

Reconsideration of Communication Strategies from an English as a Lingua Franca Perspective

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1. Introduction

This paper examines how users of English as a lingua franca (ELF) exploit communication strategies (CS) in talk in interaction. It analyzes an informal talk between four international graduate students in a British higher education setting. Although considerable research taking a psycholinguistic approach has investigated CS, its emphasis is on production strategy, which solves a speaker's problems in native-nonnative dyadic task-based communication (e.g., Faerch & Kasper, 1983). In such CS research, the interactive nature of communication and nonnative-nonnative communication, namely ELF interactions, seem to be overlooked. This paper uses four categories of CS, i.e., *restructuring*, *appeal*, *explication*, and *reformulating* that are well-reported in psycholinguistic approaches (Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Francis & Hunston, 1992; Tarone, 1983). Taking an alternative, interactional approach (Wagner & Firth, 1997) from an ELF perspective, however, this paper examines how the four CS are exploited by ELF users from different first language backgrounds in a sequence of ongoing interactions. It is found that while a speaker invests a lot of efforts to invite recipients' understanding by use of CS and nonverbal features, the participants also take part in the construction of mutual understanding by using backchannels and CS. In the following sections, I will firstly review research into CS, contrasting the two approaches, and briefly review existing research in ELF interactions. I will then give definitions of the four types of CS. After introducing data for this study, I will show how each type of CS is used in talk in interaction. Finally, implications of this study for English language teaching will be discussed.

1.1. Two approaches to communication strategies

In this section, I will briefly review two approaches to communication strategies (CS), *a psycholinguistic approach* and *an interactional approach*, which differ greatly in their view of CS.

The first approach to CS is a psycholinguistic approach (Faerch & Kasper, 1983), which is a more prevailing approach in the field of second language acquisition and regards CS as "potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal" (p. 36). The concern here is in cognitive processes of a speaker, and it is production strategy

not receptive strategy that is frequently investigated in many studies taking this approach (Corder, 1983). Various types of CS such as *reduction*, *achievement*, and *retrieval strategies* are identified although they are not exclusive (Faerch & Kasper, 1983). The CS are elicited through task-based communication particularly that between native and nonnative speakers. Those who use CS are primarily regarded as learners having incomplete competence as compared to that of a native speaker (i.e., deficit model, Kachru, 1991).

The second approach, in contrast, is an interactional approach, which is advocated by Wagner and Firth (1997). They take a conversation analytic approach in viewing CS as “elements in the ongoing and contingent meaning-creating process of communication” (p. 325). Here, the primary concern is in social rather than cognitive processes underpinning talk in interaction. Accordingly, it is not merely considered that a speaker uses CS to signal a problem, but also that a recipient takes up CS as a resource for aiding inferential work in the meaning-creating process. Instead of identifying various types of CS, this approach analyzes “*how* the [interactants] — individually or conjointly — endeavor to overcome the encoding difficulty” (p. 326; emphasis original). It particularly examines naturally occurring interactions between users of a language as a lingua franca, and regards interactants as legitimate users of the language. Specifically, Wagner and Firth (1997) examine business telephone conversations between Danish companies and their foreign partners in German and English as a lingua franca. They found that CS are brought to the fore by both/either a speaker and/or a recipient only if a communication problem becomes “*interactionally relevant*” (p. 332; emphasis original) in the process of meaning creation.

Tarone (1983) attempts to incorporate these two approaches. Retaining interests in a cognitive process, she points to the necessity of investigating the interactive function of CS because “language is not an *object* which is *used*, but a part of communication — a living organism created by both speaker and hearer” (p. 64, emphasis original). This is indeed an adequate claim since communication is not one-sided but inherently interactional in nature. Unfortunately, however, her criteria of CS do not capture this interactive nature of communication since they fail to realize how the listener may or may not react to what the speaker said.⁽¹⁾

In their review of CS research, Wagner and Firth (1997) question the compatibility between cognitive and interactional research, and reach the conclusion that “the interactional approach is — temporarily at least — best served by cutting its theoretical ties with the psycholinguistic question of language acquisition” (p. 324). This may be a plausible decision as the two approaches belong to fundamentally different paradigms. Following their argument, this paper will not deal with the psycholinguistic questions of language acquisition. Yet, it will borrow categories of CS used in the psycholinguistic approach because they are useful and well-explored. Instead of identifying types of CS itself, however, this paper will analyze how such a CS is used by interactants in a sequence of ongoing interactions, thus taking an

interactional approach. In the next section, I will briefly review existing research in ELF interactions and provide definitions of the four types of CS.

