

# Vietnamese students' use of communication strategies in academic English as a lingua franca

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACE	The Asian Corpus of English
AELF	Academic English as a lingua franca
ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CA	Conversation analysis
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CS	Communication strategy
CSs	Communication strategies
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELF	English as a lingua franca
ELFA	The English as a Lingua Franca in Academic settings
ELT	English language teaching
ESL	English as a second language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
L1	First language
L2	Target language
NNS(s)	Non-native speaker(s)
NS(s)	Native speaker(s)
Ph.D.	Doctor of Philosophy
RQ(s)	Research question(s)
SLA	Second language acquisition
SRI	Simulated recall interview
SsEC	Strategies for effective communication



TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
UC	Utterance completion
VOICE	The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English
VIS(s)	Vietnamese international student(s)
Wes	World Englishes

## Abstract

The increasing use of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in a range of contexts speakers from varied backgrounds, 70% of whom are non-native speakers (Statista, 2016) has fuelled interest in the nature of ELF and how best to prepare English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners to effectively communicate in such environments.

Communication strategies (CSs) play an important role in communicative competence, but although recent qualitative studies in ELF pragmatics have complemented earlier survey-based, problem-oriented SLA perspectives on CSs, they have focussed largely on casual conversations among highly proficient speakers in Europe. Moreover, while they have investigated various academic domains, informal academic, goal-oriented, out-of-class group discussions have been little studied. In addition, although ELF is context-dependent and thus likely to reflect differences in regions and domains, little is known about how Vietnamese speakers of English use CSs in an ELF environment.

This study adopts a qualitative approach to exploring the functions and use of CSs in goal-oriented academic discussions in an Australian ELF environment in order to propose a function-based framework that will translate easily into language training for students in Asia. Multiple data collection techniques were used to investigate the use of CSs by Vietnamese background international students (VISs) participating in goal-oriented academic group discussions at an Australian university. The data comprise ten video-recordings of authentic communication between VISs from different disciplines and their peers (31 native and non-native speakers). Analysis of these was illuminated by follow-up interviews, and a communication questionnaire eliciting VISs' background and perspectives.

Findings show that VISs used a wide range of CSs including repetition, paraphrasing, repair, questioning strategies, non-verbal sources, backchannels, utterance completion, and different topic management techniques as they pursued their discussion goals. These strategies served three overall functions: 1) to arrive at shared understanding (comprehension); 2) to smooth the interaction (interaction); and 3) to enhance the completion of a discussion (production). These overall functions are further refined into the macro functions and micro functions they performed and how they could be realised in the discourse. In this way, a multi-level classification of CSs according to their functions

is developed resulting in a function-based taxonomy which allows a clearer and broader view of how CSs actually operate in high-stakes ELF communication.

Overall, this study contributes significantly to our understanding of the nature of CSs from an applied perspective. The taxonomy extends the role of CSs so that they are no longer concerned exclusively with solving communication problems and achieving mutual understanding; rather, they are used to both arrive at shared understanding at the lexical level and to progress the interaction towards a discussion outcome at the discourse level. The use of CSs therefore reflects the strategic, pragmatic and discourse competence of ELF speakers. The functional approach taken to their classification in this study thus offers a valuable starting point from which to prepare students in Vietnam or similar contexts in Asia with the strategies they will need to communicate effectively in their future ELF speaking environments.

## Statement of Originality

I certify that the work has not neither previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, and that, to the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any unattributed materials previously published or written by any other person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself. Any help and assistance I have received in my research work and the preparation of this thesis has been appropriately acknowledged.

This study was granted approval by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee (Human Research) (Reference number: 5201701110D) and conducted in accordance with the guidelines stipulated.

Thu Thi Nguyen

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## Dedication

*This work is in the memory of and dedicated to:*

My dearest late daddy, Nhon Dang Nguyen: Your endless love and sacrifice for me and our family have given me so much strength and determination to overcome any obstacles to achieve a dream to study overseas, the dream that we shared, but because of the family, you could not do when young ...

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the motivation and rationale for conducting this research and the aims of the study. It begins with a discussion on personal research motivation in Section 1.2, and then presents the background and context in Section 1.3, highlighting the research gaps in the field. Section 1.4 outlines the research aims. Section 1.5, which ends the chapter, describes the scope of the study and thesis organization.

### 1.2 Personal motivation

This project has been inspired by a heart-felt desire to improve the communicative competence of English students in Vietnam.

It is widely accepted that the oral communicative competence of Vietnamese students is far from where it should be at the completion of their university education. This remains a huge challenge that will hold back the country's integration into the rest of the world, where there is a need for qualified people who can communicate effectively. This has become a pressing issue for Vietnam (Hoang, 2015). Thus, how to prepare Vietnamese students with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively communicate in their professional working environments in English has been a crucial concern for Vietnamese policy makers, educators and teachers, and thus one of the major concerns of research into English language teaching (ELT) in Vietnam. The aim of ELT in Vietnam has been recently stated as "providing learners with an important means of international communication, which will enable them ... to explore different cultures, hence contributing to building mutual understanding among nations and developing their own capacity as global citizens" (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), 2018, p. 3, as cited in Nguyen & Cao, 2020, p.150).



My interest in teaching and doing research on spoken English among Vietnamese learners has been driven by my 12 years of experience teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to students in Vietnam and my own experience starting to learn English as an EFL adult learner in grammar traditional English classes. I have been fully aware of the problems that hinder the communicative success in English of the majority of my students, my peers and myself. The majority of students in Vietnam have very little experience in speaking English because they study it in a traditional environment driven by mainly written exams and large classes. The fact that the teaching of English is not oriented towards practising spoken English, and the presence of collective cultural traditions, discourages students from being proactive in speaking up in the classroom. Thus, I have become interested in looking at the use of communication strategies (CSs), one of the core components of communicative competence (Chang & Liu, 2016; Kaur, 2019), to see how they can be learned and taught in order to inform the pedagogy and practice of spoken English in Vietnam.

My master's by research project in 2016 identified major gaps in research on CSs use and instruction, teachers' perspectives, curriculum and materials in the context of Vietnam, through an exploration of teachers' awareness of and perspectives on CSs, and the treatment of CSs in teaching curricula and materials at 10 universities in Vietnam (Nguyen, 2017). This investigation helped me to understand more about what teachers currently know about CSs, whether and how they teach them, and how far they are incorporated into current English teaching curricula and materials at universities in Vietnam. Although the vast majority of teachers surveyed supported the integration of CSs into their teaching of non-major students, few had been trained in how to teach them. Moreover, the study found that the teaching curricula for non-major university students do not explicitly cover CSs, nor do the teachers use supplementary teaching materials to teach them. While an

analysis of the teaching texts used by the majority of the respondents did illustrate how CSs work to some extent, potentially providing some relevant vocabulary and practice, this coverage in these teaching texts was not explicit. This meant that teachers were not fully aware of exactly how CSs are treated in the texts, and thus do not fully exploit their potential in their teaching of spoken English to their students. The respondents did, however, offer some suggestions for how CS instruction could be incorporated into the teaching of English.

I decided to take another look at this issue, but with a focus on how CSs are used in authentic communication, with the aim of informing practical pedagogy in a way that can better prepare students to communicate effectively with native speakers of English. However, my perspective on the contexts in which most would actually need to communicate changed when I started my Ph.D. study.

Starting my Ph.D. journey as an international student in Australia, I was surprised to find myself part of an English-speaking environment in which students and staff came from a wide range of different linguistic backgrounds, and non-native speakers of English (NNSs) greatly outnumbered native speakers (NSs), so that I had very limited occasions to speak English with NSs. This was somehow disappointing to me, as one of my main expectations in choosing Australia as a destination for study overseas, was to have as much exposure to the practice of speaking English with NSs as possible, particularly when I wanted to become a native-like English role model for my students when I went back home.

Despite having been an experienced teacher of English in Vietnam with professional training in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), I, like the majority of my Vietnamese fellows here, used to deal with communication difficulties caused by different varieties of English. This diverse English-speaking environment reminded me of

an occasion back home in Vietnam when I was involved in facilitating law enforcement training programs for Asian-Pacific regions in Vietnam. While I was able to interact and understand my Australian counterparts quite well, on several occasions, I failed to correctly understand my Asian colleagues, particularly those from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka whose accents I had difficulty in understanding. These colleagues sometimes switched to using another language that they shared, a behaviour which I now know to be termed “code-switching” and a very widely used CS in English as lingua franca (ELF). However, rather than making strategic efforts to understand them to facilitate interaction, I simply let the interaction flow on with smiles and nodding heads. My Vietnamese colleagues and students who were part of these programs reported similar experiences. This gave me insight into the diverse communication contexts in which my law enforcement students would be communicating when they graduated, and the challenges they would face. However, at that time, I was not even aware of the phenomenon of ELF whose research domain was fast developing in Europe and elsewhere.

My personal communication experience with my primary supervisor and other professionals in goal-oriented contexts on and off campus in Sydney has also added more insight to my perspective on CSs. When struggling to understand my lengthy expressions in our supervision meetings, I noticed that my supervisor very often used language behaviours such as: *Let me know if I can understand your point correctly...; Tell me if I'm I right, your point is ....?; Sorry, may I summarise your point? Do you mean that ...? I didn't understand your question, say it again, etc.* These strategies she uses very naturally in her native English, but they stuck me as interesting as I, myself, had not thought to do this when communicating in English with people from different lingua-cultural backgrounds in my previous academic or professional communication. If my colleagues, my students, and I had

used similar communicative behaviours in our interaction with our colleagues as Asian-Pacific law enforcers, we would have been more successful in negotiating an accurate understanding and therefore achieving our goals.

These experiences fuelled the gradual change in my attitude towards and perspective on the issue of English spoken communication in this global world, both in academic and professional settings. I began to realize that, in such a diverse lingua-cultural environment, being a NS or speaking native-like English does not guarantee successful interaction, nor does being a NNS speaking non-standard English necessarily lead to a failure to communicate efficiently, if timely and appropriate strategies are used by either NSs or NNSs to negotiate meaning and enhance communication. In addition, I also became more interested in how Vietnamese students use spoken English in authentic communication in the specialized subject areas that they will need in their future profession, and what they need to become competent in their future professional communication in English.

This led me to question my earlier goals: *what is the point in seeking how to prepare my students to communicate with NSs when the most English-speaking environments are now and will be NNSs-dominated?* This led me to ask: *whether and in what ways does the teaching of spoken of English in Vietnam respond to practical needs of the students?* I became acquainted with the notions of ELF and intercultural pragmatics, and I shifted my research aim to: *how can we better prepare Vietnamese students with necessary strategic and/or pragmatic competence to communicate effectively in ELF communication.* An investigation into how CSs help Vietnamese international students (VISs) to achieve their communication goals in their academic activities was one way to achieve this aim. This is further discussed in the next section on the background and context of the study.

### 1.3 Background and context

Although the concept of ELF was unfamiliar to me when I started my Ph.D. and might be still unfamiliar to many of my colleagues back home in Vietnam, it goes without saying that English has, for decades, been a common tool for international communication among speakers from a wide variety of backgrounds in a wide range of domains and contexts worldwide. This has spawned increasing research interest in the nature of ELF communication and how to best prepare English as a second language (ESL) and EFL learners to be communicatively competent in ELF interaction. Higher education has been one of the domains where this issue has been widely explored.

Australia is one of the most popular destinations for overseas students, especially those from Asian countries. Vietnam is among the top four countries sending international students to study in Australia, in 2018, a total of 15,718 (Australian Department of Education, 2018, cited in Ferguson & Sherrell, 2019). As international education plays an important role in Australia's economy, a growing body of research has been conducted on the international student experience in order to develop initiatives and strategies to improve their wellbeing, satisfaction and academic success. Of the many factors affecting their life and study, the ability to communicatively competently both inside and outside the classroom is of paramount importance (Yates & Wahid, 2013).

There has been considerable research on the problems facing VISs in Australia. While English is widely considered essential for international students' academic achievement, social life, and employment and permanent residence opportunities, the literature shows that oral communication in English is one of the biggest challenges that Vietnamese students face while studying in Australia (Sawir, Marginson, Forbes-Mewett, Nyland & Ramina, 2012; Wearing, Le, Wilson & Arambewela, 2015; Yates & Nguyen, 2012). Like

students from other Asian countries who are often seen as less active in the classroom, VISs are expected to actively contribute to class discussion and are judged negatively if they do not do so. Nguyen (2017) also suggests that VISs need to be strategically competent in their spoken communication both inside and outside the classroom. This is particularly the case since they will have to communicate in the academic environment in Australia where the majority of staff and students are ELF speakers from a wide variety of backgrounds, many of whom come from Asian ESL or EFL backgrounds. While ELF has been growing into an independent, fast-developing research paradigm, research into how international students in Australian higher education communicate in their academic life is still in its infancy, with very little on CSs per se.

From a Second Language Acquisition (SLA) perspective, CSs have traditionally been seen as predominantly problem-oriented, a conceptualization that does not fully reflect the nature of strategic competence in authentic spoken communication contexts. Many previous SLA studies on CSs have focused largely on the English language classroom context, where the goal is language acquisition, rather than on CS use to achieve other objectives. Such studies also largely presuppose the use of English with NSs as a standard norm. These perspectives thus do not fully describe what English speakers need to prepare in order to be competent in authentic spoken communication in English.

There is a strong body of research on the nature of ELF, ELF spoken interaction, and the pragmatics of ELF, especially in higher education and business. ELF speakers are assumed to have a number of issues resulting from differing levels of English proficiency, accents, communicative cultures, previous learning experiences, etc. They tend to use certain strategies to construct or promote mutual understanding or to co-operate with each other for effective communication and thus strategies for effective communication have,

therefore, been given priority in studies on ELF pragmatics for the last decade (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018). Although recent qualitative studies in ELF pragmatics have complemented earlier survey-based, problem-oriented SLA perspectives on CS, many of the former have mainly focussed on highly proficient speakers in Europe, who may share relative lingua-cultural closeness and have more exposure to multi-lingua-cultural communication. A small number of ELF studies have looked at Asian ELF speakers (Kaur, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2017; those based on the Asian Corpus of English (ACE) by Kirkpatrick and his colleagues; Konakahara, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2020, and others from Waseda University, Japan). Although ELF is context-dependent and thus likely to reflect differences in regions and domains, how it is used in Australian higher education has been little researched, including how Vietnamese speakers of English use CSs in the Australian environment. Moreover, most of the studies on ELF interaction in higher education worldwide have looked at naturally occurring formal academic speech events on campus or simulated talk about daily topics among students. Informal academic, goal-oriented, out-of-class interactions such as group discussions for clearly defined academic purposes or simply of students' common interest, which are directly relevant to their study and constitute an important part of students' interactional academic life, have been little studied.

In addition, CSs are not always clearly defined in existing ELF studies. They have been discussed under several terms as pragmatic strategies (Björkman, 2011), accommodation strategies (Cogo, 2009), and communicative strategies (Björkman, 2014; Kirkpatrick, 2010b), and this has muddied the conceptual waters. Not only are CSs conceptually unclear, there has been a lack of a comprehensive framework with a consistent focus on their functions, something that is important if we are to inform pedagogy for the teaching of

spoken English. With the exception of Björkman (2014) and Kirkpatrick (2010b), there have been few attempts to look at a wide range of CSs or include a taxonomy.

As far as research methodology is concerned, although CSs work in ELF pragmatics has complemented earlier survey-based, problem-oriented SLA perspectives by using CA to look at CSs in talk-in interaction, the overdependence in such studies on CA techniques has left aspects of the interactional context out of account, and few studies have attempted to triangulate the data with the participant voice.

These gaps in ELF research, together with my personal motivation and experiences at my campus in Australia, have focused my attention on the exploration of how CSs help VISs to arrive at successful completion of their goal-oriented academic discussions in an Australian ELF environment. This exploration is realized by adopting a qualitative approach drawing on multiple data sources.

The next section discusses my research aims.

#### 1.4 Research aims and questions

This study explores the CSs that VISs actually use in their pursuit of communication aims in goal-oriented academic discussions. It does this with a view to how they can best be organised for applied purposes and inform a pedagogy which prepares VISs for effective ELF communication. Since learners need to understand what CSs can do to help them, it is essential to know why they are used, that is, we need to understand their functions in discourse.

The study therefore aims to reconceptualize CSs and proposes a function-based taxonomy of CSs which captures the different functions of CSs in academic ELF communication. It does this based on how they are actually used in interaction. It is hoped that an expanded view



of CSs and a function-based taxonomy will be able to contribute to the knowledge base of research on CSs and ELF communication, and will inform a functional ELF-oriented approach to the pedagogy of spoken English, the focus of which is on the development of EFL learners' abilities to use spoken English in a diverse and multilingual-cultural environment.

Thus, the study addresses three research questions (RQs):

*RQ 1: What CSs do VISs use in a goal-oriented ELF academic context?*

*RQ 2: What functions do these CSs serve?*

*RQ 3: How can these CSs best be organized to inform a pedagogy that prepares VISs to communicate effectively in an ELF context?*

### 1.5 Scope of the study and thesis outline

The study focuses on how VISs use CSs as they pursue their communicative goals in academic discussions and the functions these CSs serve in the discourse, illuminated by the perspectives of VISs themselves. It thus focuses on language behaviours rather than on standard norms of language use.

Although, because of time limitations, the study focuses on VISs, it is hoped that the findings and implications will be relevant to other Asian EFL students in similar contexts.

The thesis consists of eight chapters.

This chapter discusses the motivation and the background of the study, outlines the research aims and objectives and the nature of the research or research questions, and provides this outline of the structure of the thesis.

Chapters 2 and 3 review the literature relevant to the study. Chapter 2 discusses theoretical issues that are central to ELF communication; that is, ELF and its conceptualization, the

development of research into ELF with a focus on ELF pragmatics, and how CSs have been researched in the literature.

Chapter 3 explores how individual CSs have been discussed in the literature in relation to two major categories of overall function: to arrive at mutual understanding, and to enhance communication. Some gaps in the literature addressed by the study are also identified and discussed.

Chapter 4 presents and explains the methodological approach and design used to conduct the research. It also describes the participants, the recruitment process, and the methods and procedures of data collection and analysis.

Chapters 5 and 6 report the results of the study; that is, the CSs identified and the specific functions (overall, macro, micro functions) they served in the group discussions, together with evidence on how VISs used each category of CSs to achieve their discussion goals.

Chapter 5 presents strategies used to serve the first overall function: to arrive at understanding in academic discussions. Chapter 6 reports on strategies of the second main category explored in Chapter 3: to enhance communication. These CSs constitute the second and third overall functions of the taxonomy of CSs proposed from this study: to smooth interactions and to develop discussions in the direction of speakers' academic goals.

Chapter 7 addresses the three research questions by summarizing and discusses the findings in terms of the functions included in the taxonomy, and the nature and value of the taxonomy itself.

Chapter 8 draws conclusions from the findings and discusses some of their implications for pedagogy and future research. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research in this field are also considered.

## Chapter 2: English as a Lingua Franca: Conceptualization, developments and pragmatics

### 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has given an overview of research motivation, background, contexts and aims of the study, particularly why the use of CSs in spoken English is particularly important to VISs for successful communication in an ELF environment. This chapter examines some theoretical issues that are central to the study, related to the conceptualization of ELF, and research into ELF and ELF pragmatics. It begins with an introduction to ELF and in Section 2.2, in particular, its pragmatic aspects. This is followed by a discussion of CSs in ELF communication and how the use of CSs is understood, positioned and researched in the ELF context in Section 2.3. Section 2.4 summarises the chapter.

### 2.2 English as lingua franca

#### 2.2.1 The concept and phenomenon of English as a lingua franca (ELF)

The current global environment has repositioned English as a shared additional language used in a variety of settings by people from a variety of lingua-cultural backgrounds from all corners of the world. It is estimated that more than 70% of the world's English users are NNS (Statista, 2016). The history of ELF outside England expanded significantly in the sixteenth century with the use of English as a lingua franca in some British colonies in Asia (e.g. The Philippines, India, Singapore) and Africa (e.g. Nigeria, Kenya). The spread of English over an extended period of time, and the way English is used now, is conceptualized by Kachru (1985) in terms of three concentric circles of users: an Inner Circle, with the function of 'norm-providing'; an Outer Circle, 'norm-developing'; and an Expanding Circle, 'norm-dependent' (Kachru, 1997). This division into circles is based on the way the spread of English functioned in each context. While Kachru (1985) has been influential and widely

used to clarify the position and role of English worldwide, since that time, the concept of ELF has developed and gained in currency and research attention. Subsequent scholarship highlighting the increasing role of ELF as a common tool for communication in a variety of international settings worldwide has improved our understanding of how these circles work.

In early studies on ELF, seen as a language used by speakers from different lingua-cultural backgrounds in the Expanding Circle (Firth, 1996; House, 1999; Jenkins, 2006, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2000), ELF was conceptualized as: ‘a “*contact language*” between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication’ (Firth, 1996, p.240); or as ‘interactions between members of two or more different lingua-cultures in English, for none of whom English is the mother tongue’ (House, 1999, p. 74). While NSs are excluded from the latter distinction, the reality of current English communication in different settings worldwide is that NSs can also be part of international interactions with NNSs (Seidlhofer, 2004). ELF has more recently been seen as “a vehicle for communication between NNSs or between any combination of NSs and NNSs” (Bern, 2009, p.39), and involving “speakers of English from both inner and outer circles (albeit as a small minority in the case of inner circle speakers) (Jenkins, 2015, p.56). Thus, ELF communication takes place among NNSs from the Expanding Circle or among those from the Expanding Circle with those from the Inner Circles and/ or Outer Circle. Therefore, the core attribute of ELF is not the issue of nativeness or non-nativeness but the context in which English functions as a means to an end. ELF is now widely accepted as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (Seidlhofer, 2011, p.7). According to House (2014a),

English is without doubt the most widespread and most widely used lingua franca in the world, a truly global phenomenon that cuts right across the well-known Kachruvian circles (Kachru 1992): it can occur anywhere and in any constellation of speakers, and can also integrate native speakers of English, though they tend to play a minor role. (p.363-364).

She also summarizes the most important features of ELF as:

enormous functional flexibility, its variability and spread across many different linguistic, geographical and cultural areas, as well as its openness to foreign forms. Internationally and intranationally, ELF can thus be regarded as a special type of intercultural communication. Since English now has substantially more non-native than native speakers, it is fair to say that English – in its role as a global lingua franca – is no longer owned by its native speakers. (p.364)

It is also worth noting that there several other terms exist as an alternative to ELF which may cause confusion, including English as an International Language (or International English), English as a Global language (or Global English for short), or English as a World Language (Seidholfer, 2011). However, the term ELF is the most widely used among researchers in applied linguistics (MacKenzie, 2014).

It is useful to distinguish ELF from World Englishes (WE) (Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011) and other related terms such as ESL and EFL. Both WE and ELF result from the spread and globalization of English and are the subject of contemporary research in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. Both highlight the expansion of English beyond the border of the Inner Circle, as they “reject the monolithic, native-speaker ideology, and refer to a bilingual proficient speaker as an empirically based alternative to native norms” (Cogo, 2008, p.59).

Both attach importance to the diversity and variation of English and accept them as a natural phenomenon in its existence and development. On this view, English is considered not to belong only to NSs; rather, there is a focus on how speakers attempt to communicate meaning, taking into account their own social identity and speaking contexts and the model they use as an alternative to NS norms. WE and ELF are different in their geographical context of use (Jenkins et al., 2011, p.284). WE is widely used to refer to the English used in the Outer Circle, which includes some post-colonial countries in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean region (Jenkins, 2006). WE scholars are interested in the “bounded varieties of English” (Jenkins et al., 2011, p.284) in those countries and regions. According to Seidlholfer (2009), in these contexts, English is influenced by the local language, which is reflected in some linguistic characteristics as well as in the functions, use and acquisition of English. However, there are no such bounded varieties in ELF, since English emerges as a common tool of communication among people from different lingual backgrounds. While the WE is “exploring is the sociolinguistic realities” (Pakir, 2009, p.228), ELF focuses on the success or effectiveness of communication (Cogo, 2009).

Comparing the two well-established terms of English (ESL/EFL) in English language teaching and ELF, Jenkins (2006) suggested that the former refers to the use of English in the NS norms while the later highlights the role of international use of English in new norms by NNSs. According to Friedrich and Matsuda (2010), ESL refers to “all other contexts where a person who already knows one language learns English” and EFL refers “more specifically to, along with other similar terms like EAL, the acquisition of English by those who already have acquired or learned another language as “first” in a context where English is used on a regular basis” (p.210).

### 2.2.2 Developments in ELF research

In response to the relocation and expansion of ELF as a common interaction tool in different communication contexts, ELF has emerged as a distinct field in applied linguistics over the past decade (for a thorough overview of ELF studies to date, see the *Routledge Handbook of ELF* by Jenkins, Baker & Dewey (2017)). Although it is still in its infancy, ELF has been researched at different linguistic levels, in different geographical settings (mainly Europe where the concept took root, and more recently East Asia), and in different domains (predominantly business and higher education), employing different methods of data collection and analysis.

The phenomenon of English used as an international language was first mentioned by Hüllen (1982), although only at a conceptual level, in order to highlight the importance of ELF to ELT and to call for more empirical research in ELF. ELF became a topic of greater discussion in Europe in the late 1980s and 1990s (Firth, 1996; House, 1999; Jenkins, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Wagner & Firth, 1997). Jenkins (2000) and Seidlhofer (2001) are the two influential studies, which marked a new development in the study of ELF, attracting the attention of scholars in applied linguistics and English teaching (Jenkins et al, 2011). Through nearly two decades of development, ELF research has passed through two phases. In the first stage, scholars were mainly concerned with linguistic forms (pronunciation, lexicology, phonology, and grammar) that are typical of ELF communication and not found in native English (Jenkins, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 2008; Maurant, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2001, 2004). This perspective is greatly influenced by the World English paradigm, which attaches importance to the codification of ELF linguistic characteristics, and ELF was considered part of WE. Jenkins (2006) distinguished ELF from EFL by considering EFL as part of modern foreign languages and ELF as part of World Englishes,



and argued that the focus of ELF is difference rather than deficiency. Investigating the forms and functions of pronunciation in ELF use, Jenkins (2000) found that some ELF pronunciation features are not found in native English. In a theoretical study of ELF, Seidlhofer (2001) argued that there was insufficient data describing the reality of ELF and called for more empirical studies. Some large-scale descriptive corpus studies in later years provided more empirical evidence of linguistic and communicative forms and their functions. Seidlhofer herself later founded and launched the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE) (<http://www.univie.ac.at/voice/>) at the Department of English, University of Vienna (see Seidlhofer, 2001). This is the first and largest corpus-based research on ELF, with the transcription of 120-hour recordings of naturally occurring spoken data from conferences, seminars, meetings, etc. in different settings. Roughly 1250 ELF speakers from 50 different linguistic backgrounds were involved in this project. It was followed by another corpus, the English as a Lingua Franca in Academic settings (ELFA) corpus (<http://www.helsinki.fi/englanti/elfa/elfacorporus>), conducted by a team at the University of Helsinki led by Mauranen (see Mauranen, 2003). The authentic academic spoken lectures, conference discussions, presentations, thesis defences, etc. were recorded at four universities in Finland and involved roughly 650 participants from 51 native languages from Africa, Asia and Europe. Another major corpus of ELF, the Asian Corpus of English (ACE) (<https://corpus.eduhk.hk/ace/>), involving participants from nine countries in East and South-East Asia, was compiled by a team led by Kirkpatrick in Hong Kong (see Kirkpatrick, 2010a, 2014). In a study conducted in Hong Kong, Kirkpatrick (2014) aimed to not only identify linguistic features and strategies used by Asian speakers in their ELF communication but also to compare these with those identified in European data. More recently, a study of the Corpus of Written ELF in Academic settings (WrELFA), the only one on ELF written communication, has been under construction by Mauranen (Jenkins, 2018).

The second phase of ELF research focused on the variability and fluidity in ELF, where meaning negotiation is paramount. The role of strategies in effective communication was addressed (Björkman, 2011, 2014; Cogo, 2008, 2009, 2012; Firth, 1996; Firth & Wagner, 1997; House, 1999, 2003; Kaur, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2017; Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Mauranen, 2006a, 2006b, 2009, 2012; Meierkord, 2000; Sheildhofer, 2006, 2009; Taguchi & Roever, 2017; Wagner & Firth, 1997), as was attitudes towards ELF (Jenkins, 2012), and also the creativity of individuals and language regulation (Hynninen 2016). A function-oriented approach has been prevalent in recent ELF research within this tradition. Here, efficiency in communication rather than linguistic correctness is the focus, and the acknowledgement of the fluidity and diversity of ELF communication has motivated a move away from the identification of linguistic forms. There has been “a far greater interest in the underlying processes that motivate the use of one or another form at any given moment in an interaction (Jenkins et al, 2011, p.296). With this kind of focus on the context and process of ELF use, its pragmatic aspects have come to prominence.

Most recently, Jenkins (2015) put forward a notion of “English as multilingual franca” (p.73) as a proposal for the third phase of ELF research in order to highlight its role in multilingual communication where English is available as a contact language of choice but is not necessarily chosen.

### 2.3 Communication strategies and the pragmatics of ELF spoken communication and

Engaging in ELF communication, speakers are assumed to face a number of challenges resulting from different levels of English proficiency, accents, communicating styles and cultures, previous learning experiences, etc. They therefore tend to resort to certain strategies to construct or promote mutual understanding or to co-operate with each other

for successful communication. CSs have therefore been given attention in research on ELF pragmatics. Before examining CSs and the pragmatics of ELF in detail, it is important to look back at the origin of CSs from SLA perspectives.

### 2.3.1 Communication strategies from the SLA paradigm

CSs, viewed as a useful way of helping EFL and ESL learners to develop their communicative competence, have attracted considerable attention in research from an SLA perspective for more than four decades. CSs studies from this perspective have looked at the conceptualization, classification, and the teaching and teachability of CSs. These studies have significantly contributed to the knowledge base of learners' language study and use. This knowledge has been considered important in the development of strategic competence, which constitutes an important part of communicative competence (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1995). Since being initially discussed in Selinker (1972) as a tool for dealing with 'errors' in communication in a second language, CSs have been conceptualized and classified CSs in a body of SLA research. The two primary perspectives in this work have been the psychological and interactional views. While the former focuses on the cognitive processes of the speaker attempting to cope with his/ her problems in producing language, the latter attaches importance to interactional moves of a speaker trying to negotiate meaning in conversation.

The earliest and the most influential scholars taking a psychological view are Færch and Kasper (1980, 1983) and Bialystok (1983, 1990). CSs were conceptualized by Færch and Kasper (1983) as "potentially conscious plans" (p.63) used by an individual to solve a problem s/he has in progressing towards a communication goal. Here, CSs, viewed from a speech production model consisting of a planning phase and an execution phase, are seen as plans made by foreign language users to deal with communication problems, rather than

as a technique to search for help from the interlocutor. Two characteristics of CSs: that they are “problem-oriented” and “conscious” were identified, and a twofold classification of CSs as either reduction strategies or achievement strategies was proposed. The former strategies involve speakers in reducing aspects of the language system (phonology and morphology) in order to avoid making problematic messages. The latter are used to expand the communicative resources of a speaker and these can be either compensatory or retrieval. Compensatory strategies are employed to handle insufficient language input and involve cooperative strategies, code switching, and interlanguage-based strategies. Retrieval strategies are used to solve problems with retrieving the target language production.

CSs were conceptualized by Bialystok (1983) as “all attempts to manipulate a limited linguistic system in order to promote communication” (p.102). She proposed two taxonomies, in Bialystok (1983) and Bialystok (1990). Bialystok (1983) classified CSs based on the source of the problems as arising from the first language (L1), target language (L2), or non-linguistic sources. L1 strategies consist of language switch, foreignizing, and transliteration; while L2 strategies include semantic contiguity, description, and word coinage; non-linguistic strategies involve miming and gestures.

CSs were viewed in Bialystok (1990) as “part of the process of ordinary language use. They reflect the way in which the processing system extends and adapts itself to the demands of communication” (p. 131). Here, CSs were classified into two categories: analysis-based CSs and control-based CSs. The former relates to when a user uses the linguistic system to try to “examine and manipulate the intended concept” (p. 131) via the use of strategies such as circumlocution, paraphrasing, and word coinage. The latter involves the use of symbolic reference systems via non-linguistic L1 strategies such as miming and gesture

when they attempt to “examine and manipulate the chosen form or means of expression” (p.132). Thus, Bialystok’s (1990) therefore largely focuses on compensatory CSs.

Three researchers of the University of Nijmegen (Poulisse, Bongaerts, & Kellerman) narrowed the focus in the psychological perspective to describe CSs as only a subset of compensatory strategies (Poulisse, 1987). Dörnyei and Scott (1995) also felt that the psycholinguistic view excluded other areas of CS use. However, Nakatani and Goh (2007) argued for a broader approach so as to include studies on other cognitive processes in speech production. On this view, CSs are considered a means used by both speakers and interlocutors to negotiate in order to achieve their common communicative goals.

Tarone (1977, 1980), the most influential work working within an interactional view, gave two definitions of CSs. The first definition attached importance to the role of speakers and their efforts to deal with problems resulting from insufficient knowledge of language structure (Tarone, 1977). She defined them as “a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared” (Tarone, 1980, p. 420). This conceptualization of CSs “moved away from the compensatory and problematicity perspective on CSs, taking into consideration aspects related to joint negotiation of meaning” (Vettoral, 2019, p.187).

Tarone (1981), who attempted to narrow the gap between the linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge of the speaker and the interlocutor, classified CSs into the three main categories. The first category includes avoidance strategies used by speakers in order to avoid talking about difficult topics and abandoning the message. The second consists of alternative ways to convey meaning, such as paraphrasing. The third involves borrowing strategies which encompass literal translation, language switch, appeal for help and miming. While she considered CSs as tools for negotiating the meaning between the two

interlocutors, she did not include in her taxonomy such interactional strategies as clarification requests and comprehension checks, which were viewed by Dörnyei and Scott (1995) as important for negotiating the meaning with the interlocutor. Thus, her classification of CSs did not completely reflect her second definition of CSs.

More recent work from the SLA perspective such as Dörnyei (1995), Dörnyei and Scott (1995, 1997), and Nakatani (2006) attempts to address the limitations of previous approaches by bringing together different functions of CSs. They consider them as a tool to not only to solve communication problems, but also to enhance communication. To develop his framework, Dörnyei (1995) drew on previous frameworks by Varadi (1973), Tarone (1977), Færch and Kasper (1983), Poulishse (1993), and Bialystok (1990). He categorized CSs into three types: avoidance, achievement, and stalling and time gaining strategies. The first type involves message abandonment and topic avoidance, the second includes strategies that help the speaker to achieve the communication goal, and the third consists of fillers/ hesitation devices which help speakers to keep the flow of talk smooth in the face of communication difficulties. Dörnyei and Scott (1997) consider CSs to be a tool both to solve communication problems and to arrive at shared understanding. Based on Tarone (1977), Færch and Kasper (1983), Poulishse (1987, 1993), Bialystok (1983, 1990), Dörnyei (1995), Paribakht (1985) and Willems (1987), they suggested a taxonomy which comprises three categories: direct, interactional, and indirect. These are further divided into four subtypes: *resource deficits*, *own-performance problems*, *other-performance problems*, and *processing time pressures*.

Dörnyei and Scott (1997) proposed that direct strategies are speakers' attempts to convey their messages. Most of these strategies are designed to handle problems caused by resource deficits, and include message replacement, message reduction, circumlocution,

approximation, the use of all-purpose words, word coinage, restructuring, literal translation, foreignizing, code switching, using similar-sounding words, mumbling, omission, retrieval, and mime. The remaining strategies in this category such as self-rephrasing and self-repair are employed to deal with problems in the speakers' performance or caused by others (e.g. other-repair). Interactional strategies are related to efforts made cooperatively by interlocutors to construct shared understanding, often to solve problems arising from something they have said, and these consist of repetition request, clarification request, confirmation request, guessing, expressing non-understanding, and interpretive summary. However, there are also strategies used when speakers have problems with resource deficits and their own-performance. These are appeals for help, comprehension check, and own-accuracy checks. The third category of indirect strategies are transferring meaning methods, which include filters and repetition and these are primarily used to cope with the pressure of speaking time.

Involving as it does a range of strategies related to the management of various kinds of communication problems, Dörnyei and Scott's (1997) taxonomy is the most comprehensive from this perspective because the first category covers strategies that are manageable, and which help to convey meaning, the second relates to cooperation between the speaker and the interlocutor in solving communication problems, and the third promotes meaning transfer.

