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NURSING STUDENTS AND THE ELF-AWARE SYLLABUS: EXPOSURE TO NON-ENL ACCENTS AND REPAIR STRATEGIES IN COURSEBOOKS FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

1. Introduction: ELF and ESP

As research on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) communication increased over the years, interest has started to emerge in the pedagogical implications that the notion of ELF may have in English Language Teaching (ELT). Studies so far have focused mainly on General English teaching (e.g. Matsuda; Sifakis; Kopperoinen; Matsumoto; Murray; Matsuda and Duran; McKay; Takahashi; Cavalheiro; Vettorel; Kohn) and, to a lesser degree, English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In the latter case, the great majority of published studies relate to the business context. Indeed, research on ELF as the language of business has led to the creation of the acronym BELF (Business English as a Lingua Franca) (Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta; Bjørge; Pullin). International communication with people across the three circles of English² (Kachru) is a daily occurrence for many professionals: increased international mobility, even within the Schengen union, is creating multilingual and multicultural workplaces where English may be employed alongside the country's official language as a common language of communication. As a result, ELF scholars have started to investigate the potential inclusion of the ELF perspective in Business English courses. So far, however, there has been no significant interest in ELF and ESP beyond the BELF context. However, as will be seen, health care professionals may also benefit from an ELF-oriented syllabus.

As non-native speakers of English are far more likely to engage in professional or personal communication with other non-native or ESL speakers, rather than native speakers of ENL, ELT materials should "be developed in ways that correspond with the emerging needs of such language learners" (Takahashi 28). Indeed, as she posits, "it is reasonable to propose that a new approach to ELT is already emerging, in which the goal is to enable learners to communicate not only with NSs (the traditional goal of EFL) but also to communicate with other NNSs" (ibid.) While her own study of two Japanese coursebooks has highlighted that textbooks have changed over the years to make space for topics relating to ELF and WE (World Englishes) perspectives as well as the representation of non-native accents, ELT materials remain to this day widely authentic to ENL models. As Kaur and Raman recently stated, "most textbooks, teacher education models and theories, syllabus etc. are based on NS English standards" (Kaur and Raman 254). It is up to the teacher, then, to introduce ELF-oriented materials and activities in the classroom by adapting existing sources or creating ad-hoc materials from scratch. The purpose for the introduction of such material would be to foster language awareness as well as recognition and use of the negotiation and accommodation strategies that characterize ELF communication.

Indeed, in Sifakis' words (231),

An ELF curriculum would concentrate on those competences and communication skills that any successful (mainly spoken) interaction involving NNSs portrays, such as the capability to render one's discourse intelligible for their interlocutors through a process of accommodation (for example making repairs, paraphrasing, rephrasing, or even allowing for linguistic errors that might facilitate communication).

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² For the purpose of this paper, it was decided to analyze accents that are traditionally not represented in ELT coursebooks, that is, ESL and EFL accents, which correspond to accents spoken in respectively the Outer and Expanding circles of English in Kachru's model of the global spread of English. While this study adopts an approach that is rooted in ELF studies, a choice was made to use the traditional term EFL to refer to the speakers in the audio material who are classifiable in the Expanding circle.



As will be seen, the process of adapting or creating new materials for ESP classes may be more complicated than in General English courses, as relying on authentic sources may not be an option. Indeed, material suitable to the target needs for ESP students, especially in terms of vocabulary and functional language for spoken communication, would be harder to find outside the context of textbook publishing. One of the traditional tenets of ELT is the use of RP English - or, in rare cases - General American English as the model of pronunciation that students are exposed to and are expected to acquire. However, the orthodox perspective does not take into account that students are more likely to encounter speakers from the Outer and Expanding circles when working outside the classroom. Exposure to a variety of accents is therefore extremely useful for students planning to work outside ENL contexts. However while the presence of non-ENL accents in English textbooks has increased, representation of ESL and EFL speakers remains scarce, as seen in multiple studies (e.g. Kivistö; Kopperoinen; Matsumoto; Elham and Reza; Tomlinson and Masuhara).