1.2. Research into ELF interactions

Along with the rapid spread of globalization, the number of nonnative speakers of English — in other words, ELF users — exceeds that of native speakers with a ratio of 3 to 1 (Crystal, 2003). The growing number of research has examined ELF interactions particularly since the end of the 1990's and revealed that while the overall occurrence of misunderstandings is small, interactants invest various sorts of retrospective and proactive strategies to solve and prevent real and potential problems in ongoing interactions (Firth, 1996; Mauranen, 2006; Meierkord, 2000).

For example, Mauranen (2006) investigates ELF interactions in academic contexts in Finland (i.e., English as Lingua Franca in Academic settings (ELFA) corpus). It was found that special efforts are devoted to achieve mutual understanding. These are frequent self-repair of grammatical structures, co-construction of expressions, seemingly unsolicited clarification and repetition, and distinct orientation toward content. Kaur (2009), on the other hand, investigates ELF interactions in Malaysian contexts. It is argued that repetitions and paraphrases are utilized to give another chance to ensure mutual understanding in talk in interaction.

The findings of these kinds are not explicitly referred to as CS. This is because the concept of CS traditionally indicates a speaker's cognitive processes as pointed out earlier. Yet, they are indeed communicative strategies, by which interactants solve and prevent real and potential communication problems in talk in interaction. In the next section, I will briefly define four types of CS observed in the current ELF interaction.

1.3. Definitions of CS observed in the current ELF interactions

In this section, I will briefly give definitions of four types of CS observed in the current ELF interactions, i.e., *restructuring*, *appeal*, *explication* and *reformulating*. Before moving on to the definitions, however, it has to be acknowledged that looking at the four types of CS in particular may not be consistent with so-called conversation analytic methodology, “[whose] preferred policy is one of ‘unmotivated’ looking” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 89). The main purpose of this paper, however, is to reveal how the four types of CS are exploited by interactants in ongoing interactions by examining a sequence in which a CS is used, not the CS itself. Table 1 summarizes the four types of CS.

Table 1 Definitions of four types of CS in the current ELF interactions

Definitions	Example
Restructuring: A speaker changes original local plan to alternative one in order to be able to communicate the intended message without reduction (Faerch & Kasper, 1983)	L: my tummy – my tummy is – I have (inaudible) I must eat something (BO) (p. 50)
Appeal: A speaker either directly or indirectly signals their communicative problem; while the direct appeal is used in the aim of asking help, the indirect appeal is not necessarily used to ask help (i.e., direct and indirect speech act) (Faerch & Kasper, 1983)	Direct appeal NS: what er colour is it – L: er skim (laugh) er – er – <i>what's – colour is this</i> – (points to her sweater) (PIF, <i>skimlet</i> Danish for 'grey' with reference to animals) (p. 51) Indirect appeal L: after my school I'll start erm (sigh) er – I learn erm shirts and er (laugh) <i>can't explain that</i> – er – sy – [sy:] <i>I I can't say that</i> (PIF, sy Danish for 'sew') (ibid.)
Explication: A speaker spells out what is meant by the expression used (Tarone & Yule, 1987)	(C2) second picture is, uh, st, triangle – striangle has three sides. (p. 59)
Reformulating: A recipient paraphrases ⁽²⁾ an utterance in the preceding turn to acknowledge it (based on <i>reformulate</i> in Francis & Hunston's (1992) category) ⁽³⁾	(several lines omitted) B: It's a bit <i>strange</i> you know → A: Yeah interesting (#) (p. 159)

In the following sections, I will introduce the data for the present study, and then show findings regarding the use of the four CS described in this section.

