

A case study of self-repair and clarification strategies in a BELF
interaction

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<p>Nykypäivän globalisoituneessa maailmassa lukuisten eri kieli- ja kulttuuritaustojen edustajien on kommunikoituava keskenään useissa eri arkipäivän tilanteissa, jolloin ihmiset ovat yhä useammin vuorovaikutuksessa keskenään käyttäen lingua franca -englantia. BELF-viestintä (engl. Business English as a Lingua Franca) on tänä päivänä olennaisessa roolissa kansainvälisessä liiketoiminnassa, jossa englannin kielellä on dominoiva status. Tämä on laadullinen tapaustutkimus, jonka tarkoituksena on selvittää lingua franca -englannin viestintästrategioiden käyttöä ja niiden kommunikatiivisia funktioita Tukholmassa sijaitsevan kansainvälisen yrityksen palaverissa. Tutkimus keskittyi kahden verbaalisen viestintästrategian ilmenemiseen, joita kutsutaan itsekorjaus- sekä selvennystrategioiksi. Aineistona tutkimuksessa käytettiin ääninauhoitetta yrityksen palaverista, jossa osallistujat käyttivät BELF-viestintää kommunikaation välineenä palaverin ajan. Tutkimus pohjautui aiempiin tutkimuksiin ja teorioihin BELF-viestinnästä sekä lingua franca -englannin viestintästrategioista. Siinä käytettiin keskusteluanalyysiin perustuvaa metodologiaa aiemmista viestintästrategiatutkimuksista (Mauranen 2006, Kaur 2011 & Björkman 2014), jotka tutkivat strategioiden käyttöä korkeakoulukontekstissa. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli omaksua aiemmissa korkeakoulututkimuksissa käytetty metodologia ja tutkia sen avulla ilmiötä kansainvälisen liiketalouden näkökulmasta. Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittivat molempien strategioiden aktiivista käyttöä BELF-vuorovaikutuksessa. Puhujien todettiin osoittavan vahvaa orientaatiota selkeään, ymmärrettävään ja tehokkaaseen puheen tuotantoon itsekorjaus- ja selvennysstrategioiden kautta. Tulokset viittasivat siihen, että kyseiset viestintästrategiat toimivat osana puhujien ammatillista kommunikaatiorepertoaria, ja niitä hyödynnettiin palaverin viestinnällisten tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

English is the most widely spoken language today, with over 1 billion L2 English speakers across the globalized world. As a Lingua Franca, English is seen as the dominant medium of international communication in different interactional encounters among speakers who do not share the same L1 (Björkman 2014). For instance, English as a Lingua Franca (henceforth ELF) is considered the international language of business, which is one of the main reasons why English is spoken so extensively today. As the international trade is expanding increasingly, it is bringing companies worldwide into contact with each other. Therefore, globalized markets and internationally competing corporations drive business professionals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to communicate with each other on a daily basis. People working within international business often interact through the use of business ELF (BELF), in order to reach common understanding in different work-related interactional situations (Kankaanranta and Planken 2010).

International business communication can be rather unpredictable at times, as speakers come from a variety of L1s and express different levels of English skills. Business professionals cannot take mutual understanding for granted, as it is expected in BELF (as in any ELF) interaction that some sort of communication challenges might occur during the conversation. In other words, speakers are prepared that something could go wrong in the interaction. Yet despite the unpredictable nature, business professionals do manage to have high-level discussions and reach work-related goals through them. In order to achieve successful and explicit BELF communication, speakers utilize various pragmatic means as tools for pro-active work, which are referred to as communication strategies.

Communication strategies are a moderately new research area within the study of ELF pragmatics, which explores how ELF speakers manifest different communicative practices to ensure successful communication. Much of the previous research into ELF pragmatics focuses mainly on how speakers resolve and pre-empt situations of misunderstanding as well maintain mutual intelligibility. In addition, BELF centered studies agree that intercultural communication skills are more important than native speaker correctness in reaching successful communication. The existing studies on communication strategies and their communicative functions in ELF interaction have mostly been conducted within a higher education setting (e.g. Mauranen 2006; Kaur 2011; Björkman 2014). However, the phenomenon has not yet been studied extensively, and much less so from a business

perspective, although BELF competence has proven to be an essential component of business knowledge in today's global business (Kankaanranta and Planken 2010).

The present research is a case study that explores the use and functions of two kinds of verbal strategies in a business meeting of one international company based in Stockholm, Sweden, where BELF is used as the medium of communication. The study draws on previous research and theories with regard to the study of BELF and communication strategies, as well as the findings from the audio-recorded and transcribed business meeting. Furthermore, the study adapts a conversation analysis based methodology used in the previous communication strategy studies. The study aims to discover the communicative functions of self-repair and clarification strategies from an international business context, and thus generate more information on BELF speakers' use of verbal communication strategies.