This paper aims at analyzing the audio tracks included in two ESP textbooks targeting nursing students at a pre-intermediate level in order to determine:

1. whether non-ENL accents are represented in the tracks
2. whether NNS-NNS communication is represented
3. whether instances of meaning negotiation or linguistic accommodation are represented in NNS-NNS interactions.

In the last section, potential activities will be outlined that may contribute to fostering awareness of the need for negotiation and accommodation in the students as well as encourage them to reinforce these skills in class.

2. Nursing students in Italy and ELF

With the exception of few students who plan on moving abroad at the end of their studies, the majority of nursing students are likely to work in public or private institutions within Italy. While the majority of the population speaks Italian as their native language, recent migration flows towards Europe have increased the number of non-native speakers of Italian in Italy as in other European countries and, as a consequence, the probability that a nurse may have to resort to English when interacting with patients. According to the Italian statistics website ISTAT³ (provides accurate and recent data on the subject) in the 2011-2012 period, 66% of the foreign residents in Italy went to the emergency room, 28,6% were admitted to a hospital in the three months prior to the interview, whereas 20% of the subjects were visited at least once in the four weeks before the interview. ISTAT provided additional data on the difficulties encountered by foreign residents in accessing healthcare in Italy. 14,8% (14 years of age onwards) of them admitted difficulties in explaining symptoms to the doctors, and 15,9% could not fully understand what the doctors said. The statistics on the subject predictably showed that communicative impairments were most likely to occur when immigrants have been residing in Italy for a limited period of time, and would steadily decrease in percentage the longer the person had lived in the country. The stream of migrants moving to Italy shows no signs of stopping, as shown again by ISTAT data which indicates a steady growth of foreign residents from 2002 (1.3 million residents) to almost 5 million (2014). On January 1st, 2015 foreign residents in Italy were 5 millions, 73 thousand and they represent 8,3% of the total resident population. This data is complemented by an additional number of non-resident, non-Italian speaking people who may have the need to seek medical attention: these patients include people involved with international mobility such as exchange and international students, as well as tourists and temporary workers.

In light of the data outlined above, it is of paramount importance for nursing students to learn how to communicate and negotiate meaning in English in its LF function, so that they may offer their patient appropriate medical attention as well as fulfill their needs for comfort. Indeed, among the main tasks nurses are required to fulfill on their job, we find:

- alleviate patients' suffering,
- enhance patients' well-being,

³ Last visited 15/03/2015. <http://www.istat.it/it/immigrati/prodotti-editoriali/salute-e-sanit%C3%A0>



- interpret patients' information,
- connect patients to their doctors,
- ease patients' anxiety (Corrizzato and Goracci 180).

The tasks listed above underline the importance of successful communication between nurses and their patient, especially with immigrant patients who may not have an adequate social support network in the country where they live and thus experience additional anxiety and discomfort.

2.1 Exposure to non-ENL accents in ELT

Interactions with patients coming from a variety of countries imply that nurses may come into contact with speakers from both the Outer and Expanding circles who display a wide range of varying accents. These accents, with due exceptions, are likely to be very different from those that learners are preeminently exposed to during their years of formal education in English. Lack of familiarity with accents other than RP and GenAm may be at the root of intelligibility issues during nurse-patient communicative exchanges. For this reason, ELF scholars suggest that in general "exposure to a variety of Englishes and successful ELF users is essential for today's English language learners, who may use the language with speakers who employ varieties of English other than so-called standard English" (Matsumoto 100). Students should therefore be exposed to a variety of both native and non-native accents that they may be more likely to encounter outside the classroom and in their professional lives (Seidlhofer 227).