2. This Study

2.1. Data

The current data are a digital-recorded informal talk between four female international graduate students from different Asian backgrounds in a British university: a Chinese (C), a Japanese (J), a Korean (K), and a Thai (T). The data were quasi-naturally collected by giving a topic: misunderstandings or communication problems that are likely to occur between friends from different first language backgrounds because of their language and cultural differences. It was hoped that a form of a focus group discussion would minimize the unnaturalness of the data. The talk lasted 29 min 26 sec. It was all transcribed, and paralinguistic features (e.g., intonation, gestures, nods, and eye movements) were partially reflected in the transcription. The data will be analyzed by a conversation analytic approach, analyzing some extracts of talk in detail.

2.2. Data Analysis

As will be seen in the following analyses, ELF users both in a speaker's role and in a recipient's role conjointly participate in the construction of mutual understanding in talk in interaction. In the following subsections, I will show how each of the four types of CS, restructuring, appeal, explication, and refor-

mulating, is exploited in a sequence of ongoing interactions.

2.2.1. Restructuring

This section analyzes how restructuring is exploited in a sequence of the current ELF interactions. It is revealed that a speaker not only employs restructuring to get her intended message across but also invites recipients' responses by use of various sorts of contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1982); and that a recipient(s) reacts to those cues by means of backchannels and participates in a construction of mutual understanding. In the following extract, K is giving an example of misunderstanding in daily life; a horizontal arrow after the line number indicates a line containing a CS.⁽⁴⁾

Extract 1 [GD1 / 00:46 ~ 01:22]

- 1 K: =and the (..) ahh my flatmate is British gi[rl ↑]=
 2 T: [mmm ↑]
 3 K: =a:nd she: went to a party ↓ =
 4 C: =m[m ↓]
 5 J: [mm ↓ =
 6 K: =and (.) c came back and we are talking about the party and she just talk
 7 about someone (.) who (...) know ↑ her who[(...)] she (..) (**)=
 8 C: [mm] ((nod thrice))
 9 K: =anyway [] a guy[↑]=
 10 T: [((nod))] [ahh ↑]
 11 J: [m[hm]
 12→K: =she talks (..) we call it guy A[a:nd]girl B[]
 13 J: [o[kay °guyA°((nod))] [((nod))]
 14 T: [mm] [mm]
 15 C: [mhm ((nod))] [((nod))mm]

In the extract above, the use of restructuring is observed in line 12. K resumes her utterance with the same structure as the one she failed to complete in line 7 (i.e., *she talks (...)*), and changes it to an alternative plan (i.e., *we call it guy A and girl B*) that makes use of the first-person plural pronoun *we* and alphabetical pseudonyms to refer to central characters of the story that she is telling. If one looks at how this restructuring is used in the sequence of interactions, a speaker not only uses restructuring but also exploits contextualization cues to invite recipients' reaction, whereas the recipients supportively responds to such cues.

For example, K firstly shows her encoding difficulty in line 7 (i.e., *who (...) know? her who (...) she (...) (**)*). As shown, this is signaled by micro pauses and questioning intonation as respectively indicated by dots in a bracket and a question mark in the transcription. During K's first attempt to convey her intended message, the recipients silently look at and listen to K, and then C provides a backchannel *mm* and nods after K's second micro pause in line 8. Here, the recipients show supportive behavior. In the subsequent turn in line 9, K abandons her initial attempt and says *guy*, which is a central character of her storytelling.⁽⁵⁾ This is accompanied by rising intonation as indicated by an upward arrow, and elicits the recipients' response. T and J provide backchannels *ahh* and *mhm* respectively in lines 10 and 11, which show their understanding of K's intended message. K uses restructuring in the next turn (line 12). The recipients promptly acknowledge what K has said in lines 13 to 15 by use of verbal and non-verbal backchannels (i.e., *okay* ° *guy* A°, *mm*, *mhm*, and nods). Supported by these responses, K continues her storytelling in the subsequent turns.

Two observations can be made from the above analyses. First, restructuring may be frequent in ELF interactions although it cannot be overgeneralized because this study investigates only limited data. In the light of conversation analysis, restructuring can be seen as a self-repair issued from self-initiation (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). While the occurrence of self-repair is pervasive in all kinds of communication, its frequency increases when ELF speakers from different language backgrounds communicate with each other (Kaur, 2011; Mauranen, 2006). This suggests that restructuring may be a characteristic feature of ELF interactions.

