' repertoire of potential linguistic realizations for a limited set of speech acts. From a pedagogical perspective, this block was not particularly successful, due in large part to issues with time. Nevertheless, the data collected illustrated some of the challenges of adopting an ELF-oriented approach to pragmatics instruction, as well as a number of issues with the supporting tasks and materials that were used to facilitate instruction.

By contrast, the second block of instruction yielded considerably more useful findings. This block aimed to develop the students' strategic competence with a range of communication strategies (CSs) which have been identified as playing a significant role in ELF talk. Upon the basis of literature relating to CS use in ELF talk, instruction focused on three macro-functions of CS use: CSs for identifying and negotiating points of misunderstanding, strategies for paraphrasing intended meaning, and CSs for preempting misunderstanding and securing mutual understanding. Especially in the lattermost area, particular emphasis was also placed on the active and supportive role of the listener through the use of CSs. In keeping with current recommendations for the teaching of CSs, and of pragmatics more generally, in both mainstream ELT and an ELF-oriented approach to language teaching, a direct, informed approach to the teaching of CSs was adopted in the pilot course. This approach was based in large part upon Dörnyei's six areas for the development of strategic competence in the classroom (Dörnyei 1995), although it was necessary to modify some aspects of the original framework in accordance with guiding principles derived from the literature pertaining to ELF and its implications for language teaching. In keeping with these principles, the multilingual, multicultural speaker was adopted as the primary model for instruction in the pilot course, and emphasis was placed on effective and appropriate use of CSs rather than on correctness according to a standard norm.

Overall, the direct, informed approach adopted in the pilot course appears to have been effective in helping many of the students to develop their strategic competence for ELF communication. Close analysis of the classroom discourse generated during this strand of the

course, as well as during portions of the oral final exam, showed that most of the students who completed the pilot course demonstrated an ability to use a range of the specific CSs that were addressed in the course effectively to negotiate meaning and achieve communicative aims with their interlocutors, both in communicative practice tasks and during the paired exam tasks. A number of students also exhibited increased meta-pragmatic awareness of those CSs that had been addressed during the course and the ways in which they could be used to support the negotiation of meaning and the achievement of mutual understanding in communication.

Analysis of the data collected during this strand of instruction produced additional findings relating to the kind of instructional approach that might successfully facilitate the development of meta-pragmatic awareness as a component of strategic competence in the classroom. This analysis indicated that the students were more meta-pragmatically aware of CSs whose use had been connected to some potential ways to realize these strategies during earlier phases of direct instruction. By contrast, they were less aware of CSs that had been introduced conceptually in direct instruction, but without making any explicit connections to potential realizations. From an ELF-informed standpoint, meta-pragmatic awareness is viewed as an important condition for conscious use, since it enables the kind of flexible and contextually-responsive deployment of CSs which has been found to be pivotally important for successful ELF communication. The findings from this study thus suggest that instruction in the ELF-oriented classroom needs to help learners link CSs to potential ways to realize them, even as it remains important to approach selected linguistic realizations non-normatively in keeping with the overall emphasis in ELF-oriented pedagogy on effectiveness and appropriateness over accuracy according to a standard norm.

Building upon Dörnyei (1995), findings from this strand of the pilot course led to the proposal of an additional non-normative, learner-centered alternative to using input from traditional ELT materials as the basis for CS instruction, at least in more advanced learning groups – using learner performance of CSs in the L2 on communicative practice tasks to generate and examine potential linguistic realizations of specific strategies. Through close conversation analytic examination of spoken data from one particular communicative task used as both a practice task during instruction and an assessment task on the final oral exam, analysis established that the students in the pilot course learning group made effective use of some realization patterns for specific CSs which were not presented in the learning materials selected as the basis for instruction. In light of these findings, it was proposed that where such patterns in learners' own use of a particular CS in the L2 are identifiable, the learners' attention could be drawn to them in subsequent instruction as a potential resource for the further development of their repertoire of linguistic resources for realizing that strategy.

In addition to increased meta-pragmatic awareness of some specific CSs and the ability to use CSs introduced in the course in communicative tasks, analysis of data from this strand also showed that many of the students who took part in the pilot course demonstrated increased awareness of the potential that CSs have for enhancing communicative success in ELF situations after instruction. This awareness is considered an important pre-requisite for developing the motivation to improve one's strategic competence and to consciously employ the CSs in one's repertoire in interaction. Content analysis of spoken data from the final oral assessment identified several points at which different students commented on the central importance of using CSs for successful intercultural communication through ELF. In two cases, the students indicated that this was the most important insight they had gained through participation in the course.

Content analysis of student talk during the final exam further suggested that the development of the awareness of the importance of CS use for successful ELF communication was fostered in particular by the use of listening tasks featuring authentic ELF conversations during the pilot course. Independently of one another, two students mentioned working with one such text as a particularly eye-opening experience which helped to illustrate for them how the skillful use of CSs could prove to be more important for communicative success than the use of 'correct' English forms. Thus, although such texts proved significantly more challenging for the students than the more traditional types of scripted texts usually provided in mainstream ELT materials, it would appear that working with them was a particularly formative experience for at least some students, making a lasting impression on them and helping them to better appreciate the central importance of CSs for successful ELF communication.

While these findings demonstrate one way in which the use of more authentic ELF listening texts was able to contribute positively toward meeting the learning aims of this strand of the pilot course, analysis of classroom work with these texts also indicated that more could have been done to make the most of the texts' potential to facilitate the development of the students' strategic competence. This analysis suggested that the students would have benefitted from a more tightly scaffolded approach to these texts, especially since they were relatively unaccustomed both to listening to this type of text and to working inductively on noticing pragmatic features. Incorporating tighter scaffolding would likely have been more effective in supporting the development not only of a more general awareness of the importance of strategy use for successful ELF interactions, but also of meta-pragmatic awareness regarding how specific CSs could be used to effectively support central processes of ELF communication such as accommodation, negotiation of meaning and the achievement of mutual understanding.

While previous research has emphasized the importance of specific, focused practice for the development of the ability to use particular CSs (cf. Dörnyei 1995), analysis of data from the pilot course indicated that more open-ended communicative tasks in which the students needed to draw upon a wider range of the CSs in their developing repertoires also fostered the development of the students' strategic competence. These findings suggest that both types of practice have an important, if complementary, role to play in the development of the ability to productively use CSs in actual communication. Nevertheless, it has been argued in this dissertation that phases of specific, focused practice with a limited number of CSs should precede more integrated, open-ended forms of practice, since analysis of the various practice phases in this strand of the course suggested that it was specific, focused practice which generally led to increased meta-pragmatic awareness of specific CSs and thus to the ability to use them consciously and notice their effects in conversation.

Finally, close examination of the different communicative practice tasks and their effects on classroom learning also highlighted the importance of task design and task instructions on a task's effectiveness as a particular form of practice. Analysis of the spoken data collected during such tasks indicated that tasks elicited the use of specific CSs more often where attention was explicitly drawn to these CSs in the task instructions. This suggests that altering task instructions might be one way to influence the extent to which a task serves as a specific, focused practice task for a particular set of CSs or as a more integrated, open-ended form of practice for a wider range of CSs. Additionally, analysis of one particular practice task showed that one of the communicative scenarios provided in the task did not actually elicit the use of the specific CSs on which the task purported to focus. Thus, findings from this block of instruction also underscored the importance of task design for the creation of genuine opportunities to practice particular CSs.