Nakatani (2006) developed an Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) based on findings from her research on learners' perceptions of CSs use in Japan. In this study, an open-ended questionnaire was used to explore learners' perceptions, a pilot factor analysis was used to select test items, and a final factor analysis was used to obtain a stable self-reported instrument. The OCSI resulting from this study comprises *(1) strategies for coping*

*with speaking problems, and (2) strategies for coping with listening problems.* This framework covers cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies to cope with both listening and speaking problems. Fluency-oriented CSs are used when speakers decide to attempt to communicate or to leave the message unfinished. Meaning-negotiating CSs are used to solve listening problems and include scanning, getting the gist, and word-oriented strategies. The OCSI is presented in form of I-do items.

In short, SLA perspectives on CSs have been helpful in helping us understand the nature of CSs and their use among language users and have stimulated insightful and fruitful research (Doqaruni, 2015). Despite the differences in their theoretical perspectives, CSs from a SLA tradition, have overtly focused on problem solving rather than assistance with initiating, maintaining and developing interaction, yet these are also important for successful communication. They have therefore been seen predominantly as problem-oriented devices developed to resolve a problem in a speaker's production or interaction, and strategic competence as the mastery and ability to use CSs to compensate for communication breakdowns or to enhance effective communication (Swain, 1984; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). However, this conceptualization on CSs from SLA perspective has been criticized for not fully reflecting the nature of strategic competence in authentic communication contexts (Chang & Liu, 2016) and as too narrow to adequately describe is happening in reality or what students need to know to be strategically competent. This is particularly the case of CS use in ELF communication, which is discussed in the next section.

### 2.3.2 The pragmatics of ELF and communication strategies

The process of meaning-making is at the heart of any kind of communication, especially in an ELF context where speakers may not have as much shared knowledge and



understanding of norms as they do in other contexts with which they may be more familiar. Pragmatics is therefore crucial (Björkman, 2014).

Before an in-depth discussion of ELF pragmatics, it is useful to touch upon how L2 pragmatics have conceptualised the ability of an L2 learner to perform communicative acts in an L2 and how that ability develops over time. This ability includes a language learner's understanding of form-function-context relationship and how s/he perceives and realizes this relationship in social interaction (Taguchi and Ishihara, 2018). This relationship involves both the knowledge of linguistic forms and the contextual aspects that shape our spoken or written communication. In the context of intercultural communication, there is an important focus on "how learners successfully participate in intercultural interaction" (Taguchi, 2017, p. 157). In other words, from a focus on speakers as learners to a focus on speakers as communicators in real-life situations.

The spread of ELF across the globe has resulted in the inclusion of ELF pragmatics in research on L2 pragmatics with a focus on an understanding of how ELF users communicate successfully in a multilingual-cultural context of ELF. According to Björkman (2011), "the work on ELF started with studies in pragmatics, arising from the need to understand how non-native speakers of English communicate with each other. These studies in ELF pragmatics have investigated the critical issue of understanding and the resolution of non-understanding in ELF contexts with reference to pragmatic strategies" (p.951).

Similar to research on ELF in general, studies on ELF pragmatics have been conducted in various domains, the majority in academia and business, in different parts of the world, predominantly in Europe and more recently in East Asia, and in several contexts. These contexts include higher education (Bjørge, 2010; Björkman, 2011, 2013, 2014; Cogo, 2008; Dippol, 2014, 2015; Dippold, Eccles & Mullen, 2019; Hanamoto, 2016; House, 1999, 2002; Kaur, 2009, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2017; Knapp, 2002; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Matsumoto,

2011; Mauranen, 2006b, 2007; Meierkord, 2000; Penz, 2008; Watterson, 2008), business meetings (Alharbi, 2016; Birlik & Kaur, 2020; Firth, 1996; Raisanen, 2012; Wagner & Firth, 1997), everyday conversations (Pietikäinen, 2014, 2016), etc. In general, according to Taguchi and Ishihara (2018), the current focus of ELF pragmatics is on how “speakers use discourse tactics, conversation moves, and communication strategies to support smooth interaction and joint meaning making” (Taghuchi & Ishihana, 2018, p.86).

Research in this area has, for the last two decades, moved from the earliest empirical works on communication among NNSs of English in simulated situations to more recent studies on “accommodation processes and pragmatic strategies, including multilingual resources”, which focus on “how speakers construct and negotiate understanding and how they solve miscommunication problems” (Cogo & House, 2018, p.210). Due to the distinguishing features of ELF communication, from ELF perspective CSs are moving from a focus on the problem-oriented nature of communication to a general focus on its goal-oriented nature. In a recent review of common areas of ELF work on pragmatics synthesizing 27 related studies using “multiple databases (LLBA, ERIC, Psychology Database)”, Taguchi and Ishihara (2018) find that “interactive and interpretive work that ELF speakers engage in using various tactics is at the core of pragmatics in ELF research” (p.87).

In ELF contexts, the function of CSs go far beyond problem-solving. Rather, they “constitute a range of powerful devices that equip the speakers in interaction with the capability to enhance communication as they seek to achieve their goals.” (Kaur, 2019, p.2.) According to Björkman (2014), in the context of ELF, “such insistence on problematicity is one of the reasons why CSs in lingua franca interactions need to be studied independently from the norms of SLA paradigms” (p.123). Firth and Wagner therefore called for an interactional approach to look at CSs in ELF research, highlighting

the need for a change in (monolingual) SLA perspectives, looking at CSs not as compensatory, but as the expression of (bilingual) identities, as for example in word coinage. In this view, meaning is cooperatively constructed as a “social and negotiable product of interaction transcending individual intention and behaviours” (Firth and Wagner 2007 [1997]: 763), naturally occurring in the turn-by-turn ongoing interactions that are part of everyday communication – a “non-deficit” view that has been widely shared by ELF research. (Vettorel, 2019, p.186)

Identity and agency are important factors in any communication. As Ishihara (2019), notes “in the context of globalization marked by increasingly conspicuous linguistic and cultural diversity” (p.161), an L2 user both shapes and is shaped by the sociocultural structure within which they are operating.

From an ELF perspective, CSs are seen more broadly as oriented toward the success of communication goals (Kaur, 2019). While from an SLA perspective, the concept of CSs is put under the umbrella of strategic competence (which, according to Chang and Liu (2016) and Kaur (2019), is the core of communicative competence), from an ELF perspective, CSs are understood as part of both strategic competence and pragmatic competence. This is because in a context where speakers come from different linguacultural backgrounds ELF speakers need to make use of a range of verbal or non-verbal resources in order to achieve their communication goals in a pragmatically appropriate way. These strategies are discussed by ELF scholars variously as pragmatic strategies (Björkman, 2011), accommodation strategies (Cogo, 2009), and communicative strategies (Björkman, 2014; Kirkpatrick, 2010b). In the present study, I am taking an interactional view on which ELF users are seen “as (multi)competent rather than deficient communicators” (Vettorel, 2019, p.197), and CSs as any strategic or pragmatic work that facilitates understanding and

enhances communication in EFL talk.

There is no space here for an exhaustive overview of all ELF work to date, in the following section I will therefore focus on those aspects of ELF research most relevant to the topic of this research, that is, the early influential research on ELF pragmatics, and recent studies which focus on strategies for successful communication.

### 2.3.3 Early research on ELF pragmatics

Early work on ELF pragmatics (Firth, 1990, 1996), House (1999) and Meierkord (1996, 2000) differ from more recent studies in that they were drawn from small-scale simulated conversations of students' talk in informal settings, and this influenced the engagement of participants in talk (Cogo & House, 2018). These studies are summarized in Table 2.1 therefore and discussed separately from more recent work on ELF pragmatics.

*Table 2.1: Early research on ELF pragmatics*

Study	Context	Methods	Focus	Findings
Firth (1990, 1996)	Business phone interactions from a Danish company	- CA - Audio recording - Ethnographic information about the participants	Interactional and discursive work by ELF speakers	Let-it-pass Make-it-normal
House (1999)	International students' talks in their assigned tasks	- CA - Audio recording of simulated conversations	Misunderstanding in intercultural communication in ELF classroom setting	- Participants were not involved in serious interactions
Meierkork (1996, 2000)	English table conversations among students from different countries in a British student residence hall	- CA - Audio recording of simulated conversations	Interlanguage characteristics	- A few misunderstandings; usually left unsolved - Differences on pragmatic level between NSs and NNSs - ELF speakers: + lack of linking closing and opening phrases, frequent long pauses before conversation end; + preference for safe topics + use of overlap, backchannels, supportive laughter, excessive use of cajolers

Firth (1990, 1996) analyzed telephone conversations between Danish employees and their international clients using CA techniques, illuminating these with ethnographic insights. The conversations concerned business topics on food and microelectronics. The general findings were that these ELF conversations went smoothly when the speakers could communicate successfully in order to sell things, regardless of instances of non-standard use of grammar and pronunciation. Although an instance of misunderstanding occurred in one conversation, the speakers were not aware of it. These studies highlighted the cooperative and consensus-oriented nature of communication, and two strategic behaviours called 'let-it-pass' and 'make-it-normal' were identified.

According to Firth (1996), the 'let-it-pass' is a strategy frequently used by ELF speakers to let "an unknown action, word, or utterance 'pass' on the (common sense) assumption that it will either become clear or redundant as talk progresses" (p.243). No attempts to repair or request clarification and confirmation were identified in these studies. Instead, ELF participants seemed to be capable of controlling their speech moves and paying attention to maintaining the flow of interaction. Firth (1996) argued that ELF speakers "have a remarkable ability and willingness to tolerate anomalous usage and marked linguistic behaviour even in the face of what appears to be usage that is at times accurately opaque" (p.247).

The 'make-it-normal' is an interactive strategy used by a listener which reflects his/her tolerance of some newly generated forms even if they are not linguistically standard, provided they make sense and do not influence the comprehensibility of the utterances of others. This principle is applied when the listeners are more interested in their communicative aims rather in the use of standard lexical or grammatical forms. They therefore accept errors made by the speakers if they make sense.

However, these two phenomena were less frequently identified as strategies in later studies. In her work on ambiguity-related misunderstanding, Kaur (2017) found that while problems of non-/misunderstanding do not happen frequently, when they do, speakers often make effort to signal non-/misunderstanding or use different negotiation strategies. In addition, ELF participants seem to use some pre-empting strategies to prevent such problems from occurring (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Kaur, 2009, 2010, 2012; Mauranen, 2007, 2012). Although Firth's position on the use of the native norm as standard has been criticized (Jenkins et al, 2011), his studies have been influential in ELF research.

As discussed, interactants were not active in interaction and very few collaborative completions and simultaneous speech acts were identified in Firth (1990, 1996). Similar behaviours were also found in House (1999), which examined understanding in international students' in assigned tasks. Her findings showed that the students were not generally active in their discussions and gave no signals of interactional moves in an effort to keep the conversation smooth. It has been suggested that perhaps the students did not take the tasks seriously due to the simulated nature of the settings in this study (Björkman, 2011, 2013; Kaur, 2009; Mauranen, 2006b). On the basis of her findings, however, House highlights a different range of pragmatically competent behaviours, including the ability to manage topics, to "carry weight" in conversation, to manage turns, and to use an appropriate speech rate, pauses, and repairs (House, 1999, p.11).

The focus in Meierkord (1996, 2000) was chiefly on collaborative interactional moves (Cogo & House, 2018). Looking at audiotaped dinner conversations among students from 17 different lingua-cultural backgrounds in a British student residence, Meierkord (1996, 2000) examined the pragmatic phenomena of opening and closing phases, gambits, topic management, politeness, turn-taking, overlaps and hesitation. Findings from this study

show that there were few misunderstandings and, when they did occur, there were no attempts to solve them. Meierkord's (1996, 2000) analyses reveal that non-verbal supportive backchannels and short turns were frequently used, and that these were not much influenced by L1 norms. Although these studies have been criticized as lacking "contrastive baseline data for the many languages involved" and participants' "engagement in solving misunderstandings", they have been also influential in turning the focus of studies towards the collaborative and interactional nature of ELF talk (Cogo & House, 2018, p.211).

Based on naturally occurring rather than simulated data, recent studies on ELF pragmatics have focused more on the understanding of pragmatics, particularly how ELF speakers accommodate their speech to their interlocutors, construct and negotiate meaning, and build common ground and interactional cooperation. The next section discusses these studies.

#### 2.3.4 Recent studies on ELF communication

Since ELF communication involves speakers from different lingua-cultural backgrounds and Englishes (Björkman, 2013) and takes place in different domains and contexts, it is inevitably heterogeneous and hybrid in form (Meierkord, 2004) even though speakers from a certain community or region may share certain commonalities in both linguistic and pragmatic features. It is therefore not appropriate to present ELF as in a "single linguistic code" (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p.120), a monocentric model or a one-size-fit-all form; rather, it can be described as "a multiplicity of voices" (House, 2006, p.88, as cited in Kirkpatrick, 2007, p.120). The language of ELF is so hybrid and flexible that meaning needs to be established under negotiation (Kaur, 2010), and this has meant that CSs have attracted increasing attention and have been largely discussed in the ELF literature to date under the

headings of three main themes: understanding, accommodation, and interactional moves in ELF pragmatics. These are discussed in the next sections.

#### 2.3.4.1 Understanding in ELF pragmatics

Since “mutual understanding in talk is a requisite for the accomplishment of communicative goals” (Kaur, 2017, p.27), understanding-related issues have been the focus of a number of studies on communication in general. This is particularly the case in ELF contexts, where intercultural communication can be “fragile” (Kaur, 2011a, p.94). Table 2.2 summarises the major research to date which directly deals with the issue of understanding in ELF interactions.

Table 2.2: ELF pragmatics research on understanding

Study	Participants/ Context	Methods	Focus	Findings
Pitzl (2005)	Business context	CA	Sources and management of understanding problems	Clarification request Repetition Other-paraphrasing
Mauranen (2006b)	International students and Finnish students University of Tampere	ELFA corpus	Signalling and preventing misunderstanding	<i>Signalling misunderstanding</i> Specific questions Repetition of problematic items Indirect signalling misunderstanding: minimal signal, questions... <i>Preventing misunderstanding</i> Confirmation check Interactive repair Self-repair
Mauranen (2007)	International students and Finnish students University of Tampere	ELFA corpus	Strategies of communicative explicitness	Co-constructions Self-rephrasing Strategies to negotiate topics Discourse reflexivity
Watterson (2008)	University students (Mongolian and Korean) in Seoul, Korea	- Video recording; retrospective interviews - CA	Non-understanding	Repair
Smit (2009, 2010)	Multilingual classroom interactions in ELF in a hotel	- Ethnographic, longitudinal study	Understanding	Repair



	management program in Austria	- Audio recordings, interviews, questionnaires		
Cogo and Dewey (2012)	- Regular workplace meetings in an institute of higher education in London, UK - Naturally occurring conversations in casual talk in London, UK	- Corpora - Audio recording; interviews	CSs and underlying language processes that give rise to a considerable degree of linguistic diversity while achieving and maintaining mutual intelligibility	<i>Understanding (pragmatic) strategies:</i> Strategies to initiate negotiation Strategies used after signals of trouble Strategies occurring as pre-realizations
Cogo and Pitzl (2016)	Data from various studies on ELF		Pre-empting and signalling non-understanding in ELF	<i>Pre-empting strategies:</i> - Partial repetition or paraphrase - Self-repetition in an ongoing turn - Spelling out potentially ambiguous terms <i>Signalling and resolving non-understanding:</i> - Repetition with interrogatory intonation - Explicit minimal query
Deterding (2013)	Academic ELF interaction at the University of Brunei Darussalam	The Brunei component of The Corpus of Asian Corpus of English (ACE)	Misunderstanding in ELF	<i>Self-initiated repairs:</i> - Repeating yourself - Unprompted paraphrase - Asking for help Responses to misunderstanding: - Asking for clarification - Correcting - Silence - Backchannels - Selecting part of the utterance - Changing the topic - Laughter - Non-awareness
Kaur (2010)	Students of an international master's degree at a university in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	- Audio recording; - CA	To achieve mutual understanding	Repetition Paraphrase Requests for confirmation of understanding Requests for clarification
Kaur (2011a)			Sources of misunderstanding	- Ambiguity in the speakers' utterance - Mishearing - Lack of world knowledge (intracultural communication)
Kaur (2011b)			Raising explicitness through self-repair	Self-repair

Kaur (2012)			Enhancing clarity	Repetition
Kaur (2017)			Ambiguity-related misunderstanding and clarity enhancing	Use of a parenthetical remark that provides illustration, description, definition, and comparison of similarity or dissimilarity
Matsumoto (2011)	Simulated student interactions at a US university dormitory	Longitudinal study of an ELF-oriented CfP - Audio recording; interviews	Pronunciation negotiation strategies	Initiating repairs, acknowledging repair requests, repeating those pronunciations for clarification, repetition, contextual cues, accommodation strategies
Hynninen (2011)	Students' seminar course interaction	- Audio recording; interviews	The practice of 'mediation'	Speaking for another person: - Rephrasing another participant's turn - Other repair
Deterding (2013)	Academic ELF communication at University of Brunei Darussalam, Brunei	- The Asian Corpus of English (ACE) - Audio recording of classroom discussion and interviews in lecturers' office - CA	Misunderstanding	<i>Repair:</i> - self-initiated repair: correcting yourself, unprompted paraphrase, asking for help <i>Responding to misunderstanding:</i> - asking for clarification - correcting - silence - backchannel - selecting part of the utterance - changing the topic - laughter <i>Avoiding misunderstanding</i> - topic fronting - lexical repetition - echoing - collaborative competition
Matsumoto (2015)	ELF communications a multilingual ESL writing classroom at a US university	Sequential analysis and ethnographic information	Multimodal strategies to resolve miscommunication	Repeating key words/phrases Explicating with examples Discourse markers Gestures that visualizes and concretizes abstract components Combining information on PowerPoint slides and worksheets with verbal speech
Hanamoto (2016)	Low- proficiency international	- Video recordings	Resolving problems in understanding	<i>Verbal resources:</i> - confirmation check

	students from Malaysia and Saudi Arabia at a Japanese university	- CA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- clarification request</li> <li>- repetition</li> <li>- or combining strategies</li> </ul> Non-verbal resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- gestures</li> <li>- material tool objects</li> </ul>
Pietikäinen (2016)	International ELF couples in UK, Norway, and Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Video recordings of private conversations</li> <li>- CA</li> </ul>	Misunderstandings and ensuring understanding in private ELF talk	Direct clarification requests Innovative extra-linguistic means: pointing, showing, drawing, acting, deixis, and onomatopoeia
Hynninen, Pietikäinen, & Vetchinnikova (2017)	International students and Finnish students University of Tampere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ELFA corpus</li> <li>- Discourse analysis and CA</li> </ul>	Flagging in ELF among multilinguals	Code-switching practices: flagging to show perceived acceptability and intelligibility

These studies examine strategies that help ELF speakers negotiate meaning in conversations. How understanding is conceptualized differs from related concepts such as non-understanding or misunderstanding in that it refers to the process of “building common ground and joint knowledge” by speakers in their speaking environment (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p.115). Non-understanding, on the other hand, refers to the occasions when utterances made by speakers are not understood by their listeners. Misunderstanding occurs when a listener thinks that s/he understands the previous utterance(s) but does not get it right (Deterding, 2013), and this may result in miscommunication. As misunderstanding or miscommunication are highly likely in “fragile” communication, a number of studies have focused on misunderstanding in ELF interactions.

According to Cogo and Dewey (2012), in ELF “pragmatic resources cannot be taken for granted” but “are negotiated moment by moment in interaction”, which pragmatically means that speakers of ELF develop “certain strategies to achieve mutual understanding and negotiate non-understanding” (p.114). Therefore, that communicative competence involves the ability to use both linguistic and interactional means to arrive at mutual

understanding in a flexible and creative way (Taguchi & Ishihana, 2018). Understanding in ELF communication in the literature typically includes ELF pragmatic concerns and features such as intelligibility, explicitness, occurrences of non-understanding or misunderstanding, and the strategies employed to arrive at mutual understanding.

While earlier research on ELF paid considerable attention to the investigation of possible factors which may cause misunderstandings, recent studies have paid more attention to the process by which ELF speakers construct and negotiate understanding. Several ELF studies (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Mauranen, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Mauranen, Hynninen, & Ranta, 2010; Meierkork, 1998, 2000; Kaur, 2011b; Pitzl, 2005; Watterson, 2008) have found that instances of non-/mis-understanding occur less frequently than expected, and may even occur less frequently in NS-NNS than in NS-NS interaction due to the fact that ELF speakers “seem to be prepared for the possibility of misunderstanding and take steps to pre-empt that, which in effect results in misunderstanding” (Mauranen, 2012, p.7). While intelligibility plays its part in precluding mutual understanding in ELF communication, misunderstanding often results from “ambiguity in the speaker’s utterance” or “mishearing or lack of world knowledge” (Kaur, 2011a, p.93). Speakers need to maintain and manage *intelligibility*, and this is related to discourse rather than to standard linguistic norms of native English (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Mauranen, 2012). Thus, understanding is viewed by ELF pragmatics scholars as an interactional process “by which participants engage in building common ground or joint knowledge, rather than taking these for granted” (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p.115), and ELF users accommodate their language to suit their interlocutors. They increase the likelihood of mutual understanding through the use of turn-taking, discourse management techniques (Cogo, 2009; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; House,

2014b; Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Maranen, 2006b), laughter (Knapp & Meierkord, 2002), and paraphrasing (Björkman, 2014; Cogo, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Kaur, 2010, 2011a).

Since understanding is collaboratively co-constructed by more than one participant, non-/misunderstanding is therefore the responsibility of all the parties involved, and signalling non-/misunderstanding can help the meaning negotiation. This often done in an explicit way. Thus, in several studies explicitness is discussed as a salient feature of negotiating understanding in ELF communication (Björkman, 2011, 2014; Cogo & Dewey, 2006, 2012; Cogo & Pitzl, 2016; Deterding, 2013; Matsumoto, 2015; Mauranen, 2006b, 2007, 2012; Pietikäinen, 2016; Pitzl, 2005).

Pitzl (2005) investigates misunderstanding in a business context and finds that clarification requests, repetition and other-paraphrasing are used by speakers to enhance clarity and explicitness in a bid to promote understanding “in a way that does not disrupt the ongoing interaction” (Pitzl, 2005, p.69). In Cogo and Dewey (2012), speakers directly signal their non-understanding and make confirmation requests by using explicit strategies such as repetition, pauses and other-paraphrasing. Such negotiation of non-understandings is considered as “a general resource and not as a problematic feature of conversation” (p.135).

Mauranen (2012) argues that, while implicitness is seen in interaction among people from the same or similar cultures due to their shared linguistic repertoires, speakers in heterogeneous environments are aware of the gaps in their shared knowledge and common ground, so that the demand for enhancing clarity and explicitness is high. Matsumoto (2015) employed a multimodal approach to the analysis of ELF data, and found that ELF speakers explicitly use various verbal and non-verbal strategies or the combination of both to prevent miscommunication in their academic classroom activities. These

included repeating key words/phrases, explicating with examples, using discourse markers, employing gestures that visualize and concretize abstract components, and confirming information on PowerPoint slides with worksheets and verbal speech. Björkman (2014) includes explicitness in her CSs framework along with strategies such as repetition, simplification, signalling importance and paraphrasing.

In general, ELF pragmatics studies on understanding have shown that ELF speakers draw on various linguistic and communicative repertoires and use various CSs to negotiate and co-construct meanings in order to achieve mutual understanding. These strategies include different kinds of questions for signalling non-understanding or confirming understanding; self-repetition, self-paraphrase, self-repair, code-switching, spelling out, extra-linguistics for pre-emptively or retrospectively making themselves understood; and other-paraphrase, utterance completion for promoting mutual comprehension.

The processes of negotiating meaning and making interactional moves in ELF “underlie the importance of accommodation in pragmatic work” (Cogo & House, 2018, p.212). To communicate successfully in a hybrid and fluid communication context such as ELF, speakers need not only to use deliberate strategies to negotiate or construct meaning, but also to have the ability to accommodate or adapt their speech to other interlocutors who are in a similar situation. Accommodation, particularly pragmatic accommodation, has therefore been a productive topic of discussion in research on ELF, and this is reviewed below.

#### *2.3.4.2 Accommodation in ELF pragmatics*

Accommodation is widely seen in all kinds of communication contexts. The concept and theory of accommodation originated in social psychology (Giles & Powesland, 1975; Giles & Coupland, 1991; Shepard, Giles & Le Poirse, 2001), and can be seen as the process in

which “speakers converge towards the language of their interlocutors as a consequence of seeking approval, or diverge away from them as part of a process of signalling a distinct identity, affiliation, and/ or disapproval” (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p.102). The role of accommodation in successful communication has been stressed since the earliest studies on ELF. Since speakers may struggle to manage the diversity found in ELF contexts, they have to adapt their own speech patterns and be flexible in their communicative behaviours in order to fit in with their interlocutors and achieve their joint communicative goals (Cogo, 2009). Thus, accommodation is a salient, distinguishing feature of ELF and key to achieving communicative success (Cogo, 2009; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Taguchi & Ishihana, 2018). Cogo and Dewey (2012) argue that, in spite of differences in English proficiency and limitations in shared knowledge and linguistic repertoires, ELF speakers often use language in a creative, flexible and cooperative way, often attempting to strategically operate “not towards an established norm or localized variety, but to a co-constructed lingua code” (p.109).

Several studies have provided interesting findings and insights into how accommodation operates in ELF interaction both linguistically and pragmatically (Jenkins, 2000, 2006; Mauranen, 2006a, 2007; Deterding & Kirpatrick, 2006; Kaur, 2009; Cogo, 2009; Cogo & Dewey, 2006, 2012; Dewey, 2011, 2012; Hülmbauer, 2009). In her pioneering work on ELF, Jenkins (2000) focused on phonology and intelligibility in discussions among Japanese, Swiss-Germans and Swiss-French people speaking English in an English-speaking exam at advanced level of the Cambridge Certificate. She argues that variation in ELF interactions does not necessarily result in misunderstanding or miscommunication if speakers make deliberate efforts to make themselves understood or to understand others. She argues that ELF speakers, rather than conforming to an ideal standard of correctness, may be flexible

in using their own pronunciation, their linguistic patterns or communicative styles in order to be more intelligible to interlocutors who do not share common lingua-cultural grounds and communicative situations and contexts (Jenkins, 2000, p.54).

Crucially, both the role of both a speaker and a listener are considered in Jenkins' study. She argues that it is necessary for both the speaker to work towards achieving understanding in the audience and for the listener to develop tolerance for the non-standard form, and that the speaker adjusts himself/herself to the expectation of the listener in terms of what is appropriate (Jenkins, 2000). Thus little importance is attached importance to adherence to the established and idealized native norm. Rather, this study paved the way for accommodation to be identified as "a key element in achieving mutual intelligibility" (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p.102).

In a study on lexico-grammar in ELF interaction with a focus on the use of 3<sup>rd</sup> personal singular present tense, Cogo and Dewey (2006) highlight the relationship between lexico-grammatical adjustment and accommodative behaviour, and argues that the underlying motivation for employing such strategic behaviour is accommodative. Cogo and Dewey (2006) conclude that there exists a correlation between lexico-grammar and pragmatics, motivated by the need of speakers to be accommodative in their lexical or lexico-grammatical items, and this affects speech patterns and pragmatic strategies.

Several empirical studies have further explored the significance of accommodation strategies to the success of ELF communication. Table 2.3 summarizes the major studies that have explored the phenomenon of pragmatic accommodation in ELF communication.

*Table 2.3: ELF pragmatics research on accommodation*

Study	Context	Data sources	Focus	Findings
Mauranen (2007)	Academic ELF context at four universities in Finland	Recordings of authentic academic spoken	Presenting a speech corpus of ELFA	Self-rephrasing, Negotiating topic, Discourse reflexivity



		lectures, conference discussions, presentations, thesis defences, etc.		
Cogo (2009)	ELF communication interactions among ELF speakers who are considered fluent or expert in non- institutional context		Accommodation strategies	Repetition Code-switching
Kaur (2009)	International students in a Malaysian university	Audio recordings of natural naturally occurring conversations	Accommodation strategies	Repetition Paraphrase
Hülmbauer (2009)	Naturally- occurring talk among international students from 13 different languages in Vienna	Recording	Lexico-grammatical correctness and communicative competence	Creative use of language in negotiating meaning
Deterding (2013)	ELF communication in academic context in Brunei	Asian Corpus of English (ACE): recording of classroom discussion and interviews in lecturers' office	Misunderstanding	
Cogo and Dewey (2012)	- Regular workplace meetings in an institute of higher education in London, UK - Naturally occurring conversations in casual talks in London, UK	- Corpora - Audio recording; interviews	Adaptive processes involved in ELF interaction	Exploring redundancy Enhancing prominence Increasing explicitness Reinforcing proposition
Pietikäinen (2014)	ELF couples in UK, Finland, and Norway	Interviews with couples	Code-switching	Code-switching

Findings from these studies have illustrated how ELF speakers use strategies such as repetition, paraphrase, code switching, utterance completion, interactional elements and discourse markers to adapt to their interlocutors' linguistic, cultural and communicative expectations.

In her ELFA corpus study investigating academic ELF interactions in Europe, Mauranen (2007) identifies three strategies for accommodating to speech: rephrasing, negotiating topic, and discourse reflexivity. Self-paraphrasing, which is used when a speaker expresses his/her own previous utterance in a slightly different way without affecting the original meaning, appeared frequently and provided an effective means to deal with the "exigencies of spoken language" (Mauranen, 2007, p.248). Speakers in her data also employed a referential subject pronoun or a noun phrase in order to make the discourse clearer to other interlocutors. These are considered to be accommodative behaviours used by ELF speakers in her data to facilitate interaction.

Analyzing interactions among fluent or expert ELF speakers in a non-institutional context, Cogo (2009) identifies two strategies used for different communicative functions: repetition and code-switching. While, from an SLA perspective, repetition and code-switching are considered to be deficit-oriented strategies use by lower-proficiency students to cope with language deficits, in ELF research these two strategies served the multiple functions of showing acknowledgement, solidarity, alignment towards other interlocutors, and belonging to a multilingual community. In her data, Cogo (2009) found that participants from bilingual or multilingual backgrounds were able to resort to their multi-dimensional repertoire for successful communication. For example, speakers from Japanese and Italian linguistic backgrounds switched to using Spanish, the third language in which both were fluent, assuming that they can share more features that are common. The use of code

switching in her data shows the cooperation of ELF speakers who share certain common linguistic knowledge and repertoire and co-construct “a certain feeling of membership to a “different” community of speakers, a multilingual community” (Cogo, 2009, p.266).

Cogo (2009) argues that the instances of code-switching in the corpus show that the participants creatively made full use of their multilingual sources for a variety of functions. These resources offer “an extra tool in communication” that “allows for meaning making and greater nuances of expression” which they can use to “ensure understand beyond cultural differences and the efficient delivery of talk”, and which draw “on issues of cultural and social identity” (p.269). Repetition and code switching seemed to serve overlapping and multiple purposes, but generally with the purpose of converging towards the speech of other interlocutors.

Drawing on naturally occurring conversation among international students from a variety of linguacultural backgrounds in a Malaysian university, Kaur (2009) also shows how participants used repetition and paraphrase to accommodate to other interlocutors. She treats repetition and paraphrase as a self-repair attempt to facilitate understanding. The study illustrates how the two strategies were used after behaviours which may have caused breakdowns in talk such as long silences, minimal responses or overlapped talk. She suggests that “the interactional practices that participants utilize in order to pre-empt or avert problems of understanding contribute to the achievement of mutual understanding in ELF” (p.120). The efforts to repeat or paraphrase by the speakers in her data helped to consolidate understanding. This study shows how frequently and effectively these accommodative behaviours of repetition and paraphrase are used to facilitate comprehension in ELF communication.

Dewey (2011) illustrates how accommodation in ELF communication can also be seen in the way new lexis or lexico-grammatical patterns are used for mutual convergence among

ELF speakers. An example of the innovative use of lexicogrammatical patterns is found in Extract 2.1 taken from a talk between a Brazilian and Japanese speaker about world travel in this study:

Extract 2.1: (S1: Portuguese; S2: Japanese)

S1: **how long** do you need to get there?

S2: **how long**?

S1: **how long time** do you need to get there?

S2: **ah** (.) it takes about 12 hours

Dewey (2011, p.210)

In this situation, S1 (Brazilian speaker), who expressed a wish to go to Japan, asked S2 (Japanese speaker) the length of time it may take to get to Japan. S2, who did not immediately understand what S1 meant by “*how long*”, repeated “*how long*” for clarification. There was temporarily a moment of non-understanding which was followed by an attempt made by S1 to explicitly clarify meaning by saying “*how long time*”, which is not native-like, but as a result, they could reach mutual understanding and communicate successfully. Findings from this study show that ELF speakers are often not able to recognize that the language used by other interlocutors is non-standard. In addition, in order to express collaboration, harmony and alignment while still maintaining intelligibility, comprehensibility and communicability, they often tended to orient towards the language of other interlocutors rather than adhere to the established native norm.

Hülmbauer (2009) investigated the relationship between lexico-grammatical correctness and communicative competence in 16 naturally-occurring ELF conversations among 44 ELF international students from 13 different language backgrounds in Vienna. She finds that speakers creatively used their language as they negotiated meaning, focusing on forms as well as functions; and that, rather than conforming to native norms, they adhered to their own established norms, and this helped to negotiate meaning and show mutual support.

Cogo and Dewey (2012) demonstrate the dynamic nature of ELF communication and show how the use of interactional pragmatic strategies can result in the innovative use of lexicogrammar. The study illustrates how “speakers routinely exploit the language to fit the immediate communicative environment, adapting and blending English innovatively and resourcefully in order to achieve a jointly constructed means of conveying and interpreting meaning” (p.4). They consider the processes of accommodation to the role of both the listener and the speaker, and classify convergence behaviours into two sub-categories: receptive convergence and productive convergence. The former occurs when a listener accepts the non-standard form and the latter occurs when a speaker reproduces a non-standard language item (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Dewey, 2011). According to them, these speakers actively accept and adopt the non-normative form of other interlocutors and extend their repertoires in their process of communicating meaning.

Cogo and Dewey (2012) also highlight the frequent use of utterance completion as an accommodative phenomenon, that is, when ELF speakers complete the previous utterance of another interlocutor, usually by providing lexical items. It is worth noting that, when speech of this type is produced, it is often accepted and repeated by other interlocutors (Cogo & Dewey, 2012). This kind of strategic behaviour is observed in several recent studies, and will be discussed further in the next chapter. Evidence from their study shows that ELF speakers often attach more importance to negotiating meaning in a convergent way rather than adhering to standard forms.

Accommodation is thus a salient strategy widely witnessed in the multi-linguacultural environment of ELF communication in a convergent, cooperative and supportive way (Dewey, 2012). It may be seen in the use of repetition, paraphrase, code switching, negotiating topic, discourse reflexivity, and utterance completion, which help to facilitate the success of ELF communication.

It should be noted that the process of arriving at mutual understanding is an interactive one displaying “a high degree of interactional and pragmatic competence” (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p.135) and reflecting the cooperative, collaborative and supportive nature of ELF communication. While earlier research (Firth, 1996; House, 1999) highlighted a few interactional behaviours employed by participants, more recent studies show that ELF speakers not only actively take part in the process of constructing and negotiating meaning but also facilitate and manage the conversation by resorting to different interactional moves (Cogo & Dewey, 2012). The next section discusses interactional devices employed by ELF speakers and the relevant issue of turn-taking and turn management in the success of ELF interactions.

#### *2.3.4.3 Interactional pragmatic work in ELF communication*

From the perspective of ELF, where speakers are considered language users rather than language learners, the focus is on difference rather than deficiency, and on communicative effectiveness rather than linguistic correctness. Thus, communicative success or competence is measured not only via a speaker’s ability to use various linguistic and interactional resources to achieve mutual understanding but also by the ability to explicitly and actively make interactive moves to cooperate and support each other in the process of negotiating meaning and developing interaction at a discourse level, thus achieving common communication goals. According to Seidlhofer (2003), ELF is “overtly consensus-oriented, cooperative and mutually supportive” (p.15.). ELF research has shown how jointly and actively ELF speakers use such techniques as backchannels, laughter, repetition, paraphrase/reformulation, lexical anticipation, lexical suggestion, simultaneous talk, utterance completion, and discourse-related techniques, in order to cooperate with each other and support each other in achieving their communication goals (Bjørge, 2010; Björkman, 2011, 2014; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; House, 2009, 2013, 2014b; Hynninen, 2011;

Kalocsai, 2011; Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Mauranen, 2007). Table 2.4 summarize ELF studies investigating such phenomena.