Second, the use of contextualization cues surrounding the use of restructuring plays an important role in the process of meaning creation. According to Wagner and Firth (1997), these contextualization cues are part of CS and resources for aiding recipients' inferential work in the meaning creation process. While a speaker exploits a lot of cues, the recipients, in response to such cues, show "interactionally supportive behavior" (Firth, 2009, p. 156) since no repair is initiated by other interactants. Specifically, a speaker's use of questioning tone and pauses show her encoding difficulty to the recipients. This in turn invites recipients' supportive behaviors: they wait until the speaker solves her difficulty by herself or provide supportive backchannels. The speaker's use of rising intonation, on the other hand, invites feedback from the recipients, and the recipients show their understanding by means of backchannels. In their analysis of the storytelling sequences in English, Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008) show how a recipient reacts to the storytelling. They point out that the use of rising intonation is one of the tools for establishing mutual reference in storytelling (based on Sacks and Schegloff's (1979) observation). A similar phenomenon is reported in a study of ELF interactions. Pitzl (2005) investigates ELF business interaction and argues that rising intonation can signal a need for feedback. This may suggest that although the use of contextualization cues, intonation in particular, is not especially a specific characteristic in ELF

interactions, they are at least utilized to establish mutual reference in ongoing interactions. It appears, then, that it is important to take into account the use of contextualization cues surrounding CS when analyzing how mutual understanding is achieved in talk in interaction. In the next subsection, I will show the analysis of another CS, i.e., appeal.

2.2.2. Appeal

In the current ELF interactions, the use of indirect appeal is more frequently observed than that of direct. What is more interesting, however, is that a speaker gradually makes explicit appeals tactically using nonverbal features to keep the floor, and a recipient takes over what the speaker has said when it seems necessary to elaborate on it. In the following extract, T tells a story about when J asked their British flatmate to proofread her CV; T was also present at the time.

Extract 2 [GD1 / 17:37 ~ 18:48]

- 1 T: [@@@ have you
 2 remember the: /da/ er whe:n ((NAME)) did er your proofreading=
 3 J: =.hh oh ye[:s
 4 →T: [yeah it remind me of (.) ((drop her eyes)) how wha- what
 5 what sentence he says he said ((look to J)) THIS word you you cannot=
 6 J: ((nod twice))
 7 →T: =use this word(.) if yo:u ((drop her eyes)) how can I say ((look to J))=
 8 J: ((nod twice))
 9 T: =how long have you been staying here som- something like that [(*)]=
 10 J: ((nod)) ((nod twice)) ((nod twice)) [mm]
 11 C: ((nod twice)) [mm]
 12 T: =because this word you i- (..) er: for those one not er native speaker (.)=
 13 J: ((nod))
 14 →T: =you can use this word you live here fo:r how can I say twenty years so=
 15 J: ((nod thrice vigorously))((nod twice))
 16 C: ((nod twice))
 17 T: =that you can use this word or [s-]
 18 J: ((nod thrice vigorously)) [yeah]=
 19 →T: =yeah so I feel like (.) sometimes (..) we: lack of the >how can I say<=
 20 J: ((nod))
 21 T: =deep profiling meaning o[f th]e: (..) notion of the word=

- 22 J: ((nod vigorously)) [mm] ((nod twice))
 23 →T: =>ah no< not the notion (..) so I don't know what to s[ay
 24 J: ((nod thrice)) [.hh yeah uh
 25 >you know< one day I: wrote a cv (.) and neede- I needed someone (.) to
 26 proofread my cv becau:se I was unsure [(.)]=

As far as a form of appeal is concerned, a storyteller T employs both direct and indirect appeals in the above extract. The direct appeal is in lines 4 to 5 (i.e., *how wha- what what sentence he says*), while the indirect appeals are in lines 7, 14, and 19 (i.e., *how can I say*), and line 23 (i.e., *I don't know what to say*).