23.2 *Reconsidering the pilot course as an ELF-oriented course*

Despite the organization of this dissertation around the major areas of instructional emphasis addressed in the pilot course, the main aim of this study was not to investigate any of these areas separately, but to explore how insights from ELF research might be incorporated into a course aimed at helping the participating students to develop interconnected aspects of what, taken together, might be called an ELF-oriented communicative capacity (cf. 1.2). Although discussion of the conceptualization and planning of lesson sequences and the data collected during course sessions has been presented as belonging to separate strands of instruction in this

dissertation, in practice, these different strands were not treated discretely, but were interwoven with one another, drawing upon each other and even overlapping at times. This is perhaps best illustrated by the fact, alluded to at a number of points in previous chapters, that some lesson segments included elements belonging to multiple strands simultaneously. In this sense, the distinction that has been made between the different strands up to this point, e.g. in the organization of this dissertation into three major sections or in the tables providing a color-coded overview of lesson segments by strand (cf. e.g. Table 1 in 2.4.2), is to some extent an artificial distinction made for the sake of analysis. Therefore, as a final step toward answering the main research question underlying this study, this section will briefly consider the pilot course as a whole and the extent to which its design was able to support successful, ELF-oriented language learning.

One of the primary arguments that has been made in ELF literature regarding ELT is that preparing learners for ELF communication will require a shift away from the traditional focus on the development of native-like competence and sentence-level accuracy toward the development of other types of skills and strategies that have been shown to be more salient for communicative success in ELF talk. Although the exact design of the pilot course and the findings it produced may not be directly generalizable to other contexts, this study has nonetheless demonstrated that it was possible to design a course around these ELF-informed areas of focus, adopting and adapting insights from ELF research into actual ELT practice in a specific classroom setting. Furthermore, the findings from the different strands of the course summarized in 23.1 above provide evidence that the design of the pilot course did in fact lead to successful learning. In each strand, analysis of the data showed that at least some development of ELF-oriented skills, strategies and awareness had taken place as the result of instruction. This suggests that the pilot course was at least to some extent effective in helping the students to develop in each of those areas which were the focus of the course. This is particularly encouraging, considering the short duration of the course. It suggests that even a limited amount of ELF-oriented instruction may be able to contribute towards helping learners to develop salient aspects of their communicative capacity.

Finally, data collected during the study also indicated that the pilot course was well-received by the participating students. Throughout the course, analysis of the classroom discourse collected during the course sessions showed that the students participated actively in both whole-class and small-group discussions and activities. They generally appeared to be motivated by and engaged with the course content, asking follow-up questions and participating in lively debates. Their responses on the end-of-course evaluations revealed that the majority felt that the course content was relevant and valuable, and that their English communication skills had improved as a result of taking the course. Thus, the students

themselves appear to have perceived their own development as a result of taking the course and been satisfied with it. In 2.6, this positive reception of the course was proposed as one reason why the course merited closer study. However, it can also be interpreted as an indicator of the quality and effectiveness of the course.

Overall, then, this study has demonstrated the practicability of developing an ELF-informed and ELF-oriented ELT course at the university level which led to successful learning outcomes and was also well-received by the language learners. This harmonizes with the findings of the handful of other classroom-based studies which to date have investigated the development and effects of ELF-oriented instruction in the language learning classroom in the areas of pronunciation (cf. Rahimi and Ruzrohk 2016), culture and intercultural communication (cf. Baker 2012c, 2015a; Yu and Van Maele 2018; Abdzadeh and Baker 2020) and communication strategies (cf. Dimoski et al. 2016). In each of these studies, the instructional approach that was developed and used was also found to lead to successful learning outcomes in the specific area targeted by the study. Thus, the current study provides further support for previous findings that an ELF-oriented instructional approach can lead to successful learning in classroom contexts. Moreover, it extends these findings beyond a focus on individual areas of instruction to the integration of multiple areas into a comprehensive and cohesive course focused on the development of a broader ELF-oriented communicative capacity.

23.3 Reexamining the design of the pilot course in light of current trends in the conceptual literature on ELF and pedagogy

Since the pilot course was designed and held in the first half of 2013, a substantial body of literature relating to ELF and pedagogy has continued to be published (cf. Dewey and Patsko 2018: 442). Thus, before continuing on to consider the implications of the current study for ELT and possible directions for further research, this section will briefly consider to what extent the guiding principles and areas of instructional focus underlying the design of the pilot course have proven to be durable through comparison with some more recent examples of research-based, conceptual publications regarding the implementation of an ELF-oriented approach in ELT.

Within the last few years, two conceptual articles (Galloway 2018, Kiczowski 2020) have appeared that each propose a set of guiding principles derived from a comprehensive study of current ELF research which the authors argue should be taken into account in the writing of ELF-oriented ELT materials. Given that such materials are designed to be used as the basis for

classroom instruction – and may even be written by teachers for use in their own classrooms (cf. Kiczkowiak and Lowe 2018: 104) – it seems rational that these same principles would apply to curriculum development and course planning as well. Accordingly, the guiding principles put forward in these two articles will be used as initial points of comparison with the principles and priorities adopted in designing my own pilot course. The principles presented in these two articles overlap considerably; since Kiczkowiak (2020) is the more recent, and also draws upon Galloway (2018) as a source text at a number of points, it will be used as the primary point of comparison in the following discussion.

On the basis of ELF research, as well as a literature review of evaluations of currently available coursebooks, Kiczkowiak (2020) proposed seven principles which he argued should inform the development of materials for ELF-oriented ELT. These comprise:

- Intelligibility rather than ‘native speaker’ proximity
- Successful E(LF)nglish users rather than ‘native speakers’
- Authentic E(LF)nglish use rather than ‘native speaker’ corpora
- Intercultural communicative skills rather than fixed cultural models
- Communicative skills rather than ‘native-like’ correctness
- Multilingual E(LF) use rather than monolingual ‘native speaker’ language use
- Raising students’ awareness: towards an ELF mindset

(Kiczkowiak 2020)

Although the article does not explicitly focus on the specific areas which ELF research suggests should be the focus of instruction in the ELF-oriented classroom, the principles themselves provide strong indications of what areas are to be prioritized. Thus, it becomes immediately apparent in the discussion of the first principle that this principle relates to the teaching of pronunciation. Likewise, the discussion of the final principle makes clear that Kiczkowiak is referring to raising learner awareness of “how English is currently being used, by whom, and for what purposes” (Kiczkowiak 2020: 7), i.e., the sociolinguistic situation of English in the world today. In between, some additional areas are unmistakably present in the wording of the principles themselves; intercultural communicative skills and communicative skills are mentioned explicitly in the fourth and fifth principles respectively. In the discussion of the fifth principle, it is further clarified that instruction in the area of communicative skills should place particular emphasis on communication strategies and the pragmatics of language use (cf. Kiczkowiak 2020: 5-6). Altogether then, the areas of particular instructional emphasis alluded to in Kiczkowiak (2020) correspond very closely to those areas which were the primary foci in my pilot course – pronunciation, culture/intercultural communication,

pragmatics/communication strategies and awareness-raising about the sociolinguistic situation of English in the world today.