*Table 2.4: ELF pragmatics research on interactional supportive moves*

Study	Context	Data sources	Focus	Findings
Mauranen (2007)	Academic ELF context at four universities in Finland	Audio recordings of authentic academic spoken guest lectures, conference discussions, presentations, and thesis defences	Presenting a speech corpus of ELFA	Self-rephrasing, Negotiating topic, Discourse reflexivity
House (2009)	Informal student talk at the University of Hamburg	Authentic informal ELF interactions	Interactional elements	Discourse marker: <i>you know</i>
Kirkpatrick (2010b)	Group discussions among English teachers from 10 ASEAN countries	Audio recordings of 6 simulated group discussions	Communication strategies	<i>Listener strategies:</i> Lexical anticipation Lexical suggestion Lexical correction Don't give up Let it pass Listen to the message Speaker paraphrase <i>Speaker strategies:</i> Be explicit Participant paraphrase
Bjørge (2010)	Simulated student negotiations from an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) program at a Norwegian University	Video recordings	Conflicts or cooperation	Backchanneling
Kalocsai (2011)	Erasmus exchange students at the University of Szeged, Hungary	Corpus Ethnographic CA Participant observations, Interviews and casual conversations with students, audio recordings of naturally occurring conversations, online journals, collections of students' Facebook posting	Interpersonal involvement and the building of rapport	Repetitions Collaborative utterance building Code-switching
Björkman (2011)	Naturally occurring teacher and student talk at	A large sample of audio recordings	Ways of achieving communicative effectiveness	Backchanneling

	a technical university in Sweden			
Hynninen (2011)	Seminar course at interaction at an English-medium university in Finland	Recording interview data	Practice of 'mediation' in ELF	Mediation
Cogo and Dewey (2012)	- Regular workplace meetings in an institute of higher education in London, UK - Naturally occurring conversations in casual talks in London, UK	- Corpora - Audio recording; interviews	Communicative strategies and underlying language processes that give rise to a considerable degree of linguistic diversity while achieving and maintaining mutual intelligibility	<i>Interactional (pragmatic) strategies:</i> Backchannels Simultaneous talk Utterance completion
House (2013)	University consultation hours at an international university in Hamburg	Video recordings	Using discourse markers to express (inter)subjectivity and connectivity	Discourse markers ( <i>yes/yeah, so and okay</i> )
House (2014b)	University academic office hours at an international university in Hamburg	Video recordings	Managing academic institutional discourse	Re-presents Discourse markers: <i>yes/yeah/ ja</i>
Björkman (2014)	Student talk at a technical university in Sweden	Fifteen naturally occurring group sessions, all from content courses	Present a taxonomy of CSs present in spoken academic communication	Co-creation of message / anticipation

Mauranen (2007) discussed explicitness in ELF discourse in authentic academic settings including spoken guest lectures, conference discussions, presentations and theses, and found that “cooperation and explicitness are foregrounded as strategies for social interaction” (p.246). This cooperation and explicitness were reflected in the use of rephrasing, topic negotiation and discourse reflexivity resulting from interactional needs of the speakers in the contexts in which they lacked shared knowledge. Rephrasing was used



pre-emptively and collaboratively by speakers to enhance clarity in their speech in order to avoid non-understanding. Topic management was frequently used to make the discourse explicit via the use of demonstrative noun phrases and core referential subject pronouns. Discourse flexibility is seen as such “a basic, indispensable property of language communication that it is very likely to be a discourse universal” (p.255) and is employed to organize and manage discourse in order to contribute to both content and interaction in talk.

An ethnographic study by Kalocsai (2011) looked at how Erasmus exchange students in Hungary sought to show involvement and build support in their ELF interaction in order to realize their goals and building a community. The participants used collaborative utterance building, repetitions and code-switching as supportive strategies in response to a direct request at moments of non-understanding or as collaborative strategies in the absence of a problem.

A range of strategies for building support and collaboration among ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations) speakers are highlighted in Kirkpatrick (2010b) in which he investigates the CSs used. These include strategies used by both the listener and speaker. Strategies such as lexical anticipation, lexical suggestion and lexical correction were used by the listener to show active involvement and give support to an ongoing speaker in the face of lexical challenge. A listener sometimes helps to resolve communication breakdowns by using *speaker paraphrase* which means paraphrasing oneself to repair the breakdowns. The combination of *speaker paraphrase* and *participant prompting* is “further evidence of the collaborative and supportive atmosphere” (Kirkpatrick, 2010b, p.136). Listeners supportively show their active listening and involvement via the use of *don’t give up* and *listen to the message* or smooth the interaction through the use of a *let-it-pass* strategy.

On the speaker's side, an important collaborative strategy is *participant paraphrase* which is used by a listener to paraphrase the ongoing speaker's speech in order to help a third participant who is having an understanding problem. All these strategies are used supportively and collaboratively in the data.

Based on ELFA data, and of recorded seminars from a master's course at the University of Helsinki in which English is the medium of instruction and supplemented by ethnographic information, Hynninen (2010) suggests that 'mediation', which is similar to *participant paraphrase* in Kirkpatrick (2010b), is a form of speaking for another or a form of repair. Her findings show that this behaviour is a cooperative strategy, as it shows the support of an intermediary in reaching shared understanding and social interaction.

Bjørge (2010) looked at the use of backchannels (verbal and non-verbal) in simulated student negotiations in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) program at a Norwegian University, involving 51 students from 16 countries. The data showed a much more frequent use of non-verbal backchannels (head nods) than verbal backchannels (mainly *yes/yeah* and followed by *mhm/okay*) to show attention, support and agreement. While backchannels are commonly considered to signal active listening, in this study "backchannelling behaviour was also found to vary according to conflict level, as giving or withholding support may be used as a negotiation strategy" (Bjørge, 2010, p.191). This study suggests that the frequency of use of backchannels varies in different phases of negotiation. For example, backchannels are less frequently used in information exchange where there is a conflict than when s/he wants to build relationship (Björkman, 2011).

One of the main objectives of Cogo and Dewey (2012), a study based on the data of naturally occurring casual student talk from the initial project by Cogo (2007), was to look at interactional strategies that their participants used to support communication. These

strategies are discussed in relation to turn-taking in ELF interactional exchanges. Strategies identified to achieve this purpose include backchannels, simultaneous talk (cooperative and competitive overlaps) and utterance completion which play an important role in the successful development and support of their interaction. Providing backchannelling feedback is found to be a supportive, although it does not add new information to the interaction, but generally helps ELF speakers to “ensure efficient continuation of exchange” (p.140) via showing acknowledgement to the previous or ongoing utterances by interlocutors and eliciting more talk from them. Backchannels in their study were commonly produced “at finely timed points in the exchange”, which are distinguished from short response overlaps which appear in a latching and overlapping manner to the prior turn. Closely related pragmatic phenomena of simultaneous talk discussed in their study include short response overlaps and completion overlaps, also discussed. Cogo and Dewey (2012) show that “simultaneous talk cannot be easily classified as either cooperative or competitive, that an overlap performed to take the turn is not necessarily uncooperative but can instead show involvement and interest in the successful development of the talk” (p.158).

Another important supportive strategy frequently occurring in their study is utterance completions. These are seen as used to “constitute the work of a second speaker on a prior speaker’s talk, displayed through the use of a syntactic continuation of the previous utterance” (p.150), in order to support the continuing speakers in their word search and to show active engagement when there are no signals of word search.

Björkman (2011, 2014) looked at the pragmatic strategies used by ELF speakers to achieve communicative effectiveness in naturally occurring lectures and students’ group-work sessions at a technical university in Sweden. In her data, two strategies serving cooperative

and supportive functions are identified. These include backchannels (Björkman, 2011) used to show active listening and acknowledgement of previous turns and *co-creation of the message/anticipation* (Björkman, 2014) used to co-construct meaning. *Co-creation of the message/anticipation*, similar to Kirkpatrick's (2010b) *lexical anticipation*, means to "fill in the blanks in each other's utterances in an effort to produce a complete utterance, which in turn means a complete message" (Björkman, 2014, p.133)

Based on different data sets of student talk, consultant hours, and office hours, at a German international university, House (2009, 2013, 2014b) focuses on how ELF speakers achieve their communicative purposes in discourse. House (2009) found that, the ELF speakers in her data used *you know* to "make salient coherence relations and focus on, or boost connections in discourse production and planning difficulties" (p.190) rather than to show cooperation, involvement and social interaction as commonly observed in NSs talk. Other discourse markers such as *yeah/yes/ja/okay* were identified in House (2013, 2014b) as serving the backchannelling functions of maintaining a smooth flow of talk via showing agreement and consensus. House (2014) also identifies re-presents, which she considers to be the repetition of part of a previous speaker's utterance and to be used to signal a confirmation of understanding. This behaviour is discussed in Cogo (2009) and Cogo and Dewey (2012) as repetition used for an accommodative purpose.

In short, studies in the ELF pragmatics literature have yielded insights into the various ways in which ELF speakers make interactional moves in collaborating and supporting one another at the discourse level. These are realized by the use of different CSs mainly revolving around backchannels, utterance completion, simultaneous talk, discourse markers, repetition and self-rephrasing. These will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

## 2.4 Summary

This chapter has presented an overview of ELF, the development of research on ELF communication over nearly two decades, pragmatics from an ELF perspective, and in particular how strategies for successful communication are positioned and discussed in such contexts under the central themes of understanding, accommodation, and interactional moves for support and collaboration. These are not always discrete from each other, as communication of any kind, especially ELF communication, is itself messy, multi-faceted and multi-functional. Nevertheless, their overall functions relate to arriving at shared understanding and enhancing communication, since ELF speakers accommodate their speech in order to promote mutual understanding or to enhance communication. While understanding is a prerequisite in any kinds of communication, how that communication is managed and developed largely depends on the nature and purpose of the communication context. CSs may take different forms and serve multiple functions depending on “the context, communication goals, and resources available to them” (Seidlhofer, 2011, cited in Kaur, 2019, p.2). In the next chapter, I will take a closer look at the specific strategies that serve the functions of promoting understanding and enhancing communication in the literature and identify the gaps in research on ELF pragmatics addressed by this study.

## Chapter 3: Strategies for effective communication in English as a lingua franca

### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed how research on ELF and ELF pragmatics has made significant contributions to the study of spoken communication in English among speakers from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds. Although findings from these studies on ELF have been drawn from different domains and contexts with different focuses, they nevertheless share a focus on the way in which ELF speakers overcome communication challenges and achieve communication goals. Chapter 2 also reviewed and discussed three main themes in CSs in the ELF pragmatics literature: understanding, accommodation, and collaborative interactional pragmatics moves. These studies have shown that ELF speakers use different kinds of CSs to pre-empt or resolve understanding problems, to accommodate one's own speech, or to support each other in their meaning-making process and facilitate interaction. The literature suggests that the overall functions of CSs are to: 1) arrive at mutual understanding; and 2) enhance communication. These functions, however, are not completely discrete, as a strategy usually serves more than one function in an instance of talk. A CS that facilitates understanding may also sometimes play a supporting role in enhancing interaction, and so on. These two categories of CSs are examined in detail in Section 3.2 and Section 3.3 respectively. Section 3.4 summarizes these CSs. Section 3.5 discusses the identification of some gaps in the research literature on CSs in ELF.

### 3.2 Strategies to arrive at shared understanding

According to Mauranen (2006b), achieving mutual understanding in ELF communication requires special effort. This section reviews a group of strategies, identified in this study (see Chapter 5) and widely observed in the literature, for when ELF speakers want to

construct or negotiate understanding. These are repetition, paraphrase, repair, questioning strategies, code-switching, and non-verbal resources.

### 3.2.1 Repetition

Repetition is a strategic behaviour and linguistic phenomenon in all kinds of spoken communication. According to Mauranen (2012), repetition is basically understood as saying an utterance twice or more in the course of conversation. Repeating behaviour is commonly considered to signal lack of fluency, problems that need solving or avoidance of communication (Skehan, 2009). However, from an ELF perspective, repetition is considered a “multifaceted phenomenon” (Cogo, 2009, p.260) and “a vital constituent of an ELF talk” (Lichtkoppler, 2007, p.59), serving different strategic functions in interaction. According to Kaur (2012), repetition “has been identified as a widely used multifunctional procedure” and “has been shown to play a crucial role both in pre-empting and resolving understanding problems” (p.593). This strategy is also helpful in maintaining the flow of conversation (Tannen, 2007). In general, repetition is seen as consisting of two types, self-repetition and other-repetition, by several scholars (Björkman, 2011, 2013, 2014; Cogo, 2009; Kaur, 2009, 2010, 2011b; Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Maraunen, 2007), depending on who does the action of repetition in the interaction. Self-repetition, which is understood as repeating what one says, is used to pre-empt any possible misunderstanding (Kaur, 2009, 2010, 2012; Mauranen, 2007), to explicitly enhance intelligibility (Björkman, 2011, 2013, 2014; Kaur, 2009, 2010, 2011b; Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Maraunen, 2006b, 2007, 2012; Watterson, 2008), or “peers’ understanding” as Björkman (2014, p.130) put it, to gain more thinking time (Kaur, 2009; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Mauranen, 2007), or to promote solidarity in interaction (Cogo, 2009; Lichtkoppler, 2007).

Lichtkoppler's (2007) exploration of the forms and functions of repetition in ELF talk has made an important contribution. She identified the forms taken by the phenomenon, that is, "exact repetition", "repetition with variation", and "paraphrasing", time (immediate or delayed), and participant (self- repetition or other- repetition). She identified the micro functions of repetition: gaining time, utterance development, providing prominence, ensuring accuracy, showing active listening, and cohesion. While Mauranen (2006b) highlighted the role of repetition in helping to express misunderstanding, Mauranen (2012) reported several different functions. These latter were to give the speaker time to think in the course of interaction and to search for content, to negotiate, to give linguistic support, and to affiliate an interaction.

Other- repetition can be also employed for various purposes. Other- repetition can be used to signal a hearing or non-understanding problem, to check comprehension or show active listening (Björkman, 2014; Kaur, 2009; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Mauranen, 2006b), and to confirm accuracy or express agreement and cooperativeness (Björkman, 2011; Cogo, 2009; Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Lichtkoppler, 2007). In the extract below from Björkman (2014), the segments of talk, "*higher surface area per volume*" and "*increase the temperature*", are repeated by S1, not because of his disfluency but to promote the understanding of this important piece of talk among his group members.

Extract 3.1:

1     <S1>he said er **higher surface area per volume** er er er  
2     lets **you increase the temperature** it he said, er er er  
3     higher surface area per volume will er mean that you can  
4     **increase the temperature**</S1>  
5     <S3> yeah (but) it's er higher er surface area per  
6     volume is we have smaller droplets when you have a  
7     better mixing you have higher</S3>  
8     <S2>yeah</S2>  
9     <S1>you can **increase the temperature**</S1>  
(Björkman, 2014, p.130)



In general, repetition has been shown to be a useful tool for negotiating and co-constructing mutual understanding and facilitating interaction in an explicit and accommodative way. In this study, I follow Lichtkoppler (2007) and several previous researchers in distinguishing self- repetition from other- repetition. However, I do not consider “paraphrasing” to be a subtype of repetition, as it involves considerable rewording requiring special effort by the speakers. Paraphrasing will therefore be discussed separately in the next section.

### 3.2.2 Paraphrasing

As discussed in Chapter 2, paraphrasing is considered one of the most important CSs in SLA (Chiang & Mi, 2011). It is generally a way of clarifying or rewording a preceding utterance in a conversation in order to solve a communication breakdown or to pre-empt “potential problems of understanding’ (Kaur, 2009, p.110), in order to enhance comprehension and clarity of talk (Mauranen, 2007, 2012, Kaur, 2011b). According to Mauranen (2007),

a typical motivation behind rephrasing seems to be the desire to improve clarity. For this, the original meaning is to be retained, and the form changed so as to improve the chances that at least one of the reformulations will get through to the hearer. This is common tactics in pedagogy, and it appears to be frequent in ELF discourse. (p.252)

This strategy is widely used in ELF to both negotiate meaning and accommodate differences among speakers. Undoubtedly, paraphrasing is linked to repair (Mauranen, 2006b) and has been considered as a sub-category of repetition by Lichtkoppler (2007), and sometimes these two strategies overlap. Paraphrasing is closely related to repetition of an idea but using different words or expressions. However, more recent studies (Björkman, 2014; Kaur, 2010; Kirkpatrick, 2010b) propose a broader understanding of paraphrasing as rephrasing

or reformulation. Kirkpatrick (2010b) proposes two sub-types: “participant paraphrase” and “speaker paraphrase” (p135-136). In his study, “speaker paraphrase” is understood as rewording one’s own speech, while “participant paraphrase” refers to the job of reformulating speech made by a previous speaker for a third person in the interaction. Björkman (2014) proposes a closely related strategy to self-paraphrasing, which is simplification.

Like repetition, paraphrasing can be grouped into self-paraphrasing or self-reformulation and other-paraphrasing or other-reformulation (Chang & Mi, 2011). It refers to the way an original idea or thought by the same speaker (self-paraphrasing) or another speaker (other-paraphrasing) is expressed in a modified way which allows the speakers to get their message across (Mauranen, 2007) in order to promote better understanding.

The following extract from Kaur (2010) gives an example of how self-paraphrasing is used to promote understanding in talk among students who are ELF speakers at an academic setting in Malaysia.

Extract 3.2:

1     A: what was your:: view er: on living in Malaysia . . .  
 2     (1.1) prior to your arrival and how. . . (0.9) has that  
 3     changed since you arrived?  
 4     → . . . (1.4) meaning that you would have some kind of  
 5     idea about Malaysia . . . (0.8) before: coming here . . .  
 6     (0.9) and then after coming how: how is that different  
 7     from your: . . . (0.6) earlier perception?  
 8     D: erm first thing I’ve . . . (0.8) the first thing that  
 9     I::: °rea° realize that I think Malaysia is er:: . . .  
 10    (3.2) more heterogeneous people that’s [mean from]: er .  
 11    . . (0.9) er-  
 12    A: [okay okay]

(Kaur, 2010, p.199)

In this segment, A makes a great deal of effort to self-reformulate the question he poses to D, which is “*what was your:: view er: on living in Malaysia*” (line 1), in order to further clarify his question (lines 2-7). This strategic behaviour by A helps him to simplify his question, and

as a result, A understands and gives his answer. In this situation, self-paraphrasing is used to “restore shared understanding” after a “lack of uptake on the part of the recipient” (p.199). Chiang and Mi (2011) also suggest that self-formulation in their data is used when there is a lack of a timely response, an adequate verbal response, or a required answer to a question.

Distinctive markers often accompany self-paraphrasing. Those identified in Mauranen (2007) are: *mean, namely, other words, trying to say, that is to say, meant, and rephrase* (p.248).

According to Chiang and Mi (2011), other-paraphrasing has different functions. They identify these as requesting clarification, verifying one’s own comprehension, and ensuring one’s own perception of the preceding utterance made by the previous interlocutor.

In the present study, the strategic behaviours of clarifying, summarizing, simplifying, explaining, expanding or restructuring the speech of a speaker or his/her interlocutor are discussed as paraphrasing, formulation, or rephrasing interchangeably.

The next section will deal with repair, a phenomenon related to repetition and paraphrasing.

### 3.2.3 Repair

Repair is widely considered as a strategy used explicitly to put something into the conversation right when it looks as if it may be going wrong. It is used very frequently in communication in general when speakers see potential problems in their hearing, speaking and understanding of the conversations and want to deal with these (Kaur, 2011b; Mauranen, 2006b; Schegloff, 1990; Schegloff et al., 1977). Repair has been further categorized into self-repair and other-repair depending on whether the repair is made by the self or another. Self-repair appears to have been discussed more widely than other-

repair, the latter which is rare in ELF data. It is worth noting that repair may be employed in the absence of errors or mistakes in an ongoing turn or previous turn to pre-empt any possible problems (Kaur, 2009, 2011b; Mauranen, 2006b). The use of repair helps to promote understanding (Wagner & Garden, 2004) and to enhance the clarity and comprehensibility of an utterance, thereby contributing to the achievement of communication goals (Mauranen, 2007). Repair can be used by the ongoing speaker or by the recipient of an utterance. Self-repair is considered a proactive strategy and has been widely reported (Kaur, 2011b; Mauranen, 2006b) to be helpful in enabling ELF speakers to self-correct linguistic or factual detail and promote the explicitness and comprehension of the conversation.

Mauranen (2006b) sees this strategy as the self-modification of one's own utterance in a pro-active way. In her study, repair was used as a proactive strategy to prevent misunderstanding and secure comprehension. Kaur (2011b) who highlights the use of self-repair to make a point more explicit also supports these findings. Kaur (2011b) reports two functions of self-repair in ELF in communication, namely "*righting the wrong*" (p.2707) and "*raising explicitness and enhancing clarity*" (p.2709). These can be found in the three examples below from her study.

Extract 3.3:

S: yes for-for you know for infrastructure also building something you know **cemong- er cement** and you know . . . (0.8) steel

Extract 3.4:

A: so what about- eh you have any:: for example like us we have identi-identification card . . . (0.8) you guys have identifision-identification? =

Extract 3.5:

L: okay let- let me chick- check the article huh?  
Kaur (2011b, p.2707)

In these situations, participants self-correct their phonological problems by replacing the wrongly pronounced words with correct ones before moving on with their speech. This is in line with the suggestion by Cogo and House (2018) that the use of self-repair indicates speakers' "awareness of potential miscommunication" (p.214). While self-repair is a well-researched phenomenon in ELF studies, instances of other-repair appear to be rare (Wagner & Garden, 2004) and are considered controversial in the literature. Firth (1996) investigated ELF interactions among NNSs and NSs of English in a workplace and found that, instead of attempting to correct or reformulate others' errors, NSs let unclear words or utterances pass and treated non-standard language use as normal, as they attached more importance to building a common ground and the content of talk rather than linguistic aspects. However, unlike Firth (1996), Tsuchiya and Handford (2014), who look at ELF communication in a professional meeting, identify numerous instances of other-repair (23 occurrences) made by the four participants, most often by the chair of the meeting. This can be due to the difference in power relationship between participants in these studies. Hynninen (2011) also identified repair which was used collaboratively in her data. However, the repair was used by the third person in the talk when this person stepped in to paraphrase a problematic speech to promote understanding. This behaviour is similar to what Kirkpatrick (2010b) called participant paraphrase.

Apart from resaying, modifying, or correcting one's own or others' utterances in order to negotiate meaning, ELF speakers often resort to more explicit ways of requesting clarification or confirmation, or checking comprehension. These may be in form of overt questions, statements with rising intonation, or minimal queries.

### 3.2.4 Questioning strategies

Strategies in form of a question have been widely discussed in ELF research under different names, types and forms: repetition request, clarification request (Kirkpatrick, 2010b), specific and questions (Mauranen, 2006b, p.132); overt questions, and comprehension checks (Björkman, 2014); requests for confirmation of understanding, and requests for clarification (Kaur, 2010); repair requests (Matsumoto, 2011); asking for help, and asking for clarification (Deterding, 2013); repetition with interrogatory intonation (Cogo & Pitzl, 2016); minimal queries (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Cogo & Pitzl, 2016) or minimal comprehension signals (Mauranen, 2006b); and direct clarification requests (Pietikäinen, 2016).

Different authors consider questioning strategies under different headings. For example, such strategies are discussed in several studies under the functions they serve in communication, namely as comprehension checks, clarification requests, asking for help, repetition requests (Björkman, 2014; Kaur, 2010; Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Matsumoto, 2011; Pietikäinen, 2016), and accuracy checks (Kaur, 2010). They can be also discussed under the form in which they appear, namely, direct/overt questions, repetition with intonation, and minimal queries (Mauranen, 2006b; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Cogo & Pitzl, 2016; Hanamoto, 2016; Kaur, 2010; Matsumoto, 2015; Pietikäinen, 2016). Minimal queries are seen as special types of question. “Explicit minimal queries” (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p.121; Cogo & Pitzl, 2016, p.343) are very short responses functioning as questions for clarification or repair when the speaker has difficulty in hearing or understanding the preceding utterance, and are also discussed in Mauranen (2006b) under the name of “minimal incomprehension signals” (p.132). They take the form of one-word utterances, for example “*huh*”, “*hm*”, “*pardon*”, “*sorry*”, or “*what*” (Cogo & Dewey, 2012) with rising intonation, and are used in a very explicit way when the speaker wants to overcome problems caused by previous

utterances. These minimal signals are usually followed by an effort to repeat or paraphrase to further clarify or elaborate unclear speech previously uttered by the interlocutors (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Cogo & Pitzl, 2016; Kaur, 2009; Mauranten, 2006b).

In some studies, the use of other-repetition or other-paraphrasing with rising intonation, functioning as questions, is found to play an important role in the success of an ELF interaction; however, these instances are usually discussed as repetition or paraphrasing, respectively, rather than as questioning strategies. Regardless of how these strategies are discussed, they share the function of a question. As the present study takes a functional approach to looking at CSs in order to work towards a function-based taxonomy of CSs, I will consider them all together here under the category of questioning strategies. These cover overt questions, Yes/No questions, statements with rising intonation, and minimal queries.

### 3.2.5 Code-switching

Code-switching has been investigated in several ELF studies (Cogo, 2009, 2012; Hynninen, Pietikäinen & Vetchinnikova, 2017; Klimpfinger, 2009; Mauranten, 2012; Pietikäinen, 2014, 2016; Pölzl 2003; Turunen, 2012) and has been found to play multiple functions in the success of ELF communication. These include: searching for a word or appealing for assistance (Klimpfinger, 2009; Pietikäinen, 2014); introducing a new idea (Klimpfinger, 2009); and specifying an addressee in order to involve another person into the conversation (Klimpfinger, 2009; Pietikäinen, 2014). Code switching has also been shown to signal agreement, listenership and engagement in conversation (Cogo, 2009), and solidarity and membership (Cogo, 2009; Pölzl, 2003;). It can facilitate nuanced expression and emphasis (Cogo, 2009; Pietikäinen, 2014), allow for borrowing terminology from other languages

(Mauranen, 2012; Turunen, 2012), and demonstrate language knowledge (Pietikäinen, 2014); and it can show perceived acceptability and intelligibility (Hynninen, et al, 2017).

Cogo (2009) suggests that code switching is a useful strategy in ELF communication because, in a multilingual community, linguistic diversity is appreciated and accepted by speakers. However, these ELF studies have been conducted in Europe where there are possibly greater similarity among the language backgrounds.

As noted in Chapter 2, studies from both SLA and ELF perspectives have tended to focus more on linguistic rather than on extra-linguistic resources in communication. Although non-verbal means clearly play an important role in successful ELF interaction (Hanamoto, 2016; Kaur, 2011a; Matsumoto, 2015; Pietikäinen, 2016), there have been few attempts to investigate how extra-linguistic resources operate in ELF communication. Some non-verbal sources identified in the literature are discussed in the next section.

### 3.2.6 Non-verbal resources

In response to Firth's (2009) and Canagarajah's (2013) recommendations that more attention be paid to non-verbal resources, a small number of recent studies have looked at non-verbal strategies such as laughter, gesturing and material objects in ELF interaction.

#### *Laughter*

Laughter usually expresses a reaction to something humorous. Although laughter is not a well-researched phenomenon in ELF conversations, some studies have provided insights into different roles that laughter plays in ELF interaction (Canagarajah, 2013; Deterding, 2013; Kaur, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Pullin Stark, 2009; Schegloff, 2000). Findings from these studies show that laughter sometimes signals misunderstanding (Deterding, 2013; Kaur, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Pitzl, 2010; Schegloff, 2000), amusement (Deterding, 2013), embarrassment or surprise (Deterding, 2013; Pullin Stark, 2009). It can be used to save face



(Pitzl, 2010). Canagarajah (2013) suggests that ELF speakers sometimes laugh to reduce tension among speakers, soften challenges or disagreements, mitigate assertiveness, or maintain conformity and solidarity. Matsumoto (2015) also shows that laughter is helpful in mitigating face-threats related to explicit repairs and that joint laughter can help to build relationships.

*Embodied or multimodal resources (gesturing or material objects)*

A small number of ELF studies (Birlik & Kaur, 2020; Bjørge, 2010; Hanamoto, 2016; Matsumoto, 2015; Pietikäinen, 2016; Raisanen, 2012) have looked at how non-verbal resources such as gesturing or material objects are helpful in ELF conversations. In Bjørge (2010), head nods serve the function of signalling active listening and understanding. Matsumoto (2015) adopted a multimodal approach to look at strategies to resolve and preempt misunderstanding in the ELF context of EFL writing classrooms at a university in the U.S.A. She finds that multimodal means such as gesture visualizing or concretizing abstract items, or combining verbal speech with information on PowerPoint slides and worksheets, helped students to communicate effectively. Also focusing on understanding issues among ELF speakers, albeit in daily casual talk in the United Kingdom, Norway and Finland, Pietikäinen (2016) finds that international couples used extra-linguistic means, such as pointing, showing, drawing, acting, deixis and onomatopoeia, to help mitigate understanding problems. Investigating how speakers of lower English proficiency use CSs to resolve understanding problems, Hanamoto (2016) finds that minimal responses and gestures are useful in maintaining the flow of conversation. In Raisanen (2012), non-verbal resources such as gestures, gaze, body postures and artefacts are used to achieve mutual understanding in the interaction between a Finish engineer and his manager in their international company based in China. Birlik and Kaur (2020) is the most recent study

focusing on non-verbal resources in business ELF. They find that head nodding, hand pointing, eye contact and gaze are helpful in contextualizing or promoting verbal interaction, enhancing clarity and understanding in informal internal business meetings in a German organization based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

In sum, the strategies discussed above have been considered useful in helping ELF speakers to better convey ideas to interlocutors and to ask for clarification or confirmation when they have problems with understanding or expressing ideas. They therefore play a crucial role in securing understanding and negotiating meaning.

Understanding is an important goal of communication of any kind; however, it is not the only goal of interaction. In reality, ELF speakers need to enhance their communication for several other purposes which are context-dependent. In ELF communication, especially in high-stake situations, apart from arriving at mutual understanding, ELF speakers also need to support each other in their meaning-making process and work towards their common goals together. Thus, for example, in a 30-minute academic discussion in a university, students may need to work towards a group oral presentation for the next class meeting. Addition of collaborative or goal-oriented strategies, which build solidarity, promote support and discussion, and help to manage discourse, can help ELF speakers to achieve their goals. Section 3.3 will review these types of strategies.

### 3.3 Strategies to enhance communication

As discussed in Chapter 2, with the exception of Firth (1996) and House (1999), whose studies “gave contradictory results concerning the use of interactional behaviour, such as simultaneous talk, backchannels and utterance completions” (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p.138), more recent research in ELF pragmatics focusing on naturally occurring conversations has found that ELF speakers make interactional pragmatic moves to promote the processing of

meaning making, smooth the interaction, and manage the discourse. This section will discuss the literature on the following collaborative and goal-oriented strategies: backchannels, utterance completion, and discourse management strategies.

### 3.3.1 Backchannels

In conversations of any kind, an interlocutor may sometimes use some interactional moves to show that they are attentive or interested in what an interlocutor is saying without competing for a turn (Bjørge, 2010; Wolfartsberger, 2009). One way of doing this is to use backchannels or “signals (verbal and non-verbal) used to indicate to the primary speaker that he/she can continue talking or that the interlocutor is actively listening and interested in what is being said” (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p. 139). Several ELF studies have shown that they play multiple functions in a conversation: to express acknowledgement, encouragement, attention, support or agreement (Björkman, 2011, 2013; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Mauranten, 2016; Stenström, 1994; Wolfartsberger, 2009); to elicit more talk from the speaker (Kalocsai, 2009, 2011); to show engagement and listenership (Cogo & Dewey, 2012); to promote mutual comprehension of the discussion topic (Bjørge, 2010); and to maintain the smooth flow of the interaction (Cogo & Dewey, 2012). Like any other CSs, a backchannel may serve more than one purpose at the same time. Widely identified short verbal responses include *yeah*, *okay*, *mh*, *good*, *uh huh*, *oh* and *really*. Doubled backchannels (e.g. *yeah yeah*) and supportive laughter are also common. Backchannels can also be lexical such as *yeah*, *okay*, *ok*, *sure*, *absolutely* and *definitely* or non-lexical such as *uh huh*, *mh* and *uh* (Bjørge, 2010).

In Cogo and Dewey (2012), backchannels are discussed in relation to the feature of “overlap” under the broad umbrella of simultaneous talk. Another related strategy, which

has a very high level of cooperation and supportiveness, is utterance completion. This strategy is discussed in the next section.

### 3.3.2 Utterance completion

Utterance completions (UC) is an interactional element or a prominent feature in some studies on ELF communication. In general, it is employed by the recipient of talk when he/she wishes to offer an immediate completion of the prior utterance by another speaker. According to Cogo and Dewey (2012), UC constitutes “the work of a second speaker on a prior speaker’s talk, displayed through the use of a syntactic continuation of the previous utterance” (p.150). This communicative strategy or pragmatic phenomenon was initially discussed in Sacks (1992) and has been treated in studies under various names: “collaborative built sentences” (Sack, 1992), “collaborative production” (Szczepek, 2000), “sentence-in-progress” (Lerner 1991), “join production” or “collaborative cognitive completion” (Leudar & Antaki, 1988), “collaborative completion” (Lerner, 1991, 1996), or “joint construction of turns” (Coates, 1994)” (cited in Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p.150-151).

A few ELF studies have examined this strategic phenomenon under various labels including “collaborative utterance building” (Kalocsai, 2011), “utterance completion” (Cogo & Dewey, 2012), “co-creating the messages/ anticipation” (Björkman, 2014), and “co-construction of utterances” (Cogo & House, 2018). Kirkpatrick (2010b) identifies similar collaborative strategies in ASEAN ELF data, which are similar to utterance completion such as *lexical anticipation*, *lexical suggestion* or *lexical correction*. These phenomena are later described by Cogo and Dewey (2012) as strategies used in response to “*word-search moments*”. Björkman (2014), investigating ELF interaction in an academic setting, also includes *co-construction of an utterance* in a category, “other-initiated strategies” (p.129), in the framework she proposes.

The relative paucity of studies on UC in ELF makes it difficult to generalize how this strategy operates in ELF communication in different contexts and domains. UC is widely understood as a technique used jointly to co-construct and coordinate an incomplete thought in the preceding utterance or in the incoming talk. The use of UC indicates a high level of cooperation and accommodation, which is often considered characteristic of ELF communication. The findings of the few studies that illustrate the use of UC show that it is used when speakers monitor the preceding utterance and co-construct that utterance without necessarily competing for the turn. This technique helps to maintain the flow of the conversation and supports other speakers in finding the right terms or expressions for completing their thought, and therefore contributes to the success of the communication tasks. Thus, UC in ELF communication should be considered a turn-sharing rather than turn-intervention move, as it shows “the ability of participants to jointly produce, recognize, and utilize their resources” (Anderson, 2001, p.159). Extract 3.6 from Cogo and Dewey (2012) illustrates how UC operates in ELF interactions.

Extract 3.6:

Italian Landlady (S1: German; S2: Italian)  
1 S1 no it's good now ... the problem was that the  
2 landlady  
3 ... she left a lot of things in the flat ... so we had...  
4 five or six big boxes with ... her things and we  
5 called her and called her and we asked her to to  
6 S2 come and collect  
7 S1 yeah ... and she never ... she never came ...  
(Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p.152)

It is worth pointing out that backchannels and UC are sometimes used in an overlapping or latching manner. Cogo and Dewey (2012) put them both under the umbrella of “simultaneous talk”. They suggest that “backchannels tend to overlap with the previous turn or to be latched onto it, in an almost immediate subsequent turn without pause”, so that “it is difficult to separate backchannels from general features of overlapping speech”

(p.142). In their study, overlaps are put under the umbrella of simultaneous talk, a phenomenon in which the ongoing speaker and the interlocutors speak at the same time over a short course of interaction. From a traditional CA perspective, such a behaviour violates the turn-taking rule under which one speaker is expected to speak at a time. However, according to Cogo and Dewey (2012) “simultaneous talk is frequent and widespread, and research across culturally diverse contexts has confirmed that it is quite common both within and between turns” (p.142). As suggested from their study, simultaneous talk can be either cooperative (without any intention to take the floor) or competitive (with an intention to take the floor). However, “competitive overlaps are not necessarily uncooperative or problematic. Taking over the floor may indicate a desire to engage in the conversation, to contribute something to the exchange or clarify something immediately before it could lead to misunderstanding” (p.143). Cogo and Dewey (2012) classified simultaneous talk into “backchannels as short response overlaps” (those backchannels uttered in an overlapping speech) (p.143) and “completion overlaps” (those backchannels uttered in an overlapping completion to the previous speech) (p.147). As overlap can occur with the use of all kinds of strategies and can be an accidental phenomenon, it is treated in the present study as a feature typical of ELF talk rather than as a strategy per se.

The cooperativeness and supportiveness of ELF communication is evident not only at the level of “meaning” negotiation or support via speakers’ moves in providing backchannels or offering an utterance completion, but also at the “discourse” level when the purpose of an ELF interaction goes beyond mutual understanding to the achievement of particular goals. These are discussed in sections 3.3.3.