2 PRAGMATICS IN ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

2.1 The study of English as a lingua franca

ELF is typically defined as a spoken phenomenon, a globalized communicative practice that is used as “an additionally acquired language system” in the interaction between speakers who do not share a common native language (Jenkins et al. 2011: 283). The dominance of the English language status as a lingua franca has grown significantly in the past few decades so that now it has even been compared to Latin as “the Latin of the modern world” (Björkman 2014: 122). In addition, Mauranen and Ranta (2009) state that as a global lingua franca, it is one of the symbols of the modern world along with globalization, networking, economic integration and the Internet. Because of its increasingly global status, ELF has recently been receiving a lot of attention among researchers and scholars, and the studies have provided important empirical descriptions of ELF usage (Björkman 2014).

However, there are some contradictions between researchers in the definitions of ELF regarding the L1 speakers of English. The majority of ELF researchers (including this study) share the idea that ELF does not exclude L1 speakers, since ELF must also be additionally acquired by L1 speakers of English, as it is not the same as Native English (Jenkins et al. 2011). Some ELF researchers, on the

other hand, have different perceptions concerning this issue. For example, Firth (1996) defines ELF as a contact language for speakers that do not share either a common native language or a common national culture, who have chosen English as a foreign language for communication (Firth 1996: 240). Firth's definition therefore excludes L1 speakers of English from ELF, as they obviously cannot be seen as foreign language speakers of English. The majority of researchers consider Firth's definition problematic, since ELF is separated from EFL, and it is not a language in itself, but rather a variety of a language that speakers use as a tool of communication. From the ELF perspective, L2 speakers are neither learners of English, nor "failed native speakers" of EFL, but instead "highly skilled communicators who make use of their multilingual resources in ways not available to monolingual L1 speakers" (Jenkins et al. 2011: 284).

The default goal in ELF interaction, as in any human communication, is mutual intelligibility between the interlocutors. However, according to Mauranen (2006), misunderstandings are usually expected to emerge more frequently among speakers that do not share a native language than between L1 speakers of the same language. As Kaur (2011) states, a key feature of interaction in ELF is diversity. When using ELF, speakers have to cope with a variety of parameters, such as different accents, proficiency levels, communicative styles, cultural norms and references (Kaur 2011; Björkman 2014) – which can cause challenges to the interactional process of achieving mutual understanding. In addition, ELF speakers are likely to have gained different experiences in learning and using the English language (Mauranen 2006), and may therefore display different pronunciation patterns and degrees of lexical and grammatical knowledge, as well as interpret lexical items and pragmatic cues differently (Kaur 2011).

Despite the diversity that is omnipresent in ELF contexts, commonalities also emerge within ELF interaction. In fact, ELF speakers are typically strongly oriented to achieving mutual intelligibility and are aware and prepared for the asymmetries that diversity poses among the interlocutors (Björkman 2014). According to Björkman (2014: 124) "this 'preparedness for what might go wrong' can be regarded as one of the characteristics of ELF interactions." Moreover, speakers in ELF contexts have a habit of doing "pro-active work" to ensure communication effectiveness and using a variety of communication strategies to both pre-empt and resolve communicative turbulence and misunderstanding (Björkman 2014; Kaur 2011; Mauranen 2006; Cogo 2009) (see more in section 2.3).

Previous studies on ELF have been conducted at various linguistic levels, especially lexis, lexicogrammar, pronunciation and pragmatics. In addition, ELF researchers are engaged in exploring ELF usage in different domains of social interaction, particularly in international business, (higher) education, tourism, politics, science, technology and media discourse (Jenkins et al. 2011; Kaur 2011). Mauranen (2006) argues that ELF is, in fact, a language of secondary socialization into discourse communities, where many of its speakers have a domain-specific ELF repertoire that they may not even acquire or need in their L1. Out of all the domains, international business and higher education have been studied most extensively with regard to ELF usage (Jenkins et al. 2011). This study aims to look into ELF usage from a pragmatic point of view within the domain of international business.

2.2 Lingua franca English within the domain of international business

During the past few decades, it has become globally accepted that the lingua franca of international business is English, and because of the increased globalization of countries, companies and individual business professionals must collaborate and compete internationally (Kankaanranta and Planken 2010). International companies around the world are increasingly using English as their corporate language, meaning that all corporate level documentation and reporting, as well as communication between other units is done in English (Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005). As mentioned earlier, today's business professionals' increasingly do not share an L1 in international work and communication situations; therefore, BELF "has come to dominate as the shared code used to get work done" (Kankaanranta and Planken 2010: 380).