Yet, if one closely looks at the sequence of this storytelling the storyteller T effectively manages to keep her floor and gradually makes explicit appeals, using nonverbal features that accompany the use of appeal; and a recipient J reacts to T's behavior sensitively. Specifically, in lines 4 to 5, T drops her eyes when using the direct appeal but lifts them and looks at J again as soon as she starts to continue her talk. The same observation is applied to the use of indirect appeal in line 7. The use of eye gaze is reported as a predictor of conversational attention (Vertegaal, Slagter, van der Veer, & Nijholt, 2001). If this is the case, T's drop of her eyes is somewhat marked, and it may play a role in keeping her floor and at the same time signaling the fact that she is facing an encoding difficulty to the recipients. In lines 14, on the other hand, with her eyes on J, T slightly lengthens the vowel sound of *fo:r* which precedes the use of appeal. She articulates another indirect appeal with the fast rate of speech in line 19. These features also seem to contribute to keeping her floor on the one hand, and signaling a (upcoming) problem to recipients on the other hand (Wagner & Firth, 1997). Recipient J is sensitive to these behaviors of T. She gives nonverbal backchannel, i.e., nods, slightly after T's use of appeal to show her understanding of what T is saying without taking up her turn.⁽⁶⁾

In line 23, in contrast, T uses a slightly more explicit form of indirect appeal, i.e., a statement, than those in the previous turns. This time, keeping her eyes on J, she pauses less than 2 seconds before the use of appeal, which is soon after her self-repair of the lexical item, i.e., *notion*, she used in line 21. This hesitation seems to signal the end of her turn, i.e., a transition-relevance place (TRP). J projects the TRP, and takes over and elaborates on what T has said in line 24.

As pointed out by Wagner and Firth (1997), the use of nonverbal features such as hesitation markers is hardly noticed and discussed in the traditional psycholinguistic research into CS. The interactional approach, in contrast, takes into account these features, supposing they have "an inferential-aiding function" (p. 340) on the part of a recipient. In the above extract, the speaker does not simply produce the form of appeal but she utilizes it in different modes — some are articulated with her eyes dropped, others are in the fast rate of speech, and yet others are preceded by hesitations. By associating the use

of appeal with these nonverbal features, the speaker manages to keep her floor and invites a recipient's response. The recipient, on the other hand, is sensitive to TRP and takes over what a speaker has said when the speaker has finished her utterance by a more explicit appeal preceded by hesitations. In this way, both the speaker and the recipient conjointly participate in the construction of mutual understanding in talk in interaction.

The use of nonverbal features, eye movement in particular, may not be characteristics specific to ELF interactions. Nevertheless, it seems important to take into account such features when analyzing CS in interactions because it reveals that the speaker gradually makes explicit appeals skillfully utilizing such nonverbal features. These cannot be judged as a plea for help on the basis of a speaker's sole use of appeal. The next section will illustrate the use of another CS, i.e., explication.

2.2.3. Explication

This section reports the use of explication in the current ELF interactions. It is found that a speaker uses an explication to confirm the meaning of the expression being used, which gives a recipient(s) another chance to confirm their understanding. A recipient who has properly understood a speaker also uses an explication in subsequent turns. The following extract is a continuation of Extract 1, in which the interactants are negotiating the meaning of the metaphorical expression *A hit C*.

Extract 3

- 1 K: =a:nd s[he told me /dei/ (.) she told me /dei/ (.) A hit C (.) [[a:nd I j[ust-
 2 C: [hhh [ee?
 3 T: [ee
 4 hit?=
 5 K: =[yeah A hit C (.)] I WAS SHOCKED (.) HOW D[ARE-
 6 T: [[ahh hit [o:kay] ((look at K)) [because of the
 7 word h[it
 8 K: [hit YEAH=
 9 T: =yea[h ((imitate to slap someone across the face))
 10 J: [oh [no:
 11 K: [s(.) so I was SO: surprIsed that [how] dare he [hit a girl=
 12 J: [yea:h] [@@@
 13 T: =oh no because /da/ of the meaning (.)=
 14 K: =yeah ↓ a[nd actually] B is a friend of C=
 15 T: [the underlying meaning]