### 3.3.3 Strategies to manage discourse

Making discourse explicit is important in ELF interactions (House, 2014; Maranen, 2006c; Mauranen, 2007, 2010, 2012) in order to promote the explicitness, clarity in discourse and the ability to negotiate and change topic, which is an important component of pragmatic fluency (House, 2002).

Mauranen (2007) considers “negotiating topic” or “topic negotiation” as a strategy to highlight a topic change, usually through the use of a noun phrase and a subsequent co-referential subject pronoun. A typical example can be seen in Extract 3.7.

Extract 3.7:

But people, peasants, they fought for the Swedish king for  
(Mauranen, 2007, p.254)

This is “a way of highlighting or foregrounding the topic”, and its central role is “to ensure that interlocutors have the same topic in mind before going on” (Mauranen, 2007, p.253). In other words, strategies to negotiate the topic enable the speaker to direct the listener to the topic before moving on, so that both are on the same page.

Focusing on misunderstanding issues in academic ELF communication (The ACE, Brunei component), Deterding (2013) identifies two topic-related strategies, “changing the topic” (p.152) and “topic fronting” (p.157). He argues that the former is “the last-resort strategy which speakers rarely adopt” and is “motivated by the inability to understand something” (p.153) in order to avoid non-understanding; while the latter “serves to enhance the intelligibility of their speech” (p.157). Examples can be seen in below where the highlighted words (me, religion, the LAW, English) are prominently fronted at the beginning of the utterances in order to avoid misunderstanding.

Recording	Speaker	Example
Ch+Br:1984	FBr	but as for <b>me</b> it's (.) I find it too dramatic
Hk+Tw:726	MHk	<b>religion</b> (.) people some people need that you know
Hk+Tw:1668	MHk	and <b>the LAW</b> (.) the other you know is you know
In+Ma:557	MIn	and <b>english</b> oh this is the language of er the dutch
n+Ma:561	MIn	and <b>malay</b> no we don't use that

Deterding (2013, p.158)

In these two studies, the topic management strategies discussed are related largely to pronoun usage at sentence level. However, Kirkpatrick (2010b) focuses on more explicit attempts to change topic, as in *"now we can change our topic to ..."* (line 1-2) and *"I want to talk er something private"* (line 1-3) in Extract 3.8, or *"shall we go shall we move on to another topic?"* (line 9) in Extract 3.9. According to Kirkpatrick (2010b), "the use of this strategy demonstrates participants' understanding that being explicit is a useful communicative strategy in ELF discourse" (p.135).

Extract 3.8:

1 L2: now we can change our topic to talk about  
2 I think about  
3 F2: I want to talk er something private  
4 (laughter) (L2: yeah yeah) er Steven could it be  
5 My2: er [sorry  
6 L2: something] private  
7 F2: I would like to ask from you something private  
8 My2: like what  
9 F2: like personal  
10 My2: personal  
11 F2: are you are you married or  
12 My2: no I'm not married

Extract 3.9:

1 S1: eh huh ok ... so that means the lessons were  
2 conducted in [English  
3 Mn1: yes] yes  
4 S1: OK it wasn't in your own dialect  
5 Mn1: no {S1: eh hm} so er after my education and  
6 self study is the most important to get {S1: eh hm}  
7 or to study ehm other languages {S1: eh hm} I think  
8 so {L1: laugh} do you think so (...) yeah {S1: eh hm}



9 shall we go shall we move on to another topic?  
10 S1: yeah OK  
(Kirkpatrick, 2010b, p.135)

In all, these studies provide insight into how speakers promote explicitness and clarity in talk, and how to control or change topic within their own speech in order to orient the listener to be aware of the discourse. However, little is known about how ELF speakers use strategies to manage discourse towards a common communication goal in high-stakes interactions such as academic group discussions. In such discussions, the success of the communication depends on more than mutual comprehension or smooth interaction. Rather, there is an additional focus on how the task is done and whether there is additional information, whether and how topics are subtopics in the discussion task are covered.

I have so far discussed CSs under the headings of the two main functions in the literature: to arrive at mutual understanding, and to enhance communication. The next section will briefly summarize the CSs I have discussed so far.

### 3.4 A summary of CSs in ELF pragmatics studies

Studies on ELF pragmatics research have looked at a wide range of strategies that ELF speakers use to achieve their communication goals. As discussed in Chapter 2, from an ELF perspective, CSs are not conceptualized as problem-oriented as in the SLA paradigm. Nevertheless, “compensation strategies” in SLA research on CSs such as repetition, paraphrase, repair and code switching are still found in ELF research. ELF speakers do use strategies to overcome the communication problems they encounter. However, the functions of these strategies go beyond simply repairing communication breakdowns; rather, they can also play a more active role in pre-empting potential problems or co-constructing meaning in order to arrive at mutual intelligibility and comprehension. Another group of strategies, which are more typical of ELF interaction, namely backchannels, utterance completion or discourse management strategies, are

collaboratively deployed by ELF speakers to support one another in negotiating meaning, ensuring a smooth interaction, and to solve their communication goals. Such a classification into two main macro functions is based on the overriding functions of strategies in the success of ELF communication; but they are not completely discrete. It is because some CSs in Section 3.2, such as repetition, paraphrasing or questions, can, in several instances, serve the purpose of supporting the meaning-making process, showing agreement or interest, etc. which, thus in one sense, seem to be of the group 2 type (in Section 3.3).

In Chapter 2 and 3, I have reviewed the literature on CSs including how ELF has been conceptualized, how research in the field has developed, the focus on ELF pragmatics, and how different CSs have been discussed in the literature. However, some important gaps in our understanding remain, which I discuss next.

### 3.5 Gaps in research on CSs in ELF communication

While there have been significant advances in our understanding of CSs in ELF, some gaps remain related to contexts, domains, methodological approach, the CSs frameworks so far proposed, and how they might be used to inform teaching.

To date, most research on spoken ELF has been conducted in Europe, where the concept took root, and recently in East Asia. ELF is widely accepted as context-dependent and thus likely to reflect differences in region and domains. However, little is known about ELF communication in other parts of the world outside Europe and East Asia. Higher education has been one of the domains where ELF has been researched. Nevertheless, the communication contexts in existing studies have looked at how students interact with peers and with lecturers in their classroom environments in naturally occurring lectures, seminars, group work, etc. or have involved free talk or simulation, where participants had little invested in the talk. There has been little attention to how students as English

language users (not learners) use CSs in various academic activities in other contexts. In reality, students' academic activities are not restricted to formal lectures, workshops, thesis defence, supervision meetings, etc., but frequently take the form of informal group discussions for clearly defined academic purposes relevant to the unit they are taking. These types of informal academic, goal-oriented, out-of-class interactions have been little studied; and yet they constitute an important part of a student' interactional academic life. Dippold (2014) also suggests that "studies on classroom interaction need to systematically explore classroom practices in different subject areas and educational environments in which English is used as the language of communication. This will further our understanding of different norms of classroom interaction and inform the teaching of EAP." (p.402). There is therefore a need for further investigation into this aspect and in high-stakes and goal-oriented communication contexts in different geographical settings worldwide, in line with Seidlhofer's (2011) call for more research describing generalizable patterns of ELF pragmatics.

As far as methodology is concerned, previous research on CSs use in SLA has employed several data collection methods including interviews and written questionnaires, observation, verbal report, blogging, recollective studies, and user tracking. Of these, questionnaire surveys have been the most widely used. According to Gao (2004), research on CSs has been over-dependent on the use of self-report questionnaire and this may have contributed to the distortion of individual learners' actual communication in different contexts. Thus, there has been a move towards multiple data collection techniques and the use of qualitative approaches. Although surveys, observations and interviews are widely used and well-established in research on CSs, data from these instruments are insufficiently informative about participants' actual strategy use in authentic situations (Cohen, 2014).

In addition, while retrospective interviews or stimulated recall protocols are helpful in eliciting participants' views on or memories of their use of CSs in communication, they have been little employed in published research on CS use (Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2016, p.496).

Conversation analysis (CA), with its focuses on turn-taking and the sequential organization of talk and how speakers construct and accomplish understanding in interaction (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998) has been widely used to analyse talk-in interaction in a variety of settings. It is particularly suitable for investigating ELF communication (Björkman, 2014; Kaur, 2009) where the focus has been on interactional moves of ELF speakers in negotiating meaning and enhancing effective communication. Initiated by sociologists (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977), the central aim of CA is to facilitate the description of sociolinguistic interactions (Heritage & Atkinson, 1984). As Burch (2014) argues, CA "can provide a useful methodological toolkit for exploring communication strategies from an interactional perspective focusing on L2 users' competence and communicative success rather than deficiency." (p.651).

However, the reliance solely on CA techniques for data analysis has been criticized for overlooking the role of the interactional context, as "CA tries to explain *how* the interactants understand each other and *how* the interaction unfolds, but they do not deal with the *why* question" (Cogo & Dewey 2012, p.31). The triangulation of data, although standard in other fields, has been little used in ELF research. Only a very small number of studies on ELF communication so far (Cogo, 2009; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; House, 2009, 2014b; Matsumoto, 2015; Watterson, 2008) have made efforts in triangulating the data with participant engagement via informal interviews. This has led to calls to combine CA with other methodological approaches and for the addition of evidence from participants'

reflections on their processes of meaning-making by several researchers in the field (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Mauranen, 2006b; Seidlhofer, 2011).

Cogo and Dewey (2012) advocate “making use of CA tools and techniques, but combining these with a much more ethnographic perspective, which allows for more emic accounts of the communicative and cultural contexts as would be provided by the participants and the participants/ researchers themselves” (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p.34). Mauranen (2006b) also highlights the need to focus on more than simply the analysis of problems. The use of CSs is both a linguistic and socio-cultural phenomenon, shaped by both the linguistic and social repertoire of the speakers and the contexts of communication. According to Seidlhofer (2011), the investigation of pragmatic phenomena is more complex than the investigation of pure linguistic form, and she appealed for more qualitative studies examining different patterns of ELF pragmatics which can be generalizable.

A few ELF studies so far have been motivated by the desire to include pedagogical implications for the instruction of spoken English (Dewey, 2012; Taghuchi & Ishihana, 2018), perhaps because they have not been investigated from an applied perspective. The dynamic nature of ELF suggests that pragmatic competence is understood as “the ability to negotiate meaning in a flexible, adaptive manner and to co-construct a communicative act”, and this constitutes a move away from “the relationship among form, function, and context of use fixed and stable out of context” (Taghuchi & Ishihana, 2018, p.82). This shift implies that learners need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to use CSs for effective communication, rather than simply being given a list of forms that might be useful. An ELF-oriented pedagogy would therefore focus on functions rather than forms; and this requires an empirical research on CSs that takes a functional perspective in order

to have a comprehensive, function-based framework of CSs that can inform pedagogical implications for the teaching of spoken English.

CSs have been investigated from the perspectives of two strands of thought: SLA and ELF both have contributed to our understanding of how they work in communication. While CS studies from an SLA perspective have proposed several definitions and taxonomies, in ELF studies there have been relatively few attempts to conceptualize CSs and provide similar frameworks. Most of the latter focus on a particular ELF pragmatic strategy or phenomenon, or on a small number of CSs and the various functions they play in interactions. The range of CSs and their functions reported in ELF literature is limited, so that they furnish only a limited range of insights into what kinds of CS instruction might help to raise awareness among EFL students to improve their pragmatic and strategic competence.

Two bodies of ELF work, Kirkpatrick (2010b) and Björkman (2014), provide taxonomies covering a wide range of CSs. Björkman (2014) uses the term ‘communicative strategies framework’, while Kirkpatrick (2010b) provides what he calls a ‘list of communicative strategies’. The CSs in these two studies are presented in Table 3.1.

*Table 3.1: CSs in Kirkpatrick’s (2010b) and Björkman’s (2014)*

<b>Kirkpatrick’s (2010b) list of communicative strategies</b> (p.141)	
<b>Listener strategies</b> Lexical anticipation Lexical suggestion Lexical correction Don’t give up Request repetition Request clarification Let it pass Listen to the message Participant paraphrase Participant prompt	<b>Speaker strategies</b> Spell out the word Repeat the phrase Be explicit Paraphrase Avoid local/ idiomatic referents

Björkman's (2014) communicative strategies framework (p.129)	
<u>Self-initiated CSs</u> <b>Explicitness strategies</b> Repetition Simplification Signalling importance Paraphrasing <b>Comprehension check</b> <b>Word replacement</b>	<u>Other-initiated CSs</u> <b>Confirmation checks</b> Paraphrasing Repetition Overt question <b>Clarification requests</b> Questions or question repeats (Dornyei and Scott, 1997:16) <b>Co-creation of the message/ anticipation</b> (in Kirkpatrick, 2007) <b>Word replacement</b>

These two selections of CSs are quite comprehensive and helpful in describing the dynamic and collaborative interaction of CSs in two different contexts, Björkman's (2014) in an academic setting of a European university, and Kirkpatrick's (2010b) in a professional setting in the ASEAN region. They also move away from the largely problem-based orientation in the use of CSs found in SLA approaches. However, as these frameworks do not fully tease out specific communication goals that they need to achieve and how these can be achieved when engaging in ELF interaction, they might not easily be translated into instruction opportunities or awareness raising in teaching spoken English.

Björkman's (2014) taxonomy of CSs in ELF communication results from a qualitative analysis of CSs used in 15 naturally occurring group work discussions among international students at a technical university in Sweden. The framework is classified into self-initiated and other-initiated CSs categories. Self-initiated CSs are further categorized into explicit strategies - which include repetition, simplification and signalling importance, paraphrasing, comprehension check, and word replacement. Other-initiated strategies consist of confirmation checks, which include paraphrasing, repetition, and overt question; clarification requests; questions or questions repeats, and co-creation of message/ anticipation; and word replacement. Although the data Björkman (2014) drew on were from high-stakes authentic group discussions among international students who were communicating to solve a task, the European university context and the cohort of a

majority of highly proficient Scandinavian students makes her contexts very different from those in ELF academic contexts in Australia, where the students are largely Asian and with many having poorly developed spoken skills in English despite meeting written entry requirements.

Many of Björkman's (2014) participants were multilingual, who, according to Kirkpatrick (2010b), were "likely to good at cross-cultural communication" and were therefore "used to ELF communication" and thus "represent valuable linguistic and communicative classroom model" (p.139). In addition, while her framework takes into account the "user" of the CSs (self- or other-) and their functions in the interactions, there is something of an overlap in the way the CSs are classified, and they are not treated in an entirely functional way. Thus, whereas simplification is distinguished from paraphrasing under the category of "explicitness strategies", in reality simplification is itself one type of paraphrasing. Word placement, which is considered a macro strategy in the taxonomy, can often be found in paraphrasing in reality. While the majority of strategies in the framework purport to be organized according to their functions (macro strategies) - namely explicitness strategies, comprehension checks, and word replacement, it is not clear which are the macro functions that word replacement, co-creation of the message/anticipation and word replacement each serve in interaction. In addition, they are highlighted in bold in the framework as paralleling other macro functions, but they are indeed strategies. The framework is not able to provide a clear guidance for how we can help students to achieve a particular communication purpose, as some questions may arise; for example, why do speakers need to enhance explicitness, check comprehension or replace a word in their interaction. A more clearly function-based CSs framework would be more helpful for pedagogical translation into a relevant, ELF-oriented pedagogy.



Kirkpatrick (2010b), who looks at how English teachers from 10 ASEAN countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) use CSs in their group discussions, identifies a selection of CSs. The discussion topic is the teaching situation and teaching environments in their home countries. The study proposes a list of CSs, organized under two subcategories: speaker strategies, and listener strategies. The former comprises: *spell out the word*, *repeat the phrase*, *be explicit*, *paraphrase* and *avoid local/idiomatic referents*. The other comprises *lexical anticipation*, *lexical suggestion*, *lexical correction*, *do not give up*, *request repetition*, *request clarification*, *let it pass*, *listen to the message*, *participant paraphrase* and *participant prompt*. While this framework suggests implications for the teaching of spoken English in the ASEAN region, in terms of both the participants (English teachers with special English linguistic knowledge and awareness of English use) and the context (“a supportive atmosphere with little crucial at stake” (Kirkpatrick, 2010b, p.126), it needs to be expanded in order to fully describe the reality of strategic behaviours for less sophisticated English users in other ELF speaking contexts. In addition, in real ELF interactions, especially if they are multiple-party, it is very difficult to tell who is a speaker and who is a listener, and the role as a speaker or listener can shift very quickly (Björkman, 2014; Mauranten, 2012); while strategies can be used by different participants regardless of the role they play in the conversation. In addition, strategies such as “*be explicit*”, “*don’t give up*”, or ‘*listen to the message*’ are quite general and thus difficult to identify in analyses or to translate for instructional purposes. It can also be difficult to distinguish strategies such as “*lexical anticipation*” from “*lexical suggestion*”, as the difference among them is very slight. Furthermore, “*lexical correction*” seems to be overlap with the widely researched phenomena of *other-repair*. A functionally organized framework is likely to be more helpful for translation into instructional opportunities rather than lists.

Furthermore, since it not entirely clear what is defined as a CS, and as participants themselves have been rarely consulted, the participants' perspective on what they were trying to achieve is absent. Extra-linguistic resources are absent in these two taxonomies. There has not much attention paid to extra-linguistic recourses such as gesturing and body action in the literature (Birlik & Kaur, 2020; Matsumoto, 2015).

To sum up, studies on CSs in ELF pragmatics have largely been conducted inside European or East Asia contexts, and while most of these studies use naturally-occurring data, not many have focused on authentic tasks in high-stakes communication contexts. We therefore need studies to investigate a wide range of strategies, capable of furnishing a function-based taxonomy that is based on what actually happens in authentic high-stakes ELF communication, and which can serve as a basis for preparing Vietnamese English learners and users with the necessary skills for being successful in an ELF environment. This is in response to Taghuchi and Ishihana's (2018) call for further exploration "concrete strategies through which this principle is translated into instruction, assessment, and teacher preparation in various ELF contexts" (p.95).



## Chapter 4: Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 has discussed the phenomenon of ELF, the development of research in the field in general and in ELF pragmatics in particular, and how CSs have been studied. Chapter 3 has dealt with individual CSs and some of the gaps in the literature addressed by this study. This chapter presents and discusses the methodological approach and design of the study. The research aims and questions are presented in Section 4.2, while Section 4.3 discusses the overall qualitative approach and research design. Sections 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 are on procedures of participant recruitment, data collection and data analysis. This is followed by a discussion on ethical issues in Section 4.7 and the limitations of the study in Section 4.8. Section 4.9 summarizes the chapter.

### 4.2 Research aims and questions

In order to address some of the gaps in CSs research discussed in the previous chapter, this study investigates how VISs use CSs in authentic communication within an academic environment in Australia. An important aim of the study is to propose a function-based taxonomy of CSs which captures their functions in academic ELF communication in a way that can be used to inform the teaching of spoken English to Vietnamese EFL students or students of similar contexts. To do this, the study addresses three research questions (RQs):

*RQ 1: What CSs do VISs use in a goal-oriented ELF academic context?*

*RQ 2: What functions do these CSs serve?*

*RQ 3: How can these CSs best be organized to inform a pedagogy that prepares VISs to communicate effectively in an ELF context?*

An overall qualitative approach with multiple data collection techniques was used to address these three research questions. The next section discusses these.

### 4.3 Overall qualitative approach and design

This section discusses the rationale for the selection of a methodological approach to address these questions, the overall design of the study and the data collection methods used.

#### 4.3.1 Selection of a qualitative approach

The qualitative approach used in this study combines different data collections methods to enable an in-depth investigation into the use of CSs in high-stakes academic discussions. This approach enables the investigation and interpretation of the dynamic and context-dependent interactive behaviours in ELF communication, and of the underlying intentions of ELF users. As outlined in Chapter 3, this study has adopted an interactional view of communication called for by Firth and Wagner (1997) to look at CSs used in talk-in-interaction in order to negotiate meaning and enhance communication in an academic ELF context.

Since the use of CSs to achieve communication goals in academic communication is both pragmatic and strategic (as noted in Chapter 2), their identification and investigation entails the exploration of the functions of the CSs that the VISs used in their academic tasks. In addition, the present study also aims to provide insight into how and why they used them and their perceptions of CSs in academic communication. In an ELF environment, the inclusion of participants' perceptions and opinions on CSs and related phenomena enables the development of a taxonomy that is oriented towards pedagogical application. In addition, employing multiple data collection techniques addresses the methodological limitations of CSs in research to date from both SLA and ELF perspectives as discussed in Chapter 3, and thus enables the research questions to be addressed in a comprehensive way.

The perspective in this study is on strategies that may be useful to a range of speakers in academic discussions in a variety of disciplines and potentially a range of speakers in a variety of high-stakes communication contexts. However, the way in which language is used varies according to context and speakers. An influential way of exploring this variability has been the notion of ‘communities of practice’ (CfP). First introduced and developed by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) as a social theory of learning it has been discussed in relation to ELF first by House (2003) and then in a handful of empirical studies (Alharbi, 2015; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Ehrenreich, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2018; Kalocsai, 2014; House, 2013, 2014; Smith, 2010). Ehrenreich (2018) defines CfP as “a group of people who regularly interact with each other by means of a shared communicative repertoire in order to accomplish a common task” (p.37). Through mutual engagement and the pursuit of shared goals and purposes, CfP members develop a shared repertoire, which involves both linguistic and non-linguistic communicative features.

House (2014b), argues that CfP is a useful way of exploring ELF since speakers share the goal of communicating “efficiently in English as the agreed language of communication without, however, heeding or being constrained by, English native norms” (p.52). Since particular groups of ELF speakers who share a particular common purpose or repertoire may have their own CfP characterised by its own particular features, there can be differences between how particular groups of ELF speakers use ELF and ELF usage more generally. This makes attention to interaction type and context crucial in the study design. Therefore, in this study, a number of different groupings across a range of disciplines are explored. While these may be considered to constitute a CfP in its broadest sense as a community using English to communicate about common tasks to be achieved, they do not

constitute CFP in the narrowest sense of a single community that has developed its own repertoire through repeated on-task interactions involving the same members.

In order to address the research questions comprehensively, video recordings of CS were transcribed using CA principles and complemented by data from stimulated recall interviews and a questionnaire. The research design is described and discussed in detail in the next section.

#### 4.3.2 Overall design

This study design used here addresses some of the gaps in the literature on ELF pragmatics discussed in Chapter 2. Table 4.1 gives an overview of the study design and the three data sources: video recordings of communication activities, follow-up interviews, and a communication questionnaire.

*Table 4.1: The research design*

Research questions	Data collection methods		
	Video recordings of communication activities	Follow-up interviews	Communication questionnaire
1	x	x	
2	x	x	
3	x	x	x

The general principles of CA were applied to analyse group discussions between students in order to provide an in-depth investigation of what was going on in the interaction. Retrospective interviews enabled the probing of participants' views of their strategic behaviours, to understand the underlying functions of each CS used and any relevant contextual insights. Data from these two sources provided an insight into whether, how and why they used strategies to achieve their goals in order to address RQs 1 and 2. To supplement this, the follow-up general interviews and communication questionnaire responses elicited VISs' views on their previous spoken English instruction and communication experiences in English. The answers to RQs 1 and 2 and communication

questionnaire were integrated together to address RQ 3. Thus, the data from these three sources source complemented each another to give a more complete picture of how VISs use CSs in ELF in their academic life in Australia.

Section 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 will describe in detail the process of participant recruitment, data collection instruments and procedures, and approach to the analysis of the data collected from the three sources.

#### 4.4 Participant recruitments and details

VISs were chosen as the focus participants in this study because, as outlined in Chapter 1, the primary aim is to understand how Vietnamese international students might be assisted to improve their communication skills. As the investigation focuses on how VISs used CSs in their academic group discussions in an ELF environment, the participants were recruited in a way that guarantees there was one group member from Vietnamese backgrounds and the other group members from non-Vietnamese backgrounds. Undergraduate or postgraduate course work (rather than research) students, were recruited since these account for the majority of Vietnamese students in Australia. Participant recruitment was undertaken in two phases in a purposive and convenient way following the procedures being approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Macquarie University. VISs were targeted first, followed by their group peers from the same disciplinary background from different linguistic backgrounds.

The VIS participants were recruited through two channels: via a network of Vietnamese students studying at the university, and by approaching the Program Director of each department. The relevant information sheet, briefly describing the aims of the project, the criteria for potential participants, what they would be doing when participating in the project, etc. (see Appendix 1), was sent to these potential participants as appropriate via



the above two channels. An outline of the project and an invitation to participate was sent by email to each of those who responded to this initial approach. After an initial and informal discussion with potential VIS participants, 10 VISs who met the following criteria were selected: 1) they were undergraduate or master's coursework students at the time of data collection; 2) they were taking a unit in which they were actually involved in some groupwork activities; and 3) their groupwork activity included local and/or non-Vietnamese international students.

Recruitment of the other group members proceeded as follows. A recruitment letter with information similar to that sent to VISs was then sent to other group members (domestic or non-Vietnamese international students). Students agreeing to participate were then invited to reply to the researcher directly with a completed participant consent form (see Appendices 2 and 3). As a result of this process, 10 groups of undergraduate and master's coursework students, involving a total of 10 VISs and 21 non-VISs from 9 other different countries, were recruited for the video-recorded group discussions.

Each group consisted of 1 VIS and 2 or 3 non-Vietnamese students. The non-Vis participants came from all the three of Kachru's (1985) circles: 9 from the 'inner circle'; 3 from the 'outer circle'; and 19 from the 'expanding' circle. Australia, 8; USA, 1; Singapore, 1; Malaysia, 1; Nigeria, 1; Ukraine, 1; Japan, 1; South Korea, 2; Bangladesh, 2; Pakistan, 1; and China, 2; and Vietnam, 10). Eight of these were domestic rather than international students. These figures reflect the composition of many higher education classes in Australia where the academic English-speaking environment is frequently ELF and where the majority of students come from Asian countries. One student (from South Korea) participated in two group discussions in which he was a member (Group 1 and Group 5). Table 4.2 provides a summary of the backgrounds of the Vietnamese participants.

Table 4.2: Vietnamese participants

VISs	Study program	Department	English Proficiency on entry to program	Age	Gender
V1	Bachelor	Accounting and Corporate governance	IELTS: 7.0	22	Male
V2	Bachelor	Speech, Hearing and Language Sciences	IELTS: 6.5	28	Male
V3	Bachelor	Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies	IELTS: 6.5	20	Female
V4	Bachelor	Psychology	IELTS: 6.0	25	Female
V5	Bachelor	Actuarial Studies	IELTS: 8.0	21	Male
V6	Master's	Information Technology	TOELF iBT: 98	24	Male
V7	Master's	International Business	IELTS: 6.5	25	Female
V8	Master's	Linguistics	IELTS: 8.0	23	Female
V9	Master's	Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies	IELTS: 5.5	25	Female
V10	Bachelor	Marketing	IELTS: 7.5	21	Female

Of the 10 VISs, four were male and six were female, and they ranged in age from 20 to 28.

Their overall English proficiency score of IELTS or equivalent ranged from 5.5 to 8.0. They studied a wide range of disciplines as follows: accounting; speaking, hearing and language sciences; media; psychology; actuarial studies; information technology; international business; TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and Applied Linguistics; creative industries and marketing.

All the participants had met the requirements for entry to their respective course. They were recorded discussing a range of activities for different purposes: preparing for an oral group presentation, preparing for a group writing task, improving a research proposal, etc. The non-Vietnamese participants were only involved in the video-recorded discussions, while the 10 VISs participated in the three data collection activities: group discussions, interviews, and questionnaires.

The three sections that follow describe how data from the three sources were collected, analysed and used in a complementary way to provide insight into the nature and function of the CSs used by the VISs.

## 4.5 Data collection procedures

### 4.5.1 Data collection: video recorded group discussions

Undergraduate and postgraduate students generally participate in a range of communication activities including pair work discussion, group work discussion, whole-class discussion, oral individual presentation, group presentation, and meeting with lecturers/supervisors. Since the present study could not investigate all types of activities, small group discussions focusing on particular tasks which students have to complete were selected as likely to yield active interaction and therefore to be a good source of CSs use. Such discussions may occur inside or outside undergraduate and master's coursework classes .

The group discussions were recorded in a laboratory rather than in the classroom for a number of reasons. This enabled the recordings to be of good sound quality for later transcription. As noted above, students' academic discussions do not necessarily take place in the class as obligatory classroom activities. Rather, students often sit together to prepare a common written assignment, oral presentation, research project, etc., or simply to discuss a particular topic of mutual relevance. The group discussions by each group were taken from a relevant unit from the relevant disciplines. For example, the group of undergraduate students in Marketing (Group 10 in Table 8) were given the task of how to improve their proposal for a project market for students' backpacks after their proposal had been rejected by their lecturer (see Appendix 4 for an overview of the groups and the discussions that the participants were involved in).

Topics were selected to be as relevant as possible in order to encourage participants to actively engage in the discussions in as natural a way as possible so that the strategic

behaviours used by the VISs would provide an insight into how they would normally communicate in their normal academic environment.

The 7 hours of recordings collected in this way were transcribed and used as the basis for follow-up interviews. The next section will outline the procedure use for data collection for interviews.

#### 4.5.2 Data collection: interviews

Interviews consisted of two parts: a simulated recall interview (or retrospective recall interview), focussing on the recording of the task in which they had participated; followed by a more general interview section (see Appendix 5 for the interview guide). These took place shortly after each of the recorded group discussions. Each session lasted from 30 to 60 minutes and was conducted in Vietnamese so that VISs would feel comfortable.

##### Part 1: Stimulated recall interview (SRI)

Stimulated recall interview (SRI), which “can be characterized as a retrospective technique based on retrieval cues, which may entail audio and/or visual prompts” (Lam, 2007, p.58), has been used in recent research on language learning or language use strategies. The use of SRIs can yield important information about these. SRI is therefore considered an effective means to tap into the problems that learners experience and how they use CSs (Lam, 2007; Nakatani, 2010; Cohen, 2014). The researcher interviewed each of the 10 VISs individually shortly after each speaking task in order to optimize recall. The recording of each discussion was played back to the VISs. In the interviews, they were asked to watch a segment of the video which was selected by the researcher and explain any strategic behaviours that the researcher had identified as potential instances of CS. To encourage their reflections, VISs were asked questions such as “*What did you have in your mind at that moment?*”, and “*Why did you say that?*” This allowed for an investigation into the

underlying purposes of each strategic behaviour. Extract 5.17 is provided by way of illustration of how this worked. In the SRI with the Vietnamese student from Group 1 (V1), this segment of the group discussion was played and the researcher posed some questions as shown below.

Extract 5.17:

**Group 1:** V1 (Vietnamese), K1 (Korean), U1 (Ukrainian), AC1 (Australian of Chinese origin)

**Program:** Master, Accounting

**Unit:** Accountants in context

**Discussion topic:** Tax and accounting practices

- 1 U1: because you have to have like this what it is called
- 2 you're er judgmental sense or what's that {thinking}=
- 3 V1: =**accounting**=
- 4 U1: I can't put it=
- 5 V1: =**accounting professional judgement**
- 6 K1: accountability?
- 7 U1: no you=
- 8 V1: =**you have to do something**
- 9 U1: no you are not supposed to=
- 10 K1: ok anyway whatever
- 11 V1: **professional judgement right?**
- 12 U1: yeah professional judgement yeah

Below was the content of the SRI.

Researcher: *Why did you complete U1's speech by saying "accounting" and then "accounting professional judgement"? Did you want to take turn?*

V1: *No, I didn't. At that moment, I saw him struggling to express himself. He meant to say the term "accounting professional judgement" but struggling in finding it. When seeing him asking himself "what's that" or explicitly showing his difficulty "I can't put it", I just wanted to help by providing the term that I could remember then.*

Based on exchanged of this kind, it was possible to probe and clarify the nature of language behaviour and why it was used.

Each SRI was followed by a semi-structured interview.

## Part 2: Semi-structured interview

Following the retrospective recall sections of each interview, the research used semi-structured interview techniques to probe participants' understanding of any difficulties they had encountered in achieving their communication aims, their evaluation on how successful they had been in their discussion, and how they had perceived their use of CSs in the conversation they took part in. In the present study, semi-structured interviews were selected because they allow unexpected topics or issues to emerge (Richards, 2009). In addition, semi-structured techniques can allow for a high level of flexibility in addressing the research questions and in later thematic analysis. The follow-up interviews helped to collect VISs' reflections on their group discussion in general. Participants were asked some general questions such as, *"What did you think of the oral task"*, *"Was it successful?"*, *"Was it challenging?"*, and *"Tell me more about it?"* They were asked to freely share any issues related to their performance in their group discussion in particular or their communication in spoken English in general. These issues could relate, for example to: any aspects of their difficulties either in their discussion task or in their academic communication with lecturers or peers; how comfortable they feel in their current English-speaking environment; or whatever they consider important for their spoken English.

The next section presents the third data collection instrument: a communication questionnaire.

### 4.5.3 Data collection: communication questionnaire

#### 4.5.3.1 Procedures and design of the communication questionnaire

A communication survey was administered to the 10 VISs via after the follow-up interviews.

This elicited some general background information and comments on their experiences of academic communication in an international context in Australia, and on their previous

spoken English communication and instruction. The questionnaire (a full copy can be found in Appendix 6) consisted of the following three parts.

*Part 1: General background information*

This part consisted of 12 open-ended, multiple choice, and gap-fill questions eliciting participants' background information: gender; discipline; level of study; their latest English proficiency scores if applicable; a self-evaluation of their English speaking and listening skills; whether they had had any previous experience (studying, working, living or leisure) in any other English-speaking countries before coming to Australia; and their length of stay in Australia.

*Part 2: Experience in spoken English communication in academic contexts*

Part 2 comprised seven Yes/-No and open-ended questions which further explored participants' reflection on their experience communicating in English in a university setting. Students were asked about how frequently they took part in different kinds of communication activities with supervisors/lecturers, domestic students and international students from other countries, and to report any communication difficulties. These questions included Likert rating scale, open-ended and gap-fill types.

*Part 3: Experiences in CS use and views on CS instruction*

In this part, participants were asked three Yes/ No questions about their previous experience in the use and instruction of CSs. They were asked to reflect on whether they had been taught or specifically introduced to any CSs as a means of promoting understanding and enhancing interaction either in Vietnam and in Australia, and whether they felt CSs should be taught to Vietnamese learners of English.

Information elicited from their responses helped to illuminate data from conversation recordings to address the research questions. The background information of the VISs will be briefly discussed in the next section.

#### *4.5.3.2 Insights gained from background data on VISs*

VISs' responses to the communication questionnaire provided some insights into their English backgrounds, experiences and perspectives on their spoken English instruction, ELF communication and CS use (see Appendix 7 for full detail). Although they came from a range of prior English language learning backgrounds, and disciplines, they largely reported that they were becoming more confident in their English communication and had a positive attitude towards their academic ELF environment. However, they did report having difficulties in their ELF interactions related to their own competence or that of their NS or NNS peers.

Most did not have experience of living in English-speaking environments overseas prior to their university life in Australia, had had very little exposure to English speaking inside and outside the classroom, had not been introduced to or taught any strategies to cope with communication problems or to enhance communication in their previous formal spoken English instruction, and lacked confidence with their English speaking before coming to Australia.

Most of the participants felt that more time should be devoted to the teaching of spoken English in Vietnam, and that students should be taught to use specific strategies to communicate. All reported that they had had more exposure to communication in English since being a member of their current ELF environment. Most also reported being involved in academic communication with both NS and NNS peers and lecturer(s) and communicating more with non-Vietnamese NNSs than NSs.

In general, they were happy to communicate in an ELF environment with people from a diverse range of backgrounds, cultures and languages. Nevertheless, they also reported facing difficulties in academic communication, which included fast and complex speech by NSs, their own accent/pronunciation, difficulty with specialized terminology or



contextually appropriate vocabulary, their own grammar, NNSs' accents, and misunderstanding other speakers due to their word choice and unclear explanation.

The next section will discuss how the three data sources were analysed and used to complement each other.

#### 4.6 Approach to analysis of the three data sources

##### 4.6.1 Transcription and analysis of recorded data

To facilitate transcription and analysis, the video recording of each group discussion was stored digitally in the same folder as the interview audio recordings and survey responses for the focus VISs in that group. This enabled a convenient, cross-case and systematic approach for an in-depth identification of themes across the data.

The 10 video recordings and the 10 interview files were transcribed and translated into English for analysis.

The video recordings were first transcribed using VOICE 2.1 (Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English 2.1) transcription conventions (see Appendix 8). These conventions, which have been widely used in recent ELF research, enabled the examination of CSs in detail. In comparison to other transcription systems used for spoken communication, VOICE is particularly useful in transcribing pronunciation and intonation features and presenting overlaps in ELF talk. In addition, it is worth noticing that in all the excerpts used in Chapters 4 and 6, the linguistic behaviours made by the VISs was presented in italics and those used for CSs analysis were presented in bold.