BELF is defined as a neutral and shared communication code for business purposes that has been characterized by its goal and content orientation as well as efficient usage (Kankaanranta and Planken 2010). As discussed above, it is used and shared among the members of the global business discourse community in various business-related interactions. In the definition that will be used in this study, BELF speakers are neither categorized as L1 or L2 speakers, nor learners of the language, but rather as business communicators who make use of BELF in their everyday working life. Some researchers, however, have different opinions on whether BELF should be seen as culture-neutral or cultureless. As it is argued by Meierkord (2002), seeing lingua francas as cultureless is problematic, as it neglects the fact that its speakers come from a diversity of backgrounds. Thus, BELF speakers do bring out their own cultural aspects in discourse practices as well as in terms of how they think encounters should be handled (Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005: 404).

Similarly to ELF research, much of the research into BELF focuses on the phenomenon of BELF speakers accommodating in multiple ways to ensure mutual understanding and communication effectiveness (Jenkins et al. 2011). Additionally, a considerable amount of research has been conducted on individual business professionals' perceptions towards BELF communication (Jenkins et al. 2011). For example, Kankaanranta and Planken's (2010) study reveals that the business professionals interviewed in the study see BELF as an essential part of business knowledge, and BELF communication as content-oriented that requires domain specific knowledge and vocabulary.

BELF competence as business knowledge is a significant notion within the concept of BELF, since it is expected from business professionals around the world in today's globalized business to achieve work-related goals and mutual understanding (Räsänen 2018; Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005). According to Kankaanranta and Planken (2010), BELF competence requires clarity, accuracy of content, and knowledge of business-specific vocabulary and genre conventions rather than linguistic correctness. In addition, relational orientation is seen as a central aspect in BELF competence, since BELF interactions occur with professionals from a variety of L1 and cultural backgrounds (Kankaanranta and Planken 2010). Therefore, it is integral for BELF speakers to pay special attention in ensuring that all participants are comfortable within the interaction and that there is mutual intelligibility between the participants (as in any ELF interaction).

As noted earlier, the speakers manage to use the language successfully and carry out the business discourses for sophisticated professional purposes, despite the diversity that is present in BELF interaction (Mauranen 2006). According to Räsänen (2018), BELF speakers have a professional communicative repertoire, which demonstrates micro-level globalization processes in today's working life and international business; whereas the macro-level aspects of globalized business have generated the need for a new flexible repertoire. Räsänen (2018: 150) states that BELF is being "appropriated, modified and used in diverse ways as part of translingual practices", that are manifested in various goal-oriented business interactions and in building relationships. Furthermore, Kankaanranta and Planken's (2010) study showed that BELF communication about work-related issues with those sharing the business knowledge and professional repertoire was found to be somewhat effortless compared to the communication with non-professionals, which was described as challenging. Additionally, the study revealed that three components were essential for successful BELF usage: "getting the facts right, making the discourse clear, and making the recipient feel good" (Kankaanranta and Planken 2010: 400).

2.3 Pragmatics in (B)ELF interaction – communication strategies

Early research into ELF pragmatics, for example by Firth (1996) and Meierkord (2002), discovered mutual cooperation as a key characteristic of ELF communication, alongside speakers' strong orientation towards achieving mutual understanding, regardless of linguistic correctness (Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey 2011). In addition, the early work focused on the descriptions of several strategies, features and other pragmatic phenomena that take place in preventing misunderstanding (e.g. Mauranen 2006). More recent work on ELF pragmatics has focused on pragmatic strategies used by ELF speakers, such as pre-empting strategies (Cogo, 2009; Kaur 2011).

More than four decades ago, communication strategies (henceforth CS) were first linked to the study of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). According to Björkman (2014), the first definitions of CSs were limited to overcoming crisis and problems related to language structures, and compensating for breakdowns and gaps in communication, since in the early SLA problematicity was definitional to communication strategies. However, some researchers considered the definition problematic, as they saw CSs as a means of increasing explicitness and effectiveness in communication, instead of fixing only the difficulties and problems that speakers face. Björkman (2014) articulates that such emphasis on problematicity is one of the reasons why CSs within lingua franca communication must be studied separately from the SLA paradigm. In addition, SLA frameworks were originally developed for language teaching; therefore, Björkman (2014) argues that such frameworks are not proper to study CSs in ELF usage.

Research into pragmatic CSs demonstrates that ELF speakers make proficient use of interactional practices to both pre-empt and resolve problems of understanding. In addition to that, the speakers use various 'explicitness strategies' that enhance the clarity, comprehensibility and effectiveness of their speech (Kaur 2011). Thus, Kaur (2011) states that ELF speakers have a habit of using such interactional practices in order to make their speech more intelligible to their interlocutors, which is also considered a signal of cooperation and solidarity (which has been shown to be essential for successful BELF usage). The definition for CSs includes pro-active work (Björkman 2014); for example, Kaur's (2011) study discovered instances where ELF speakers reacted not only to real problems but also potential problems that might have occurred during interaction without any observable problems actually taking place. According to Kaur (2011), speakers have a heavy reliance on CSs in ELF communication, and despite the diversity in such interactions, speakers are able to

utilize the pragmatic resources to accomplish successful communicative outcomes. This study will look more in detail into two forms of CSs: repair and clarification strategies.