- 16 K: =[ah] no B is a friend of=
 17 J: [mm]
 18 K: =(.[.]) my flatmate [[] so she tol- she told me thAt=
 19 C [A] [ah]
 20 T: [[mm]
 21 J: [[yeah]
 22 K: =yes how dare he hit my friend[
 23 J: [yeah=
 24 K: =so I just told her not only of your friend how- it's not at all
 25 acceptable[] behaviour when when er when a guy doing (.) violence=
 26 J: [no:]
 27 K: =to a girl [] it's not acceptable at all=
 28 T: [[mm]
 29 J: [[mhm]
 30 K: =a:nd she told me [(.) ahh [] hit mean[s (.)]=
 31 T: [>but it turns tobe that hit<] [(**)]
 32 J: [yeah]
 33 K: =A flirted [(.)] B hh
 34 T: [yeah]((nod twice)) [hit yeah ((nod))]
 35 J: [AH::]=
 36→K: =not physically hit [] like that=
 37 T: [yeah]
 38 J: =a[l[rIght]
 39 C: [ah
 40 T: [the problem is] (..) how can I say it's like slang[] we don't know=
 41 J: [yEA]:h
 42 T: =the underlying meaning [we only know surfa]ce meaning=
 43 K: [yeah right hh]
 44 T: =of the word (.) yeah (.) [[hit]=
 45 C: [[really]=
 46 T: =mm=
 47 C: =[H-I-T]((spelling out))
 48 J: [[.hh I didn't kno][w that
 49 T: [yeah hit=

- 50 C: =A[h
 51 → K: [yeah H-I-T ((spelling out)) hit (.) [hit doe]sn't mean=
 52 T: [yeah but (**)]
 53 → K: =physically hit[] it's just fl[irted]=
 54 C: ((nod))
 55 J: [no:]
 56 → T: [hit] (.) mentally hit=

The most apparent use of explication as previously defined is in line 36 (i.e., *not physically hit like that*). The storyteller K uses it in order to confirm the meaning of *A hit C*, which is explained as *A flirted (with) B* in line 33. In fact, a recipient J has already recognized the meaning in line 35 (i.e., *AH::*). The other recipient C, on the other hand, understands it in line 39 (i.e., *ah*) after K provides the additional explication in line 36. That is to say, the use of explication gives another chance for J and C to (re)confirm the meaning, which in turn facilitates mutual understanding in talk in interaction.

Interestingly, the interactants continue to negotiate the meaning of *hit* in the subsequent turns. In order to explain what *hit* means, they recycle similar expressions with enjoyment. Specifically, in lines 45 and 47, C asks a confirmation question as to whether *hit* really means a male flirting with a female (i.e., *really* and spelling out the word respectively). Responding to this, in lines 51 and 53 (i.e., *it doesn't mean physically hit* and *it's just flirted*), K — the original storyteller — recycles similar expressions but in reverse order as those in lines 30, 33 and 36 (i.e., *hit means A flirted B* and *not physically hit*). C reconfirms the meaning in line 54 as indicated by the nod, so does J in line 55 as indicated by *no*, which is a partial repetition of K's utterance *it doesn't mean physically hit*. Subsequently, to further confirm the meaning, T, who has already understood the meaning in line 6 (i.e., *ahh hit okay*), uniquely exploits the word *mentally*, an antonym of *physically*, in line 56 in order to explain the meaning of *flirt*. Here, the interactants who have already known the meaning of the word provide those who are not sure about it with many opportunities for understanding by recycling similar and/or unique expressions for explications. In doing so, they enjoy the creativity of playing with words (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2009).

Tarone and Yule (1987), too, find the use of explication in their data of nonnative-nonnative communication. Yet, allowing an interactant in a listener's role to use only nonverbal feedback, their finding is limited to explication used only by the speaker. This paper, however, has found that not only the original storyteller K but also the interactant T who has already known the meaning uses explications, collaboratively giving explanations. Mauranen (2006) reports that ELF users in her data co-construct expressions in the process of interactive repair. Similarly — although what can be observed in Extract 3 is not a repair sequence — the interactants in the current ELF interaction collaboratively contribute to

the process of meaning creation (Seidlhofer & Widdowson, 2009). In the next section, I will illustrate the use of reformulating in the current ELF interactions.