Jenkins (2000, 184) in particular reinforces the idea that familiarization is especially important in relation to non-native accents, which they are more likely to encounter in both professional and personal communicative contexts. The key to familiarization, always according to Jenkins, is constituted by pedagogical exposure to non-ENL accents, coupled with raised awareness of the phonological features that differ from institutionalized NS varieties. However, the majority of available ELT materials and textbooks are to this date still overwhelmingly dependent on ENL norms and accents, and this tendency includes audio material as well. In the early 2000s, Jenkins (2000) and Seidlhofer (2003) pointed out that ELT audio materials include very few recordings of NNS, and when there are, the accents portrayed are usually representative of ESL countries such as India or Singapore (Seidlhofer 2003: 13), providing only token examples of non-traditional varieties that are however still culturally related to English through imperial domination. In more recent years, studies carried out on coursebooks for both school-aged (Kopperoinen; Matsumoto) and adult learners (Tomlinson and Masuhara) that focused on the representation of NNSs in written and audio materials or reported a slight increase in ESL and EFL characters - and as a result, accent representation - in textbooks. However, ESL/EFL accents are still significantly underrepresented in a world where lingua franca uses of the language among non-ENL speakers are more likely to occur than NS-NNS communication. Indeed, the studies showed that the "amount of non-native accents in the two textbook series is very small in relation to the duration of the whole recorded material" (Kopperoinen 82), and that the NS/NNS ratio in the coursebooks "does not seem to reflect the increasing opportunities for English communication between NNSs" (Matsumoto 33). Of the 5 coursebooks analyzed by Tomlinson and Masuhara, only two were given sufficient marks in relation to fostering cultural awareness and representation of ELF, and only one was found sufficient in both elements: generally, Non-ENL accents were scarce and in many cases emphasized stereotypical features (244).

The studies highlighted above reported results from General English coursebooks. In the next section, an analysis of two ESP textbooks for nursing students will attempt to determine whether the audio material provided by the books is sufficient for the implementation of an ELF-aware syllabus.

3. L2 accents in textbooks

This study is based on two textbooks published by two major ELT publishing houses: *Oxford English for Careers. Nursing 1* (henceforth *N1*) (Grice) and *Cambridge English for Nursing* (henceforth *CEN*) (Allum and McGarr 2010a).

The analysis involved multiple listenings of the audio CDs of the two textbooks. A first categorization of the tracks related the typology of listening material, which will be clarified below. The second stage involved the identification of non-ENL speakers in the dialogues, and of their phonological and prosodic features. Two



main texts (Swan and Smith; Jenkins 2009) were used as reference for the identification of non-ENL features in the dialogues. Unfortunately, as will be seen, it was not always possible to pinpoint the geographical - and linguistic - origin of the speaker, and for this reason it was not deemed appropriate to create a further differentiation between ESL and EFL speakers. The third stage focused on the analysis of the content of the tracks involving non-ENL characters, which were scanned for instances of communicative strategies commonly associated to ELF.

At a first listening, both books were found to include different categories of listening material:

- Pronunciation models: single, isolated words or short sentences are produced for students to repeat.
- Exercise checks: Isolated sentences that are used as self-checks after the students have completed other types of activities, e.g. gap fill, word order exercises. This type of listening occurred only in *N1*.
- Comprehension activities: The majority of tracks in both books introduce listening comprehension activities. The tracks may include multiple isolated sentences and short dialogues as part of the same activity, or longer dialogues between two or more participants. Comprehension is often introduced by pre-teach sections providing essential vocabulary or lead-in speaking activities such as making predictions. Students then engage with gist (e.g. checking predictions, open questions) and detail listening (e.g. sentence completion, true/false, putting events in order, choosing the correct option). After the listening comprehension stage, the books generally provide a structured speaking activity where students are asked to role-play variations on the listening.

It has to be noted first that while both books include examples of non-ENL accents as well as different ENL accents, the pronunciation model tracks are exclusively performed in a prestigious British variety.

The two audio CDs are different in length, *N1* including 52 minutes of listening material, and *CEN* totaling at 1hour, 22 minutes. However, the difference in length does not reflect on the amount of time ESL and EFL accents are featured in the material, 10 tracks in *N1* and 13 in *CEN* included non-ENL accents, translating respectively into around 17 and 16 minutes.

In the analysis of ENL to non-ENL accents ratio, tracks including at least a non-ENL speaker have been added in their entirety, regardless of the actually speaking time of the non-ENL speakers.