The general principles of CA were applied in identifying and categorising candidate CSs in the transcribed video recordings following Ohta (2005). Thus, CSs were identified by focussing on:

- the initial turn which causes the problem in communication,
- the turn which signals strategy usage,

- the turn which responds to the problem.

However, in order to remain open to both goal-oriented and problem-oriented CSs used by the participants, the above model was adjusted as follows to focus on:

- the turn that provokes the strategic behaviour of the next speaker,
- the turn that indicates a possible CS use,
- the turn that responds to the previous speaker's speech act.

Candidate CSs were therefore not analysed in isolation but in the context of the sequential organization of talk by different parties in the discussion.

In this study, CSs are conceptualized as *any linguistic or extra-linguistic sources that help ELF speakers to progress towards the achievement of their discussion goals when participating in an ELF academic activity*. This conceptualization of CSs goes beyond the problem-oriented perspective of the SLA paradigm and better suits the dynamic and goal-oriented nature of ELF communication. It draws from a range of CSs identified in ELF literature. As discussed in Chapter 3, a CS potentially serves two major functions: 1) to arrive at shared understanding; and 2) and to enhance communication. While the former is the primary goal of communication of any kind, the latter can be context-dependent and unprecedented in the high-stakes communication contexts of the study. In addition, in line with the context-dependent nature of ELF, any verbal or non-verbal communicative behaviours that help the participants arrive at the achievement of their academic discussion goals as well as those related to arriving at shared understanding were considered to be candidate CSs.

In preparation for the retrospective interviews, I reviewed each completed transcription together with the relevant video in order to identify points where it seemed that CSs were being used strategically. I noted my initial thoughts on what may or may not have been a

CS were made on the transcript. These included instances which signalled a strategic use that matched my definition of a CS as discussed above. I approached each instance bearing in mind the context of the interaction, what the speakers' intention might have been, and the reactions of their interlocutors. As language is multifunctional, many of the instances identified in this way had several functions which may or may not have been strategic. These were checked in the relevant retrospective interviews to confirm whether or not the participants felt that the behaviours identified were, indeed, strategic. Thus, not all the behaviours I originally noted on the transcripts were eventually identified as strategies. Since insights from these retrospective interviews elicited a particular participant's post hoc reflections in the context of the interview with me, and thus her/ his memory of what s/he was doing at a particular time rather than any definitive assessment, they cannot be seen as perfectly reliable (Björkman, 2014), they nevertheless added another perspective and thus helped to triangulate the data. In addition, the interviews were able to clarify any aspects in the discussion that I did not fully understand.

Using this procedure, some of the behaviours previously identified as a candidate CSs turned out to be not strategic. The notes relating to these phenomena were therefore changed, edited and elaborated during and after each interview. The recording of each interview was then transcribed, and translated into English for thematic content analysis. Apart from the researcher, an experienced Vietnamese teacher of English was involved in checking the translated versions.

After a strategy was identified in this way, its functions based on the participants' responses were noted. CSs could be of different patterns and serve different purposes, and one communicative function could be achieved by the use of different CSs or a combination of more than one CS.

Once all the CSs had been identified and triangulated in this way, NVivo, a software for qualitative analysis, was used to facilitate the coding and organization of the CSs. The use functions and resultant function-based taxonomy of CSs will be discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

The next section explains in how data from the second part of the interviews with the VISs and the communication questionnaire were analysed.

#### 4.6.2 Analysis of data from the second part of the interview and questionnaire

Following Silverman (2011), Content Analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data collected from Part 2 of the interviews and the questionnaire in which participants shared their perspectives on their use of CSs, their general awareness of CSs, their academic communication experiences in Australia, and their reflections on their previous studies of English. This approach gave insight into participants' underlying perceptions and awareness of CSs and complemented the analyses of their performance in their academic discussions. Schreier (2012) identifies two approaches to coding: concept-driven or data-driven. While the former draws on frameworks that are more or less fixed, the latter draws on categories that emerge from the data. In the present study, concept-driven codes were used as a starting point, and this was followed by the identification of data-driven codes. The qualitative data from the interview and survey were first grouped under different questions and then under different themes as they emerged. NVivo (11) was used to support the qualitative analysis of the survey and the interviews. Codes were made in order to organize and classify qualitative data into relevant and meaningful categories as they emerged. A coding frame containing consistent and comprehensive coding formats was established. All values of scale were coded, for example: male = M; female = F; Vietnamese student of

Group 1 = V1; Bangladeshi student of Group 7 = B7; and Australian of Chinese ethnicity of Group 9 = AC9.

Data from conversations and follow-up interviews were used directly to identify CSs used by the VISs in their academic discussions. The CSs identified are discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 under the macro and micro functions they serve in the discourse, and constitute the main findings of the study. Meanwhile, information elicited from the communication questionnaire plays a supplementary role, and were used in particular to suggest pedagogical implications from the study (see Section 4.5.3.2 and Appendix 7) .

#### 4.7 Ethics

Ethics approval for the study was requested from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Macquarie University Australia and was fully granted (Reference number: 5201701110D, see Appendix 10 for details). It was stated clearly in the written consent form that the purpose of video recording was solely for the research. In addition, any records, information or personal details, which include video recording, transcription, name, gender, age, study program, and education background, of the participants and their interlocutors gathered in the study are to remain absolutely confidential at all times. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Quotes from responses to the questionnaires, interview questions or excerpts from video recordings are de-identified throughout. All data are kept securely as required, and information gathered from these kept absolutely anonymous at all times. Thus, the consent, voluntariness and confidentiality of all participants have been ensured.

#### 4.8 Limitations of methodology

Due to time restrictions and its small-scale, this study has some limitations. Although authentic tasks and participants were involved, the discussions recorded were not naturally occurring. While every effort was made to make the participants as comfortable as

possible, the fact that the researcher was present behind the camera may have made the participants feel themselves to be observed. Furthermore, time limitations meant that it was not therefore possible to analyze the use of CS by non-VISs, which would have enriched and potentially their extended the findings presented in the following chapters. Time limitations also precluded their inclusion in the follow-up interviews in order to gain insight into their perspectives on how they or their Vietnamese interlocutors performed in the discussions. In addition, it should be noted that this approach does not investigate in-depth each individual's use of CSs and its relation to identity and agency, although further analyses of the data could pursue this perspective. The potential for research bias arising from the researcher's position as an insider of the Vietnamese community in Australia should be acknowledged. These perspectives remain to be explored in future studies.

#### 4.9 Summary

This chapter has discussed the research approach, overall design, and multiple data collection techniques taken, to investigate how CSs were used and perceived by VISs in their academic communication in an ELF environment in this study. Data from three sources, video-recorded communication activities, follow-up interviews and communication questionnaires, were used to address the three research questions. Data were analyzed following general principles of CA and Content Analysis with the support of NVivo software. VISs' use of CSs in order to achieve their academic communication goals were identified through analysis of the discussion tasks and retrospective interviews in order to address the research questions. The findings will be described and discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 on the basis of analysis of the data from these sources.



## Chapter 5: Strategies for arriving at shared understanding in academic discussions

### 5.1 Introduction

The two literature review chapters discussed some issues related to how research on ELF pragmatics and communication strategies has significantly contributed to the theory of spoken communication in English among speakers from different lingua-cultural backgrounds. Chapter 3 also highlighted the need to have a comprehensive function-based taxonomy of CSs that can inform pedagogy designed to prepare EFL learners to become successful in their communication. The data from video recorded group discussions were analyzed using a CA approach illuminated by data from interviews, as outlined in Chapter 4. In this and the following chapter, the strategies identified are discussed and organized according to the functions they served in the group the discussions. Any strategic or pragmatic work done by the VISs in order to promote understanding or enhance communication, and confirmed by the participants in the retrospective interviews, were considered to be CSs. While understanding is a prerequisite for communication, exactly how that communication is enhanced largely depends on the nature and purpose of the communication context. In the high-stakes communication contexts in the present study, the purpose was achieved via participants' effort to smooth the interaction and enhance the completion of a discussion which was goal-oriented. The findings show that the CSs used by the VISs in the communication data fit well with the two major major categories of CSs in the literature reviewed in Chapter 4: to promote understanding and to enhance communication in academic discussions. The first group of CSs comprises those used to arrive at shared understanding and these consititue the first macro function of CSs of the proposed taxonomy presented in Table 5.1. The second group of CSs comprise those used to enhance communication which consists of strategies primarily used to smooth



interaction and enhance the completion of a task. These constitute the second and third macro functions in Table 6.1 of the next chapter. These macro functions are further divided into micro functions of CSs. The focus of this study is the identification of CSs that help VISs to achieve their communication goals rather than a comparison of the frequency the use of particular strategies to others. However, the frequency with which the CSs are used by Vis is presented in Appendix 9.

In general, the CSs identified were categorized into three overall functions: 1) to arrive at shared understanding (comprehension); 2) to smooth the interaction (interaction); and 3) to enhance the completion of a task (production). Chapter 5 covers the first of these three overall functions, namely strategies used to arrive at understanding in academic discussions. In Section 5.2, I will begin the chapter with an overview of the first overall function, that is, strategies used to arrive at shared understanding. Section 5.3 and Section 5.4 provides more detail on the macro and micro functions of this category, together with evidence on how VISs used this category of CSs to arrive at a shared understanding in their group discussions. Section 5.5 will summarize the chapter. The second and third categories of CSs will be presented and discussed in Chapter 6. The nature and value of the function-based taxonomy of the CSs drawn from these findings will be discussed in Chapter 7.

## 5.2 An overview of strategies for arriving at shared understanding

A fine-grained analysis of the data shows that most instances of non-understanding in the conversations were resolved as VISs were actively involved in both pre-empting and solving non-understanding using a range of strategies. That is, they used strategies both to pre-emptively prepare for what might go wrong in the course of interaction and to retrospectively respond to problems of understanding when they occurred.

In general, the data show that VISs used all the strategies previously reported in the literature (discussed Chapter 3) to achieve mutual understanding in their talk. These include repetition (self- and other-), paraphrase (self- and other-), repair (self- and other), questioning strategies for confirmation and clarification purposes, and non-verbal resources. It should be noticed that there are multiple occurrences of CSs in different places in Table 5.1 (also in Table 6.1 and Table 7.1 of the next chapters). This is because one strategy can serve different functions and a communication goal can be achieved by the use of different strategies in the interaction.

Table 5.1 summarizes the functions of the strategies used to arrive at understanding in their group discussions and how they were realized in interaction. The two macro functions of pre-empting non-understanding before it arises and negotiating meaning when non-understanding occurs are presented in the first column from left. These are further refined into micro functions in the second column from the left, which are realized through the use of the specific strategies listed in the third column of the table.

*Table 5.1: Strategies to arrive at shared understanding*

Macro functions	Micro functions	Strategies (Realizations)
To pre-empt understanding /intelligibility problems	To promote clarity and accuracy in one's own speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-repetition (of important words)</li> <li>- Self-paraphrasing</li> <li>- Self-repair</li> <li>- Non-verbal resources (gesturing or concrete objects) with verbal speech</li> </ul>
	To check others' comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overt questions</li> </ul>
To resolve understanding/ intelligibility problems	To signal non-understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overt questions</li> <li>- Other-repetition (preceded or followed by a backchannel) with rising intonation</li> <li>- Other-paraphrase (preceded or followed by a backchannel) with rising intonation;</li> <li>- Minimal queries</li> </ul>
	To respond to understanding/ intelligibility problems caused by one's own speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-repetition</li> <li>- Self-paraphrasing</li> <li>- Self-repair</li> </ul>
	To give linguistic (pronunciation, lexical)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utterance completion</li> <li>- Other-repair</li> </ul>

	support to the continuing speaker	
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The strategies VISs used to proactively pre-empt non-understanding and retrospectively respond to understanding problems in order to arrive at mutual understanding in their discussions will be described in Sections 5.3 and 5.4, respectively. For each, the micro functions within each macro function and the specific language behaviour(s) used to realize them will be described and illustrated.

### 5.3 Strategies to pre-empt understanding/ intelligibility problems

VISs made strategic efforts to pre-empt potential understanding problems in their group discussions through the use of strategies to promote clarity in their own speech and/or to check other speakers' comprehension. These strategies were considered "pre-realizations" by Cogo and Dewey (2012, p.126). In my data, these served to minimize potential understanding challenges before they occurred, but also to collaboratively support the meaning-making process. These two micro functions will be discussed in Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2, respectively.

#### 5.3.1 Strategies to promote clarity and accuracy in one's own speech

On a number of occasions in the data, VISs anticipated that their own utterance may cause trouble in understanding for their interlocutors, and so they offered self-clarification before any non-understanding could occur. They used a wide range of verbal strategies including self-repetition, self-paraphrasing, self-repair, and non-verbal resources with or without verbal speech to achieve this purpose.

##### 5.3.1.1 Self-repetition

In this study, I examined self-repetition separately from other-repetition and followed Kaur (2012) in that "only exact repetition and repetition with slight different slight variation"

(p.599) were considered to be repetition. Instances involving considerable rewording or where reformulation of an utterance needed special effort by the speaker were considered to be paraphrasing/ rephrasing and are discussed separately in Section 5.3.1.2.

VISs frequently used self-repetition for self-clarification in order to make their own utterance more intelligible or clearer to their interlocutors and thus to pre-empt any potential difficulties in understanding.

Extract 5.1 shows how a VIS uses self-repetition for clarification when she feels that her intended meaning might be not fully understood.

Extract 5.1:

**Group 8:** V8 (Vietnamese), C8 (Chinese), J7 (Japanese), K8 (South Korean)

**Program:** Master, TESOL and Applied Linguistics

**Unit:** Language Teaching Methodologies

**Discussion topic:** Activities for the micro teaching task

- 1 K8: is this a warm-up activity?
- 2 C8: yeah a warm-up activity warm-up and then after I
- 3 teach the vocabulary <296> yeah yeah er how many minutes
- 4 I didn't consider?
- 5 K8: <296> uh
- 6 V8: *oh if you er if you try to elicit the vocabulary it*
- 7 *takes for very <297> very long*
- 8 K8: <297> very long
- 9 C8: very long <nod> oh : <298> yeah
- 10 V8: <298> yeah *if you try to <299> elicit*
- 11 C8: <299> yeah the <prv> {procedure} <prv> very time-
- 12 consuming
- 13 V8: *yeah if you try to elicit the vocabulary it will*
- 14 *take very long. After this (1) er exercise exercise what*
- 15 *do you do?*
- 16 C8: after this exercise? e:r no I just do this this
- 17 exercise <300> my main activity is just teaching
- 18 vocabulary
- 19 J8: <300> maybe <un> xxx </un>
- 20 K8: is this the main activity?
- 21 C8: yeah but er the <prv> {procedure} <prv> has so many
- 22 details (1) I have to put in not like like er during
- 23 during the er my teaching I have to ask er students
- 24 questions something about the cars
- 25 V8: *uh huh*
- 26 C8: yeah

In this extract, C8 is explaining her demo lesson to her group. After she presents some teaching ideas in her lesson plan to the group, V8 wonders about the time allocation, “*oh if you er if you try to elicit the vocabulary it takes for very very long*” (lines 6-7). C8 agrees that this takes a long time (line 8). In the follow-up interview, V8 confirmed that, although there were signals of understanding by K8 and C8 in the repetition of “*very long*” (lines 8-9) and C8’s addition of verbal and non-verbal backchannels (line 9), she assumed that C8 did not fully understand what she meant. She therefore repeats the phrase, “*...if you try to elicit*” (line 10), a second time. Although C8 again shows her agreement with V8 in lines 11-12, “*yeah the <prv> {procedure} <prv> very time-consuming*”, V8 more explicitly restates her previous idea in full, “*yeah if you try to elicit the vocabulary it will take very long*”, and further asks whether there are any other activities after that vocabulary exercise, “*after this er vocabulary exercise what do you do?*” (lines 3-15). V8’s continued efforts to repeat her utterance three times helped her to convey her intended meaning to C8. This pre-emptive function of self-repetition supports findings reported in Kaur (2009, 2010, 2012) and Mauranen (2007).

#### 5.3.1.2 Self- paraphrasing

Like self-repetition, self-paraphrasing in this study is treated separately from other-paraphrasing. In my data, self-paraphrasing is mainly used pro-actively (Mauranen, 2012) to pre-empt potentially problematic moments of understanding. This function is illustrated in Extract 5.2 from a discussion among a group of undergraduate students majoring in speech, hearing and language sciences.

Extract 5.2:

**Group 2:** V2 (Vietnamese), B2 (Pakistanis), AP2 (Australian of Pilipino origin)

**Program:** Undergraduate, Speech, Hearing and Language Sciences

**Unit:** An introduction to audiology

**Topic:** Cochlear implants and hearing aids

- 1 B2: they are looking to <64> yeah it is not a hearing  
2 aid ok but something like they have some if they are  
3 using hearing aids but they still need something extra  
4 but they are not deaf at that level <65> that they need  
5 a cochlear implant=  
6 V2: <64> ow ok yeah new device {nodding and looking at  
7 AP2}  
8 V2: <65> uh {nodding} 'cause that is the one I mentioned  
9 about like **a mixed hearing loss <66> 'cause like still**  
10 **they still have some part <67> {gesturing} in the**  
11 **cochlear still normal but some part is damaged=**  
12 B2: <66> yeah {nodding}  
13 B2: <67> yeah {nodding}
- 13 B2: yeah <nod>  
14 V2: **=so you cannot like put it in a cochlear implant**  
15 **because it will damage everything damage like every like**  
16 **every power of cochlear=**  
17 B2: yeah  
18 V2: **=so they might need like something to fix this like**  
19 **only the damaged part**

When discussing the differences between cochlear implants and hearing aids, V2 mentions “a mixed hearing loss” (lines 5-6). This is in response, in an overlapping manner, to the cases B2 mentions earlier who “... are using hearing aids but they still need something extra but they are not deaf at that level...” (lines 2-3). V2 clarifies by supplying the phrase “...uh {nodding} ‘cause that is the one I mentioned about a mixed hearing loss <66> ‘cause still like they still have <67> {gesturing} some part in the cochlear still normal but some part is damaged=” (lines 8-11). In his interview, he said that he wanted to further clarify the meaning of “a mixed hearing loss” in order to pre-empt any possible understanding difficulties and make sure that his interlocutors understood his meaning. Another act of self-paraphrasing is used in the utterance that follows when he uses “damage like every

*like every power of cochlear*” to specify what is said earlier, *“damage everything”*. B2 signals her understanding, *“yeah”*, two times (lines 12 and 13), and the conversation moves on.

Such paraphrasing is very similar to the way in which an explanation may be offered during conversations between interlocutors from any background who are seeking to maximise comprehension of unfamiliar technical concepts.

In the above extract, V2 uses *“like”* before the reformulated piece of utterance. In the data, VIs frequently used *“like”* and *“I mean”* to introduce self-paraphrasing.

### 5.3.1.3 Self-repair

Similarly, in line with findings from previous work on ELF (Kaur, 2011b; Schegloff, 2000), in my study, VIs frequently used repair in the absence of any errors for the purposes of “raising explicitness” and “enhancing clarity” (Kaur, 2011b, p.2709). In these cases, self-repair appears in segments of talk where a word or an expression is used as an alternative for what is said earlier, for promoting clarity in an explicit way.

VIs sometimes repaired their own speech by replacing a more general word with a more specific one. This phenomenon is conceptualized by Björkman (2014) as “word replacement”, which “can occur even when there is nothing to correct” (p.131), and is also highlighted in Kaur (2011b), Kurhila (2003) and Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks (1977). Extract 5.3 provides an example.

#### Extract 5.3:

**Group 6:** V6 (Vietnamese), N6 (Nigerian), B6 (Bangladeshi)

**Program:** Master, Information Technology

**Unit:** Cryptography and information security

**Discussion topic:** Security evaluation of credit pay and Apple Pay

- 1 V6: *so like if I know your pin can I get access to your*
- 2 *phone?*
- 3 N6: *er at that time yes 'cause the pin is the first*
- 4 *layer of the er er authentication=*
- 5 B6: *we only put one layer for that the touch on the pin*
- 6 *would be ok so yes you can*

7 N6: yeah so if if you have=  
 8 V6: =so if I know your pin and I have access to your  
 9 phone and I have **get stuff buy stuff** right?  
 10 N6: if you know my pin=  
 11 V6: =uh huh  
 12 N6: =and you have access to my phone say (3) you are  
 13 trying to er er get access to my card on the phone=  
 14 V6: =uh huh=  
 15 N6: =the first place for the authentication is actually  
 16 thumbprints there's no other there's no other unless of  
 17 course I'm not entirely 100% sure the centrality can  
 18 manually access to accept pin=

In this context, a group of master's students in Information and Technology are discussing security evaluation of credit pay and Apple Pay in order to prepare for their group writing assignment. B6 is sharing with his group his own experience of using Apple Pay with a pin. V6 wants to confirm whether he would be able to access B6's phone and use the pin to use the Apple Pay App to pay for the things he buys (lines 8 and 9). Firstly, he uses the more general word '*get*' instead of the more accurate word '*buy*' (line 9). After realizing this, he changes '*get stuff*' to '*buy stuff*' after, to more accurately express his intended meaning.

In line with the Kaur (2011b) and Mauranen (2006b), in this study, VISs attempted to correct themselves in order to orient towards accuracy or in promoting explicitness and clarity (Kaur, 2011b).

The above analysis of VISs' practice of re-saying, re-wording or repairing their own utterances in their academic group discussions shows their sensitivity to their own speech production (Cogo & House, 2018), their ability to monitor their speech in a strategic way (Cogo, 2016), or as Mauranen (2006b) puts it, their self-regulating mechanism. The use of these strategies in a pre-emptive way with an attention to the speaker's previous utterance in the talk shows how ELF speakers are collaborative in their efforts to enhance mutual understanding and build common ground (Kaur, 2009, 2011b).



While these verbal strategies have been widely discussed in the literature, very few studies on ELF communication have dealt with non-verbal resources. These also occurred in the data as part of VISs' efforts to arrive at a shared understanding.

#### 5.3.1.4 Gesturing and/ or use of concrete objects in combination with speech

Using non-verbal devices is a normal aspect of speech in which speakers are trying to ensure understanding. In this study, VISs used multimodal resources, including gestures and/or concrete objects as well as verbal speech, for negotiating meaning in the discussions.

Extract 5.4 from a discussion about attitudes to beauty among psychology students illustrates how VISs used gesturing together with verbal speech to convey their intended meaning.

##### Extract 5.4:

**Group 4:** V4 (Vietnamese), A4-1 (Australian 1), A4-2 (Australian 1)

**Program:** Undergraduate, Psychology

**Unit:** Gender foundation

**Discussion topic:** Differences between Australian and Asian women

- 1 V4: yeah like <23> the big eyes and when they and they  
2 follow the trend like (2) the idols or actresses **who**  
3 **have beautiful eyes** <24> **have big eyes** {gesturing:  
4 moving her hands around her eyes} <25> **because you know**  
5 **the Korean they have small eyes** <26> **quite small**  
6 {gesturing: moving her hands around her eyes}?  
7 A4-2: <24> yes  
8 A4-1: <25> uh  
9 A4-1: <26> oh yeah like boys or girls and we call them  
10 the monocular or <27> something like that?  
11 V4: {looking at A4-1} <27> **the monocular?**  
12 A4-1: yeah=  
13 A4-2: =yeah I do I can't remember exactly but yeah like  
14 it's very popular cosmetics surgery they have their eyes  
15 altered to match the standard of so=  
16 V4: =**and their noses straight like** {gesturing: moving  
17 her right hand along the nose} <28> **and their face**  
18 **because we have round face** {gesturing: moving her right  
19 hand around her face} **not long face like Western** <29>  
20 **and most of Asian girls they (1) round face so they cut**  
22 **their face to become like** {gesturing: moving her right  
23 hand around her face }=

24 A4-1: <28> yeah  
25 A4-1: <29> uh  
26 A4-2: really?

In this scenario, psychology students are talking about attitudes towards beauty in some Asian countries. V4, who is of limited English proficiency, is trying to explain the fact that many Koreans follow the trend of having cosmetic surgery to make their eyes bigger, to her two interlocutors who are Australian. In order to clarify her meaning, she moves her hands to illustrate what she means by making eyes bigger (lines 1-5). Her efforts result in A4-1's suggestion, *"...we call them the monocular or something like that?"* (lines 8-9). V4 is eventually successful in making herself understood, as evidenced by A4-1's summary that *"... it's very popular cosmetic surgery they have their eyes altered to match the standard..."* (lines 13-15). V4 also uses similar hand movements in combination with her speech as she speaks and goes on to describe another trend that Asian girls resort to in cosmetic surgery to make their noses straight and faces oval like Westerners (lines 16-23). In the interview, she reported that this strategic behaviour enabled her to once again convey her meaning and catch the attention of others. Indeed, A4-1's token of understanding and agreement, *"yeah"* (line 20) and *"uh"* (line 21), suggests that she was successful in this instance. V4 also said that, when she has difficulty in finding the right words or expressions, she usually tries to use some gestures while she is explaining verbally.

There are a few cases in the data where the use of objects and/or gesturing together with verbal speech helped the speaker to explain her idea to other group members. Extract 5.5 is an example.

Extract 5.5:

**Group 10:** V10 (Vietnamese), M10 (Malaysian), S10 (Singaporean)

**Program:** Bachelor, Marketing

**Unit:** Marketing research

**Discussion topic:** Market research for student backpacks

1 M10: <85> uh yeah er so the behaviour the to-what-extent  
 2 then {gesturing} you choose right?  
 3 V10: **yeah like er we have {sketching the idea on a**  
 4 **paper} thirteen dollars here and the purchase decision**  
 5 **like <86> something that and then er fourteen and we**  
 6 **have <87> like this**  
 7 M10: <86> uh yeah  
 8 M10: <87> yeah  
 9 M10: yeah that's a good idea  
 10 V10: yeah but what kind of tests will we will we like  
 11 like conduct this <88> er regression?  
 12 S10: <88> metric and non-metric correlation

In this situation, when trying to describe the test experiment, V10 utilizes a paper to sketch out her idea while she is explaining (lines 3-6). She reported in her interview that this combination of objects, drawing and verbal speech helped her to express her idea more easily to her two peers. M10 acknowledges this via the use of “uh yeah” (line 7), “yeah” (line 8) or “yeah that’s a good idea” (line 9).

Extract 5.6 provides an example of a speaker using verbal language in combination with gesturing and a digital device (mobile with an Internet connection) to convey the meaning to interlocutors.

Extract 5.6:

**Group 6:** V6 (Vietnamese), N6 (Nigerian), B6 (Bangladeshi)

**Program:** Master, Information Technology

**Unit:** Cryptography and information security

**Discussion topic:** Security evaluation of credit pay and Apple Pay

1 B6: we we we read about there's there's the only unique  
 2 feature of the Samsung Pay which is actually unique from  
 3 Android and Apple Pay=  
 4 V6: but=  
 5 B6: =do you remember if you know that?  
 6 V6: **see like I can pay with fingerprints or with the pin**  
 7 **code or fingerprints** {gesturing}  
 8 B6: and there's no details with them over there right as  
 9 well?  
 10 V6: no I don't think so I think it's the same thing (2)  
 11 I couldn't read my (2) all my card number  
 12 B6: ok

When asked by B6 if he knows a unique feature of Samsung Pay which is different from Android and Apple Pay, “*do you remember if you know that?*” V6 uses his own mobile phone with Internet connection to demonstrate the way he can use fingerprints and pin code with Samsung Pay at the same time as he is speaking. These techniques are used effectively several times in the conversation. According to V6, these are used not only in this conversation with the special topic of information technology but also frequently in his academic or daily interaction when they can turn to Google to search for things to negotiate meaning when necessary.

Although the use of non-verbal is useful in effective in helping VISs to negotiate meaning in the data, it is, of course, typical of communication among all speakers and not only observed in ELF communication.

In addition to the use of some pro-active strategies to promote clarity and accuracy in their own speech, VISs also made efforts to check that others had understood what they said in order to prepare for any potential understanding problems. This will be discussed in the next section.

### 5.3.2 Strategies to check the comprehension of others

VISs often used overt questions (Wh-questions or Yes/No questions) to check on their interlocutors’ comprehension, a behaviour not confined to ELF communication but found in communication of any kind. Such questions can be useful in promoting shared understanding and building rapport. Extract 5.7 from a discussion on tax and accounting practices provides an example.

#### Extract 5.7:

**Group 1:** V1 (Vietnamese), K1 (Korean), U1 (Ukrainian), AC1 (Australian of Chinese origin)

**Program:** Master, Accounting

**Unit:** Accountants in context

**Discussion topic:** Tax and accounting practices

1 U1: <146> that's what I meant <147> Block chain is like  
 2 a system <148> that somebody paints something or doing  
 3 some transactions that you actually to have to have like  
 4 like public public dispose for your like for yo:ur all  
 5 your like data about you just <149> have  
 6 K1: <147> yeah  
 7 V1: <148> Block chain is  
 8 V1: <149> hey man so you you new update man because I  
 9 watched a lot of things about cryptocurrency man today's  
 10 G20 they talked **do you know G20?**  
 11 U1: no  
 12 V1: **it's just like <150>20 countries sit down and talk**  
 13 **about cryptocurrency man <151>**so they said they allow  
 14 cryptocurrency right now man but we had K we need  
 15 U1: <150> honestly I don't know  
 16 U1: <151> uh  
 17 U1: yeah in some countries er cryp\_ cryptical\_ ah  
 18 what's this?  
 19 V1: *cryptocurrency*  
 20 U1: cryptocurrency is illegal yep=  
 21 K1: =and we can also because what's happening in Korea  
 22 it's because cryptocurrency because in Korea we have to  
 23 lodge we have a lot that you can lodge things that only  
 24 perceived that cash or cash equivalence=  
 25 V1: yes

In this situation, a group of accounting students are discussing cryptocurrency, and V1 mentions the G20, "*hey man so you you new update man because I watched a lot of things about cryptocurrency man today G20 they talked about cryptocurrency man*" (lines 8-9). Feeling uncertain as to whether his interlocutors understand what he means by G20, V1 explicitly asks, "*do you know G20?*" U1 gives a negative answer, "*no*" (line 11) and an overlapping completion, "*honestly I don't know*" (line 15), signalling non-understanding; and this leads to V1's attempt to self-clarify, "*it's just like 20 countries sit down and talk about cryptocurrency man...*" (lines 12-13). U1 responds with a token of understanding, "*uh*" (line 16), in the following utterance.

The way V1 uses a Yes/No question in this situation is pro-active, collaborative and listener-oriented. He is sensitive to the fact that others may not understand and is keen to promote mutual comprehension.

As illustrated throughout this section, VISs paid considerable attention to pre-empting non-understanding before it occurred, through the use of self-repetition, self-paraphrasing, self-repair or non-verbal resources to promote clarity and accuracy in their own speech, or by using comprehension checks to check that others were understanding them. These pre-emptive strategies are only discussed as a strategy within an ELF perspective. Meanwhile, retrospective strategies have been identified in studies from both SLA and ELF perspectives and were also widely seen in the data. These will be discussed in the following section.

#### 5.4 Strategies to resolve understanding/ intelligibility problems

In the data, the VISs often showed a willingness to negotiate meaning and start negotiation to resolve understanding difficulties, using “initiating strategies” and “resolving strategies” (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p.135). The former are CSs used to “initiate negotiation”, the latter are those used to respond to “those occurring after the signal of troubles, then on those occurring as pre-realizations, or before any signal of non-understanding that has taken place” (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p.116).

They used various explicit or implicit initiating strategies that typically took the form of questions which could be overt questions, minimal queries, and other-repetition or other-paraphrasing with rising intonation for clarification or confirmation to signal non-understanding. These allowed the previous speakers to clarify the points in their utterance which may have caused difficulty, using solving strategies such as self-repetition, self-paraphrase or self-repair.

##### 5.4.1 Strategies to signal non-understanding

As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, questioning strategies, which include Wh-questions, Yes/No questions, minimal queries or statements with rising final intonation, have been shown to be helpful in negotiating meaning in talk. VISs frequently used these types of questions

in the data for various purposes, but largely to request clarification, check comprehension or confirmation, or request help. These have been widely discussed in the literature. The functions of questioning strategies found in the data for discourse management or to facilitate further discussion will be illustrated and discussed in the next chapter.

Strategic questions when a listener does not sufficiently understand the preceding utterance and wishes to confirm her/his understanding by asking for clarification, elaboration or confirmation were widely observed in the data. Again, this phenomenon is not restricted to ELF communication but also occurs in NS-NS interaction.

#### *5.4.1.1 Questioning strategies to request clarification or elaboration*

In the data, VISs frequently used questioning strategies in an explicit way to request clarification or the elaboration of the intended meaning. In other words, they asked the speaker of the preceding utterance to further clarify his/her own speech. According to Mauranen (2006b), “direct, focused questions on an expression or its meaning are perhaps the easiest to detect and also the most unequivocal signs of lack of understanding” (p.129). In the data, VISs were willing to negotiate meaning and generally did not “*let-pass*” non-understanding moments.

Extract 5.8 shows how an overt Wh-question is explicitly used in direct response to a source of trouble.

#### Extract 5.8:

**Group 1:** V1 (Vietnamese), K1 (Korean), U1 (Ukrainian), AC1 (Australian of Chinese origin)  
**Program:** Master, Accounting  
**Unit:** Accountants in context  
**Discussion topic:** Tax and accounting practices

- 1 K1: =or maybe we can also talk about diversity in tax
- 2 er=
- 3 U1: =comvironment com\_=?
- 4 K1: tax compulsion I think that word
- 5 V1: ***what does compulsion mean?***
- 6 K1: compulsion is like you are enforcing to pay the tax
- 7 so maybe we can say about=

In this discussion on tax practices, K1 is suggesting that they discuss diversity in tax. U1 is trying to remember the related term to show his understanding of what K1 is talking about, “*comvironment com\_*” (line 3). His suggestion is incomplete, as he completes the exact term. When K1 provides a lexical suggestion, “*tax compulsion I think that word*” (line 4), which does not make sense to V1, V1 makes a clarification request, “*what does compulsion mean?*” (line 5). This is followed by K1’s explanation of what he means by “*compulsion*”. The use of this overt question helps V1 to promote his own comprehension and the co-construction of meaning among his group in the face of difficulty with unfamiliar terminology.

A combination of other-repetition and rising final intonation is used for a similar purpose in Extract 5.9.

Extract 5.9:

**Group 2:** V2 (Vietnamese), B2 (Pakistanis), AP2 (Australian of Pilipino origin)

**Program:** Undergraduate, Speech, Hearing and Language Sciences

**Unit:** An introduction to audiology

**Topic:** Cochlear implants and hearing aids

- 1 B2: e:::r no no I think with the young kids they say
- 2 they do say like with the children who have cochlear
- 3 implants as quick as they should be <118> they develop
- 4 their speech very quickly <119> so it is really
- 5 different like it depends on their speech as well speech
- 6 development as well and er what was I going to say?
- 7 V2: <118> uh
- 8 V2: <119> oh
- 9 AP2: @
- 10 B2: @ er okay so:: (2) yeah I was going to say that
- 11 the big reason why they do have hearing loss
- 12 V2: **the big reason?**
- 13 B2: yeah what do you think the big reason it is like if
- 14 it is like they are not deaf or they are not born with
- 15 this hearing loss so why they have this? like the first
- 16 think we can consider this like the workplace noise?
- 17 V2: <120> uh
- 18 AP2: <120> uh
- 19 B2: that could be the big reason for the adults



20 AP2: I think that's the biggest reason  
21 B2: yes biggest reason

When talking about hearing loss among children and adults, B2 wants her group to discuss the reasons why people have hearing loss, by saying “@ er okay so:: (2) yeah I was going to say that the big reason why they do have hearing loss” (lines 10-11). V2 said in the retrospective interview that he repeated “the big reason” (line 12) here not because he could not understand the words themselves; rather, he just wanted to know exactly what B2 intended to imply by “the big reason” in this context. As can be seen in the extract, B2 then explains that “...it is like if it is like they are not deaf or they are not born with this hearing loss so why they have this?...” (lines 13-16); and she adds a suggestion that “we can consider this like the workplace noise?” for discussion. That this idea makes sense to both V2 and AP2 can be seen in their overlapping tokens of agreement and understanding, “uh” (lines 17-18) and “I think that's the biggest reason” (line 20).

The above examples have illustrated how overt questions and questions covering other-repetition or other-paraphrase helped VISs to request clarification and elaboration. VISs also used minimal responses for this purpose.

In addition to requesting clarification and elaboration to signal non-understanding, they also used questioning strategies to request confirmation of understanding. The next section will discuss these.