2.2.4. Reformulating

In this subsection, I will show how the interactants use reformulating in the current ELF interactions. It will be demonstrated that a current speaker uses a reformulating to specify what a previous speaker has said. In the preceding turns to the following extract, the interactants talk about whether they feel more comfortable to talk with native speakers or nonnative speakers of English. K starts to give her opinion.

Extract 4

- 1 K: =mm: I think it's a bit part of cultural(. [.] .) common culture (.)=
 2 J: [mm]
 3 K: =er I live one girl from British[an]d one girl from America [] a:nd=
 4 C: [mm]
 5 J: [mhm]
 6 K: =well three continents hh[: a:nd (3.0) both- two other flatmates are
 7 J: [[@@ oh it's ((a snack package)) empty
 8 C: [[hhhh
 9 T: [[mhhh
 10 K: =native English speakers (.) a:nd well the (..) when they are talking ↑ =
 11 J: =mm=
 12 K: =[it's] just a girlish chat [] the SPEED is different [h[h] =
 13 T: [yeah] [mm] [oh yes]
 14 J: [mm] [oh yeah]
 15 C: ((nod))
 16 K: =yeah when they are talking girlish chat the speed is(.) complEtely
 17 diffe[rent-
 18→J: [yeah much quicker isn't it
 19 K: [yeah yeah right so lots of time I just=
 20 C: ((nod))
 21 K: er- many time I just- er- er: lost attention ↑ [] and the- well (.)=
 22 J: [mm]

The use of reformulating in question occurs in line 18. The sequence that the reformulating is used is as follows: In lines 10 and 12, K points out the rate of speech of native speakers of English during girl talk

is different from that in usual talk. This is acknowledged by the other interactants with various forms of backchannels, i.e., *oh yeah*, *oh yes* and nods respectively in lines 13, 14, and 15. In the aim of emphasizing what she has said, K repeats the same content with slightly changing forms and adding the adverb *completely* in lines 16 to 17. Here, although K emphasizes native speaker's fast rate of speech by repeating the same content and enunciating the word *completely* in line 16, the word describing the rate of speech, *different*, remains rather unspecific — though it is apparent from the context, it does not indicate where exactly the difference is. In response, J specifies and displays understanding in line 18 (i.e., *yeah much quicker isn't it*), with a backchannel slightly overlapping with the end of K's utterance. This shows J's cooperative behavior. K acknowledges it in the next turn in line 19 (i.e., *yeah yeah right*), so does C in line 20 as indicated by the nod.

What we observe here is the process of enhancing shared understanding between the interactants of what is being talked about. Kaur (2009), who investigates ELF interactions in Malaysia, reports that the use of repetitions and paraphrases gives another opportunity to ensure mutual understanding. It can be added from the present analysis that the use of reformulating specifies the content of the preceding turn, which in turn develops mutual understanding between the interactants.

3. Conclusion

This paper has investigated how four ELF users in a British higher education setting exploit four types of CS, restructuring, appeal, explication, and reformulating, in an informal talk, taking an interactional approach. It has revealed that such CS together with nonverbal features are interactionally exploited by interactants to construct mutual understanding. Specifically, a speaker exploits restructuring and contextualization cues (e.g., hesitation and rising intonation) to invite recipients' responses, and recipients provide backchannels in response to those cues. Similarly, a speaker gradually makes explicit appeals by utilizing eye movements in order to keep her floor, and a recipient takes over what the speaker has said when the speaker leaves the floor to her. The use of explication, on the other hand, gives another opportunity for interactants to confirm the meaning of word being used; and it can also be re-used by other interactants, which gives many opportunities for them to confirm the meaning. As for the use of reformulating, it specifies the content of the preceding turn and develops mutual understanding between the interactants.