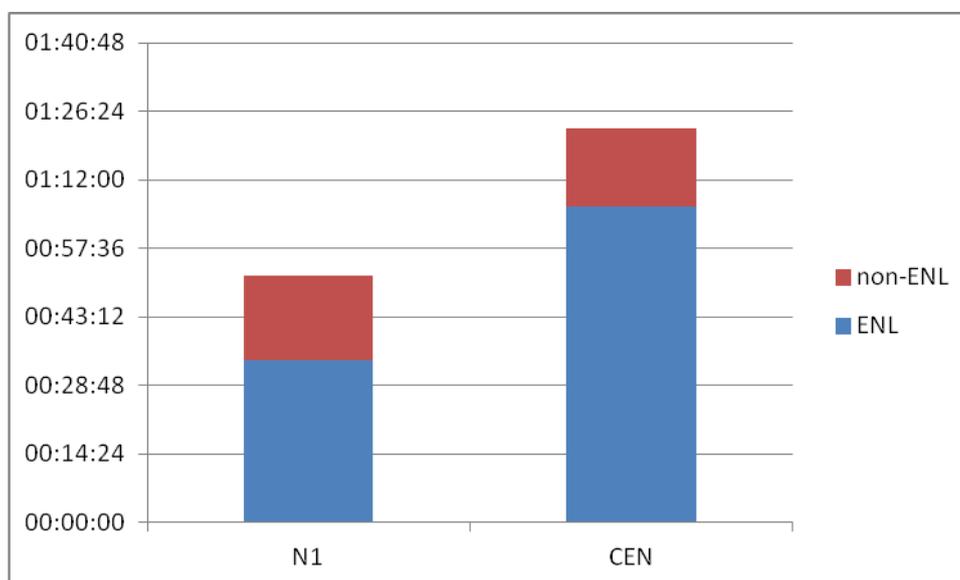


Table 1. NS and NNS accents in English textbooks for nursing

Table 1 above shows that NS accents are significantly more represented than non-ENL accents, especially in *CEN*. However if a second measure was done based on the number of words spoken by the characters in the dialogues rather than the length of the dialogues involving non-ENL speakers, the gap between the representation of the two categories of speakers would lean even more in favor of ENL speakers, as dialogues including non-ENL speakers depict NS-NNS communicative situations in the vast majority of



cases. In addition to non-ENL speakers, the audio tracks in both CDs also include multiple ENL accents. While the majority of speakers portray socially prestigious southern British English accents, other NS varieties are represented, including Northern British English, Scottish and North American. While this diversity contributes to the familiarization of students with a range of accents as well as the awareness that English is no longer definable as a monolithic, self-contained entity, it still only represents a relatively small section of all the speakers of English in the world today. These results appear to be in line with previous studies carried out on General English textbooks (Kopperoinen; Matsumoto; Tomlinson and Masuhara). It is also important to note that neither the student's books nor the teacher's book highlight the presence of non-ENL speakers in the individual dialogues or suggest related activities. The introduction to the teacher's book for *N1* only makes a brief reference to exposure to "a variety of English accents, both native-speaker and non-native speaker" (Grice and Meehan). It is therefore up to the teacher to draw the students' attention to the varieties portrayed in the audio material and devise additional tasks or activities relevant to the aimed at highlighting and fostering awareness of the diversity of English pronunciation across the three circles.

Due to difficulty in identifying the linguistic background of the speakers in the audio material, ESL and EFL speakers have both been included in a larger 'non-ENL' category. Indeed, while non-ENL speakers are easily identifiable in the audio tracks, it is not always possible to pinpoint their exact background. In limited cases, the speaker's name, where it is made explicit in the dialogues, provides a clue to their linguistic background: the combined presence of specific segmental and suprasegmental features in the speech of a given speaker provides clues as to a generic geographical or linguistic origin, as will be seen in the following section. This, however, is not applicable to all the identified non-ENL speakers: *CEN* audio tracks includes speakers with more stereotypical - and therefore recognizable - EFL accents, whereas the linguistic background of most non-ENL speakers in *N1* is not immediately decipherable.