That the same areas which constituted the instructional foci of the pilot course continue to be treated as centrally important areas for instruction in more recent conceptual publications related to the implementation of an ELF-informed approach in the ELT classroom is even more clearly exemplified in a handbook for ELT practitioners published by Kiczkowiak in collaboration with Robert Lowe in 2018. This handbook, entitled *Teaching English as a Lingua Franca: The journey from EFL to ELF*, represents perhaps the most practically-oriented teacher resource dealing with the adoption of an ELF-oriented approach in the ELT classroom to be published recently (cf. 23.4 below). The most substantial section of the book provides concrete suggestions for classroom activities in each of the areas established by the authors on the basis of the available ELF literature as particularly important for the development of the ability to communicate successfully through ELF. In presenting these areas, Kiczkowiak and Lowe generally differentiate between the development of an ELF-oriented mindset and the development of an ELF-oriented skillset. The development of an ELF-oriented mindset “involves raising awareness of the global spread of English, of native-speakerism and the implications of all these for the learning and use of language” (Kiczkowiak and Lowe 2018: 33). It thus correlates with the strand of the pilot course in which the focus was on raising awareness of the sociolinguistic situation of English in the world today. The development of an ELF-oriented skillset encompasses the development of communicative skills in four main areas: listening and pronunciation, grammar and lexis, intercultural competence, and communication strategies (cf. Kiczkowiak and Lowe 2018: 27, 55). Listening and pronunciation essentially address both receptive and productive aspects of ELF-oriented pronunciation and intelligibility, including issues related to phonological accommodation, thus covering the same ground as the pronunciation strand of my pilot course (cf. Kiczkowiak and Lowe 2018: 57-65). Likewise, the kinds of skills targeted in the intercultural competence and communication strategies areas of Kiczkowiak and Lowe (2018) overlap substantially with the content of the culture/intercultural communication and the pragmatics/communication strategies strands of the pilot course respectively (cf. Kiczkowiak and Lowe 2018: 75-92). Thus, all of the primary areas which were identified and developed as instructional foci in the pilot course are also included as important areas for instruction in this handbook, demonstrating their continuing relevance for ELF-oriented ELT.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ This leaves the area of grammar and lexis as the only area of instructional focus in Kiczkowiak and Lowe (2018) which does not coincide with the instructional foci of the pilot course. However, the

The comparison with Kiczkowski (2020) and Kiczkowski and Lowe (2018), then, shows that the areas which were selected for instructional focus in the pilot course continue to be indicated as particularly relevant areas for ELF-informed ELT. However, and perhaps even more significantly, a comparison with the principles outlined in Kiczkowski (2020) shows that not only the areas of instructional focus, but also the guiding principles underlying the approach to teaching them that were adopted in the pilot course have proven to be robust. Six of Kiczkowski's seven principles are clearly reflected in the pilot course:

- the emphasis on intelligibility over the development of native-like pronunciation (cf. Kiczkowski 2020: 3¹⁵⁶)
- the adoption of the multilingual, multicultural user of English as a more fitting model for instruction than the native speaker, and the consequent necessity of including listening texts which expose learners to authentic ELF (cf. Kiczkowski 2020: 3-4, Galloway 2018: 476-477)
- the inclusion of linguistic input based on research into successful ELF use (cf. Kiczkowski 2020: 4, Galloway 2018: 477), particularly in the area of communication strategies, since the ability to use certain strategies has been shown to be of such central importance for successful ELF communication (cf. Kiczkowski 2020: 6; Galloway 2018: 467, 477)
- the development of intercultural communicative skills reflecting a flexible and fluid conception of culture (cf. Kiczkowski 2020: 5, Galloway 2018: 477)
- a de-emphasis of sentence-level accuracy and a corresponding increase of emphasis of the teaching of communication strategies, as well as the flexible, pragmatically

differences here are less substantial than they might appear at first. Grammar was not included as an area of instructional focus in my pilot course on the grounds that the use of non-standard grammar rarely causes problems of understanding in ELF talk (cf. 2.4.1). Instead, a non-normative approach to grammar and lexis emphasizing effectiveness and appropriacy over correctness according to a prescribed norm was adopted as a guiding principle underpinning all instruction in the course. Likewise, in their handbook, Kiczkowski and Lowe (2018) emphasized “that using ‘non-standard’ expressions is common and normal in many contexts, and does not necessarily have a negative impact on understanding” (cf. Kiczkowski and Lowe 2018: 30). In response to this, the classroom activities they proposed in the practical part of their book focus not on teaching vocabulary and structures per se, but rather on making learners more aware of linguistic variation as a common feature of ELF talk and on cultivating a non-normative attitude toward grammar and lexis (cf. Kiczkowski and Lowe 2018: 66-74). Thus, there is considerable overlap in the way in which grammar and lexis were approached in Kiczkowski and Lowe (2018) and in my pilot course, despite the fact that grammar and lexis were not treated as a discrete area of instructional focus in the pilot course.

¹⁵⁶ It should be noted here that this is the only principle which is not also reflected in Galloway (2018), as Galloway largely ignores the area of pronunciation in her article. All of the other principles presented in Kiczkowski (2020) are clearly evident in Galloway (2018), and Kiczkowski (2020) draws directly on Galloway (2018) as a source text in the discussion of several of them (cf. Kiczkowski 2020: 4, 5, 7).

effective and appropriate use of language (cf. Kiczowskiak 2020: 5-6, Galloway 2018: 476)

- increased awareness of the sociolinguistic realities of English use in the world today and the issues that these realities raise for both the individual language learner and society more generally (cf. Kiczowskiak 2020: 7, Galloway 2018: 478)

Overall, then, comparison with more recent publications such as Kiczowskiak (2020), Galloway (2018) and Kiczowskiak and Lowe (2018) shows that the overarching principles and areas of instructional focus around which my pilot course was designed continue to be emphasized as fundamentally important in recent literature relating to ELF and pedagogy. This demonstrates that these principles and instructional priorities have proven to be both sound and robust as research into ELF continues. It also indicates that many aspects of the pilot course remain highly relevant, which in turn increases the likelihood that the findings derived from this study might contribute valuable insights for the further development of ELF-informed ELT practice.

Nevertheless, these publications also reflect one subtle yet fundamental shift in the direction that ELF research has taken since the conceptualization of the pilot course: Over the past few years, ELF research has increasingly accorded the “multilingual nature” of ELF “greater theoretical prominence” (Jenkins 2015b: 61). Thus, while earlier research tended to focus on ELF as primarily a phenomenon of English and to treat its multilingual characteristics as a background feature, current ELF research now places multilingualism much more centrally, following Jenkins’ call to conceptualize ELF “within a framework of multilingualism” (Jenkins 2015b: 75) rather than regarding “multilingualism as an aspect of ELF” (Jenkins 2015b: 63). This shift in the research paradigm has led to a corresponding increase in emphasis on the implications of ELF as an essentially multilingual phenomenon for the development of an ELF-oriented pedagogy.

As Jenkins (2015b) has pointed out, this “more multilingual turn in ELF” does not represent a complete shift of priorities, since “ELF [was] already theorized as a multilingual activity” (Jenkins 2015b: 61). Thus, an orientation toward ELF as a multilingual phenomenon involving users with recourse to linguistic resources in more than one language was also reflected in the pilot course to a certain extent. Indeed, by the mid-2010s, a body of studies had been published in the area of ELF pragmatics that highlighted the ways in which ELF users have been observed to exploit their knowledge of languages other than English to facilitate and support the collaborative construction of meaning, and insights from these studies certainly informed the approach toward the teaching of pragmatics and communication strategies adopted in the pilot course (cf. Chapter 15). Although the students were generally encouraged

to try to speak in English as much as possible during the course sessions¹⁵⁷, there was an underlying understanding that they should also “be introduced to the fact that successful ELF users also draw on their plurilingual resources”, including their own first language(s) (Galloway 2018: 477). Thus, for example, when it was observed in a communicative task focused on paraphrasing in course session 9 that the students quite naturally employed some paraphrasing strategies which drew upon their knowledge of German, the local language and the L1 of the majority of the learning group, this was used as an opportunity to explicitly acknowledge that such strategies can contribute to communicative success in ELF talk and to encourage the students to utilize them in actual ELF communication beyond the classroom (cf. 19.6). However, such moments in which the role of plurilingual resources in ELF talk was explicitly addressed remained relatively infrequent and isolated, and the course mainly focused on using English, albeit English which was not necessarily tied to native speaker norms of use.