#### 5.4.1.2 Questioning strategies to request confirmation of understanding

VISs also used questioning strategies in the form of other-repetition or other-paraphrase with rising intonation to check whether they had understood the meaning of a previous utterance correctly. In these cases, VISs often repeated, paraphrased or summarized the content of an utterance by the previous speaker and added rising intonation.

In the data, these questions are sometimes preceded by “*you mean*”, “*do you mean*”, “*so*”, or “*sound like*”, or followed by “*right?*” at the end of the utterance in instances of other-paraphrasing for confirming the speaker’s own comprehension. Extract 5.10 provides a typical example.

Extract 5.10:

**Group 5:** V5 (Vietnamese), K5 (Korean), A5 (Australian)

**Program:** Bachelor, Actuarial studies

**Unit** Finance and Finance Reporting

**Discussion topic:** Contemporary issues in the global finance market and estimation of risks

- 1 K5: so er I'm not really familiar with the insurance  
2 points so how would you let's say there's a soldier in  
3 Iraq and there is a guy who works in an office in  
4 Sydney. What kind of indicator how would you  
5 differentiate these two different people and measure the  
6 risks depending on what like how how do you quantify it  
7 how you quantify the risks of the soldier in Iraq how  
8 you quantify the risks of the person working in Sydney?  
9 A5: {looking at V5} you want to take this one?  
10 V5: {looking at K5} **er you mean the the risks that they**  
11 **are willing take on or?**  
12 K5: well for the insurance companies er if a person is  
13 more likely to get injured or get killed er you have to  
14 pay more money to the people what are paying for the  
15 insurance right? and but let's say there is a person who  
16 is the soldier deployed in Iraq  
17 V5: yep  
18 K5: fighting the frontline and a person who is working  
19 in Sydney office doing paper work whatever @ how would  
20 you differentiate how would you quantify this kind of  
21 risks based on what and how would you do it?  
22 V5: er they will have to submit in er like a form for er  
23 so we can gather information about their **health current**  
24 **health yep and habit like (2) usually we consider**  
25 **whether they are smokers or not**  
26 A5: yep that's it

In the above excerpt, students in actuarial studies are discussing the estimation of risks in health insurance. K5 asks A5 and V5 (lines 1-8) how to quantify the insurance risks by giving an example of two people working in different places and doing different jobs: a soldier in Iraq and an office worker in Sydney. After A5 asks V5 to answer this question, “*Do you want to take this one?*”, V5 first wants to confirm his own understanding of what kind of risks

they are talking about and asks, “*er you mean the the risks that they are willing take on or?*”. K5 clarifies (lines 12-16, 18-21), and V5 is able to specify some information about “*current health*” or “*habits*” (lines 23-25).

These examples show that questions for confirmation request are not necessarily only used in situations where intelligibility problems arise, but also when the listeners want to promote mutual comprehension by confirming their own understanding.

#### 5.4.1.3 Questioning strategies to request help

There are a few instances in the data where a speaker makes a request for help from a third speaker who is not in the current interaction. Extract 5.11 provides an example.

##### Extract 5.11:

**Group 4:** V4 (Vietnamese), A4-1(Australian), A4-2(Australian)

**Program:** Bachelor, Psychology

**Unit:** Gender foundation

**Discussion topic:** Differences between Asian and Australian women

- 1 V4: *so like more than like Western culture so like I*  
2 *don't feel I compare to Asian women like Australian*  
3 *women more (2) er they are more (2) independent?*  
4 A4-2: {nodding}  
5 A4-1: uh  
6 V4: *like er and confident about themselves rather than*  
7 *that like the women and I think that because it's*  
8 *effects from the culture the way they **er** from and where*  
9 *they (2) inspire, **does this make sense to you?***  
10 A4-2: *yeah so: okay you think so in Australia they kind*  
11 *of women are more independent like they are active than*  
12 *compare to Asian women so a lot of kind of I mean I'm*  
13 *not an expert @ but a lot of what I have read kind of*  
14 *talk about in many in East Asian culture kind of*  
15 *dominance of Confusion value or Confusion philosophy so*  
16 *it's my understanding that a big part of that is*  
17 *traditional general role is really concrete and really*  
18 *accepted and enforced so **would you agree that is the***  
19 ***case?***  
20 V4: {looking at A4-1} ***yeah how about you?***  
21 A4-1: *yeah I think obviously I don't know about like*  
22 *Asia women as much as you do but I think in Australia*  
23 *for Australian women they are still obviously the*  
24 *general roles that still in play and Australian women*  
25 *have to I feel they have to conform to but I feel that*  
26 *'cause you know obviously that the historical things*

27 have meant very much for struggle so I think in current  
28 days women are sort of like fighting up against not in  
29 Australia but sort of like the Western world more women  
30 are fighting for feminism and stuffs like in your  
31 history so I think that's sort of like why we seem more  
32 independent that's because there's been a big struggle  
33 for feminism and yeah yeah yeah but then I think that  
34 Asian culture that hasn't been in this struggle just  
35 because there hasn't been like there

In this scenario, V4, is sharing some ideas with her two classmates, who are Australian, about differences between Asian and Australian women and how they are affected by their cultures. As can be seen from the extract, V4's English proficiency is limited. However, she is trying to convey an opinion that Australian women are more independent than Asian women and that this is related to their cultures (lines 1-3, 6-9). Her two interlocutors, who are native speakers of English, "*make-normal*" (Firth, 1996) when they signal their understanding via a head nod (line 4) and a backchannel (line 5). As V4 is aware of her non-standard English, she checks that they have understood, "*does this make sense to you?*" (line 9). As a result, A4-2 expresses his understanding and agreement, and offers some further ideas on Asian women, asking "*a big part of that is traditional general role is really concrete and really accepted and enforced so would you agree that is the case?*" (lines 16-18). Although she is expected to answer as she comes from Asia, instead of answering this question, V4 turns towards A4-1 and asks, "*yeah how about you?*". In the interview, V4 said that, at this moment, she did not immediately understand the point of the long preceding utterance and so sought for help from A4-1 by allocating her turn to her so that she had more time to think. In this way she is requesting help from a third speaker rather than using a "*let-it-pass*" strategy. V4 also reported that she had a better, but not complete, understanding after listening to A4-1's explanation. Although her question is effective in keeping the conversation smooth, saving her face, and gaining support from the third

participant, a more thorough understanding would have been achieved if she had requested for further clarification from A4-2.

Signalling non-understanding and responding to non-understanding are both important to the negotiation of meaning in an ongoing interaction. In addition to signalling non-understanding caused by other speakers in talk as discussed above, VISs also made strategic efforts to retrospectively clarify the points in their own utterance which caused the difficulty in understanding to their interceptors. This micro function is discussed in the next section.

#### 5.4.2 Strategies to retrospectively promote intelligibility, clarity, and accuracy in one's own speech

This section describes how VISs used strategies to respond to problems of intelligibility, clarity and accuracy caused by their own speech. These functions were realized through the use of self-repetition, self-paraphrasing, and self-repair, which were used retrospectively to resolve problems of understanding.

##### 5.4.2.1 Self-repetition

Extract 5.12 illustrates how V2 used self-repetition to enhance intelligibility where the speaker is aware that there might be a problem. B2 is explaining to her group that the research team she is working with is investigating differences between infants and babies with normal hearing aids and those with cochlear implants (lines 1-6).

#### Extract 5.12:

**Group 2:** V2 (Vietnamese), B2 (Pakistanis), AP2 (Australian of Pilipino origin)

**Program:** Undergraduate, Speech, Hearing and Language Sciences

**Unit:** An introduction to audiology

**Topic:** Cochlear implants and hearing aids

1     B2: =so when they find that it is useful like they were  
2     looking at the differences like how differentiate like  
3     how the infants and babies with normal hearing aids and  
4     with the normal hearing and with the cochlear implants  
5     they like how they differentiate in <59> their

6 acoustic phonemes and all that stuff (0.1) so I think  
 7 that's a really big point to consider <60> as well and  
 8 it can make a difference as well <61> yeah  
 9 V2: <59> uh  
 10 AP22: <60> uh  
 11 V2: <61> uh so are are they going to like invent **a new**  
 12 **device** or something <62> also?  
 13 B2: <62> yeah <63> they are looking to  
 14 V2: <63> **a new device**  
 15 B2: they are looking to <64> yeah it is not a hearing  
 16 aid ok but something like they have some if they are  
 17 using hearing aids but they still need something extra  
 18 but they are not deaf at that level <65> that they need  
 19 a cochlear implant=

B2 wants to know whether they are going to invent a new device and asks, “*so are are they going to like invent a new device or something <62> also?*” (lines 10-11). As illustrated, there are some overlaps in the utterances by B2 and V2 that follow, and V2 repeats an important key phase, “*a new device*” (line 14). He reported in the interview that he repeated the phrase because he felt that he might have uttered his previous question too softly and so he was just not sure if B2 had heard it clearly. The use of self-repetition in this example supports Kaur’s (2010) suggestion that it is used to “provide another opportunity to hear the question” (Kaur, 2010, p.197) and is in line with the findings from the previous studies (Björkman, 2011, 2013, 2014; Kaur, 2009, 2010, 2011b; Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Maraunen, 2006b, 2007, 2012; Watterson, 2008).

#### 5.4.2.2 Self-paraphrasing

Several examples in the data show that VISs used self-paraphrasing to serve a “repairing” function when there was a signal of non-understanding. This function of self-paraphrasing is discussed from an SLA perspective by Dörnyei and Scott (1995) and Tarone and Yule (1987) when a speaker responds to an appeal for help by an interlocutor.

Extract 5.13 provides an example where V3 self-paraphrases in order to help C3, who is much less competent in English, to understand her question regarding her previous job in media back in China. In this example, V3 is providing support to a less competent speaker.

Extract 5.13:

**Group 3:** V3 (Vietnamese), A3 (Australian 1), C3 (Chinese)

**Program:** Undergraduate, Psychology

**Unit:** Australian Media

**Discussion topic:** Cultural identity in media

1 C3: and er the last one is er (3) er the last one is one  
 2 two student (2) one child {using fingers to count} it's  
 3 er er e::r=  
 4 V3: **how about your previous career?**  
 5 C3: previous career?  
 6 V3: **career yeah** {pointing to the third speaker} **she used**  
 7 **to work in er a TV show**  
 8 A3: {nodding}  
 9 C3: er ok my career?  
 10 V3: **yeah <5> career like your job**  
 11 C3: <5> yeah I was the worker (@)  
 12 V3: **no I mean like your previous job**  
 13 C3: oh my previous job ok  
 14 V3: *what is that? Can you share to Beth 'cause\_ @*  
 15 C3: <6> @  
 16 A3: <6> @  
 17 C3: yeah so er we talked we talked from the last one <7>  
 18 job about my job e::r China has er four biggest TV  
 19 stations er I was job for 2 of them. and er the first  
 20 one is er which is a location in my (2) province it's  
 21 Chang Xu TV Station and the (2) er the difference the  
 22 difference er from the er Shanghai TV Station is I think  
 23 Chang Xu is more richer for the staff yeah but Shanghai  
 24 (2) they are very uh (1) I feel very tired in the er  
 25 place 'cause we have er work from the 2pm to 2am <8>  
 26 twice er 12 hours yeah  
 27 V3: <8> uh

In line 3, V3 asks C3 about her previous career back home in China. C3 is struggling to understand V3's question and repeats "*previous career*" (line 5) to ask for clarification. V3 repeats "*career*" (line 6) and then clarifies what she means by pointing to A3 and saying, "*she used to work in a TV show*" (lines 6-7) as an example. At this moment, C3 is still not fully aware of what V3 means and asks a question to confirm her comprehension. V3 makes

a second attempt to self-clarify her question by providing a synonym after her agreement token of “*yeah career*” (line 10). V3 said in the interview that she was certain that C3 had misunderstood her question when she gave the answer, “*I was the worker*” (line 11), because she knew that C3 used to do something in media before coming to Australia. V3 once more explicitly further clarifies by saying, “*no I mean like your previous job*” (line 12). As illustrated, V3 is very patient in accommodating her own speech to respond to C3’s signal of non-understanding and paraphrases her own utterance. By rewording her own speech, V3 helps C3 to repair moments of non-understanding and promote further interaction. V3 reported in the retrospective interview that she tried to accommodate as much to C3 as she could in order to both make herself understood and to encourage C3 to speak in order to elicit ideas from her for their common discussion topic. Clearly, the use of self-paraphrasing in this situation is not deficit-oriented as it might have been described from an SLA perspective. Rather, V3 used it in a supportive way to help her colleague to make a contribution as illustrated above.

Extract 5.14 shows that self-paraphrasing can also be a good way for a speaker to resolve understanding problems when their own speech is ambiguous.

Extract 5.14:

**Group 8:** V8 (Vietnamese), C8 (Chinese), J8 (Japanese)

**Program:** Master, TESOL and Applied Linguistics

**Unit:** Language Teaching Methodologies

**Discussion topic:** Activities for the micro teaching task

- 1 V8: ***what can we do with the sound? What can we do with***
- 2 ***the sound?***
- 3 J8: no ideas
- 4 C8: do you mean the er the classroom we <215> need we
- 5 can play the video so what should we use?
- 6 V8: <215> yeah
- 7 V8: ***yeah how should we record it?***
- 8 C8: record it?
- 9 V8: ***like how should we (1) how should we record i:t?***
- 10 C8: I use computer (@)
- 11 J8: oh computer



Here, a group of master's students in TESOL and Applied Linguistics are talking about their teaching ideas, and some questions are raised regarding the recording of C8's demo lesson. V8 asks a question, "*what can we do with the sound? what can we do with the sound?*" (lines 1-2). In her interview she explained that she became aware that this utterance was unclear to her interlocutors even though she repeated it. C8 then requests clarification, "*do you mean the er the classroom we <215> need we can play the video so what should we use?*" (lines 4-5). This expression of uncertainty leads to V8's two acts of self-clarification, "*yeah how should we record it?*" (line 7) and "*like how should we how should we record i:t?*" (line 9). Thus, here self-paraphrasing serves the function of clarifying what is said earlier.

Apart from repeating and rephrasing their preceding utterance, VISs also sometimes use self-repair to enhance accuracy in their speech.

#### 5.4.2.3 Self-repair

VISs sometimes used self-repair to correct their own linguistic (phonological, lexical, or grammatical) errors to promote accuracy in their language, as illustrated in Extract 5.15 which is taken from a discussion, on differences between cochlear implants and hearing aids, among a group of undergraduate students majoring in speech, hearing and language sciences.

##### Extract 5.15:

**Group 2:** V2 (Vietnamese), B2 (Pakistanis), AP2 (Australian of Pilipino origin)

**Program:** Undergraduate, Speech, Hearing and Language Sciences

**Unit:** An introduction to audiology

**Topic:** Cochlear implants and hearing aids

- 1 B2: yeah and I think with the er=
- 2 V2: =but do you think like the noise can can prompt to
- 3 **ensorony censor censorable?**
- 4 B2: it depends on how loud is that=
- 5 V2: uh

6 B2: I think it really depends on how you work and how  
7 consistent is that as well like if you are working there  
8 since 9 to 5 or like continue then and yeah definitely  
9 by the time=

V2 wants to ask B2 whether the noise can go to the ear's sensory system but could not find the right word form (lines 2-3). After realising that he has made a mistake, he corrects himself until he finds the right word, '*censorable*' ('*censorable system*' was confirmed as incorrect in the follow-up interview). This conscious orientation towards accuracy helps him to make his question clear to B2 and elicit the answer from B2 afterwards. In this example, a speaker used self-repair to respond to his own linguistic problems. Several instances in the data show that VIS also used this strategy to correct their errors of content or grammar. In general, the data show that self-repair was helpful for "*righting the wrong*" in talk (Kaur, 2011b, p.2707).

#### 5.4.3 Strategies to give linguistic support to the continuing speaker

There were several instances in the data where VISs made strategic efforts to help another speaker to negotiate meaning successfully when s/he was having a linguistic problem. These were realized using other-repair and utterance completion.

##### 5.4.3.1 Other-repair

In addition to re-adjusting their own speech to improve comprehensibility and accuracy, in the following example a VIS attempts to correct speech made by another speaker in order to enhance linguistic accuracy. Extract 5.16 from a discussion among students in TESOL and Applied Linguistics illustrates how a VIS used other-repair to correct her peer's pronunciation.

#### Extract 5.16:

**Group 8:** V8 (Vietnamese), C8 (Chinese), J7 (Japanese)  
**Program:** Master, TESOL and Applied Linguistics  
**Unit:** Language Teaching Methodologies

**Discussion topic: Activities for the micro teaching task**

1 C8: <103> no no no no I mean I mean it is just to me  
2 that for example so methodology you can you know it's  
3 not necessary you must do that so that's the example  
4 some <pvc> {procedure} </pvc> ok  
5 V8: *what? sorry?*  
6 C8: oh er how could you show your methodology if you  
7 don't know how to do that? I don't think it is necessary  
8 to show all details about that=  
9 V8: =come on {pointing at the computer screen} it is  
10 read it is read in the requirements  
11 J8: yeah yeah  
12 C8: yeah yeah for example but this er <pvc>  
13 {implementation} </pvc> also included also included in  
14 <pvc> {procedure} </pvc> explanation you can choose that  
15 not that one and er  
16 V8: *what?*  
17 C8: what you can choose just just to show your <pvc>  
18 (procedure) </pvc> explanation and the questioning and  
19 the er not er about the methodologies  
20 V8: **PROCEDURE** explanation <104> and questioning  
21 C8: <104> yeah  
22 V8: *yeah well wow (@)*  
23 J8: what do you mean? (@)  
24 V8: *er I mean what er procedure*  
25 C8: yes procedure just to show your teacher's procedures  
26 gesturing: moving her hands}

In the above example, C8 is presenting ideas for her microteaching section in order to get feedback from her group peers before presenting in front of the class. She wrongly pronounces the word 'procedure' three times (lines 4, 14 and 18) when describing the methodology used. V8 responds with "what? sorry?" (line 5) after she makes the pronunciation mistake for the first time, and "what?" (line 16) after the mistake is repeated. C8 seems to be not understand V8's point and goes on with her explanation. V8 reported in the retrospective interview that she provided an accurate pronunciation of that word, "PROCEDURE" (line 20), in order to correct C8's pronunciation after loud repetition. This correction by V8 is acknowledged by C8 via a backchannel "yeah" (line 21). Eventually, V8's repair works, as C8 moves on in the conversation without repeating her previous

mistake, as can be seen in the correct pronunciation used in line 24, “*er I mean what er procedure*”.

This strategy is referred to by Mauranen (2006b) as interactive repair, one that occurs when an attempt is made to correct another speaker’s mistake.

In addition, VISs frequently took a turn to complete another speaker’s preceding utterance in order to give lexical support.

#### 5.4.3.2 Utterance completion

As discussed in Chapter 3, utterance completion (UC) has not been discussed as extensively as other strategies in ELF communication research. In line with findings from previous studies (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2010b), the strategy principally appears in the data in the form of a short lexical units or phrases, and is most frequently used to show support, involvement and agreement to the continuing speakers. Extract 5.17 from a discussion on accounting practices shows how VISs used UC to give lexical or terminological assistance in response to a signal of lexical difficulty by the previous speaker.

##### Extract 5.17:

**Group 6:** V6 (Vietnamese), N6 (Nigerian), B6 (Bangladeshi)

**Program:** Master, Information Technology

**Unit:** Cryptography and information security

**Discussion topic:** Security evaluation of credit pay and Apple Pay

- 1 U1: because you have to have like this what it is called
- 2 you’re er judgmental sense or what’s that {thinking}=
- 3 V1: **=accounting=**
- 4 U1: I can’t put it=
- 5 V1: **=accounting professional judgement**
- 6 K1: accountability?
- 7 U1: no you=
- 8 V1: **=you have to do something**
- 9 U1: no you are not supposed to=
- 10 K1: ok anyway whatever
- 11 V1: **professional judgement right?**
- 12 U1: yeah professional judgement yeah

In this scenario, U1 is struggling to find the right words/phrase to describe the ability to evaluate and judge accounting practices. He repeatedly reveals this difficulty explicitly, "*what it is called*" (line 1), "*what's that*" (line 2), and a self-paraphrasing effort, "*you're judgmental sense or*" (line 2). Here, both U1 and V1 are collaboratively involved in the process of thinking and producing the right words or expressions. This is observed in V1's first effort to provide "*=accounting=*" (line 3) which is incomplete. U1, in his turn, continues to show his difficulty with an implicit request, "*I can't put it*" (line 4). V1 then completes U1's turn by providing the specialized term of "*accounting professional judgement*" (line 5) after a few moments' thought. However, it takes U1 a while to really understand the phrase suggested by V1, and he eventually agrees, "*yeah professional judgement yeah*" (line 12). V1 confirmed in the retrospective interview that, in this situation, his aim was not to claim a turn but to provide lexical support in response to U1's search for the right word, which he understood as an appeal for help. U1 again continues to hold the floor. V1's strategic completion of the preceding speech in this case contributes to the continuing process of meaning negotiation.

Other functions of UC which go beyond the level of meaning negotiation to develop discussion will be discussed later in Chapter 6.

## 5.5 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has presented the strategies included under the first major overall function focusing on how VISs prepared for threats to mutual understanding and how they responded to instances of understanding problems in the discussion. The findings show that VISs were very active in employing different linguistic and extra-linguistic sources strategically and pragmatically to construct and negotiate understanding both pro-actively and retrospectively. The ways these functions were realized included repetition,

paraphrasing, repair, questioning strategies, non-verbal sources, and utterance completion.

In order to promote the clarity and accuracy of their own speech, VISs used self-repetition, self-paraphrasing, self-repair, and non-verbal means to pre-empt potential non-understanding, where they anticipated that an utterance may cause trouble in intelligibility or comprehensibility for their interlocutors. In addition, they also used questions to check comprehension in order to proactively address comprehension problems.

In order to negotiate meaning retrospectively when non-understanding occurred, VISs explicitly signalled their non-understanding of a preceding utterance, actively sought to resolve non-understanding problems caused by their own speech, and gave linguistic support to the ongoing speaker where they were having difficulty. In addition, they frequently signalled their wish to negotiate meaning when they did not understand something. They requested clarification, elaboration or confirmation of a prior turn in order to signal their non-understanding, using various kinds of questions. VISs realized these functions using self-repetition, self-paraphrase or self-repair following signals of non-understanding from other group members. Moreover, VISs also used utterance completion and other-repair to linguistically support the continuing speakers when they were struggling with their own expression.

The overall function of the CSs reported in this chapter is to pursue mutual understanding, a basic goal in most types of interactions. However, in academic discussions, ELF speakers also need to work towards their discussion goals. Chapter 6 will present the second and third overall functions of CSs found in the data which are used to work towards these goals. The functions of CSs identified, and the way in which they are realized in the data, will be

discussed together in Chapter 7 with a view to considering the pedagogical implications for the teaching of CSs to Vietnamese EFL students.

## Chapter 6: Strategies for enhancing communication in academic discussions

### 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on how VISs used CSs to construct or negotiate meaning to facilitate understanding in authentic discussions. However, in a high-stakes communication context such as goal-oriented academic discussions in the present study, apart from arriving at mutual understanding in given instances in interaction, ELF speakers need to enhance communication as they seek to achieve their discussion goals. My analysis of CSs used by the VISs includes any possible communicative behaviours that had the function of strategically moving the discussion towards achieving other discussion goals. While VISs are often seen as being reluctant in class discussions (Yates & Nguyen, 2012), little is known about whether and how they use strategies to maintain the smooth flow of interaction and progress a discussion to the completion of its goals.

In this chapter, I will discuss the second and the third overall functions (categories) of CSs introduced in Chapter 7, that is, to: (2) smooth the interaction and (3) enhance the completion of a task in pursuit of the communication goals at the discourse level. These two overall functions were realized, respectively, by a wide range of “interaction-enhancement” and “production-enhancement” CSs.

This chapter will begin in Section 6.2 with an overview of these two overall functions of CSs. This will be followed by Sections 6.3 and 6.4 with evidence of how CSs helped VISs, respectively, to smooth interactions and develop discussions. Section 6.5 will summarize the chapter.



## 6.2 An overview of strategies for enhancing communication

As highlighted in Chapter 3, studies on ELF pragmatics have suggested that ELF is characterized by its collaborative and supportive nature. This is supported by the findings of this study and is reflected not only in the way VISs used different strategies to pre-empt or resolve understanding problems, as discussed in Chapter 5, but also in the way they used them to enhance their communication towards the achievement of their shared discussion goals. This latter category identified was further divided into two overall functions, of smoothing the interaction and enhancing the completion of a discussion, as summarized in Table 6.1.

*Table 6.1: Strategies to enhance communication*

<b>To smooth the interaction (interaction)</b>		
<b>Macro functions</b>	<b>Micro functions</b>	<b>Strategies (Realizations)</b>
To keep the flow of interaction smooth	To build solidarity, consensus, and rapport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Backchannels (verbal and non-verbal)</li> <li>- Utterance completion</li> <li>- Self-repetition with falling intonation (preceded or followed by a backchannel)</li> <li>- Other-repetition with falling intonation (preceded or followed by a backchannel)</li> <li>- Other-paraphrasing with falling intonation (preceded or followed by a backchannel)</li> </ul>
	To gain thinking time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-repetition</li> <li>- Other-repetition</li> </ul>
<b>To enhance the completion of a task (production)</b>		
To develop the discussion	To co-construct or develop an idea or argument	- Utterance completion
	To emphasize a discussion point	- Self-repetition
	To elicit additional perspectives from interlocutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Backchannels</li> <li>- Overt questions</li> </ul>
To manage the discourse	To manage the discourse or direct the conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overt questions</li> <li>- A summary request</li> <li>- A summary/ interpretation and a question</li> <li>- Statements with "Let's ..." (and a question)</li> </ul>

Within these, macro functions and micro functions are identified and shown, respectively, in the first and second column from left to right. The various ways in which they can be

realized are presented in the third column. Sections 6.3 and 6.4 will cover how these strategies helped VISs to achieve communication goals. In each, the micro functions within each macro function and the specific language behaviour(s) used to realize them are described and illustrated.

### 6.3 Strategies to smooth interaction

The data show that VISs were highly sensitive to keeping interactions smooth. This was reflected in the way VISs used several strategies to build solidarity, consensus and rapport with other group members, and to hold the floor while gaining time to think during their own speech. These two micro functions are illustrated in the following sections.

#### 6.3.1 Strategies to build solidarity, consensus, and rapport

In their group discussions, most of the VISs used a range of ways to show listenership, involvement, acknowledgement, alignment, interest or excitement. These functions are closely related and helped to build solidarity, consensus or rapport in their discussion and a positive and supportive speaking environment among their group members. They are therefore treated here as strategies to help the discussion to flow more smoothly. They were realized as backchannels, utterance completion, repetition (self- and other-), and other-paraphrase.

##### 6.3.1.1 Backchannels

Backchannels generally serve more than one function at any given time in talk, and it is not easy to distinguish one function from the other. The analysis of data in this study shows that VISs very often use them to provide feedback to the speaker. This supports the findings in the existing ELF literature that backchannels largely contribute to “keeping the flow of discussion smooth” (Cogo & Dewey, 2012, p. 140).

VISs in this study chiefly used backchannels to show that they were actively listening to and engaged with their interlocutor, and this helped to build rapport. Extract 6.1 gives an example in which a VIS used both verbal and non-verbal backchannels to achieve these purposes.

Extract 6.1:

**Group 3:** V3 (Vietnamese), A3 (Australian 1), C3 (Chinese)

**Program:** Undergraduate; Media, music, communication and cultural Studies

**Unit:** Australian Media

**Discussion topic:** Cultural identity in media

- 1 A3: oh yeah so they have been here for a while er my dad  
2 speaks (3) Mandarin yeah ok he doesn't 'cause my grandma  
3 speaks Mandarin and my grandparents speak both Mandarin  
4 and Cantonese I think yeah. er (2) yeah but ... I  
5 could do like class <46> after that or something I'll  
6 try to learn a little bit <47> you know it's something  
7 which I wanna do  
8 V3: <45> @  
9 C3: <45> @  
10 V3: <46> *oh*  
11 V3: <47> {*nodding*}  
12 V3: *uh*  
13 A3: er yeah but I'm kind of half understanding this  
14 because of that language barrier a bit even though my  
15 grandparents both speak very good English ...

In this extract from a discussion on cultural identity in media among a group of students, C3 is sharing with her group something about her identity as a mixed-race person. V3 four times responds with short backchannels: two verbal backchannels ("*oh*" in line 10 and "*uh*" in line 12) and two non-verbal (*laughter* in line 8 and a *nodding* in line 11). The first three backchannels are said in an overlapping way as A3 is in the middle of her talk. V3 uttered "*uh*" following a pause in A3's speech. V3 reported in the follow-up interview that she used this to show that she was paying attention to A3's talk and accepted her ideas, especially since her speech was long and covered a lot of information about her extended family and the languages they speak.

### 6.3.1.2 Utterance completion

VISs frequently completed the previous utterance of their interlocutor as a way of consolidating the preceding turn. This helped them to show their involvement, agreement and understanding. Extract 6.2 from a discussion on security evaluation of credit pay and Apple pay among students in information technology is a typical example.

VISs often used UC to show their understanding of and agreement with the previous idea given by their interlocutor. This can be seen in Extract 6.2 below on Apple pay among a group of students in information and technology.

#### Extract 6.2:

**Group 6:** V6 (Vietnamese), N6 (Nigerian), B6 (Bangladeshi)

**Program:** Master, Information Technology

**Unit:** Cryptography and information security

**Discussion topic:** Security evaluation of credit pay and Apple Pay

- 1      N6: yes but as you still lose \$100  
2      V6: yes  
3      B6: \$100 yes  
4      N6: but if you lose your PHONE before the person can  
5      actually initiate the Apple Pay you have to have your  
6      fingerprints so you have=  
7      V6: **=yeah it is authenticated**  
8      N6: yes you have to press fingerprints for  
authentication 9      before you can tap

In the excerpt, N6 is explaining that a person must have their prints authenticated before using Apple pay in preparation in case his/ her phone is lost: *"but if you lose your PHONE before the person can actually initiate the Apple Pay you have to have your fingerprints so you have="* (line 4-6). V1 explained in the follow-up interview that, although N6 had made good sense, completing N6's continuing turn by saying *"=yeah it is authenticated"* (line 7) was his way of showing that he was involved in the conversation and understood it. V6 added that he did not wish to take the floor. Thus, the way V6 completes N6's idea with a combination of a verbal BCL and an interpretive paraphrase in a latching of this kind shows a high level of cooperativeness in ELF interaction. Here, UC is both used and received as a

positive way of keeping the flow of their conversation smooth. The way V6 expresses his agreement understanding helps to support the ongoing interaction among his group. This finding is in line with Kalocsai (2011) that, “in the case of collaborative utterance building as a way of helping out, speakers are involved in the conversation to a point where they can guess what the current speaker is about to say next” (p.116).

Backchannels and utterance completion have been discussed in the literature as serving collaborative rapport-building functions, and the data from this study show similar results as discussed above. However, while self-repetition, other-repetition or other-paraphrase have been mainly discussed in the literature as devices for negotiating meaning, VISs also used them to build rapport, discussed as follows.

#### *6.3.1.3 Self-repetition*

VISs sometimes repeated their own utterance as a way of underlining their interest in the point made by the previous speaker. Extract 6.3 from a discussion on the security of credit pay and Apple Pay by information and technology students illustrates this.

##### Extract 6.3:

**Group 6:** V6 (Vietnamese), N6 (Nigerian), B6 (Bangladeshi)

**Program:** Master, Information Technology

**Unit:** Cryptography and information security

**Discussion topic:** Security evaluation of credit pay and Apple Pay

- 1 N6: so Apple has er software and encryption is designed  
2 whether developers themselves do not see certain layers  
3 of encryption because it is like pass credit, if you  
4 design and and er er back in of interface to an  
5 application you have to design er your code has to be in  
6 such way that they provide extra hash keys er so that  
7 you develop you wouldn't see the password of the users.  
8 'cause if you do the password then your business is on  
9 your power and it is an etiquette to do that=  
10 V6: uh  
11 N6: =so er the same idea I believe I want to believe  
12 Apple is actually transacting to promote 'cause that  
13 there's been an accident where er the FBI was trying to  
14 get access to a terrorist er PHONE and they could 'cause  
15 they used an Iphone but they couldn't use their er=  
16 V6: =and Apple couldn't Apple couldn't=?

17 N6: =yes and they have really drove Apple to court. you  
 18 know they tried to get Apple er to design a back and a  
 19 letter of Window for them to be able to access er=  
 20 V6: =**when was it when was it?**  
 21 N6: that happened like a couples of years ago that's  
 22 quite recent like 2017 or something like that  
 23 V6: so, they took it took Apple to the court?  
 24 N6: they took Apple to the court and Apple refused=  
 25 V6: =refused?

In this situation, when B6 is sharing with N6 and V6 his knowledge about Apple Pay (lines 1-9, lines 9-15, lines 17-19), he mentions an incident where the FBI took Apple to court. V6 asks B6, “*When was it*” (line 20) about the time of the incident. Although this might be considered repetition to gain thinking time or for some other purposes, in the retrospective interview, V6 reported that it was because he was excited and curious to know more about this case that he repeated himself.

#### 6.3.1.4 Other-repetition

VISs also used other-repetition with a falling intonation to express their active involvement and interest in the topic of the ongoing interaction. Extract 6.4 provides an example (when this strategic behaviour functioned as a question, it is as discussed in Chapter 5).

##### Extract 6.4:

**Group 7:** V7 (Vietnamese), C7 (Chinese), B7 (Bangladeshi)

**Program:** Master, International Business

**Unit:** Social Media Management

**Discussion topic:** Social Media Management for a start-up firm

1 B7: =but I mean in a day in social media they are a lot  
 2 of content <16> may be thousand or <17> yeah hundred  
 3 types of content but I mean you have to make such a  
 4 content content like this whether into a () of people  
 5 people will focus on every type of content. you you have  
 6 to er I mean transfer all your ideas to the people and I  
 7 think via marketing or video <18> that er you now that  
 8 erI mean to push something specific and people attach  
 9 <19> their er importance to the social media because if  
 10 you add something for then release it then it could be  
 11 better for example er if we talk about er um er (1)  
 12 Dollar-Shave club=  
 13 V7: <16> yeah  
 14 V7: <17> yeah true

15 V7: <18> oh  
 16 V7: <19> yeah sure  
 17 V7: er yeah **Dollar** <20> **Shave Club**  
 18 C7: <20>{nodding}  
 19 B7: <20> and then only works with one video he just gave  
 20 a thousand views watch <21> within a day and then it is  
 21 a subject to complete with Gillette <22> and other you  
 22 know the the a special famous you know the shaving  
 23 products <23> for men something like that er they just  
 24 with er the only one video then they just can complete  
 25 <24> with other things so I can find so the company that  
 26 er I mean uh this kind of content video is really  
 27 important <25> but what er I am confused is that I mean  
 28 er sometimes there are other companies that they both  
 29 start-up their videos <26> for that but as you {pointing  
 30 at C7} said that may be the financial resource problems  
 31 and how can they do. what do you think?

In the extract above, a group of students in social media management are talking about the content they should pay attention to when having their products advertised in the media.

B7 gives an example of “*One-Dollar-Shave club*” (lines 11-12) which is a video advertisement for Gillette on television. This attracts the attention of V7 and C7. V7 repeats “*One-Dollar-Shave club*” (line 17) with a falling intonation preceded by some backchannels, “*yeah sure er yeah*”, (line 6) in an overlapping way. V7 in the interview reported that, at this point, she wanted to show that she agreed with B7’s idea and that she was very interested in it. B7 then continued to provide more information about the content of the video.

In addition to self-repetition and other-repetition, VISs sometimes reworded a speaker’s preceding utterance to show alignment, as discussed in the next section.

#### 6.3.1.5 Other-paraphrasing with falling intonation

While VISs mainly used other-paraphrasing with a rising final intonation to negotiate meaning, as reported in Chapter 5, on a few occasions in the data they used this strategy with falling intonation in order to show their agreement with, acknowledgement of or

confirmation of understanding of a point made by their interlocutor. This is illustrated in Extract 6.5.

Extract 6.5:

**Group 2:** V2 (Vietnamese), B2 (Pakistanis), AP2 (Australian of Pilipino origin)

**Program:** Undergraduate, Speech, Hearing and Language Sciences

**Unit:** An introduction to audiology

**Topic:** Cochlear implants and hearing aids

- 1 B2: yeah what do you think the big reason it is like if  
2 it is like they are not deaf or they are not born with  
3 this hearing loss so why they have this? like the first  
4 think we can consider this like the workplace noise?  
5 V2: <120> uh  
6 AP2: <120> uh  
7 B2: that could be the big reason for the adults  
8 AP2: I think that's the biggest reason  
9 B2: yes biggest reason  
10 V2: **yeah still the main reason**  
11 B2: yeah and I think with the er=

B2 asks her two interlocutors the main reason for children's hearing loss and whether it is workplace noise (lines 1-4). AP2 also welcomes this by emphasizing, "*I think that's the biggest reason*" (line 8). B2 agrees via his repetition, "*yes biggest reason*" (line 9). V2 reported in his interview that he said, "*still the main reason*" (line 9), a rephrasing of B2's idea, in order to show that he agreed with B2 and other group members.