3.1 Features of non-ENL accents

The second stage of the analysis involves the identification of the segmental - and, to a smaller extent, prosodic - features of the non-ENL accents represented in the textbooks.

It is clear even at a first listening that the non-ENL speakers' production of both consonant and vowel sounds differ from the ENL variety used in the tracks that were categorized as pronunciation models. In order to carry out a more in-depth analysis, reference sources were needed to aid the identification of features commonly associated with ESL or EFL accents. Jenkins (2009) has constituted the main reference source for ESL accents; it also acted as a reference for EFL as a number of features are not uncommon across both circles. Where linguistic background was identifiable for EFL accents, Swan and Smith was used as a reference.

Where vowels are concerned, variations were identified in both quality and quantity: the list below summarizes some of the most noticeable features in the audio tracks.

- the sound [a:] in final position, representing the orthographic ending was often realized without length by non-ENL speakers, as in ['tʃat] for *chart* and ['stat] for *start*.
- the sound /ə/ in final position was realized in some cases as the full vowel [a].
- lack of distinction between the sounds [i:] and [ɪ], which are both realized as [i] (Jenkins 2009, 28).

The two features described above are both present in the realization of the word *fever* by an EFL speaker, which was produced as ['fivə] rather than the RP ['fi:və]. A similar example from the same speaker is the production of ['di:a] for RP ['di:ə] (*dear*).

Pronunciation of diphthongs was also found to vary: for instance, the RP diphthong /əʊ/ was realized as either [o:] (as in ['to:z], *toes*) or [ɔ] (['sɔr], *sore*).

The non-ENL accents represented in the audio material are also syllable-timed. Mesthrie and Batt (2008: 129, as cited in Jenkins 2009: 28) put forward that "for [New English] varieties vowel reduction is not as common as in RP and in some of them [ə] is rare". A reduced incidence of the schwa sound was indeed noticeable in some of the utterances. This was especially evident in a dialogue in *CEN*, where one of the speakers spoke with an accent that could be associated to an Italian background. Indeed, lack of vowel reduction is one of the main characteristics Swan and Smith (75) identify for Italian speakers: "the pronunciation of an Italian vowel is not affected by stress or its position in a word [...] Unstressed vowels are often pronounced as they are written rather than being weakened or reduced."



Non-normative realizations of consonant sounds were also identified:

- the labiodental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ are realized respectively as /f/ (e.g. ['fati], *thirty*) and [d] (e.g. ['dat] or ['dæt], *that*) or /v/ (['vat], *that*; ['ven], *then*). Alternative realizations of these two sounds is fairly common across New English varieties (Jenkins 2009: 27) as well as EFL uses of English.
- the alveolar approximant /r/ is realized as a trill by multiple speakers as well as a flap /r/. The latter case is representative of Indian English (e.g. [fizio'θerapi], *physiotherapy*);
- the liquid consonant /l/ is sometimes realized as /r/ in non-ENL speakers from East Asian linguistic backgrounds, where the two sounds are not distinct (Jenkins 2009, 27). This resulted in the realization of *finally* as ['fainari] and *label* as ['leɪbər];
- the voiceless glottal fricative /h/ is realized by a Spanish EFL speaker as [x], as in ['xæz] (*has*) and ['xelp] (*help*) (Swan and Smith 93). The Spanish speaker also substituted the semi-vowel /j/ with /dʒ/ in *yes*, which is produced as ['dʒes];
- voiced consonants in word-final position are realized as voiceless consonants (e.g. ['gut], *good*).

The list above shows that even though the audio material in the books is not necessarily very representative of accents outside ENL contexts, non-normative realizations of RP sounds are recognizable in the tracks and may be used as a basis for the development of activities aimed at fostering awareness of accent diversity. What is mostly concerning in relation to the proposed material is the lack of consistency in the use of non-normative features by speakers as well as the lack of association with recognizable linguistic backgrounds; some of these speakers appear to be 'generic' non-ENL speakers without any identifiable linguistic background. In addition to a lack of linguistic affiliation, the speakers' use of the language in relation to grammar, vocabulary and syntax is considerable as native-like. The non-normative features of their accent are the only 'give away' of their status as NNSs of English