2.3.1 Self-repair strategies

As reported in Kaur's (2011: 2706) study, repair can be referred to a self-righting mechanism that generally occurs very frequently in conversations "as participants address the difficulties that arise in interaction in an ongoing manner". However, when cultural and linguistic differences are present among participants in interaction (like in ELF contexts), repair has proven to take an even greater role as participants most likely need to deal with increased asymmetries. According to Kaur (2011), the term repair is separated from correction since repair may also occur in the absence of a language error or a mistake, and on the other hand, it may be absent in the occurrence of an error or a mistake. Repair can be self-initiated by the speaker of a turn or it may be other-initiated by the recipient, and likewise it can be performed by either party. However, this study focuses only on self-performed self-repair practices since in ELF contexts where a hearable error is taking place, it is usually not in the speakers' nature to correct other participants' language errors, as speakers are often engaged to solidarity (Kaur 2011).

Self-repair practices are identified as speakers' own orientations to one's own speech as segments of talk that display disturbance in an ongoing utterance, which is followed by a repair of some element(s) in the preceding utterance. Speakers in ELF interactions resort to self-repair in order to maintain and enhance intelligibility and achieve mutual understanding. Moreover, in such cases when there are no observable errors in participants' speech, self-repair is utilized to pre-empt potential problems rather than real trouble, as a means to pro-active work (Kaur 2011, Mauranen 2006). Such practices include speakers' performance on rephrasing the content, word choice, and grammar of prior talk. The motivation that drives (B)ELF speakers to the move to self-repair is formed by the need to make talk more intelligible and explicit to assist the recipient in the progress of understanding (Kaur 2011).

2.3.2 Clarification strategies

According to Kankaanranta and Planken (2010), the term clarity can be used to refer to characteristics such as logical progression, organization and explicitness which is commonly stated as integral in, for example, business communication; "The second component of successful BELF communication

can be summarized in one word: clarity” (Kankaanranta and Planken 2010: 401). However, misunderstandings may occur despite participants’ communicative and interactive skills. As Mauranen (2006: 147) reports in her study, increased occurrences of clarifications, comprehension checks, and explanations refer to ELF speakers’ “natural commonsense assumption” that mutual understanding cannot be taken for granted - it requires special effort when taken into account the “precarious nature of the ELF situation”.

In addition, Mauranen (2006) in her study found that speakers utilize clarification strategies to make discourse explicit in ELF interaction. Speakers may for example employ paraphrasing as a means to improve the clarity and comprehensibility of their speech (Kaur 2011: 2705); “rephrasing or restructuring the form of prior utterance, for instance, allows speakers to make themselves clear and improves the chances that at least one of the formulations will get across to the hearers”. Such strategies work as pro-active tools to inhibit possible problems of understanding, for example in interactional situations where a pro-longed silence, minimal response, or overlapping talk takes place (Jenkins et al. 2011). Mauranen (2006) states that pro-active strategies are continually used by ELF speakers not only to ensure mutual understanding but also communication effectiveness and intelligibility.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1 Research Aim and Questions

As mentioned earlier, CSs are an integral research area within ELF communication, as it is the ultimate intention to communicate effectively and intelligibly in ELF contexts. However, the study of CSs in ELF context is a fairly new research area and their communicative functions have not yet been thoroughly researched. Unlike detailed frameworks that exist in the SLA paradigm, there are relatively fewer attempts in creating CSs frameworks for natural ELF interactions (with the exception of e.g. Björkman’s 2014 study). Most of the existing studies on CSs in spoken ELF discourse have been carried out within the field of higher education (e.g. Mauranen 2006; Kaur 2011; Björkman 2014), but fairly less has been conducted in the domain of international business.

The aim of this study is to narrow down the research gap described above by discovering and providing information on the use and functions of self-repair and clarification CSs in BELF

interaction. More specifically, the study aims to explore the communicative functions of such CSs in a business meeting of an international company based in Stockholm, Sweden. The study will focus on the following research questions:

1. What kind of self-repair and clarification CSs emerge during the meeting?
2. What functions do the CSs carry within the BELF interaction, i.e. do they pre-empt or resolve communicative turbulence and/or enhance the communicative comprehensibility and effectiveness of the meeting?

3.2 Data

The data used in this study is an audio recording from a business meeting of an international company. The recorded meeting took place on 27 February 2019 in Stockholm. The recording is approximately 1 hour long, and the meeting was recorded specifically in cooperation with this study. The five (5) participants speaking on the recording are all business professionals who are L2 speakers of English. As it is increasingly the case in today's international business communication (e.g. Kankaanranta and Planken 2010; Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005), the business professionals participating in this study come from different L1 backgrounds, and the corporate language of the company is English. Therefore, (B)ELF is being used to communicate throughout the whole recorded meeting. Furthermore, the participants have received a privacy notice and they have given an official consent to participate in this study. According to those terms, the company name as well as the names of the participants will remain anonymous.