The data show that VISs also tried to maintain a smooth flow of talk by avoiding "dead" moments in their own speech. This is reflected in the way they used self-repetition and other-repetition to gain thinking time during their contribution, as discussed below under the second micro function of gaining thinking time.

### 6.3.2 Strategies to gain thinking time

The VISs seemed to be aware of the need to keep the interaction smooth while thinking of what to say next. The data show that VISs frequently used self-repetition or sometimes used other-repetition to achieve this purpose.



### 6.3.2.1 Self-repetition

On several occasions, VISs repeated their own preceding utterance in order to retain the floor while searching for appropriate words or expressions. This function of self-repetition is widely discussed in CS studies from an SLA perspective and in some ELF pragmatics studies (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Kaur, 2009; Lichtkoppler, 2007; Mauranen, 2007).

Extract 6.6, from a discussion on micro teaching plans among students in TESOL and applied linguistics, provides a typical example. In this setting, C8 is presenting her teaching ideas in front of her group in order to seek advice from her peers.

#### Extract 6.6:

**Group 8:** V8 (Vietnamese), C8 (Chinese), J7 (Japanese)

**Program:** Master, TESOL and Applied Linguistics

**Unit:** Language Teaching Methodologies

**Discussion topic:** Activities for the micro teaching task

- 1 C8: I need you so er show this video for your students  
2 so do you consider to give them the subtitles in this  
3 video?  
4 V8: subtitles?  
5 C8: yeah  
6 V8: er I think that I would like first show them just  
7 that's it and **my task is my task is** like I have two  
8 columns {pointing at the slides} in here and they have  
9 have to fill in what he says about what you should do  
10 <19> and what you shouldn't do  
11 C8: <19> uh huh  
12 C8: <19> uh huh  
13 V8: so maybe the first time I would show them without  
14 subtitles  
15 C8: without subtitles yeah  
16 J8: so the students are going to (2) maybe listen  
17 {moving hands} <20> sometime  
18 V8: <20> yeah (1) do you think they can catch it like  
19 the first time?  
20 C8: may be some can catch the main ideas <21> but not  
21 all=  
22 K8: <21> yeah

Here, C8 is wondering whether she should include the subtitles when showing the video to students, "...do you consider to give them the subtitles in this video?" (line 2). V8, who is the most experienced in teaching English, is trying to give her some suggestions (lines 5-9).

However, she is hesitating in her speech as shown by the hesitation signals and restructuring efforts, “*er I think that I would like ...that’s it...*”, and the repeated utterance of “*my task is my task is*” (line 6). As illustrated, this repeated phrase is followed by “*like*” and a long explanation, “*I have two columns in here and they have have to fill in what he says about what you should do <8> and what you shouldn’t do*” (lines 6-8). V8 confirmed in the interview that she repeated “*my task is*” as she was in the process of thinking about how to organize her idea to make it intelligible to C8.

### 6.3.2.2 Other-repetition

On a few occasions, VISs also repeated the important part of the previous speaker’s utterance in order to gain more time to express their own view on the ongoing discussion point. This can be seen in Extract 6.7.

#### Extract 6.7:

**Group 8:** V8 (Vietnamese), C8 (Chinese), J7 (Japanese)

**Program:** Master, TESOL and Applied Linguistics

**Unit:** Language Teaching Methodologies

**Discussion topic:** Activities for the micro teaching task

- 1 K8: what is the main aim {pointing at the screen}?
- 2 V8: **the main aim the main aim** is e:r to practice note-
- 3 taking skills while listening to a presentation
- 4 J8: uh huh
- 5 V8: like when when they listen to the first time <63> er
- 6 (2) I’m like just not really sure if practice note-
- 7 taking skills should I give them the table already?
- 8 K8: <63> uh

In this example, K8 asks V8 to state what is the main aim of the teaching activity she is describing. V8 repeats the key words, “*the main aim*” (line 2), from K8’s question twice before coming up with the answer. The repetition and a signal of hesitation, “*e:r*” (line 2), observed in V8’s utterance are indications that she is in the process of thinking about what to say. V8 confirmed in the follow-up interview that she wanted to maintain the floor while thinking of the answer to K8’s question.

Using the strategies illustrated throughout this section, VISs helped to create a positive communicative environment to create comfortable, supportive and collaborative discussions in which all group members were encouraged to contribute to the completion of the discussion task. In this way, these strategies served as a “solidarity and consensus booster” (Cogo & House, 2018, p.215) in their academic discussions. The next section describes the more goal-oriented strategies they used to enhance the completion of a discussion in order to move towards the achievement of their discussion goals.

## 6.4 Strategies to enhance the completion of a task

VISs used a variety of goal-oriented strategies to work towards the completion of their discussion outcome. This was reflected in the way they developed the discussion and managed the discourse in ways that targeted their discussion goals. These are discussed in Sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2.

### 6.4.1 Strategies to develop the discussion

VISs used CSs to achieve the three micro functions presented in Table 11; that is, strategies to co-construct or develop an idea or argument, to emphasize a point, or to elicit additional perspectives from interlocutors, in order to help the discussion to move towards the achievement of shared goals.

#### 6.4.1.1 *Strategies to co-construct or develop an idea or argument*

The data show that VISs were actively involved in developing the discussion through the use of utterance completion, often to co-construct or develop an idea and sometimes to develop an argument in the ongoing discussion. They often used them in a latching or overlapping way in order to orient towards the successful completion of a particular point or the whole discussion.

Extracts 6.8 and 6.9 are examples in which VISs completed a previous speaker's utterance in order to co-construct an existing idea.

In Extract 6.8, a group of undergraduate students in creative industries are discussing problems they are having with their project for market research on student backpacks.

Extract 6.8:

**Group 10:** V10 (Vietnamese), M10 (Malaysian), S10 (Singaporean of Indian origin)

**Program:** Undergraduate, Marketing

**Unit:** Market research

**Discussion topic:** Evaluation on a project of market research for student backpacks

- 1 M10: yeah it is because like price was part of what we  
2 want to test <71> like that's why right now <72> we are  
3 trying to=  
4 V10: <71> yeah  
5 S10: <72> ok  
6 V10: **=yeah to conduct experiment (4) like we have to**  
7 **like er test the above price realistic or anyway**  
8 S10: uh  
9 M10: yeah yeah like {gesturing: hand illustration}kind  
10 <73> of graphs <74> yeah graphs that they did  
11 S10: <73> yeah statistics about graphs  
12 V10: <74> yeah

While M10 is outlining the task, her group is trying to do to improve the proposal, “...we are trying to=” (lines 1-3). V10, without any hesitation, collaboratively completes M10's line of thought, “=yeah to conduct experiment like we have to like er test the above price realistic or anyway” (lines 6-7). In the retrospective interview, V10 reported that she understood the focus of the ongoing talk and wanted to support M10 and her colleagues to clarify what her group needed to improve the research project. As shown in the extract, her suggestion is welcomed by M10 and the other group members (lines 9-11), and this helps to move the conversation forward.

Extract 6.9 from a conversation among a group of undergraduate students in audiology shows how VISs use UC to actively help to develop an existing idea further.

Extract 6.9:

**Group 2:** V2 (Vietnamese), B2 (Pakistanis), AP2 (Australian of Pilipino origin)  
**Program:** Undergraduate; Speech, Hearing and Language Sciences  
**Unit:** An introduction to audiology  
**Topic:** Cochlear implants and hearing aids

1 B2: =you know like those they are using the cheap brands  
2 they have some other effects on the brain as well  
3 AP2: yeah  
4 B2: yeah you don't really know how to manage them if you  
5 just go keep experimenting on that you may could may=  
6 AP2: =damage damage your ears=  
7 V2: =**'cause I think like for some cheap hearing aids it**  
8 **is just like simple amplifies everything**  
9 B2: yeah=  
10 V2: =so for example the sound just goes loud for  
11 everything but like for expensive ones like hearing aids  
12 actually it is like divided into like small pieces and  
13 it is like they just amplify what er which one is like  
14 important for the speech for example  
15 B2: yep  
16 AP2: yep

In this situation, B2 raises the idea that cheap brands of hearing aids may negatively affect the brain (lines 1-2). AP2 and B2 agree. B2 further elaborates this idea by saying, *"yeah you don't really know how to manage them if you just go keep experimenting on that you may could may="* (lines 4-5). This utterance is completed by AP2, *"=damage damage your ears="* (line 6), showing his understanding and agreement. V2 then takes the floor to say, *"='cause I think like for some cheap hearing aids it is just like simple amplifies everything"* (lines 7-8), picking up on the ideas expressed by B2 and supported by AP2 earlier. In his interview, V2 said that, at this point, he wanted to develop his two interlocutors' ideas by explaining why it was important to manage the hearing aids. In this way, he moved on and developed the ideas expressed by his peers in order to work towards their discussion goals.

In the data, UC is most commonly used: to give lexical support to the continuing speaker as discussed in Chapter 5; to show conformity to what has gone before in the talk as discussed in Section 6.3; and to proactively co-construct or develop a discussion point in order to orient towards their communicative goals as illustrated in Extracts 6.8 and 6.9 above.

However, on several occasions in the data, VISs used UC in order to show disagreement or to offer some alternative opinions in a way which helped to promote a productive exchange of views within a group and thus move the discussion along. This was often in a latching, simultaneous manner.

This is illustrated in Extract 6.10 from a discussion on security evaluation of credit pay and Apple Pay, when V6 showed disagreement by means of a UC.

Extract 6.10:

**Group 6:** V6 (Vietnamese), N6 (Nigerian), B6 (Bangladeshi)

**Program:** Master, Information Technology

**Unit:** Cryptography and information security

**Discussion topic:** Security evaluation of credit pay and Apple Pay

- 1 N6: so an NFC device is small like your er=
- 2 B6: =but we connect it to the boss system <50> and we
- 3 have to use it in real world
- 4 N6: <50> yes exactly
- 5 B6: but are you we=
- 7 V6: **=but I think you can use with Apple Pay with online**
- 8 **stuff**
- 9 N6: yeah but that you can do that when that online stuff
- 10 has apped in your app
- 11 B6: ok

When talking about Apple Pay, B6 mentions an NFC (which stands for Near Future Communication). B6 raises the idea that “...*we have to use it in real world*” (line 2-3). While N6 strongly agrees, “*yes exactly*” (line 5), V6 has a different viewpoint and intervenes immediately to say that NFC can also be used online, “*=but I think you can use with Apple Pay with online stuff*” (lines 7-8). V6 admitted in the interview that he did not want to wait until B6 had finished his turn before he offered a different idea challenging B6’s implication that NFC could not be used online. This behaviour, although interruptive on a surface level, can also be useful in promoting more in-depth discussion on the issue when different participants have different perspectives to contribute to the discussion.

This more competitive use of CSs does not run counter to the general view that ELF is collaborative (Cogo, 2009; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Kalocsai, 2011; Kaur, 2009; Sheilhofer, 2011; Wolfartsberger, 2011). As Cogo and Dewey (2012) put it, “both overlaps and interruptions “can be seen as supportive moves”, and are “in some cases with competitive overlaps and interruptions used for further clarification, thus functioning as a means of enhancing meaning and supporting the negotiation of understanding.” (p.158)

Although on the surface, several instances of UC in the data may appear to be competitive or interruptive, they actually reflect an underlying collaborative and supportive motivation to contribute to the discussion on the ongoing issue and thus progress the discussion towards a successful conclusion. As such, they are treated here as a strategy for progressing the argument towards discussion goals.

#### *6.4.1.2 Strategies to emphasize a point*

Emphasizing a particular point in the discussion is one way of helping the group to solve the common discussion task. On several occasions, VISs used self-repetition to achieve this purpose. This is in line with Björkman (2011). A typical example is found in Extract 6.11 from a discussion on differences between Australian and Asian women by psychology students. In this extract, students are discussing the age of marriage and having children of women in rural areas in Asia.

##### Extract 6.11:

**Group 4:** V4 (Vietnamese), A4-1 (Australian 1), A4-2 (Australian 1)

**Program:** Undergraduate, Psychology

**Unit:** Gender foundation

**Discussion topic:** Differences between Australian and Asian women

1     A4-2: 20 I couldn't I mean obviously a man no women I  
2     couldn't imagine so I couldn't imagine having a child  
3     like at that at 22 you know having and being a father  
4     with a kid but er is that kind of is I mean obviously  
5     you haven't been back for a while but is it like the age  
6     that people have children is increasing like going  
7     higher like or is it kind of staying?

8 V4: I think **it doesn't change much it doesn't change**  
 9 **much** because I look at on my social media my Facebook  
 10 some girls are just around 25 or something some girls 11  
 that are older than me one or two years old **they have**  
 12 **two children they have two=**  
 13 A4-1: =oh  
 14 V4: **it doesn't change much** and it's just in big cities 15  
 I'm not saying about in the countryside where some girls  
 16 when they are 18 they get married  
 17 A4-1: oh 18 married?

In this scenario, the students are discussing the age for getting married and having children.

After V4 mentions the fact that women in some parts of Asia get married and have children at a very young age. A4-2 is wondering if “...the age that people have children is increasing...” (lines 5-6). V4 responds to his question by saying, “I think it doesn't change much it doesn't change much...” (lines 8-9), in which “it doesn't change much” is repeated in her answer, followed by some further elaboration. This phrase is again repeated in line 14. V4 confirmed in the interview that, because her two Australian interlocutors were very surprised by what she was saying, she repeated it in order to emphasize that that was the reality in Vietnam and some Asian countries.

Sections 6.4.1.1 and 6.4.1.2 illustrate how VISs were actively involved in receiving or developing ideas contributed by previous speakers. The data show that they also paid considerable attention to eliciting other group members' views on the ongoing discussion as a strategic way to bring a particular discussion point to a successful conclusion. The strategies they used to do this are discussed below.

#### *6.4.1.3 Strategies to elicit additional perspectives from interlocutors*

The data show that VISs used backchannels and overt questions strategically to elicit or encourage more insights on a discussion point from other group members.



## Backchannels

The use of backchannels to elicit more talk from interlocutors has been discussed in the literature (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Kalocsai, 2009, 2011; Sack, 1992). VISs similarly used backchannels to do this as illustrated in Extract 6.12 from a discussion on cultural identity in media.

### Extract 6.12:

**Group 3:** V3 (Vietnamese), A3 (Australian 1), C3 (Chinese)

**Program:** Undergraduate; Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies

**Unit:** Australian Media

**Discussion topic:** Cultural identity in media

- 1 C3: so: (2) um (2) I have a little bit awkward about  
2 that point 'cause I think in this age I should have a  
3 Master degree or that or higher than this degree but I'm  
4 still er bachelor degree because it is my second degree  
5 <20> second bachelor degree my first degree is about er  
6 how to be **a pro- a pronouncer** yeah but I er when I  
7 worked when I worked for the TV station I think oh  
8 director it's the interesting work so er I went to  
9 Australia and then I want to learn something about how  
10 to to be a director how be a TV show director <21> yeah  
11 A3: <20> {nodding}  
12 V3: <21> **oh yeah interesting**  
13 A3: cool yeah you've got a lot of experience <22> you  
14 don't need to have the degree in it definitely yeah  
15 C3: <22> @  
16 C3: @ ok  
17 V3: **oh that' fine**

In this extract, V7 uses a three-word backchannel, "*oh yeah interesting*" (line 12), which includes three different backchannels, "*oh*", "*yeah*" and "*interesting*", and "*oh that's fine*" (line 17), which combines a backchannel, "*oh*", and a syntactic structure, "*that's fine*", to respond to C3' talk. As C3 is talking about how she came to want to study again, V3 shows her interest, "*oh yeah interesting*". V3 reported in the interview that the responses overlapped because she wrongly judged when it was appropriate to speak. She confirmed that, as C3 had shown herself to be self-conscious about the fact that she was still following an undergraduate program at an older age than her peers, "*... I have (am) a little bit*

*awkward...*" (lines 1-2), she later responded with a backchannel, *"oh that's fine"* (line 17).

V3 said that, although she felt that C3 was the least communicatively competent in English among the three group members, she had much more experience in the media industry. As group leader, V3 deliberately used these behaviours to share her experience to the group's discussion.

### Overt questions

Overt questions not only play a role in checking comprehension, as discussed in Chapter 5, but can also serve as an invitation to others to contribute to the discussion. Extract 6.13 is a typical example.

#### Extract 6.13:

**Group 4:** V4 (Vietnamese), A4-1 (Australian 1), A4-2 (Australian 1)

**Program:** Undergraduate, Psychology

**Unit:** Gender foundation

**Discussion topic:** Differences between Australian and Asian women

- 1 A4-1: uh
- 2 V4: *=and especially in like the countries that have*
- 3 *really strong tradition that as Japan Korea China and*
- 4 *India is really really worst*
- 5 A4-1: yeah
- 6 V4: ***so does this make sense? what do you think about it?***
- 7 A4-2: yeah I er just relate to what you said 'cause I've
- 8 I've been to a few Asian countries like <un> xxx </un>
- 9 but one thing I do remember is when I went to Japan so I
- 10 went to Japan last year and one thing I was really aware
- 11 of was the kind of really strong er like appearance
- 12 standard beauty standard in media and entertained
- 13 products advertising it was like everywhere and
- 14 particularly it was really public as well, I think in
- 15 the West it was really I mean we have billboards and
- 16 stuffs but certainly like it was another level like of
- 17 stuffs on trains stuffs on buses billboards everywhere
- 18 and it was really present so it was definitely strange
- 19 to me so I mean that's my personal account

After sharing some thoughts about women in some Asian cultures in this group discussion on differences between Australian and Asian women, V4 poses two questions to A4-1 and A4-2 (who are Australian), *"so does this make sense? What do you think about it?"* (line 6).

In the follow-up interview, V4 reported that the aim of the first question, “*so does this make sense?*”, was to check whether her peers could understand her point, and that of the second, “*What do you think about it?*”, was to elicit more opinions on the topic from the two other group members who may have different viewpoints as they are not from Asia.

These questions in the above example helped to facilitate an exchange of ideas between group members. VISs also used several kinds of questions strategically to manage discourse in their discussion. This is discussed below.

#### 6.4.2 Strategies to manage discourse

In addition to progressing towards the completion of a discussion, VISs also used strategies to manage the discourse, that is, to make the discourse transparent in order to manage the topic or direct conversation. Managing discourse is an important micro function that has been little discussed in the literature of CSs. The specific ways in which ELF speakers manage discourse towards communication goals in their talk have not been treated as CSs in the literature from the perspectives of SLA and ELF. However, negotiating topics and directing the conversation plays an important role in clear communication, especially in high-stakes contexts such as academic ELF where students are participating in group discussions for clearly defined academic purposes. Discourse management played an important role in the discussions recorded for this study. Indeed, a discussion of group 5 went off topic and was less successful in achieving its aims due to the participants’ lack of effort in managing topic. This is particularly due to V5, a team leader who was leading the talk and who, despite his advanced English proficiency (8.0 in IELTS) and English fluency, did not manage to control the discussion of the different sub-topics they had to cover. By contrast, some VISs of lower English proficiency actively used some strategies to control topics and direct integration to make sure that all the discussion issues were covered. The

other groups were able to achieve their shared goals because of the way in which VISs supported their peers to signal topic change, balance different sub-topics within a discussion, and ensure that all necessary topics were covered in the discussions and that the groups remained on track. In this way, they played an important part in managing the discourse of interaction which contributed to the achievement of their discussion goals.

These strategic ways of actively managing the discourse in a timely way toward specific discussion goals are proposed here as CSs. This section presents and illustrates these strategies that serve this macro function of discourse management as follows. In the data, questioning strategies were widely for this purpose and included overt questions (Section 6.4.2.1), and requests for a summary (Section 6.4.2.2). Combination strategies in the form of the supply of a summary, an interpretation or wrap-up of previous points together with a question, are discussed in Section 6.4.2.3; and statements inviting joint action introduced by “Let’s...” are discussed in Section 6.4.2.4.

#### *6.4.2.1 Overt questions*

Some VISs used questions in an explicit way to lead the discussion towards a specific goal. This is illustrated in Extract 6.14 from a discussion on the vulnerabilities of Apple Pay in preparation for their group writing assignment. V6 uses a question, not to elicit group ideas as in Extract 6.13, but to move discussion on and away for N6 who has been hogging the floor and failing to consider all aspects of the task at hand.

##### Extract 6.14:

**Group 6:** V6 (Vietnamese), N6 (Nigerian), B6 (Bangladeshi)

**Program:** Master, Information Technology

**Unit:** Cryptography and information security

**Discussion topic:** Security evaluation of credit pay and Apple Pay

- 1 N6: yeah I mea:n <100> every everything everything has
- 2 its own pros and cons <101> and er the pros about in our
- 3 society is
- 4 B6: <100> @
- 5 B6: <101> yeah

6 N6: yeah I mea:n every everything everything has its own  
7 pros and cons and er the pros about in our society  
8 V6: ***so what kind of vulnerabilities do you think are***  
9 ***there to Apple Pay?***  
10 N6: for Apple Pay that's a very good question  
11 V6: ***yeah because we have to write about one***  
12 ***vulnerability***  
13 N6: yes yes er okay so I believe one of the  
14 vulnerabilities is obviously could be er er that your  
15 device itself is broken or you run er that would be one  
16 vulnerability one vulnerability has everything to do  
17 with the security aspects of the of the device right?

N6, who is very experienced in and knowledgeable about Apple Pay, is doing most of the talking in his group, and he keeps talking about the advantages of Apple Pay. In his interview, V6 reported that N6 was persuading with discussion of “*the pros*” (line 7) even though the advantages of Apple Pay had been already thoroughly discussed. He therefore tried to shut him down in order to control the topic and direct the talk towards the disadvantages, which they also needed to address, by posing the explicit question, “*so what kind of vulnerabilities do you think are there to Apple Pay?*” (lines 8-9). He followed this with his explanation, “*yeah because we have to write about one vulnerability*” (lines 11-12), and thereby successfully induced N6 to shift to talking about vulnerabilities. V6 explained that, if he had not made that attempt to lead the conversation, N6 would have continued to talk about how ideal Apple Pay is. Thus, V6’s strategic use of an overt question was helpful in ensuring that the relevant topics were discussed.

VISs sometimes used this strategy in order to achieve their own goals in talk. Extract 6.15 gives an example in which questions enable one participant to ensure an in-depth discussion of an issue that is important for her takes place before the discussion moves on to other topics. In this setting, students majoring in TESOL and applied linguistics are presenting activities for the micro teaching task to get feedback from their group members,

before video-recording them and sending to the lecturer as an assignment of the unit,

*Language Teaching Methodologies.*

Extract 6.15:

**Group 8:** V8 (Vietnamese), C8 (Chinese), J7 (Japanese), K8 (Korean)

**Program:** Master, TESOL and Applied Linguistics

**Unit:** Language Teaching Methodologies

**Discussion topic:** Activities for the micro teaching task

- 1 V8: =which <angle>? like <217> if we seat in a  
2 classroom <218> @then where should we place our er  
3 filming design er device?  
4 J8: <217> {gesturing: hand raising}  
5 C8: <218> yeah  
6 J8: uh I have no ideas  
7 C8: maybe we can talk about it later <219> we can talk  
8 about it later <220> yeah yeah  
9 J8: <219> we can come back yeah  
10 V8: <220> later?  
11 C8: later later later @  
12 J8: <221> @  
13 K8: <221> @  
14 V8: when? @  
15 J8: <222> @  
16 K8: <222> @  
17 C8: <222> @  
18 C8: it's my time @  
19 V8: what you mean? @  
20 C8: no <223> we we just talk about our teaching plans  
21 J8: <223> plan {gesturing: hand movement)  
22 V8: ok  
23 C8: so later we'll solve our problems about <224> the  
24 media  
25 V8: <224> **okay so so basically do do you think any**  
26 **problems with my activities?**  
27 C8: it's just the warm-up activity? just the warm-up  
28 activity?  
29 V8: yeah  
30 K8: yeah  
31 J8: yeah you have 10 minutes <225> so pick up only one  
32 act\_  
33 K8: yeah 10 minutes  
34 V8: <225> yeah so even one activity is like normally  
35 would be 25 to 30 minutes already  
36 C8: ok  
37 J8: after you edit  
38 C8: yeah {gesturing}  
39 V8: **so do you think of er anything to to consult it?**  
40 C8: oh ok how long time for the video totally 5 <226>  
41 minutes?  
42 V8: <226> er three minutes  
43 C8: three minutes

44 V8: *yeah it should it's not too long*  
 45 C8: *and if you play the video for twice you have to*  
 46 *spend er (1) 6 minutes but totally how many minutes*  
 47 J8: {gesturing: hand movement}  
 48 V8: *we cut it we cut it we're sure <227> we can edit it*  
 49 *ok*  
 50 C8: <227> *ok*  
 51 V8: ***so ok anything er <228> to consider so we can move***  
 52 ***on?***  
 53 C8: <228> *uh*  
 54 K8: *I think it's good {nodding}*  
 55 J8: *it's good*  
 56 K8: {gesturing: thumbs up} *move on*  
 57 V8: ***ok let's move on***

V8 has not yet finished her presentation to her group and wants to elicit further advice from her group, “...where should we place our er filming design er device?” (lines 1-3). C8, however, repeatedly tries to insist that this be done later, “maybe we can talk about it later <219> we can talk about it later <220> yeah yeah” (lines 7-8), or “later later later @” (line 11). She explicitly says that it is time for her to present her teaching activities, “it’s my time @)” (line 18), and explains to V8 and her group that “no <223> we we just talk about our lesson plans” (line 20) and “so later we’ll solve our problems about <224> the media ...” (lines 23-24). V8 agrees, but would still like to hear from other members whether there are any problems with her activities, “okay so so basically do do you think any problems with my activities?” (lines 25-26). Other topic management behaviours follow (line 39), “so do you think of er anything to to consult it?” (line 39), “so ok anything er <228> to consider so we can move on?” (lines 51-52), or “ok let’s move on” (line 57) before she wraps up her presentation. V8 reported in her interview that she asked these questions in order to get more feedback from her peers before other members could move on with theirs.

This ability to manage topics shown by both V8 and C8 is very helpful in achieving their communication goals. V8 is therefore able to get in-depth suggestions from other group members to help her to finalize her teaching plan. It is worth noting that, while this type of

strategy might sometimes irritate interlocutors, this is currently not the case here. Both V8 and C8 do not show any signs of annoyance, there is a lot of friendly laughter in the talk, and the group comes to an agreement on how things should be done. In this case, V8's pursuit of her own goals does not seem to have interfered with her group's discussion goals.

#### 6.4.2.2 Summary request

Extract 6.16 shows how effective a request for summary can be in controlling discussion topics. In this context, master's students in accounting are preparing for their group presentation in which five issues are covered.

##### Extract 6.16:

**Group 1:** V1 (Vietnamese), K1 (Korean), U1 (Ukraine's), AC1 (Australian of Chinese origin)

**Program:** Master, Accounting

**Unit:** Accountants in context

**Discussion topic:** Tax and accounting practices

- 1 U1: we cannot make it up that way straight anyway so
- 2 that's the problem that's like really
- 3 V1: **hey yeah please repeat the issues issues we have we**
- 4 **discussed so far again?**
- 5 K1: er the **first one** is the Big 4 company dominating the
- 6 market a:nd <51> people just assume people just assume
- 7 that Big 4 companies are generating their smaller
- 8 companies
- 9 V1: <51> yeah
- 10 V1: ok
- 11 K1: and er which will eventually result in high cost and
- 12 maybe less efficiency <52> but we can discuss about
- 13 things like er some companies which just like to pay
- 14 more for more certainty
- 15 U1: <52> yeah
- 16 V1: *yeah the same results right*
- 17 K1: yeah so **the first one** is all Big 4 companies are
- 18 actually better in taxation
- 19 U1: uh
- 20 K1: the **second one** is ethics and business er ethics and
- 21 tax practices tax and accounting practices
- 22 U1: yeah
- 23 K1: so what's the border between illegal and smart
- 24 taxations?
- 25 U1: uh



26 K1: we can talk about Enron case and offshore if they  
 27 are really related in-depth tax matters in Enron case  
 28 but we can talk about er (2)=  
 29 U1: =offshoring  
 30 K1: =companies that attempt to reduce their tax attempts  
 31 how can we see if it is legal or it is smart application  
 32 of <53> legislation  
 33 U1: <53> uh huh  
 34 K1: the **third point** was <54> offshoring

In his interview, V1 said that he saw some repetition and overlap in the preceding talk, especially by K1 who did the most talking, and he therefore made an effort to see how far his group had progressed and whether there were any issues that had not been addressed. He requests a summary from K1, *“hey yeah please repeat the issues we have we discussed so far again?”* (lines 3-4). His question encourages K1 to recap the topics they have gone through, *“the first one...”* (lines 5 and 17), *“the second one...”* (line 20), and *“the third one...”* (line 34). V1 confirmed that he wanted to make K1 more conscious of controlling topics and kept trying to help to ensure that K1 did not dominate; and that this helped his group to focus on the issues they needed to tackle. However, V1 also expressed his uncertainty as to when he should use this kind of interruptive questioning in his general communication with speakers from other cultural backgrounds.

#### 6.4.2.3 A summary/ wrap-up/ interpretation followed by a question

Strategies to summarize, wrap up, or interpret a topic previously discussed can help to ensure that the discussion is on the right track and that should be particularly important for group leaders. VISs made use of these as illustrated in Extracts 6.17 and 6.18.

In Extract 6.17, V7 is leading the discussion of her group about how to manage social media for a start-up firm.

##### Extract 6.17:

**Group 7:** V7 (Vietnamese), C7 (Chinese), B7 (Bangladeshi)  
**Program:** Master, International Business  
**Unit:** Social Media Management  
**Discussion topic:** Social Media Management for a start-up firm

1 V7: <84> yeah it will be better <85> yeah if you do like  
 2 promotion all the time all the year <86> people will  
 3 realize that it's normal why they have to buy their  
 4 products right? <87> something like that so yeah but **so**  
 5 **we've talked about objectives the environment so how**  
 6 **about the like the firm itself?**  
 7 B7: <85> yeah  
 8 B7: <86> uh  
 9 B7: <87> yeah  
 10 C7: <87> yeah  
 11 B7: I think er another I think is I mean in a firm they  
 12 have to maintain their normal communication very well=  
 13 V7: yeah  
 14 B7: =and for these things is that I think the firm that  
 15 hires I mean the firm that see you online that is the  
 16 firm that employs they have to need to communicate with  
 17 the customers in both ways. with their firms they have  
 18 to communicate in the way that we only the leader or the  
 19 COE that they told something and just simple like formal  
 20 for them <88> but they don't take any er you know the  
 21 targeted firm or some information from their employees  
 22 <89> so I think it is really important to get their er  
 23 communication in both ways=  
 24 V7: <88> uh huh  
 25 V7: <89> yeah

Following some discussion, V7's group has come up with some ideas about the objectives and the environments that should be taken into account in social media management. V7 explained in the interview that she wanted her group to talk about the firm itself and therefore attempted to manage the talk by providing some background information, by summarizing what they had done and then suggesting a new topic, "*so we've talked about objectives the environment so how about the like the firm itself?*" (lines 4-6). This strategic effort by V7 helps her group to focus on what they are moving on and facilitates further discussion.

A similar technique is used in Extract 6.18 from a discussion on ideas for start-ups among a group of students in creative industries. In this example, topic management does not occur in the same utterance but is distributed across different utterances during the course of the interaction by the same speaker.

Extract 6.18:

**Group 9:** V9 (Vietnamese), Am9 (American), AC9 (Australian of Chinese origin)

**Program:** Master, Creative Industries

**Unit:** Creative Entrepreneurship

**Discussion topic:** How to get ideas for start-ups

1 Am9: we can start up our company and make it happen  
2 (2)and we only need to talk to other people and give  
3 them our voice and even if they are not 100% support we  
4 just keep them convinced that (1) we don't have to  
5 promise them a portion or <83> the other <84> things you  
6 know equity or whatever may be  
7 AC9: <83> yeah  
8 V9: <84> yea:h  
9 V9: **so it is all around (2) money and connections=**  
10 Am9: yeah {nodding}  
11 V9: =in this industry  
12 AC9: yeah  
13 Am9: {nodding}  
14 V9: =or you think?  
15 Am9: I think in most industries  
16 AC9: most industries  
17 V9: most industries {nodding}  
18 AC9: even if there is difference cases but very rare  
19 like not even that even I think there's a mini risky  
20 chance of rare considering a life a person that they can  
21 change their concepts that's all money and connections.  
22 and there's one person that didn't have any of that he  
23 probably has one he's the luckiest person in the world  
24 or that he's just one of a couple of stories  
25 V9: **how about people? <85> people you work with?**  
26 Am9: <85> what do you mean?  
27 AC9: **people we work with? you mean the our (2) you mean**  
28 **<86> partners?**  
29 V9: **<86> I mean** you can't start a business yourself like  
30 just only you you have <87> to have=  
31 AC9: <87> just like by yourself?  
32 V9: **no I mean=**

In her retrospective interview, V9 said that, by saying, "*so it is all around money and connections*" (line 9), she wanted to interpret and wrap up the main ideas previously mentioned by the group in order to lead the talk. She also confirmed that she wanted to help her group to define two important ideas for start-ups that they had come up with, "*money*" and "*connections*". She suggested a new idea, "*people*", in "*how about people?*"

<85> people you work with?" (line 25), which is further discussed in the later part of the talk.

The above extracts have shown how powerful questions can be as strategies to manage the discourse. The next section will discuss how VISs used "Let's ..." statements to introduce a new topic or signal a topic change in order to manage the discourse, in the data.

#### 6.4.2.4 Statements with "Let's ..."

VISs explicitly used statements with "Let's ..." (*Let's talk about...*, *Let's discuss...*, *Let's go to...*) to introduce a topic or signal a topic change in their group discussions, as illustrated in Extract 6.19.

##### Extract 6.19:

**Group 10:** V10 (Vietnamese), M10 (Malaysian), S10 (Singaporean)

**Program:** Bachelor, Marketing

**Unit:** Marketing research

**Discussion topic:** Market research for student backpacks

- 1 V10: *ok **let's start** our discussion like er we already*  
2 *have er final report and something like everyone know*  
3 *that we have problems with that <1> because yeah all the*  
4 *results like not support <2> our hypothesis*  
5 M10: <1> yeah  
6 M10: <2> yeah  
7 S10: uh  
8 V10: *so:: like do you think like er what problems that*  
9 *we have?*

In this conversation, V10 introduces the discussion, "*ok let's start our discussion...*" (line 1), and this is followed by a brief presentation of the knowledge that the group shares about the task they have to achieve, "*we already have er final report and something like everyone know that we have problems with that <1> because yeah all the results like not support <2> our hypothesis*" (lines 1-4). After providing this background, V10, as the team leader, raises the first issue to be discussed, "*...what problems that we have?*" (line 8). V10 confirmed in her interview that she wanted her group to be aware of what they should focus on in their

discussion, going from “*problems*” they had with their project proposal first, and then going on with solutions to these problems, which the groups addressed later in their discussion.

“*Let’s...*” can also be used to change topic, as in Extract 6.20 from a discussion on cultural identity media among students in psychology.

**Extract 6.20:**

**Group 3:** V3 (Vietnamese), A3 (Australian 1), C3 (Chinese)

**Program:** Undergraduate; Media, music, communication and cultural studies

**Unit:** Australian Media

**Discussion topic:** Cultural identity in media

- 1 V3: so well **let’s go to the next one** uh (3) alright so  
2 what type of media you guys mostly consume? like what  
3 type of media you guys mostly consume? like I mean  
4 Australian media or American or yeah something like that  
5 C3: I’m a little confusing about the question (h)  
6 V3: like actually I’m not sure if I ask right I mean  
7 like er (5) for your like for all the media er products  
8 that you have consumed like films movies er TV shows er  
9 where they come from? like for me mostly I guess Korean  
10 (h) Korean dramas American movies and er TV shows I’m  
11 not really into TV shows sometimes I guess and I (2)  
12 watch a lot of Vietnamese movies as well kind of mixed  
13 up but the thing the thing that I feel like kind of hard  
14 for me to be into Australia is that I am not consume  
15 much Australian media=  
16 A3: yeah

Thus, strategies to manage discourse were effectively used by some VISs to ensure that all the sub-topics or ideas were covered and thus worked towards the successful conclusion of their group discussions.