In Kiczowskiak (2020), the inclusion of *Multilingual E(LF) use rather than monolingual ‘native speaker’ language use* as one of seven central principles for the writing of ELF-oriented materials reflects the increased emphasis that is currently placed on the multilingual nature of ELF in conceptual literature regarding the development of an ELF-informed pedagogy. With an eye towards practical implementation, Kiczowskiak (2020) also offers two broad recommendations for how this principle could be integrated into ELF-oriented instruction. First, learners need to be exposed not only to examples of authentic communication through ELF, but also to “examples of ... multilingual language use” in which they can observe the kinds of plurilingual phenomena and the functions that their use has been shown to serve in successful ELF talk (Kiczowskiak 2020: 6). They also need to be “encouraged to reflect on the multilingual resources they already have at their disposal and how these can help them communicate more effectively in ELF contexts” (Kiczowskiak 2020: 6-7). Kiczowskiak and Lowe (2018) included a few suggestions in their section on communication strategies for more concrete activities that could be used to raise learner awareness of the potential of using plurilingual resources in ELF talk and to help learners develop skills to cope with such phenomena when they encounter them in actual communication (cf. Kiczowskiak and Lowe 2018: 85-88).

Beyond increased attention to raising learners’ awareness of plurilingual resources, including their own, as an important facet of ELF-oriented ELT, more recent publications have also drawn attention to the need to adjust the way in which other languages, particularly the

¹⁵⁷ Cf. 19.6 for a more detailed discussion of the rationale behind the decision to encourage the students to use English as much as possible in the classroom.

L1(s) of the learners, are oriented to in the classroom. Currently, this is less apparent in publications relating to materials design than in discussions of the implications of the more multilingual turn in ELF for teacher education. It is foregrounded, for example, in Dewey and Patsko's contribution to *The Routledge Handbook of English as a Lingua Franca* on ELF and teacher education (Dewey and Patsko 2018). In the introduction to their chapter, the authors drew attention to "the relationship between English and other languages in students' and teacher's [sic] repertoires" as "a particular aspect of current pedagogy that needs some rethinking [...] in light of Jenkins' (2015[b]) argument that ELF requires a retheorization that properly foregrounds its fundamentally multilingual nature" (Dewey and Patsko 2018: 441). They argued that, instead of the "strong monolingual orientation toward language teaching" that has traditionally underpinned communicative language teaching, "[a] more plurilingual methodological approach" which values the linguistic resources other than English that learners bring to the classroom "would be far better suited to incorporating ELF in teacher education" (Dewey and Patsko 2018: 441). Building upon Dewey and Patsko (2018), Kiczowskiak and Lowe (2018) also included a section on the development of "[a] plurilingual focus" in their chapter on teacher education and training (cf. Kiczowskiak and Lowe 2018: 112). Here, they listed some ideas for ways to "include general principles of L1 use in the classroom" (Kiczowskiak and Lowe 2018: 112). They also pointed the reader towards Kerr's *Translation and Own-language Activities* (2014) as a useful resource providing concrete suggestions for activities designed to incorporate the learners' L1(s) into the classroom. Arguably, these suggestions could be incorporated not only into teacher training courses, but also into the ELF-oriented language classroom itself. However, both publications stop short of such a proposal.

In summary, then, the multilingual nature of ELF has received increased theoretical emphasis since the pilot course was conceptualized and held. Thus, while insights into the role and functions of plurilinguistic resources are to some extent apparent in the underlying principles which guided the approach to instruction in the pragmatics and communication strategies strand of the pilot course, content related to plurilingual phenomena in ELF talk was not systematically included in the course itself. To my knowledge, there have as yet been no classroom-based studies reporting on attempts to integrate either a more plurilingual methodology or an explicit focus on raising learners' awareness of their own plurilingual resources and the ways in which ELF users actually use such resources as communicative tools in interaction into the ELF-oriented classroom. Given the current direction of ELF research, this is an area that would certainly merit more classroom-based research attention, a point which will be briefly touched upon again in 23.5 below.

23.4 *Wider implications for an ELF-oriented ELT*

The current study has been primarily concerned with exploring how emerging theories about ELF and the implications they carry for language pedagogy could be translated into actual classroom practice in a university-level pilot course. This inevitably involved intensive consideration of the practical challenges of implementing such an approach which came to light during the processes of conceptualizing, carrying out and analyzing the pilot course. Many of the findings of the study summarized in 23.1 were related to attempts to cope with these challenges and thus led rather naturally to further suggestions regarding the practical implementation of an ELF-oriented approach in each of the main strands of the course. These suggestions are relatively specific to the areas of instructional focus from which they stem; in that sense, they represent what might be called micro-level implications of the study.

The experience of planning the pilot course itself, however, also suggests at least one more macro-level pedagogical implication of the study: the continuing need for more support for teachers in developing practical solutions to address the implications of ELF research and the challenges they pose for implementing an ELF-oriented pedagogy. At the time at which the pilot course was conceptualized and held, few resources were available which provided “concrete recommendations that relate to teachers’ professional concerns beyond what might be considered quite broad ‘implications’” (Dewey and Patsko 2018: 442; cf. also Jenkins 2015b: 493). The only notable exception was Walker (2010), a handbook focused primarily on the teaching of pronunciation, but also including some practical activities aimed at raising learner awareness about the sociolinguistic situation of English in the world today. In comparison to these two strands of the pilot course, in which Walker (2010) served as a primary point of reference, the conceptualization and planning of the other strands of instruction required significantly more time and energy on my part as the teacher-researcher to bridge “the gap between implication and application” (Dewey and Patsko 2018: 442) in developing an instructional approach for the pilot course.

Arguably, the kind of time and energy which was invested in the planning and subsequent analysis of the pilot course is something that most teachers cannot be expected to have, considering the other demands of their profession (cf. Dewey and Patsko 2018: 442). Additionally, scholars have observed a disconnect between research and pedagogy, in which

research is often perceived by the [language teaching] profession as belonging to a purely academic domain, having little to no direct relevance to the classroom. [...] Research findings can also appear inconclusive, often contradictory, and sometimes counterintuitive, thus making it particularly difficult for teachers to integrate into their existing knowledge base and frames of reference. This in effect leads to a state in which the empirical research findings remain inaccessible to many practicing teachers, with the result that many of the more recent studies are

at risk of being ineffectively applied or not applied at all by large numbers of practitioners. (Dewey and Patsko 2018: 442-443)

Both of these issues represent considerable hurdles to the implementation of an ELF-oriented approach to language teaching which will need to be addressed if such an approach is ever to 'take hold' in ELT.