3.3 NNSs and meaning negotiation

The audio tracks involving NNSs show normative, native-like uses of the language: except for the noticeable non-normative realization of certain vowel and consonant sounds, speakers demonstrate advanced proficiency in the language. In addition, the communicative events portrayed in the material all include at least a native speaker, which results in a distinct lack of representation of ELF interactions. It should be noted that scholars do not exclude ENL speakers from the ELF framework; however, native speakers who participate in ELF communication may have to adopt accommodation and cooperation strategies so that effective communication is maintained (Carey 92). The materials do not provide any hints about the location of the contexts (fictional hospitals in this case) where the dialogues are set; however, considering the NS to NNS ratio and the predominance of British L1 accents over North American accents in these materials, it would be fair to assume that the interactions occur in the UK. NNSs would thus be expected to align themselves with normative ENL uses and sociolinguistic conventions. The materials are therefore ascribable within a traditional ELT framework that supports the native speaker paradigm, and are not suitable for an ELF-aware syllabus. Indeed, such a syllabus would ideally aim at developing communicative strategies that may contribute to the achievement of mutual intelligibility and of the participants' communicative goal, which is "more relevant than native-like correctness" (Mauranen 2005, 280).

Accommodation and cooperative strategies identified in ELF studies include orientation to the listener and fine-tuning of the language according to communicative needs (Mauranen 2012, 131). Meaning negotiation has been shown to occur through the use of repair strategies (Mauranen 2006; Kaur), which may act as the solution to miscommunication issues or have a pre-emptive function where occurrence of miscommunication is perceived as likely by the speaker.

Mauranen (2012) has found that repetition and rephrasing are common strategies in ELF communication. Self- and allo-repetition involve the production of the same utterance, whereas rephrasing entails a reworking of the intended meaning. The two strategies may be employed in ELF to fulfill a number of functions, that is, "additional confirmation checks, explanations, clarifications, and active co-construction of expressions" (Carey 90). In addition, self-repetition is often used to gain more time in processing the following linguistic material, whereas allo-repetition, or echoing, emphasizes the main points of the communicative event and show alignment between speakers (content-oriented repetition) (Mauranen 2012,



222). Rephrasing, on the other hand, entails a change in the speaker's wording "to improve on the first formulation, to correct it, to make it clearer, or for emphasis or effect" (206).

Dialogues involving non-native speakers were scanned for instances of such communicative strategies to determine whether they can be used in class as a starting point to foster awareness of their existence and functions. Indeed, Dewey (163-4) claims that a heightened attention on the development of accommodating skills is one of the essential objectives to be incorporated in an ELF-oriented syllabus in order to provide students with the tools to engage in successful international interactions.

However, only one example was identified in either book that includes an instance of meaning negotiation - this also constitutes the only instance of NNS-NNS communication in the audio materials. In example (1) below, it can be seen how a request for clarification is followed by an effective rephrasing of the utterance, where more common words are used, and the NNS can finally answer the nurse's question.

(1)[...]
Nurse: What's your marital status?
Patient : Sorry?
Nurse: Are you married?
Patient: No, I'm single.
[...] (N1, 126)

This was not the only instance of clarification request and rephrasing found in the audio materials analyzed, and the only example of a language-based issue in communication; other dialogues showed clarification and rephrasing in relation to medical information. Such instances are therefore related to a lack of medical knowledge - they generally involve a doctor/nurse interacting with a patient/student nurse - and are therefore not relevant to our study.