3.3 Methods

The approximately one-hour recording was transcribed, and some parts of the transcript were manually selected for qualitative analysis. The selection of the data is conducted in terms of what is relevant to this study and which spoken parts best demonstrate the use and functions of CSs in the data of this study. Therefore, the contents of the meeting, such as the topics handled, are neither revealed for security reasons, nor are they relevant for this study.

The methodology used in this study is a conversation analysis based CSs framework on self-repair and clarification strategies - the methodology used in previous CSs analyses that have been conducted

within the domain of higher education (e.g. Björkman 2014; Kaur 2011; Mauranen 2006) is adopted and used to analyze repair and clarification CSs in an international business setting. As mentioned previously, speakers in any interactional ELF setting have a habit of doing pro-active work and using a variety of communication strategies to pre-empt and resolve communicative turbulence and ensuring communication effectiveness (e.g. Björkman 2014; Cogo 2009; Kaur 2011; Mauranen 2006). Thus, the adopted methodology of CSs analysis from the domain of higher education into the domain of international business is theoretically unproblematic. However, possibly emerging communicative characteristics of specifically BELF usage (see section 2.2) are additionally taken into account in interpreting the data, as it is relevant for this study that deals with an international business setting.

4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The present study looks into two types of self-repair practices as well as several pro-active clarification strategies, which emerged during the business meeting. Overall, the results demonstrate speakers' active use of both self-repair and clarification strategies during BELF interaction. The participants are seen to be very much aware of the nature regarding the current BELF situation, and they therefore act accordingly by showing strong orientation towards clear, explicit, and effective production of speech. Furthermore, the results present that the methodology from Kaur's (2011), Mauranen's (2006) and Björkman's (2014) study within the domain of higher education worked unproblematically with this study's business meeting context, as speakers showed similar use of CSs regardless of the different interactional ELF context, especially with self-repair practices. However, the results also somewhat differ - the speakers in this study show greater effort in terms of getting the key work-related concepts correct and the ideas concerning them understandably across to the interlocutors, which is shown especially through the use of clarification strategies. The results thus suggest that the use of the strategies are a part of the speakers' professional communicative repertoire. This proves the content and goal-centric nature of BELF that is perhaps not as dominant in other ELF contexts, such as in higher education that is explored in Kaur's (2011), Mauranen's (2006), and Björkman's (2014) study.

4.1 Self-repair – Righting the wrongs

The first and more typical form of self-repair, which was also performed regularly among the participants of this study, can be described somewhat as ‘righting the wrongs’. Such instances are identified as the process of a speaker performing a hearable error or a mistake (according to the norms of the standard language) in the preceding utterance, which is then replaced with a linguistic unit according to what the speaker thinks is correct. They seem to function as a means to resolve errors regarding different aspects of the participants’ talk, mainly in order to maintain and enhance communicative intelligibility and accurateness during the meeting as demonstrated below. The examples show speakers’ similar use of phonological, lexical, morphological and syntactic repair as also found in Kaur’s (2011) study.

4.1.1 Phonological repair

Self-repair may take place within disturbance at the phonological level, where a speaker is oriented to correcting one’s phonemic slip or articulation of a word (Kaur 2011). In the examples (1) and (2) below, the repairs entail overcoming speakers’ phonological errors by replacing the mispronounced words with the correct forms. The mispronounced words are immediately followed by the repairs, and, as example (1) displays, the speaker is likely to be able to continue smoothly with the rest of the utterance. Furthermore, both examples suggest that the speakers are showing an orientation to comprehensibility by also repeating and adding key information connected to the words that were mispronounced before actually correcting them: In example (1), the speaker adds the word “separate” and repeats the word “job” with regard to mispronounced word “descriptions”. In example (2), the speaker repeats the adjective “good” twice after the phonemic slip regarding the word “example”.

(1) S1: a quick question. how many **job pres- eh separate job prescript- descriptions** we have?

(2) S2: an-and power plants are (0.7) are **good expa- good-good example**

4.1.2 Lexical repair

Self-repair may also emerge at the lexical level, where a speaker replaces an incorrect word choice with a correct one. As the examples (3) and (4) show, the replacements take place immediately after the incorrect lexical unit that Kaur (2011) describes as a slip of tongue. In example (3), the speaker replaces the incorrect word “past” with the correct word choice “beginning”. Example (4), on the other hand, demonstrates a speaker accidentally mixing up the personal pronouns he and she, which the speaker repairs immediately. After the repair has been performed, the speakers again continue

with the rest of the utterances, with no notable disturbance to the sentence structures as displayed in both of the examples below.