One important way to address these issues would be through the publication of more teacher-directed resources. Over a decade ago, Cogo and Dewey (2012) called for exactly this type of publication in their concluding consideration of the implications of ELF for ELT:

What is in fact needed in the near future is a teacher's handbook that draws together the various strands of the debates surrounding ELF, in order that better sense can be made of how they impact on the professional lives of teachers. (Cogo and Dewey 2012: 184)

Ten years on, such handbooks remain thin on the ground. In fact, Kiczowskiak and Lowe (2018) represents one of the only such publications addressing the practical implementation of ELF-oriented pedagogy in ELT to be published since Walker (2010). Although considerably more compact, Kiczowskiak and Lowe (2018) adopts a broader focus than Walker (2010), aiming to provide practical guidance for the application of an ELF-oriented approach across a wider range of the instructional areas which have been identified as salient to ELF communication. It begins with an overview of the implications of ELF for ELT, particularly in the areas which constitute focal points of instruction in the book (cf. 23.2 above). The central part of the book then provides practical activities, many supported by prepared materials available for download through the publisher's website, that teachers can use in the classroom to support learning in each of these areas. Nevertheless, while the brevity of the book and the highly practical resources it provides make it user-friendly for busy practitioners, it does not consider each area as deeply or as systematically as Walker (2010) does with the area of pronunciation. Additionally, it does not address other important areas of pedagogical concern beyond the individual lesson, such as assessment or curriculum planning. In that sense, the practical guidance provided in this handbook remains somewhat limited, even as it serves as an important stepping stone to help practicing teachers begin to adopt a more ELF-oriented approach in their classrooms.

A need remains, then, for more resources like Walker (2010) which consolidate research insights into the implications of ELF for language teaching and offer concrete, practically-oriented guidance in terms of instructional content, teaching techniques, materials design, medium- and long-term curriculum planning and assessment in areas other than pronunciation which have been recognized as important for ELF-oriented language teaching. This would seem to be particularly crucial for the area of pragmatics and communication strategies, considering the importance ascribed to this area for successful ELF communication and the

recommendations which continue to appear in conceptual literature relating to ELF pedagogy that this area should receive more attention in the ELF-oriented classroom. Compared to pronunciation and intercultural communication, this area has attracted more extensive research interest and has generated a larger body of empirical studies undertaken by a wider range of authors, making it particularly difficult for practitioners to gain an overview of emerging pedagogical implications. Moreover, whereas research-based frameworks intended to inform an ELF-oriented approach have been proposed by scholars such as Jenkins and Baker for the areas of pronunciation and intercultural communication respectively (cf. Chapters 4 and 8), no such attempt has been undertaken for pragmatics and communication strategies. Thus, there is a particular need in this area for the kind of resource that would draw research insights and their implications together into a coherent, accessible, practitioner-oriented form.

There is also a need for the kind of systematic, practical guidance for the implementation of an ELF-oriented pedagogical approach provided in Walker (2010) in both the areas of culture/intercultural communication and pragmatics/communication strategies. While Baker has recently published a compact overview of the issues and implications raised by ELF, as well as research into intercultural communication more broadly, for teaching in the area of culture and intercultural communication as part of the *Cambridge Elements Language Teaching* series (cf. Baker 2022), this practitioner-oriented resource stops short of offering more than a few broad suggestions for teachers looking for practical guidance. These suggestions take the form of a reiteration of the five strands of resources previously published in Baker (2012a, 2012b, 2015a). With the exception of the handful of suggested activities provided in Kiczkowiak and Lowe (2018), virtually no practice-oriented ELF resources currently exist in the area of pragmatics and communication strategies.

Given the research focus on the practical implementation of an ELF-oriented approach in a language-learning course, the findings and implications derived from the current study, as well as other classroom-based action research studies, may be particularly well-placed to contribute useful insights to teacher-oriented resources on ELF. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the study findings summarized in 23.1 in many cases led to further suggestions for pedagogical practice regarding the implementation of such an approach in the specific areas which were the focus of instruction in the pilot course. While the findings from this study may not be directly generalizable to other teaching contexts, due to the contextually-bound nature of action research, the continuing relevance of both the areas of instructional focus and the underlying principles informing instruction, as discussed in 23.3 above, nevertheless suggests that they may well ‘resonate’ (cf. Banegas and Consoli 2020: 184) with the experiences of other practitioners attempting to implement an ELF-informed perspective in their own settings. Thus, the experience and insights gained from the current study represent potentially valuable

contributions toward the kind of practice-oriented resources teachers need in order to translate the pedagogical implications of ELF into effective practice in their own settings, as well as providing examples of types of tasks, materials and teaching techniques that could be adopted or adapted for use in their own classrooms.

One of the strengths of the qualitative action research approach adopted in this study was that even those moments in the course in which attempts to implement an ELF-oriented approach proved less than successful need not necessarily be viewed as failures, but rather as further opportunities to analyze and reflect on teaching and learning. As such, they were also capable of yielding insights which might ultimately contribute to a better understanding of ELT from an ELF-oriented perspective and thus to more effective future practice. At the very least, as has been suggested at the beginning of 23.1.3 above regarding the first block of the pragmatics strand of the course, such moments may help to draw attention to practical challenges faced by teachers which have yet to be adequately addressed. The challenges identified in this study will also likely resonate with teachers in other settings. This study thus helps to highlight the need to continue to develop and test practical solutions to such challenges that could then find uptake in ELF-oriented teacher resources.

With regard to existing resources, Walker (2010) is still cited as the primary source for practical guidance on how to implement pronunciation teaching based on the LFC more than ten years after its original publication (cf. e.g. Kiczkowiak 2021: 65). While much of the content included in Walker (2010) is substantiated by newer research over the past decade, the findings derived from the pronunciation strand of the current study nevertheless indicate one area which may be due for an update. Walker (2010), like Jenkins (2000), provides an overview of the problems involved in working on phonological accommodation in monolingual classes, but offers only one “partial solution” – as Walker himself put it – for practicing productive phonological accommodation in such learning groups (Walker 2010: 93). While this activity was not used in the pilot course, analysis showed that other tasks that were included were able to elicit successful phonological accommodation toward more target-like pronunciation of specific features, despite the fact that the students were often working with others who spoke the same L1, and identified two particular aspects of these tasks – task design around a limited set of (contrasting) features, as well as adequate previous instruction and practice in producing these features – that seemed to play a key role in the elicitation of this type of phonological accommodation (cf. 23.1.1 above). Considering both the importance ascribed to phonological accommodation for ELF communication and the fact that linguistically homogenous learning groups are a wide-spread phenomenon in the world’s language classrooms, it would seem particularly important that such an insight finds its way into practical handbooks like Walker (2010) or Kiczkowiak and Lowe (2018) which include a focus on the ELF-oriented teaching

of pronunciation. This suggests that, in addition to the need for more teacher-directed resources, there is also a need to periodically update such resources so that they reflect the current state of research and thus provide teachers with truly up-to-date guidance.