4. Pedagogical implications: practicing paraphrasing

As we have seen, both books under examination offer a range of examples of both native non-native accents that are usually underrepresented in ELT material. However, the examples of non-ENL accents remain quite limited, as shown in Table 1 above. As a consequence, an ESP instructor wishing to implement an ELF-aware syllabus in his or her classroom for the reasons outlined above cannot rely entirely on published material. The material may need considerable adaptation to be suitable for the development of target objectives - that is, acquisition of meaning negotiation strategies that may be contribute to improving nurse-patient communication in ELF contexts -, or new material may have to be created from scratch. Takahashi suggests that additional, authentic materials be used in the EFL class as examples of successful ELF communication:

It might be beneficial as well to use additional materials such as audio recordings (presentations given by NNSs from online TED talks, for example) in the classroom. The purpose behind using such recordings is as follows: to expose learners to different varieties of English; to provide learners with authentic NNS speech (not recorded by NS actors using various accents) which reflects an appropriate level of intelligibility; and to show learners examples of English usage between NNSs. (Takahashi 34)

Other scholars have made other similar claims about the importance of exposure to ELF communication in the classroom. Murray underlines that materials should be added in the syllabus that "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 323). The use of these materials "might allow [teachers] to project more pedagogically realistic and sociolinguistically relevant goals for ELT (Matsumoto 110). McKay (77) also underlines the need to complement existing materials with additional texts and dialogues representing ELF interactions, including materials that may be either drawn from authentic sources or created from scratch. This second case would be the most appropriate course of action, provided that the materials be appropriate for the students' competence level and target needs



(McKay 2012: 80). However, in the context of an ESP course for nursing students, it would be extremely hard to obtain access to authentic ELF interactions focusing on the topics included in a medically-oriented syllabus, which, after a needs analysis, aims at providing students with "the linguistic, communicative, discursive or strategic competence that the target group may need to acquire in order to function efficiently in their chosen area of study or workplace (Bhatia and Bremner 413). ESP teachers wishing to implement an ELF-aware syllabus in their classes must be familiarized with techniques to adapt existing materials as well as develop their own.

As creating listening material portraying multiple ESL/EFL accents and representing successful ELF interaction may not be always possible for many ESP teachers, an option would be to develop additional activities based on the existing dialogues. Such activities may be aimed at:

- drawing awareness on diversity of accents
- pointing out and recognizing non-normative phonological features that are common across ESL and EFL accents

However, as was shown in the analysis, in most cases it would not be possible to use the existing dialogues as a set-up to introduce the strategies that ELF speakers use to maintain mutual intelligibility throughout a communicative event. In order to provide students with examples of successful uses of such strategies, new materials would have to be created from scratch that incorporated both instances of meaning negotiation as well as target vocabulary and structures. Indeed, follow-up activities may be created to complement the practice of meaning negotiation strategies and target vocabulary. Two examples of activities that may be used for this purpose are outlined below:

1. This structured speaking activity may be used as a follow-up to other vocabulary-building activities. Both *N1* and *CEN* offer a variety of different vocabulary-building exercises that may be adopted, including matching exercises - with pictures or definitions -, labeling and gap-fills.

After students have become familiar with the new vocabulary, they are divided in pairs or groups of three. Each of them is given a list of the vocabulary items they have just encountered (pieces of medical equipment, types of treatment, medication, etc.) and that they cannot show to the other students in their group. In turns, each student provides a definition of one of the items, which the other student(s) has to guess. This activity has the aim of encouraging students to use periphrasis and exploit all the linguistic resources at their disposal to convey the message to their listener. The teacher may demonstrate the activity with one of the students instead of providing lengthy instructions. The activity can be further adapted for more advanced students by forbidding use of specific words in their definitions, as in the example below:

Define the word: Walking frame

Forbidden words: aid, mobility, walk

Answers are then shared with the whole class; the most effective ones may be written on the board and further discussed with the class. The added difficulty may help students develop their capability of navigating real-life situations where they may not have access to all the words they might want to use.

2. A common follow-up activity to a dialogue, that is, role-playing, could be adapted to encourage students to engage in meaning negotiation strategies such as asking for clarification and rephrasing/paraphrasing. As mentioned in the previous sections, *N1* provides a single instance of meaning negotiation among non-native speakers of English, whereas *CEN* does not include any examples. The teacher might have to adapt one of the existing dialogues or create one from scratch in order to draw the students' attention on successful uses of repair strategies in ELF context. Below is a potential example of a dialogue including an instance of meaning negotiation (asking for clarification / paraphrasing):

Nurse: Hello Mr. Schmidt. How are you today?

Mr. Schmidt: Not very good. I think I have a fever.