- (3) S2: [i-i] in in my understanding we have eh **from eh from the past ehh from the beginning** of the new organization (0.7) we-we have spent quite spent quite a lot effort having having eh eh decent level job descriptions.
- (4) S2: [in my understanding] it's not eh that urgent that that ehh that **he nee- she needs** the answer today

4.1.3 Morphological repair

At the morphological level, self-repair may appear in the form of correcting the inflection of a word as shown in example (5), where the speaker replaces the incorrect suffix of the word with the correct form. Additionally, morphological repair may emerge for example as correcting a word from singular to plural or changing the tense of a word etc. (Kaur 2011). Example (5) illustrates the speaker being aware of the mistake regarding the inflection of the previous unit and immediately shows an orientation to accuracy by asking “what is the fine word”. Morphological errors are likely to appear regularly in ELF interactions and as Kaur (2011) states, they rarely create trouble in terms of getting the message across if they are left unrepaired. However, when self-repair does take place as seen in example (5), it again implies to the speaker’s engagement to being accurate, which is considered especially important in BELF interaction.

- (5) S1: How about making it a game? I have e- experience in ehh sort of the **gamificavity ehh what is the fine word**
- S3: Mmm=
- S1: **Gamification**

4.1.4 Syntactic repair

Fourthly, self-repair may take place at the syntactic level, where the correction may be performed for example in the form of a speaker abandoning a previous syntactic sentence construction, modifying the clause type or changing the word order of a sentence (Kaur 2011). As stated by Kaur 2011, syntactic self-repair is likely to be more extensive compared to phonological, lexical, or morphological repair, because speakers may perform considerable changes to the ongoing utterances.

Example (6) demonstrates the speaker being unsatisfied with the previous word order of the verb phrase in progress, which is then changed according to what the speaker thinks is correct. In example (7), the speaker's previous utterance is grammatically correct, yet he or she decides to abandon the sentence construction. The repair suggests that instead of saying "maybe this takes too long", the speaker feels like proposing a separate discussion expresses better to the interlocutors that ongoing matter of discussion is important but it is taking too long for the current meeting.

(6) S2: but **it has been the email ehh e-mailing has been** for quite a long time so so (0.8) so eh she needs the answer from-from us in in cer- (h) certain period of time

(7) S2: So that is is the inside where she wants to have our (0.7) our opinion but but eh make- **maybe this takes too (1.0) maybe it should (0.7) be good thing to have a separate discussion**

4.2 Self-repair – raising explicitness

The second form of self-repair that occurred during the business meeting can be described as self-repair practices which are not preceded by a hearable error or mistake, in contrast to 'correction' exemplified above, but are regularly performed by (B)ELF speakers regardless. To identify these kinds of repair practices, it is crucial to "answer the question 'why that now?' when there is no hearable error or mistake in the preceding segment of talk" (Kaur 2011: 2709). Such instances of repair usually take place in the form of a speaker producing an alternative utterance for something said previously, or making additions to an ongoing utterance. They seem designed not only to make discourse more explicit, but also pre-empt possible disturbance by enhancing the clarity of speakers' talk. The occurrence of this form of self-repair in ELF contexts is often the outcome of ELF speakers' strong orientation to pro-active work, as demonstrated below and also shown in Kaur's (2011) study. However, examples below where speakers are shown to self-repair demonstrate speakers' precision on content that seems to be important in terms of reaching the communicative goals of the meeting - they are tied to the BELF context and are therefore used for purposes other than the ones in Kaur's (2011) study.

4.2.1 Insertion of a qualifying lexical item

One self-repair practice performed in the meeting involves a speaker inserting a qualifying lexical item to make his or her utterance more specific. It may occur in segments of talk where the preceding

term used has made the utterance rather general, and the speaker therefore inserts a lexical item to the utterance in order to reduce the possible amount of meanings that the utterance may carry within (Kaur 2011). In example (8), the speaker inserts the word “descriptions” which suggests that the speaker’s intent is to make it clear to the interlocutors that he or she is referring to the descriptions. Example (9) shows the speaker narrowing down the amount of meanings that the previous utterance “no language requirement” carries by inserting the word “English” to specify that he or she is specifically talking about English language requirements. The performance of this kind of self-repair practice shown in the examples below and also demonstrated by Kaur (2011) illustrates speakers’ orientation to pre-empting possible situations where interlocutors would have to ask the speaker for additional clarification.