The kind of handbook which has been described above is a fairly top-down resource which would seem to be particularly valuable to teachers who are starting out on their journey toward understanding ELF as a communicative phenomenon and what it might mean for their own teaching. As they engage with the practical implementation of an ELF-oriented approach in their own classrooms, it will also be important to find ways to share these experiences with others in ways that can contribute to the wider development of ELF-informed practice. Dewey and Patsko (2018) highlight a number of digital forms which have emerged over the past few decades, including blogs such as the *ELF Pronunciation* blog (Simpson and Patsko), to which I also contributed a post in 2017 (cf. Heike), as well as online discussion forums, professional development websites, digital seminars and even regularly-scheduled Twitter chat sessions. Such formats provide opportunities not only to share practical experience and teaching materials with a wider audience of other teachers, but also to raise awareness about ELF and its implications for pedagogy within the language teaching community (cf. Dewey and Patsko 2018: 450-452). While many of these resources are often less systematic in their presentation and organization than a published handbook and may become overwhelming if not managed well, they carry the advantage that they are easier to edit and update as new insights become available. It would seem, then, that these more interactive resources may also be well-placed to foster “further engagement between researchers and practitioners” (Dewey and Patsko 2018: 453) that can help to bridge the gap between implication and practice.

23.5 *Directions for further research*

This final section of the concluding chapter of this dissertation proposes some directions for further research suggested by the current study. One such area has already been mentioned above in 23.3: Given the increased theoretical prominence which the multilingual nature of ELF has received since the pilot course was conceptualized and held, there is a need for classroom-based studies investigating how a more plurilingual methodology, as well as an explicit focus on raising learners’ awareness of their own plurilingual resources and the ways in which ELF users actually use such resources as communicative tools in interaction, can be practically and effectively integrated in ELF-oriented ELT. As in the area of phonological accommodation, it seems likely that this may be an area where special attention will need to be

given to linguistically homogenous learning groups like the one in the pilot course. For one thing, learners in such groups will be less likely to be naturally confronted with the use of plurilingual resources from a range of L1s through classroom interaction and therefore will not have the chance to observe why and how these resources prove successful or otherwise in actual interaction. Furthermore, while the use of their own L1 with other fluent speakers will very likely lead to understanding in the classroom setting, it may not help the learners to develop realistic impressions of how the use of these same resources might affect communication in authentic ELF contexts.

The current study was focused specifically on teaching and learning in an advanced course for young adult learners. Thus, another possible direction for further research might be to examine how well the approaches developed for this course would translate into teaching and learning with other age groups, e.g. in the secondary school classroom, and/or at other proficiency levels, e.g. in intermediate-level courses. Regarding adaptation to lower-level courses, one specific aspect that will likely require more attention than it was given in the current study is the role of instruction related to grammar and vocabulary. In the pilot course, very little attention was paid to the systematic development of the students' linguistic resources in English, since they could be expected to bring foundational knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structures with them from previous language instruction, something which cannot be assumed for beginning and intermediate learners. Indeed, as Leung and Lewkowicz (2018) have pointed out, "it would be rather difficult to imagine any kind of language learning without paying at least some attention to the formal and rule-based aspects of the language concerned" (Leung and Lewkowicz 2018: 61). Even if an ELF-oriented approach prioritizing communicative effectiveness and flexibility over formal accuracy is adopted in the classroom, research into communication strategies, for example, suggests that at least some familiarity with certain vocabulary items and grammatical structures is necessary in order to be able to realize particular kinds of strategies in English (cf. 22.5). In discussing an ELF-oriented pedagogy, Seidlhofer (2011) proposed that "most learners would benefit from a focus on communication processes and strategies combined with an initial focus on priorities derived from descriptive ELF research into the functional value of linguistic features on all levels of language" (Seidlhofer 2011: 206). This implies that insights gained from empirical, descriptive studies of ELF talk should be used to help determine which grammatical structures and lexical items should be introduced in beginning and intermediate instruction, but the practical implications of this suggestion have yet to be explicated in any pedagogically meaningful way. In exploring how an ELF-oriented approach might be adapted to lower-level courses, then, it will be necessary to investigate how the systematic development of learners' linguistic resources can be integrated into an ELF-oriented curriculum and balanced against the

development of those areas which pedagogical ELF literature emphasizes as particularly important for successful communication.

The current study also concentrated on what it was possible to incorporate into a single fourteen-week course. Accordingly, another possible direction for further research might be to explore the development of longer programs of learning, such as the kind of multi-year, multi-level course that is often followed in secondary schools. This would involve looking at how competence in the different areas which have been identified as particularly important for successful communication through ELF could be systematically developed over longer periods through classroom teaching.

Due to limitations of scope, this study has only been able to touch tangentially on the issue of assessment in the ELF-oriented classroom. Although assessment is an area which has received a fair amount of attention in the conceptual literature on ELF, much of this literature has focused primarily on issues relating to standardized ‘gate-keeper’ exams offered through language testing services (cf. Jenkins 2006b, 2014, 2020; McNamara 2012; Harding and McNamara 2018). However, since grades and standards are also a reality of much classroom teaching, issues relating to the design and implementation of classroom forms of assessment will also need to be addressed if an ELF orientation to language teaching is to become practicable in ELT. Furthermore, assessment, in both formal and informal forms, serves other important functions beyond providing a basis upon which to assign a grade. It can also be used to help set learning aims and priorities for subsequent instruction (cf. Walker 2010: 148), or to evaluate “to what extent students have been successful in their attempt to learn what has been taught” (Walker 2010: 149), even if this is not ultimately reflected in a formal grade. In order to help teachers develop useful and effective assessment tools for all of these purposes, more research is needed, particularly on how important aspects of ELF-oriented competences such as attitudes and awareness which cannot be easily measured using traditional forms of assessment might be evaluated in practice.

Finally, while this study has addressed the issue of translating insights about ELF into classroom practice, and has thus focused primarily on teaching and learning processes within the classroom, it will eventually become important to connect the results of classroom learning back to ELF beyond the classroom. As ELF-oriented approaches to ELT are developed, it will be necessary to study their impact beyond the classroom to see whether classroom-based learning really leads to an (improved) ability to communicate in actual ELF situations. Accordingly, studies could be undertaken which compare classroom data with performance in actual ELF encounters beyond the classroom, rather than performance on pedagogic

assessment tools, in order to examine how effective these approaches really are in preparing learners for intercultural communication through ELF in real-world situations.

Appendices

Appendix A *Transcription conventions*

The transcription symbols used in the pilot course corpus are largely based on the mark-up conventions developed for the *Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English* (VOICE) (cf. VOICE Project 2007).

Spelling follows American English conventions.

No capital letters are used except for emphasis.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| S1 | speaker designation (student) |
| T | speaker designation (instructor) |
| Sx | no definitive identification of speaker possible |
| Sx-f / Sx-m | no definitive identification of speaker was possible beyond the gender of the speaker (female/male) |
| Sxx | collective utterance by more than one student |
| [S17] | name replaced with speaker designation |
| CD | designates a speaker on a recording |
| sou:nd | lengthening of the preceding sound (repeated use of symbol indicates longer duration) |
| soun- | cutoff of a word or sound |
| [3] | used to disambiguate pronunciation of individual sounds which are not produced as part of a word |
| xx | unintelligible speech |
| (word) | uncertain transcription |
| (.) | short pause (up to half a second) |
| (2) | longer pause (in number of seconds) |
| @ | laughter (repeated use of symbol indicates longer duration) |
| <@> ... </@> | laughing intonation |
| CAPS | emphasis, loud intonation |
| word? | rising intonation |
| word. | falling intonation |
| = | latching between utterances |
| <1> ... </1> | overlapping talk (numbered sequentially) |
| <L1x> ... </L1x> | non-English talk in the speaker's L1 (ger = German, por = Portuguese) |
| <LNx> ... </LNx> | non-English talk in an additional language other than the speaker's L1 |
| <pvc> ... </pvc> | denotes the use of a non-standard lexical item |
| { } | translation of non-English talk, notation of nonstandard pronunciation (in IPA notation), standard lexical item, contextual events, speaker noises |