Firth (2009) explains two factors that make ELF as *sui generis*. One is *entailment*, which “concerns the inherent interactional and linguistic variability that lingua franca interactions entail”, and the other is *metatheory*, which is “theoretical underpinnings and dispositions brought about by adopting a lingua franca outlook on language” (p. 150). Seidlhofer (2009) explains these factors in a simplified manner. The former factor means that it is a fluid communication process that characterizes ELF as it is used

in talk in interaction (p. 239). The latter, on the other hand, means that a view of and approaches to languages which used to be unproblematically regarded as fixed and straightforward should be questioned and revised as fluid, complex and blurred, taking into account of social constructuralistic and post-structuralistic point of views. That is to say, although only a native language of English — but not exclusive — is used to be regarded as a legitimate object of investigation, “what constitutes a legitimate community... a legitimate linguistic variety [and a legitimate user of a language] has to change” (Seidlhofer, 2009, p. 238). As shown in this paper, the interactants in the current ELF interaction tactically exploit various strategies or nonverbal features to achieve mutual understanding in the ongoing interactions. This seems to suggest that such interactants are legitimate ELF users having various resources for their communicative needs, not learners having insufficient competence as compared to that of a native speaker.

Only tentative conclusions can be drawn from the present analyses since this study has examined only one case of ELF interactions. It is certainly necessary to collect more data and analyze them in more detail in order to confirm or refute the current findings. Despite these limitations, some pedagogical implications have emerged from the present analyses of ELF interactions though this is only at awareness-raising level. The process of meaning creation of the kind observed in the present ELF interactions can be presented to future ELF users, i.e., current learners, in order to encourage them to see themselves as legitimate users of the language, who might have been intimidated by the persuasive native speaker norm that is widely taken for granted in English language teaching contexts. For instance, the use of backchannel and reformulating may be introduced as a tool for showing active listening behavior, which contributes to rapport management (Bjørge, 2010). In addition, the use of explication may be introduced as a tool for confirming an expression that they are using (Tarone & Yule, 1987). Although these suggestions are tentative, it is hoped that this paper sheds some light on how ELF users interactively facilitate mutual understanding by use of various strategies and resources.

Transcription conventions

=	Latched speech, where the turn or utterance is followed without a perceptible pause by the next turn or utterance
(.) (..) (...)	Micro pauses
(**)	Unrecoverable speech
:	Lengthened vowel sounds
TEXT	The word is enunciated louder than surrounding speech
tex-	Abrupt cut-off of the word
[[text] [[text]	Utterances starting simultaneously are linked together with double left-hand brackets, their end is indicated with a single right-hand bracket
t[ext] [text]	Overlapped (part of) utterances are put in square brackets

@	Laughter
hh mhh	Chuckles
↑ ↓	Marked rising and falling shifts in intonation are indicated by upward and downward pointing arrows
?	Questioning tone
.hh	Inbreathe
/sound/	Transcribed as it is sounded
° text°	Soft sounds
>text<	Fast rate of speech
((text))	Notes of contextual information and nonverbal features
((NAME))	The name of person who is referred to in the conversation is anonymously indicated
(1.5)	Numbers in the brackets indicate the length of silence

- Note (1) Tarone's (1983) criteria of CS is as follows: 1) a speaker desires to communicate a meaning X to a listener; 2) the speaker believes the linguistic or sociolinguistic structure desired to communicate meaning X is unavailable, or is not shared with the listener; 3) the speaker chooses to: (a) avoid — not attempt to communicate meaning X; or, (b) attempt alternate means to communicate meaning X. The speaker stops trying alternatives when it seems clear to the speaker that there is shared meaning (p. 65).
- (2) Although reformulating can be regarded as part of paraphrases, this study adopts the term *reformulating* to specifically refer to the recipient use of paraphrase.
- (3) Francis and Hunston (1992) develop the analytical categories for discourse analysis, which is applicable to varieties of situations such as casual conversation, commercial transactions, professional interviews and so forth, based on the original Sinclair-Coulthard model (1975), i.e., initiation, response, and follow-up model. Although their original category is *reformulate*, this study employs the term *reformulating* for consistency with the other types of CS.
- (4) Information on transcription conventions is available at the end of this paper.
- (5) This may be identified as another type of CS, meaning replacement or semantic avoidance, in the light of the psycholinguistic approach to CS (Faerch & Kasper, 1983), but it is not my concern here.
- (6) Maynard (1987) reports several function of vertical head movements in Japanese communication. More detailed analysis may be required to reveal functions of nods in ELF interactions in future research.

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