(8) S1: So **these** are tools for personal development and eh personal career planning ehh **these descriptions** ehh and that’s why we want to have them open

(9) S1: at the moment we have a lot of people working in the company who have been hired here with **no language** (0.7) **eh requirement** (1.3) **eh or no English language requirement** when hired

4.2.2 Replacement of a pronoun

Another self-repair practice emerges in the form of a speaker replacing a pronoun used in the preceding utterance with its referent. Example (10) demonstrates a speaker using the pronoun “that” in the previous utterance, which the speaker repairs with its referent “process” by first repeating a part of the prior utterance “to get” and then replacing the pronoun. Kaur (2011: 2710) states that when questionable reference takes place, there is a possibility that such situations end up in an “interpretive error, which reveals itself as a misunderstanding in the next turn”. The performance of this self-repair practice therefore suggests that BELF speakers are aware of the possible turbulence that a problematic pronoun usage can cause to the interlocutors. The replacement of the pronoun may function as a move to pre-empt possible problems in understanding and thus ensure communication effectiveness, as demonstrated in example (10) below. The example also shows the speaker making clarifying additions to the rest of the clause after the repair has been performed.

(10) S1: so good we have the second meeting already in in your calendars and eh now ((name)) will (0.7) eh take an extra point for booking the first one **to get that start- eh**

S3: yes [yeah]=

S1: [to-to get] the process eh (0.7) clear so that you all see it in the same way and then eh agree on starting about the p- starting the performance evaluation ground

4.2.3 Lexical replacement

The data also uncovered a self-repair practice where a speaker replaces a lexical item used in the previous segment of talk with a semantically more specific one. This is different from lexical repair, where the speaker replaces an incorrect lexical item with a correct one, since within lexical replacement the speaker decides to use another term that is connected to the prior but “narrows down the possible range of meanings to a very specific one” Kaur (2011: 2709). Example (11) demonstrates a speaker replacing a very general term “people” with the term “we”, which suggests that the speaker is making sure to the interlocutors that he or she is referring to the five people that are present in the business meeting. A general term can easily carry a variety of different meanings to the listeners, so by replacing it to a more specific one, BELF speakers seem to make sure to pre-empt any possible misunderstandings.

(11) S1: I don't think it's fair to have them only in English (1.0) if **people- we** are not we cannot expect everybody to know (0.7) eh English

4.3 Clarification strategies

As mentioned previously, BELF competence is strongly connected to speakers' clarity and accuracy of content, and thus interactional practices that enhance the explicitness of speech are considered integral in BELF interactions. The utilization of the following clarification strategies demonstrated below expresses the participants' orientation to this. Somewhat similar forms of clarification strategies are also found in Mauranen's (2006) and Björkman's (2014) studies; however, the occurrences of the strategies exemplified below are closely tied to this study's BELF context and seem to be used as a part of speakers' professional communicative repertoire.

4.3.1 Paraphrasing and clarification

Paraphrasing was performed quite often in the meeting, which according to Björkman (2014) can be described as modifying a prior or an ongoing utterance although providing the same content. Example

(12) demonstrates a speaker paraphrasing the ongoing utterance **in bold**, which the speaker uses evidently as a strategy to signal the need for finding a common procedure for the matter at hand.

Clarification is somewhat similar to paraphrasing, where a speaker provides another segment of talk related to a prior one to clarify and/or exemplify something said previously. Examples (12) and (13) illustrate the utilization of this strategy in the segments of talk *in italics*: In example (12), the speaker raises a matter related to role descriptions on behalf of an unnamed person outside of the meeting. When the speaker is finished with the turn, there is a prolonged silence of approximately 3.5 seconds, which presumably drives the speaker to clarify that he or she raised the matter because it is considerably bothering the unnamed person. Example (13) on the other hand shows a speaker exemplifying his or her previously used term “gamification” after receiving a minimal response “yeah?” This shows that the speaker makes an effort to ensure that the interlocutors understand the concept and therefore the topic at hand.

(12) S2: *(name) has has asked all of us that that okay if the basic thing- eh regarding role descriptions is is English, but **what is eeh what is the the our (0.7) what wha- what is our procedure regarding that if there are people who who don't understand English enough so so that we should have a common procedure regarding this (1.0)** before we start to-to give give advice (0.7) eeh to to superiors...*

S2: (3.5) *so so eh I know that-that-that thing bothers (name) quite-q-quite quite much=*

S3: Mmm=

S4: Okay the question before we actually open a discussion about this is a: a timeline

(13) S1: How about making it a game? I have e- experience in ehh sort of the gamificavity ehh what is the fine word

S3: Mmm=

S1: *Gamification*

S3: Yeah?

S1: *Ehh so building this kind of transformation into a board game*

4.3.2 Confirmation check

Another clarification practice discovered from the data is, according to Mauranen (2006: 136), an efficient “guard against misunderstanding” that appears to be much used in B(ELF) interactions. Such

practices may be manifested as minimal checks, or they may take the form of a more extensive and explicit request for clarification as shown in example (14): The speaker is unsure whether they are talking about person specific or more generic role descriptions, and the speaker therefore requests for clarification with “am I interpreting this correctly? ...”, which is then answered by an interlocutor with a confirmation response “Yeah...”. In this case, understanding the nature of the role descriptions that are being talked about seems important for the speaker, and the speaker therefore makes sure that he or she has the correct concept.