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| <spel> ... </spel> | spelling out, pronunciation as individual letters rather than sounds |
| <read> ... </read> | speaker reading a written text |
| <fast> ... </fast> | notably faster than surrounding speech |
| <soft> ... </soft> | notably quieter than surrounding speech |
| <loud> ... </loud> | notably louder than surrounding speech |
| <high> ... </high> | notably higher pitch than surrounding speech |
| <mimic> ... </mimic> | mimicking another speaker |
| bold | used to highlight specific parts of excerpts discussed in the text |

Appendix B Participant consent form

Consent for Audio and/or Video Recording

as Part of a Research Study

You have signed up for the course "English for International Communication". The primary purpose of this course is to help you improve your English for international communication. However, this course is also the basis for linguistic research into how English for international communication can be taught effectively. The working title of this research project is "Reevaluating the Teaching of English for International Communication" and is based on research from the relatively new field of English as a Lingua Franca. This field is currently making discoveries about how people from different language backgrounds use English to communicate effectively. My study looks at how teachers can use this knowledge to better prepare students for international communication situations in the English language classroom. As part of this research, each of our course sessions will be audio- and/or videotaped. I will then transcribe and analyze these recordings as part of my study.

Recordings made during course sessions will be kept in a secure location in my office. The recordings will only be heard by myself and, in limited cases, by my research advisor (Prof. Dr. Olaf Jäkel, University of Flensburg). No one else will have access to the recordings.

Recordings will be used to create transcriptions of each course session. These transcriptions will protect your identity. No names will be included in the transcriptions. For the purposes of the study, each speaker will be identified by a number (Speaker 1, Speaker 2...) and two pieces of personal information, gender and languages spoken. I will use these transcriptions – and not the recordings themselves – in any written texts or presentations that I write or give as part of this research.

.....
The researcher has explained the purpose of the study to me. I understand that each course session will be audio and/or videotaped, and I agree to allow myself to be recorded as part of this study. I also understand that my personal data will be protected, and that recordings will be used for research purposes only.

Name of student (print): _____

Signature of student: _____ Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____ Date: _____

English C1 – English for International Communication

Th., 5:15-6:45 pm

Room 32-439

Instructor: Christie Heike

Examiner Scaffold

Tasks:

1. Transportation for a touring holiday
2. Keep the conversation flowing
3. Pronunciation paragraph

Opening the exam (2 minutes)

- *Greet the students and welcome them to the exam*
- *Explain the format of the exam:*

"As I told you on your course review sheet, the exam for this course consists of three tasks. You should have already completed the first task: the pronunciation paragraph. *(Confirm that this is the case for both students.)* This task is worth 8 points, or one quarter of the total exam.

"We will now do the other two tasks together. Each task is worth 12 points, or a little less than 40% of the total exam.

"I will be recording the exam tonight."

"Do you have any questions at this point?"

- *Answer any questions students may have.*
- *Transition to the first task.*

"I will explain the first task now."

Task 1: Transportation for a touring holiday (6 minutes, 12 points)

- Give each student a copy of the transportation photo sheet.
- Say:

"I'd like you to talk about something together for about 3 to 4 minutes.

"I'd like you to imagine that you are planning a week-long touring holiday with your partner around Germany. You want to see as much as possible, but you don't want to spend too much money on transport. Look at the types of transport shown in the photographs.

"First talk to each other about how useful each of these forms of transport might be for your holiday. Then decide which one would be best.

"Do you understand the task?"
- Give students up to 4 minutes to solve the task. If after 4 minutes, they are still discussing the task, interrupt them.

Tests ability to: use language to discuss options, to express and rationalize an opinion, to agree and disagree, to negotiate with a partner and reach an agreement; use cooperative communicative strategies to negotiate an agreement with a partner, manage turn-taking and ensure mutual understanding (e.g. using questions to hand over a turn or show interest in another's opinion, checking for understanding, asking for clarification, paraphrasing unknown or difficult words, evidence of active listening, etc.)

Task 2: Keep the conversation flowing (6 minutes, 12 points)

- Give each student a list of possible topics for this activity.

- Say:

"In this task, one of you will be the speaker and the other will be the listener. The speaker will choose one of these topics. He or she must talk about this topic for 2 minutes. The listener's job is to use listening strategies to help keep the speaker talking.

"After 2 minutes, you will switch roles. The new speaker will choose a topic – the same one or a different one – and we will repeat the task.

"When you are the speaker, I am not grading what you say about the topic. I am more interested in whether you can talk about a topic for 2 minutes and whether your partner can use listening strategies to help you keep talking.

"Do you understand the task?

"Would either of you like to speak first?"

- If no one or if both respond to this final question, choose the person whose last name comes first in the alphabet to be the first speaker.
- Give first speaker 30 seconds to choose a task. Give students two minutes to complete the first round of the task. Stop them after two minutes.
- Give second speaker 30 seconds to choose a task. Give students two minutes to complete the second round of the task. Stop them after two minutes.

Tests ability to:

- **Speaker:** speak for an extended period of time on a given topic, respond to questions, provide clarification or more details if appropriate, use appropriate communicative strategies to ensure mutual understanding
- **Listener:** use appropriate strategies to keep the other person talking, signal interest, signal understanding or misunderstanding, ask appropriate follow-up questions

Task 2: Keep the conversation

Possible topics:

- The most important thing you learned in this course and how it will help you when you speak English in the future
- The biggest challenge(s) for communicating internationally using English
- Whether it is important to try to speak like a native English speaker when we use English for international communication
- How we can prevent misunderstandings and communication problems when we use English for international communication

Closing the exam (1 minute)

- Thank the students for their participation in the course and the exam.
- Explain that I will send them their scores by email by the end of next week.
- Explain that they can pick their certificates and their feedback forms up in the SSC starting on August 5th.
- Ask if there are any questions.

Task 3: Pronunciation Paragraph (8 points)

- Students must complete this task before their final exam appointment.
- Students must record themselves reading the text below. They have the option of recording themselves at home and submitting the assignment by email or of recording themselves on my recorder before or after our last course session on July 11.

Tests ability to: produce discrete pronunciation features which we have discussed and practiced in class during the course of the semester (progress achievement test)

Hi Christie, it's *[your name here]*. Listen, are you available to work on Thursday? I'm supposed to work from five to ten, but I have a small problem. I just got an invitation to see my favourite band in concert. For free! Usually, I only watch them on television, so it's a big chance for me. Can you take my shift? Please call me and let me know.
Thanks!