Nurse: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that! Let's check your temperature. Here, can you lift your tongue for me please?

Mr. Schmidt: What? Can you repeat please?

Nurse: Mmm, ok. Can you open your mouth? Good, now the thermometer has to go under your tongue. I am touching it with the thermometer, can you feel it?

Mr. Schmidt: Mm-hmm.

Nurse: Perfect, this is your tongue. Can you move it up so I can put the thermometer under it? Great. Don't move until it makes a noise.

[...]

Nurse: You are right, your temperature is 39! I will tell the doctor. Would you like anything before I go?

Mr. Schmidt: Can have a, uh...medicine for the fever?

Nurse: We have to wait for the doctor. Would you like something to drink?

Mr. Schmidt: A bottle of water, thank you.

After being exposed to a pedagogically-relevant dialogue portraying successful instances of meaning negotiation strategies, possibly in ELF contexts, students are asked to perform activities aimed at promoting linguistic awareness of ELF-oriented communicative strategies:

- students are asked to identify instances of miscommunication and repair strategies such as repetition, rephrasing, clarification requests in the dialogue.
- in pairs, students are asked to provide alternative options that may be useful in solving or preventing a potential misunderstanding.
- still in pairs, students are asked to role-play a situation similar to that encountered in the dialogue. Students As and Bs receive different prompts that include instructions that could potentially impair communication. It is up to the students to put repair strategies into use to ensure the success of the communicative event. Below is an example of how such prompts may be structured:

Student A: you are a patient in student B's care.

1. You want a **painkiller** but you do not remember the word. Try to explain your needs to student B.
2. You do not understand B's instructions. Ask for clarification.

Student B: You are a nurse. Student A is your patient.

1. Ask Student A if (s)he needs anything.
2. You have to give Student B an injection. Instruct him/her to roll up his/her sleeve.
3. Take leave.

These instructions both provide structure to the role-play and at the same time, they encourage students to practice communicative strategies. Students may then be asked to switch roles, using either the same prompt or a different one to create a new dialogue.

The activities outlined above are designed to either complement pre-existing materials - where available - or as follow-ups to teacher-designed texts and dialogues featuring successful interactions among people from different linguacultural backgrounds, and have been created with the communicative needs of the students in mind. Activity number 2, especially, includes different steps aiming at allowing students to reach a deeper comprehension of the dialogue by pointing out not only the form, but the function of the linguistic choices made by speakers in the dialogues. In the second step, students start exploiting their own linguistic repertoire to provide solutions to the identified problem and eventually, during role-play, they practice the strategy by negotiating meaning online in a guided speaking activity. As a result, these three steps contribute to the development both ELF-aware comprehension and production skills (Kohn).

5. Conclusion



This paper has analyzed the audio materials of two textbooks aimed at nursing students at the pre-intermediate level in order to determine whether existing materials might be suitable to implement an ELF-oriented syllabus. Exposure to non-ENL accents as well as to meaning-negotiation strategies has been deemed important for nursing students who are likely to interact with international patients outside the classroom. While non-ENL accents were present in both books, albeit in a small percentage, and therefore could be used as a basis for activities fostering awareness of accent diversity in ELF, the dialogues analyzed did not show, but for one exception, instances of successful NNS-NNS communication, or use of repair strategies to solve or prevent misunderstandings. It is up to the teacher then whether to adapt existing materials or create new texts from scratch to expose students to pedagogically-relevant linguistic material. Exposure to and analysis of non-ENL accents and communicative strategies contributes to the students' ELF-aware comprehension skills, which include "identification and analysis of comprehension problems due to unfamiliar linguistic-communicative means of expression, unclear meanings or lack of coherence" (Kohn 2015: 3). Follow-up activities as the ones exemplified above allow students to practice metalinguistic awareness and employ these strategies in simulated ELF encounters that reproduce "the challenges involved in communicating outside the protected enclosure of the classroom" (Kohn). By orienting their language to the listener and focusing on the achievement of communicative goals, future nurses can improve the quality of interactions with their patients, contributing to both their physical well-being and comfort during their hospital stay.

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