- (14) S1: So that it's not eh person specific eh tailor made role descriptions but we are talking about eh this a more generic descriptions
S3: Hmm=
S1: **Eh am I am I interpreting this correctly? (0.8) That this is this is about the sort of the wider role descriptions**
S3: **Yeah (0.7) that's what I (0.7) I [have understood it]**

4.3.3 Self-repetition

Lastly, instances of repetition were uncovered from the data, which the participants mostly performed in the form of self-repeating. Self-repetition involves a speaker repeating key pieces of information of his or her own ongoing utterance. As mentioned by Björkman (2014) and demonstrated in the examples below, the repetitions are not conducted for lack of fluency, but rather for explicitness purposes to highlight the key information: Example (15) shows the speaker repeating the word “sub projects” three times, which is clearly the key concept of the speaker’s utterance. In example (16), the speaker is expressing that two unnamed persons outside the meeting are having superior training today, which the speaker then repeats again with minor word changes (e.g. today - currently). Again, it seems like the parts that the speaker repeats are key pieces of information in terms of the rest of his or her utterance.

- (15) S1: I'm th- my thinking is that we need to have (0.8) **sort of sub projects** (0.5) ehh so that eh these separate areas there are values and target culture as one then leadership development learning together part with competences and the learning platform and HR processes HR systems they are all **sort of sub projects** and eh we need to have a separate plan for each of them and follow them up as ehh as a as **sub projects**

(16) S3: But I think it eh (0.8) it eh raised up in-in eh (0.8) in that respect when: when: (2.0) eh ((name1)) and ((name2)) **they are having first superior training today so currently they are they're having the training** and (0.8) maybe maybe (1.0) it was it was eh the idea that she would get the answer before that but it's not that urgent in my in my opinion also

5 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore and demonstrate BELF speakers' use of self-repair and clarification strategies and their communicative functions in a business meeting where ELF was used as the medium of communication. Overall the study is an example of how BELF speakers use the two CSs to ensure successful communication and, moreover, reach work-related communicative goals.

The results show participants' regular use of both self-repair and clarification strategies throughout the meeting. The two different forms of self-repair practices that speakers were found to manifest can be categorized into practices that a) right the wrongs and b) raise explicitness. With regard to the first form, speakers self-repaired in situations where they performed a hearable error or mistake. The findings indicate that the repair was performed with the speakers' intention to resolve phonological, lexical, morphological and syntactic errors, and thus maintain and improve the intelligibility of their talk. The occurrence of the second form of self-repair, on the other hand, was not preceded by an error or mistake. According to the results, such practices were performed to produce alternative utterances and make specifying additions to ongoing talk - presumably in order to pre-empt possible communicative turbulence by enhancing the explicitness of speakers' talk.

Furthermore, the clarification strategies that speakers were found to utilize include paraphrasing, clarification, confirmation check, and self-repetition. The results demonstrate that such practices function as pro-active tools to prevent possible misunderstandings in situations where a prolonged silence or minimal response took place after a speaker's turn. However, the practices were also performed spontaneously. In such cases, they appeared to work as the means for making sure that important work-related concepts and content gets across by increasing the clarity and accuracy of speakers' talk.

The findings of this study mirror the results of previous CS studies (Mauranen 2006; Kaur 2011; Björkman 2014), as the methodology of their higher education ELF context research was adopted to

this study's BELF context. In terms of self-repair, the findings of its use and functions are very similar to Kaur's (2011) findings and relatable to the higher education context, as well as presumably any ELF context. However, when it comes to clarification strategies, speakers seem to have more context-dependent motives for using such strategies. They do work as pro-active tools to prevent misunderstandings (as found in the previous studies), but the findings of this study also propose that they are a part of BELF speakers' professional communicative repertoires (see Räisänen 2018).

The findings of this study provide useful information about self-repair and clarification CSs in BELF communication for international organizations and business professionals who make use of BELF in their everyday working life. However, there is a need for more thorough research on the communicative functions of CSs, especially in BELF contexts, because BELF competence has a major role in today's international business communication. An interesting future research regarding this topic would be to also explore the functions of non-verbal pragmatic means in BELF interaction, as well as the relationship between verbal and non-verbal CSs to understand the phenomena more extensively.

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TRANSCRIPTION SYMBOLS

From Jefferson Transcription System

Symbol	Definition and use
[words]	Overlapping talk
=	End of one TCU and beginning of next begin with no gap/pause in between
(0.8)	Time in seconds between end of a word and beginning of next
word-	A dash indicates a cut-off
((word))	Double parentheses contain analysts’ comments or descriptions. In this case they are used instead of names that cannot be revealed