Appendix D **Final exam: Assessment rubric**

English C1 – English for International Communication

Th., 5:15-6:45 pm

Room 32-439

Instructor: Christie Heike

Final Exam

Student name: _____

Task 1: Transportation for a touring holiday

| | + | o | - | n/a |
|--|---|---|---|-----|
| uses appropriate language to express an opinion | | | | |
| uses appropriate language to explain or justify an opinion | | | | |
| uses appropriate language to agree or disagree with partner's opinions | | | | |
| uses cooperative communicative strategies to negotiate an agreement with partner | | | | |
| uses communicative strategies to manage turn-taking and ensure mutual understanding | | | | |
| features of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar do not interfere with the listener's understanding | | | | |

Comments:

/ 12 points

Task 2: Keep the conversation flowing

Speaker:

| | + | o | - | n/a |
|--|---|---|---|-----|
| uses appropriate language to give position on chosen topic | | | | |
| able to respond appropriately to listener input | | | | |
| able to maintain a long-turn, bearing the majority of the speaking for two minutes | | | | |
| uses communicative strategies to ensure mutual understanding (e.g. checking for understanding, responding appropriately to clarification requests, etc.) | | | | |
| features of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar do not interfere with the listener's understanding | | | | |

Comments:

Listener:

| | + | o | - | n/a |
|--|---|---|---|-----|
| uses appropriate listener strategies to signal interest and keep speaker talking (e.g. questions, minimal feedback, non-verbal cues, etc.) | | | | |
| uses appropriate listener strategies to signal (mis)understanding (e.g. summarizes speaker's position, asks for clarification, etc.) | | | | |
| demonstrates that he/she understands partner's talk (e.g. asks logical follow-up questions, etc.) | | | | |
| features of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar do not interfere with the speaker's understanding | | | | |

Comments:

/ 12 points

Task 3: Pronunciation paragraph

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| <i>Consonant sounds: (4 points)</i> | | | | |
| /v/ | available | invitation | favourite | television |
| /w/ | work | watch | | |
| /l/ | listen | available | small | problem |
| /dʒ/ | just | | | |
| /tʃ/ | watch | chance | | |
| /ʃ/ | shift | | | |
| /s/ (word initial) | supposed | see | | |

| | | | | |
|---|------|------|-----|--|
| <i>Voicing final voiced consonants: (1 point)</i> | | | | |
| five | have | band | big | |

| | | | | |
|---|---------|--------|--|--|
| <i>Unvoiced consonants in initial clusters: (1 point)</i> | | | | |
| small | problem | please | | |

| | | | | |
|--|-----------|---------|------------|---------|
| <i>Final and medial consonant clusters: (2 points)</i> | | | | |
| Christie | Thursday | problem | invitation | concert |
| it's | available | work | just | band |
| chance | shift | thanks | | |

Comments:

/ 8 points

TOTAL EXAM SCORE: / 32 points = %

Pronunciation Practice: /l/

Words with /l/

- a) Practice saying each of the words with /l/. Feel the tip of your tongue touch the roof of your mouth behind your front teeth as you say /l/. Exaggerate at first! Make each /l/ extra long.
b) Ask a partner to listen to you read the list and to mark any words you had difficulties with. These are words you should continue to practice this week.

| word-initial | word-medial | word-final | multiple /l/ |
|--------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| lamp | problem | little | available |
| loot | television | small | little |
| leopard | alert | coral | lovely |
| leave | blurry | real | clearly |
| lizard | faulty | sail | skillful |
| | silent | travel | |
| | milk | | |
| | please | | |

Phrases and sentences with /l/

- a) Practice saying each phrase or sentence with /l/.
b) Hold a conversation with a partner, using as many of these phrases and sentences as you can.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| small problem | limited availability |
| silent killer | a clearly bleary outlook |
| public alert system | Please call me! |
| pollen allergy | Kuala Lumpur is in Malaysia. |
| clear as milk | Why you miserable little rat! I'll kill you! |

Tongue-Twister Dictation

- a) Choose words from each column and write three tongue twisters.
b) Dictate your tongue twisters to a partner. Compare what he or she has written with what you said.
Did you speak clearly? (If you can, try this with someone who speaks a different first language than you do!)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----------|--------------|--------------|-------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| Glen | landed in | Kuala Lumpur | on/in | a little | blue | airplane |
| Gwen | left for | Lima | | a lovely | lime green | ambulance |
| A lamb | travelled to | Lisbon | | a small | lemon yellow | leopard |
| A lizard | sailed to | Wellington | | a ridiculous | bright purple | walrus |
| A wizard | woke up in | New Zealand | | a wonderful | blood red | whale |
| A pilot | ran away to | Malaysia | | an available | leather | motorcycle |
| A pirate | lurked to | Bangladesh | | a faulty | cloth | sloop |

Adapted from Smolder, Christina Maurer (2012) *Be Understood! A pronunciation resource for every classroom*. Cambridge University Press, p. 23.

Pronunciation Practice: /v/, /w/ and /f/

Words with /v/

a) Practice saying each of the words with /v/. Feel your top teeth on your lower lip and your vibrating vocal chords.

b) Ask a partner to listen to you read the list and to mark any words you had difficulties with. These are words you should continue to practice this week.

| word-initial | word-medial | word-final |
|--------------|-------------|------------|
| vacation | heavy | cave |
| vitamin | television | dive |
| vowel | available | move |
| voice | invest | have |
| value | over | five |
| vampire | diverse | of |
| vegetable | university | |
| | festival | |

/v/ or /w/?

Listen and respond with a) or b).

- Where did you get that **wine / vine**?
a) I bought it at the plant store.
b) I got this bottle for my birthday.
- I tried to call my brother yesterday,
but he was out **rowing / roving**.
a) Oh, does he have his own boat?
b) Did he wander far?
- What do you think of my new **viper / wiper**?
a) Is it safe to keep a dangerous snake as a pet?
b) I think you'll finally have clean windows.
- I ordered the **veal / wheel**.
a) It was good, wasn't it? I had it last week.
b) Good! As soon as it comes in, we can fix your bicycle.

/v/ or /f/?

Listen and respond with a) or b).

- That was some **surf / serve**!
a) I know! The ocean is so powerful after a storm.
b) If she can keep it up, she'll win the tennis match!
- Just look at that **face / vase**!
a) I've never seen such a cute smile.
b) It looks like an antique.
- That's a **fast / vast** change.
a) Yeah, it went quickly.
b) Yeah, it made a big difference.

Phrases and Sentences with /v/, /w/ and /f/

a) Practice saying each phrase or sentence with /f/, /v/ and /w/.

b) Hold a conversation with a partner, using as many of these phrases and sentences as you can.

very well
a wool vest
lovely weather
winter vacation

proof positive
very funny
fantastic service
lifesaver

one visitor
I want to visit West Virginia.
What did you study at university?
When are you available to work

save face
a difficult diversion
Do you believe in fairies?
Get off of me!

Just for fun – Tongue Twisters

a) Practice saying the tongue twisters. Start slowly!

b) Record yourself. Can you hear each of the target sounds?

Wild vines make fine vintage wines.
Which verse is worse – Wendy's verse or Wayne's verse?
Vile Willy's wily violin
A fine view of a few vines

Listening practice

Go to <http://www.esl-lab.com/pron3.htm> and try the listening activity. Can you hear the difference between /f/ and /v/?

Pronunciation Practice: Unvoiced consonants in initial clusters

Voiced or unvoiced?

Look at the word pair. Circle the word that starts with an unvoiced sound. Try pronouncing both words. Can you hear a difference?

class – glass

Words beginning with an unvoiced consonant in an initial cluster

- a) Practice saying each of the words. Make sure your vocal chords aren't vibrating on the first sound in the word. Exaggerate at first! Make the first sound extra long.
b) Ask a partner to listen to you read the list and to mark any words you had difficulties with. These are words you should continue to practice this week.

| | | |
|---------|--------|----------|
| small | stand | plate |
| problem | swim | stranger |
| price | floor | smile |
| class | stress | sleep |
| cream | train | twin |
| quiet | square | free |

Make your own sentences with word starting with unvoiced consonants in initial clusters

- a) Write sentences using as many of the words above in each sentence as you can.
b) Practice saying the sentences.
c) Dictate your sentences to someone else and then compare what you said and what they wrote.
Did they understand you?

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