## 6.5 Summary of chapter

This chapter has discussed interactional moves made by VISs to support each other in the process of smoothing the interaction and enhance the completion of a discussion task. These can be seen as strategies that help participants in group discussions to move towards the achievement of common goals. These strategies include backchannels, utterance completion, repetition (self- and other-), paraphrase (self- and other-), and various

discourse management strategies. Their presence in the data provides evidence that VISs were actively engaged and highly supportive in their group discussions.

As far as the second overall function (of CSs introduced in Chapter 7) of smoothing the interaction is concerned, VISs used verbal and non-verbal backchannels and utterance completion to build solidarity, consensus and rapport in their interactions, and self-repetition and other-repetition to hold the floor while thinking how to express themselves.

Regarding the third overall function of enhancing the completion of a task, VISs actively contributed to the development of their discussion by using utterance completion to co-construct or develop an idea or argument, self-repetition to stress a particular point in talk and backchannels, and overt questions to invite different perspectives from interlocutors. In addition, they explicitly managed the discourse in their discussion in pursuit of their academic goals. To do this, they introduced topics or signalled topic change, thus ensuring that all the topics or sub-topics were covered in their discussions and that the discussions remained on track. These strategies took a variety of forms including questions (overt questions, requests for summary, combinations of a summary, or the supply of an interpretation of a previous point together with a question) or statements inviting joint action introduced by *“Let’s”*.

In Chapter 7, I will bring together the findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6 to address the three Research Questions under the function-based taxonomy of CSs drawn from this study.



## Chapter 7: Discussions

### 7.1 Introduction

In the present study, I have taken a functional approach to the issue of CSs; that is, I have explored how CSs were used by VISs to achieve their communicative goals in a particular ELF context: goal-oriented academic discussions at an Australian university. Although the communication contexts analyzed in the study were not naturally occurring, they were conducted in a manner that was as close to authentic as possible, so that the participants were able to conduct their discussions as if the researcher were absent. They took part in authentic activities with groups comprising peers who were studying the same disciplines, working towards an authentic goal in their specialized disciplines. My focus has been on how VISs used CSs in their discussions, including some strategic behaviours that have not clearly been treated as CSs in the literature, the functions they served in the discussion, and how they were realized in the discourse. The purpose is to revisit the notion of CSs and to draw up a taxonomy of CSs that can be used to inform the teaching of spoken English to Vietnamese students for their future ELF communication.

The two previous chapters have presented in detail the findings of the CSs that VISs used in order to pursue their discussion goals. These were identified in recordings of group discussions and illuminated by data from the retrospective interviews. In this chapter, I will further discuss the findings in relation to the three research questions outlined in Chapter 4.

*RQ 1: What CSs do VISs use in a goal-oriented ELF academic context?*

*RQ 2: What functions do these CSs serve?*



*RQ 3: How can these CSs best be organized to inform a pedagogy that prepares VISs to communicate effectively in an ELF context?*

In Chapters 5 and 6, the findings on CSs were presented according to the functions that they served in the discourse, thereby addressing RQs 1 and 2. In Section 7.2, I will further address these two RQs together through a discussion of this taxonomy. In Section 7.3, I will address RQ 3; that is, the pedagogical implications for the teaching of English spoken communication to Vietnamese students. Section 7.4 will summarize the chapter.

## 7.2 How did the VISs use CSs in their discussions?

The data presented in Chapters 5 and 6 have shown that, in pursuit of their communication goals, VISs used strategies that can be seen as serving three overall functions: 1) to arrive at shared understanding (comprehension); 2) to smooth the interaction (interaction); and 3) to enhance the completion of a task (production). As communication itself is multi-functional and multi-faceted and sometimes it is hard to distinguish one function from another. Thus, it is useful to clarify how these three functions are understood in the given context of high-stakes communication in this study. In general, strategies of the first overall function operated chiefly at the lexical level, where meaning was negotiated in order to promote mutual understanding; while the second and third overall functions operated at the discourse level. CSs of the second function were used to maintain the smooth flow of interaction while CSs of the third function were to orient towards the achievement of discussion goals at the discourse level, which focus on the outcome of the discussion task (production). These included various problem-oriented and goal-oriented CSs that VISs used actively and flexibly in the data. Table 7.1 puts together the findings from Tables 5.1 and 6.1 from the two previous chapters and summarizes the CSs that they used as they pursued their academic goals. The three overall functions are further refined into the

macro functions (the first column from left to right) and the micro functions (the second column) that they performed in the discourse. The specific ways in which these functions could be realized in talk are shown in the third column.

*Table 7.1: A function-based taxonomy of CSs*

<b>To arrive at shared understanding (comprehension)</b>		
<b>Macro functions</b>	<b>Micro Functions</b>	<b>Strategies (Realizations)</b>
To pre-empt understanding / intelligibility problems	To promote clarity and accuracy in one's own speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-repetition</li> <li>- Self-paraphrasing</li> <li>- Self-repair</li> <li>- Non-verbal sources (gesturing or concrete objects) with verbal speech</li> </ul>
	To check others' comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overt questions</li> </ul>
To resolve understanding / intelligibility problems	To signal non-understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overt questions</li> <li>- Other-repetition (preceded or followed by a backchannel) with rising intonation</li> <li>- Other-paraphrase (preceded or followed by a backchannel) with rising intonation;</li> <li>- Minimal queries</li> </ul>
	To respond to understanding/ intelligibility problems caused by one's own speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-repetition</li> <li>- Self-paraphrasing</li> <li>- Self-repair</li> </ul>
	To give linguistic (pronunciation, lexical) support to the continuing speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utterance completion</li> <li>- Other-repair</li> </ul>
<b>To smooth the interaction (interaction)</b>		
<b>Macro functions</b>	<b>Micro functions</b>	<b>Strategies (Realizations)</b>
To keep the flow of interaction smooth	To build solidarity, consensus, and rapport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Backchannels (verbal and non-verbal)</li> <li>- Utterance completion</li> <li>- Self-repetition with falling intonation (preceded or followed by a backchannel)</li> <li>- Other-repetition with falling intonation (preceded or followed by a backchannel)</li> <li>- Other-paraphrasing with falling intonation (preceded or followed by a backchannel)</li> </ul>
	To gain thinking time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-repetition</li> <li>- Other-repetition</li> </ul>
<b>To enhance the completion of a task (production)</b>		
	To co-construct or develop an idea or argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utterance completion</li> </ul>

To develop the discussion	To emphasize a discussion point	- Self-repetition
	To elicit more perspectives from interlocutors	- Backchannels - Overt questions
To manage the discourse	To manage the discourse or direct the conversation	- Overt questions - A summary request - A summary/ interpretation and a question - Statements with “Let’s ...” (and a question)

As far as the first overall function of CSs is concerned, VISs facilitated mutual understanding in their academic discussions by both pre-empting potential non-understanding before it arose and negotiating meaning when it did arise. These findings support those from previous studies (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Cogo & Pitzl, 2016; Deterding, 2013; House, 2002; Kaur, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2017; Mauranen, 2006b) in that non-understanding is not frequently observed in ELF discourse. However, code switching was absent in the data although English-speaking environment in the study is truly multilingual with students coming from Vietnam and other 11 countries including Australia. This is understandable because there were not more than Vietnamese in one group and members in each group share English as the only common language. With the exception of code switching, a widely seen phenomenon in ELF research conducted in European contexts, VISs were very active in employing a wide variety of linguistic and extra-linguistic resources reported in the literature strategically and pragmatically to construct and negotiate understanding both pro-actively and retrospectively. These included repetition (self- and other-), paraphrasing (self- and other-), repair (self- and other-), questioning strategies, non-verbal resources, and utterance completion as illustrated in Chapter 5.

Clearly, despite their non-standard English (their language was often disfluent or ungrammatical as seen in the excerpts provided in Chapters 5 and 6), VISs pro-actively used a variety of linguistic or extra-linguistic resources to work cooperatively towards shared understanding as they pursued their task goals. This is in line with Cogo and Dewey’s (2012)

comments: “It appears that constructing meaning and managing intelligibility in ELF interactions is not so much a question of surface linguistic features (such as ‘correct’ use of any given grammatical forms), but rather a matter of enacting appropriate discourse processes.” (pp.136-137)

As Cogo and Dewey (2012) argue, these behaviours demand sophisticated communicative use of the VISs, since “the process of arriving at shared understanding, far from being a straightforward matter, calls for fine-tuned negotiation and collaboration between participants with the help of a common interaction procedure.” (Kaur, 2010, p.204)

The second and the third overall functions of the taxonomy illustrate how VISs used several strategies at the discourse level in order to enhance the discussion by smoothing the interaction and moving towards the completion of discussion goals. In order to smooth the interaction, VISs supportively built solidarity, consensus and rapport, keeping the floor to give them thinking time by using backchannels and utterance completion, repetition and paraphrase. These “solidarity and consensus booster” (Cogo & House, 2018, p.215) CSs helped them to build a supportive and comfortable atmosphere in their group discussion, in line with findings from previous work (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Kalocsai, 2011; Kaur, 2009; Pullin Stark, 2009). It is worth noticing that apart from discourse markers such as *yeah/yes/yep, etc.* treated as backchannels serving the second and third overall functions, no evidence of *you know* and other discourse markers were reported being used by the VISs in the data.

In order to facilitate the completion of a discussion, VISs actively co-constructed or developed an idea or argument by completing a preceding utterance, emphasizing a point through self-repetition, or eliciting additional perspectives from interlocutors through backchannelling feedback or overt questions. In addition, they actively used questions or

statements beginning with *“Let’s...”* in order to manage topic and direct interaction. The use of these strategies helped their discussions to move forward.

Consistent with the “cooperative” nature of ELF, VISs used these strategies in a collaborative way, as suggested in the literature (Björkman, 2011, 2014; Bjørge, 2010; Cogo & House, 2018; Firth, 1996, 2009; Jenkins, et al, 2011; Kalocsai, 2011; Kaur, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2010b; Mauranen, 2006b, 2007, 2010, 2012; Pietikäinen, 2016; Seidlhofer, 2001; Wolfartsberger, 2011). However, as shown, their use of strategies extends beyond the notion of simple assistance at the word level in order to achieve mutual understanding; rather, VISs collaborated and supported group members at the discourse level as they pursued their shared academic goals.

While many of the CSs shown in the third column have been widely discussed in the literature, several have not been included in previous taxonomies. As illustrated in the previous two chapters, however, these language behaviours were clearly used strategically by the VISs in the data for various functions and are therefore argued here to be CSs. While strategies to arrive at shared understanding have been widely researched from both SLA and ELF perspectives, and strategies to smooth the interaction have been given attention in studies on ELF pragmatics, strategies to enhance the completion of a discussion in ELF have received little attention. The macro and micro functions in the third overall function and the CSs used to realize them are therefore a new addition to taxonomies of CSs, with the exception of the use of utterance completion to develop interaction in Cogo and Dewey (2012). While discourse management has been discussed in the ELF and CA literature, the communicative behaviours actually used in order to manage discourse have not been regarded as CSs. Yet my data analysis shows that they clearly offer VISs (and potentially other speakers, although these were not in focus in the present study) a strategic resource

in academic ELF communication. As such, within a functional approach to understanding CSs in a high-stakes communication context, these can be treated as “discussion/ task-enhancement” CSs, as they were clearly used strategically to progress discussions towards the completion of their goals.

This study has built on previous studies of SLA and ELF pragmatics to approach CSs from a functional perspective, and has illuminated how CSs actually work in a high-stakes communication ELF context. The multi-level classification of CS according to their functions and the resulting function-based taxonomy have been able to illustrate the range of strategies that ELF speakers can use to communicate effectively. This allows a clearer and broader view of how CSs actually operate in high-stakes ELF communication that builds on and complements previous work.

However, one limitation of the proposed taxonomy relates to the third overall function of CSs proposed in the function-based taxonomy, to enhance the completion of a discussion, since it narrows focusses specifically on discussion-type speech events, thus potentially limiting the generalizability of the taxonomy. This suggests the importance of further empirical examination in other types of communication discourse. Moreover, given the overlap of functions and strategies, there is scope for future refinement both through further analyses of the data collected from this thesis and research in other contexts.

While SLA perspectives on CSs have traditionally taken a deficit-oriented perspective, focusing on their function of dealing with communication breakdowns in NS-NNS communication, more recent ELF perspectives have treated CSs as a pragmatic interactional means to pre-emptively and retrospectively negotiate meaning and develop interaction collaboratively in interlingua-cultural communication. The broader definition of CSs that emerges from the present study is of *any communicative behaviour that a speaker*

*uses in order to arrive at shared understanding and to progress interaction towards communication goals at both a lexical and a discourse level.* This definition covers both the problem-oriented nature of CSs and their goal-oriented nature in ELF communication, particularly in high-stakes contexts. With such an expanded view on CSs and how they work in ELF communication, thus I propose that CSs, reconceptualized in this way, should be more properly referred to as “strategies for effective communication” (SsEC), a term which better describes the role of CSs and how they actually operate in a wide variety of contexts, especially high-stakes ELF contexts.

The advantages of this function-based taxonomy for practical pedagogy are discussed in the next section.

### 7.3 How can these be best organized in order to prepare VISs to communicate in an ELF context?

In conducting this project, I have been motivated by a desire not only to find out what SsEC VISs need to use in order to achieve their goals in ELF discussions, but also to understand and organize these SsEC in a way that can feed into a pedagogy that can help to prepare students to participate in ELF contexts. Insights from participants’ responses to the communication survey presented in Chapter 4 strongly suggest that it is important to integrate SsEC into the teaching of spoken English; and the taxonomy drawn from the SsEC that they used in their academic discussions offers some ideas on how to prepare Vietnamese students to communicate effectively in their future ELF speaking environments.

The students’ perspectives captured in the follow-up interviews and communication survey indicate that their previous English instruction in Vietnam did not prepare them very well to deal with communication breakdowns or to facilitate communication in authentic

communication. As discussed in Chapter 4, the students reported that they had very little exposure to English speaking either inside or outside the classroom in Vietnam. They also indicated that they had not been introduced to or taught SsEC in their English-speaking classes but were becoming increasingly aware of the importance of SsEC in their communication in English in Australia. As discussed, most VISs strongly agreed that SsEC should be integrated into teaching of spoken English to Vietnamese students. With the exception of three VISs who had had more exposure to speaking practice and reported using one or two simple strategies in their English communication before coming to Australia, the majority had to learn about these after they had started their studies.

In line with the need for more focus on pragmatic aspects and SsEC in teaching English speaking for international communication (Kiczowski & Lowe, 2018; Mar & English, 2019), an understanding of SsEC, how to use them for effective ELF communication among Vietnamese students, opportunities for practicing using them in their English classrooms, are crucial if students are to be prepared to communicate effectively in their professional or academic ELF discussions.

The taxonomy proposed above would be particularly useful in the context of preparing students for higher education in English-speaking countries or various professional settings where small group discussions are the norm. It would be also applied to other high-stakes ELF communicative contexts where speakers work together towards a common communication goal. The taxonomy also suggests what may be important for the pedagogy of spoken English in Vietnam.

Practically, the functional organization of the taxonomy of SsEC helps to make more transparent exactly what students will want to be able to do in goal-oriented communication contexts, and how they can work towards achieving these aims. This



taxonomy readily provides a transparent base for instruction and offers a resource for teachers and students.

A functional approach to SsEC is practical in that it teases out how students can use language behaviours at the lexical level and the discourse level to achieve their purposes. As indicated in the functions of the taxonomy, in goal-oriented communication ELF speakers need to negotiate meaning, smooth the interaction, and develop discussion towards the completion of their goals; and they can use a wide range of SsEC to do these things. Since SsEC are organized in terms of very specific functions in the taxonomy, it clearly highlights the strategic purposes that SsEC serve in ELF communication, and these can then be selected for focuses in English classes.

The first overall function of the taxonomy foregrounds the fact that arriving at mutual understanding in an ELF talk “is a joint, dynamic, and interactive process that participants continuously engage in and work towards” (Cogo & Pitzl, 2016, p.339). This clearly signposts some of the challenges that learners of English may face in communication and how to deal with them; for example, how to deal with potential or actual intelligibility, clarity problems in speech, and lexical challenges. The taxonomy allows teachers and curriculum developers to select different strategies used for different purposes for students at various levels, allowing a staged introduction to the idea and use of SsEC. Simple strategies such as repeating, rephrasing or self-correcting a previous utterance, simple questions such as short overt questions, minimal responses, and other-repetition/other-paraphrase added with final rising intonation, can help them to request clarification in talk in the face of unintelligibility or ambiguity in ELF talk.

The second overall function of strategies in the taxonomy, that of those which can be used to smooth interaction, highlights how students can be taught to keep the interaction going

by building a supportive and comfortable environment among group members. The strategies for building solidarity, consensus and rapport during interaction or for maintaining the floor to give thinking time can be relatively simple verbal or non-verbal backchannels (laughter, head nods), self-repetition, or completing a previous utterance. While a student may be accustomed to using these strategies in their native language, an awareness of how these can help to promote interaction in a multi lingua-cultural English-speaking environment is useful. This is particularly the case where differences may make junior speakers reluctant to take a turn to complete another speaker's turn. Vietnamese speakers may be accustomed to seeing such behaviours as an indication of impoliteness or interruption. Thus, an understanding that it is widely used in ELF interaction, provided that the purpose is to show listenership, understanding or involvement, is important.

The third overall function of SsEC in the taxonomy has the potential to offer explicit guidance on how to progress discussion goals in high-stakes ELF communication. An explicit focus on these goal-oriented strategic behaviours is particularly important for Vietnamese learners who have backgrounds where they have not been very active in contributing for reasons related to a traditional teacher-centred classroom and a more collective orientation in relation to face saving (Yates & Nguyen, 2012). Approaching strategies in this way can help to draw to learners' attention that, when engaging in multiple party discussions, they may experience situations in which they need to do something to contribute to the discussion, manage the topic or direct the conversation towards the achievement of discussion outcomes. Pragmatically, learners need to understand and master the use of goal-oriented SsEC: to co-construct or develop an idea or argument, emphasize a point when necessary, or invite their peers to contribute to the discussion; and to manage topic or direct conversation at the discourse level. Using the taxonomy

presented here and authentic data, students can be introduced to how to: take a turn to complete a preceding utterance; give lexical support to the ongoing speaker; invite more perspectives from their peers; contribute their view to an ongoing point; or even to competitively exchange their viewpoints in an argument. The use of strategies such as utterance completion, overt questions, backchannels and self-repetition do help them to achieve their communication goals; which requires the contributions of every individual.

Overall, the taxonomy lends itself to a functional approach to bringing SsEC into the classroom. Since ELF is context-dependent, not a language variety, and very changeable (Kiczkowiak & Lowe, 2018), “adopting a form-focused approach to SsEC-teaching by providing a list of decontextualized expressions to be committed to memory and structured exercises that have little relevance to real-world use is unhelpful” (Kaur, 2019, p.5). Since it is not possible to list all strategies that ELF speakers need in order to achieve their communication goals, and because forms may be used for multiple functions, a functional rather than a formal approach to a pedagogical evidence base is required. Moreover, the expanded view on and taxonomy of SsEC proposed from the present study suggests an investment in developing learners’ strategic, pragmatic and discourse competence, highlighting the role of SsEC in the teaching of spoken in English.

This taxonomy can be used flexibly so that the teaching of spoken English can start from learners’ practical needs and prepare them with understanding of how these can be achieved by means of SsEC. The SsEC identified in this study or other studies may include strategic language or communication behaviours that are routinely and unconsciously used by people in their own language according to their personal style or repertoire. As such, many SsEC may not need to be taught. However, it may be useful to show how these

behaviours can be introduced for practice in class so that the students can be helped to make that shift from their first language to English in using these SsEC.

#### 7.4 Summary of the chapter

The discussion in this chapter has focussed on how addressing the three research questions has resulted in a function-based taxonomy of SsEC which expands the notion of SsEC, offers pedagogical advantages for integrating SsEC into the teaching of spoken English to Vietnamese students, and raise awareness of ELF communication among students. The final chapter offers some conclusions and implications, reflects on the limitations of the present study, and proposes some directions for future research on SsEC for ELF communication.



## Chapter 8: Conclusions

### 8.1 Introduction

The present project has been inspired by a wish to prepare Vietnamese learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to be competent English communicators in academic and professional environments involving speakers from different lingua-cultural backgrounds speaking English as a common language. It explores the SsEC that the VISs in the study used as they pursued their communication goals in goal-oriented academic communication with their peers as they studied in an Australian higher education context. Based on the students' authentic discourse data, illuminated by post hoc reflection, this study has enabled me to explore in-depth the CSs that the VISs used and why they used them, thereby contributing a detailed description of this aspect of their use to our knowledge base of academic ELF communication.

In this final chapter, I will discuss the contribution in Section 8.2, limitations in Section 8.3 and offer recommendations for pedagogy and further studies in Section 8.4.

### 8.2 Contribution

Taking a functional perspective to look at CSs and using an qualitative approach drawing on different sources of data, this empirical study has enabled a reconceptualization of CSs to offer an expanded framework of CSs in ELF communication, which has important implications for both theory and pedagogy. The study therefore makes a significant theoretical and methodological contribution to research on CSs and ELF communication, and has practical implications for the teaching of spoken English to students in Vietnam and similar contexts.

Theoretically, the present empirical study has contributed to the scant literature on CSs used by Vietnamese students in ELF communication and by international students in the

higher educational context of Australia. Importantly, the study offers an expanded view on and a function-based taxonomy of CSs (see Table 7.1), as discussed in detail in Chapter 7 which contribute to our understanding of the nature of CSs from an applied perspective.

This broader conceptualization of CSs moves beyond their role in solving communication problems and achieving mutual understanding, to one that also encompasses their use in both arriving at shared understanding at a lexical level, and in progressing the interaction towards a discussion outcome at the discourse level. ELF speakers use CSs to promote comprehension, interaction and development where the focus is on communicative effectiveness and communication outcomes. They reflect strategic competence (Chang & Liu, 2016; Kaur, 2019) as well as pragmatic and discourse competence.

The proposal in Chapter 7 of the term SsEC better describes how speakers strategically deploy their resources in high-stakes ELF contexts. This new term avoids the confusion between the label “communication strategies”, which originated in and is well-established in SLA studies but refers to only a limited range of problem-solving functions, and “accommodation strategies”, “communicative strategies” and “pragmatic strategies”. The latter terms have been used in ELF pragmatics research, where the focus is on negotiating meaning in context and linguistic accommodation. The term SsEC covers a broader conceptualization of CSs that operate at both a lexical and a discourse level in high-stakes ELF interaction, and reflects a speaker’s strategic, pragmatic and discourse competence.

The framework proposed can also help to provide a portrait of an effective ELF speaker. S/he does not necessarily speak standard English perfectly. Rather, s/he is an English speaker who knows how to use a wide range of available linguistic or extra-linguistic resources to both pre-empt and resolve understanding and intelligibility issues, to keep the

interaction going productively, to develop ideas through discussion, and to manage the discourse of interaction towards the achievement of discussion goals.

This study also helps to bring greater insight into the notion of “cooperativeness” in ELF where in depth descriptions are still lacking by proposing a taxonomy that takes collaboration at the broader level into account. Findings from the present study illustrate in detail how the “cooperative” nature of ELF communication. This extends beyond notions of assistance towards mutual understanding at the lexical level, and, at the harmony and consensus building level, to notions of collaboration and support in managing topics and developing discussion at the discourse level as participants pursue their shared academic goals.

Methodologically, the study offers an innovative and comprehensive approach to investigating CSs in talk-in interaction. The employment of a functional approach which makes full use of CA principles to look at how CSs operate in the data, supplemented by participants’ post hoc reflections through follow-up interviews and a questionnaire eliciting participants’ spoken English experiences, has been able to provide deep insight into the use of CSs. This has helped us gain not only a deep understanding of the nature and use of CSs in the communication activities investigated, but also insight into the English language learning needs of learners. In addition, while previous studies on academic ELF pragmatics have mainly focused on formal, academic speech events or simulated casual talk among ELF speaker students, the present study has been able to explore students’ academic discussions in goal-oriented communication which normally take place outside the classroom. Despite its limitations, outlined in Section 8.3, the research design applied in this study has made a methodological contribution to research on ELF pragmatics and CSs from an applied linguistic perspective.



Practically, as discussed in Chapter 7, the functional approach taken to the classification of CSs in this study makes an important contribution to the evidence base on how language is actually used in ELF contexts, and this offers a valuable starting point which a functional, ELF-relevant pedagogy can be developed to prepare students in Vietnam where “monocultural and monolingual norms still largely underpin actual teaching and assessment practices” (Nguyen & Cao, 2020, p.150). This is an important step towards helping Vietnamese students and other students studying in similar contexts to understand and use the strategies they will need to communicate effectively in their future ELF speaking environments.

The next section discusses the limitations of this study.

### 8.3 Limitations

While the present study has been able to reconceptualize CSs in ELF communication and propose an expanded view on and framework of CSs in line with its aims, the qualitative small-scale dataset has necessarily limited the scope of investigation so that many questions remain unclear.

Firstly, although an effort was made to make the conversations as authentic as possible by using real communication activities taken from participants’ units of their study, the academic spoken data were not naturally occurring in that the activities were not video-recorded in the settings in which they normally occurred. The presence of the researcher behind the camera may have made the students feel observed while speaking. There could also be potential research bias resulting from the view of the researcher as a member of the Vietnamese student community in Australia. These perspectives could be explored in further studies.

Second, the limitation of time did not allow me to include a detailed analysis of the SsEC used by non-Vietnamese participants during task discussions, nor to include them in the follow-up interviews. Their inclusion could have provided greater insight into the success or otherwise of the discussions, their perceptions of the SsEC used by the VIs, and any communication challenges they experienced during their discussions with them. Importantly, it could also have provided a broader view of SsEC use and allowed examination of how speakers from a range of backgrounds use them. These issues can be investigated in future analyses of the data.

Another limitation relates to the focus exclusively on group discussions which meant that the study did not examine how students as ELF speakers employ SsEC in other academic speech events, both monologic and dialogic. These might include lectures, workshops, oral presentations, academic consultations and supervision meetings. This, to some extent, potentially limits the generalizability of the proposed taxonomy which particularly focuses on discussion-type events. Further exploration of CSs used in other types of speech events are therefore suggested. The overlap of the functions and CSs in the taxonomy discussed in Chapter 7 could be refined in future analysis of the data from the thesis and similar studies in other contexts.

In addition, the focus of this study was not individual use of SsEC or the frequency of use of a particular strategy among the participants. It would be interesting for studies to investigate individual SsEC use and how this might be impacted by social-cultural aspects, identify, agency or English proficiency.

## 8.4 Recommendations

The results, contributions, and limitations discussed earlier suggest important recommendations for future ELT practice and ELF research.

### 8.4.1 Recommendations for an ELF-oriented approach in ELT

Findings from this study suggest the value of a functional approach to looking at SsEC and to bringing a focus of SsEC into the classroom, as discussed in Chapter 7. In line with the call for an ELF-oriented approach to teaching of spoken English (Bayburt & Sifakis, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2014; Kohn, 2019; Lopriore & Vettorel, 2015, 2019; Seidlhofer, 2015; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018), this kind of functional approach to the teaching of spoken English could highlight the role of pragmatics and focus on what speakers want to achieve (functions) rather than on lists of words or phrases (forms).

However, ELT worldwide is currently not yet prepared for an ELF-oriented approach (Blair, 2017; Kiczowskiak & Lowe, 2018; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018), and ELT in Vietnam is no exception. While ELF has been and will be the actual English context in which students in Vietnam will need to communicate, in their home country, in the ASEAN region and worldwide, the goals of English programs at many different levels in Vietnam are still preparing students to communicate with NNSs in a way that does not match the actual practical needs of students. There has been a mismatch between the English teaching curricula and materials in Vietnam, on one hand, and what students need to know in order to communicate effectively in ELF contexts on the other hand. The 6-level framework adjusted from the CEFR, adopted by Ministry of Education and Training for ELT programs, materials, testing and assessment nationwide, provides an overall communicative framework for international communication, but the language standards upon which instruction is based remain those of British English NSs. A move away from a focus on

native-like mastery of standard language forms to communicative competence in ELF as a common communication is encouraged (Marr & English, 2019; Kaur, 2019; Kiczowski & Lowe, 2018; Kirkpatrick, 2014). Any shift in this direction should be well structured and include attention to awareness, attitude, teacher education, teaching curricula and materials (Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018).

It would first be essential to raise awareness among Vietnamese teachers of English of the value of an ELF-oriented pedagogy since the majority of university teachers, students and recent graduates in Vietnam do not currently have a positive attitude towards ELF (Ho & Nguyen, 2020). This is understandable, as neither students and their teachers have had much occasion to be involved in ELF contexts and therefore become more aware of their prevalence and importance. While ELF has developed into an independent research field and become an important strand in conferences in applied linguistics worldwide, few Vietnamese teachers of English have had the opportunities for this kind of international engagement. It is therefore recommended that ELF should be included in English teacher education and professional development programs in Vietnam, both at the level of knowledge (an understanding of ELF) and practice (an ability to apply integrate the approach in the classroom) (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015; KirkPatrick, 2010b; Seidlhofer, 2011; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018).

According to Kaur (2019),

it is essential that the teaching of CSs to second or foreign language learners of English includes the following three steps: raising learners' awareness of CSs and their value in effective communication, providing contextualized samples or models of CS use, and creating practice opportunities for the use of CSs in interaction. (p.4)

Inviting students to “reflect upon how English really works” (Mar & English, 2019, p.71) in an ELF environment as part of an ELF-oriented pedagogy would be a practical way to start raising their awareness (and that of their teachers).

#### 8.4.2 Recommendations for future research

The small scale of this study has been able to furnish only a limited data set for analysis. A larger and richer data set could bring deeper insights into the nature and use of SsEC. It would be useful for future studies on academic communication in ELF to look at CSs used in a wide variety of speech events, in order to furnish a more comprehensive description, interpretation and explanation of how SsEC operate in different academic activities and how VISs and other language background students in Asia from different programs or disciplines use SsEC in their campus life. In addition, it would be useful to include the perspectives of all the speakers involved in discussions recorded through follow-up interviews. This would allow an examination of how speakers from a range of backgrounds use and perceive SsEC. Moreover, ideally, future studies should have participants video-record their own conversations without the presence of the researcher so that their interactions can be closer to being naturally occurring. It would be also interesting for studies to investigate individual SsEC use and how this might be impacted by social-cultural aspects, English proficiency or identity.

As far as the context of ELT and ELF in Vietnam is concerned, while this study provides insight into how VISs actually use in the ELF academic context of Australia, more empirical data on how VISs use SsEC in different contexts across Vietnam and worldwide would be useful. It is also recommended that future studies should look into curriculum development of SsEC and how they can be taught and practised. A systematic and thorough examination into how ELF is positioned in ELT in Vietnam in teacher education, testing, curricula and

materials would provide the basis for moving towards an ELF-oriented pedagogy and the teaching of SsEC. All these will constitute an important part of planning for well-structured guidelines from which an ELF-approach in the teaching of spoken English can be developed and adopted.



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## Appendices





## Appendix 1: Advertisement for Participant Recruitment

Department of Linguistics  
Faculty of Human Sciences  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109



Chief Investigator: Professor Lynda Yates

### **Advertisement for Participant Recruitment for simulated communication tasks and retrospective interviews**

Dear Vietnamese international students,

If you are a Vietnamese student currently taking an undergraduate or Master's coursework program at Macquarie University and are taking an academic group activity, you are warmly invited to participate in a research project on how Vietnamese students communicate in English in academic settings. The aim of the study is to expand our knowledge of what students need to know in order to communicate successfully in English. The study is being conducted by Ms. Thu Nguyen to meet the requirements of her PhD study at Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University under the supervision of Professor Lynda Yates. Contact details are as follows:

Professor Lynda Yates: work phone: +61 9850 9646; email: [lynda.yates@mq.edu.au](mailto:lynda.yates@mq.edu.au)

Ms. Thu Nguyen: [REDACTED]

Your participation will make a significant contribution to research in this field and contribute to an expanded and modified taxonomy of oral communication strategies and thus offer the potential to contribute to the improvement of the teaching of spoken English to Vietnamese students.

If you decide to participate, you will be involved in an authentic academic discussion with your group. Your performance will be video-recorded for later analysis. Shortly after that, you will be invited to attend a short interview (about 30 to 60 minutes) in which I will ask you to watch the video and explain what you are thinking at various points and some other related questions and complete a short communication survey.

As a small token of appreciation, you will receive a voucher of AUD ... value for your participation in these two activities.

We will not be asking you anything sensitive, and the information gathered from you will be kept absolutely anonymous at all times. You will be free to withdraw from any parts of the task without any explanation and consequences.

If you are willing to participate in this study or have any further question, please contact Ms. Thu Nguyen at the email listed above.

Sincere thanks.

Thu Nguyen

## Vietnamese version

Phân khoa Ngôn ngữ học  
Khoa khoa học xã hội  
ĐẠI HỌC MACQUARIE, NSW 2109



Chủ nhiệm đề tài: Giáo sư Lynda Yates

### Thông báo tuyển người tham gia khảo sát

Kính gửi các anh/ chị sinh viên Việt Nam tại Australia!

Nếu anh/ chị là sinh viên quốc tế người Việt đang theo học chương trình đại học hoặc sau đại học tại Úc, anh/ chị được mời tham gia dự án nghiên cứu về cách thức giao tiếp bằng tiếng Anh của sinh viên quốc tế người Việt trong môi trường học thuật tại Australia. Mục đích của nghiên cứu này là để mở rộng hiểu biết về những kiến thức và kỹ năng sinh viên cần nắm được để có thể giao tiếp thành công trong tiếng Anh. Nghiên cứu được thực hiện bởi nghiên cứu sinh Nguyễn Thu tại Khoa Ngôn ngữ học, Đại học Macquarie University dưới sự hướng dẫn của Giáo sư Lynda Yates. Thông tin liên lạc như sau:

Chị Nguyễn Thu: số điện thoại: [REDACTED]

Giáo sư Lynda Yates; số điện thoại: +61 9850 9646; email: [lynda.yates@mq.edu.au](mailto:lynda.yates@mq.edu.au)

Sự tham gia của anh/ chị sẽ đóng góp đáng kể về mặt lý thuyết cho lĩnh vực nghiên cứu về chiến thuật giao tiếp tiếng Anh đồng thời góp phần cải thiện việc giảng dạy kỹ năng nói tiếng Anh cho sinh viên Việt Nam.

Nếu đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này, anh/ chị sẽ tham gia một cuộc thảo luận là nhiệm vụ của môn học mà bạn đang học. Hoạt động này sẽ được quay video để phục vụ việc phân tích sau này. Sau khi thảo luận, anh/ chị sẽ được mời tham gia một cuộc phỏng vấn ngắn (thời gian khoảng 30 tới 60 phút), trong đó anh/ chị sẽ xem lại đoạn video cuộc thảo luận mình đã tham gia và giải thích về một số suy nghĩ của mình tại một vài thời điểm trong đoạn hội thoại đồng thời trả lời một số câu hỏi liên quan tới video và hoàn thành bảng khảo sát về chủ đề giao tiếp tiếng anh (thời gian khoảng 20 phút).

Để cảm ơn và ghi nhận sự đóng góp của anh/ chị cho đề tài nghiên cứu này, chúng tôi xin được chuyển tới anh/ chị một voucher (... AUD) cho thời gian anh/ chị đã dành tham gia vào các hoạt động nói trên.

Chúng tôi sẽ không hỏi anh/ chị bất kỳ thông tin nhạy cảm nào, đồng thời mọi thông tin thu được sẽ được đảm bảo khuyết danh tuyệt đối. Anh/ chị có thể rút khỏi nghiên cứu bất cứ khi nào mà không cần phải giải thích nguyên nhân hay phải chịu hậu quả nào.

Nếu anh/ chị đồng ý tham gia hay có bất kỳ câu hỏi nào, xin vui lòng liên hệ chị Nguyễn Thu theo địa chỉ email cung cấp ở trên.

Trân trọng!  
Nguyễn Thu

## Appendix 2: VISS' consent form

Department of Linguistics  
Faculty of Human Sciences  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW2109



Chief Investigator's: Professor Lynda Yates

### Participant Information and Consent Form

**Name of project:** Communication in academic settings

You are invited to participate in a research project on how Vietnamese students communicate in English in academic settings conducted by Ms. Thu Nguyen to meet the requirements of her PhD study at Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University under the supervision of Professor Lynda Yates. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and anonymous: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence. Contact details are as follows:

Professor Lynda Yates: work phone: +61 9850 9646; email: [lynda.yates@mq.edu.au](mailto:lynda.yates@mq.edu.au)

Ms. Thu Nguyen: [REDACTED]

The aim of the study is to expand our knowledge of what students need to know in order to communicate successfully in English.

If you decide to participate, you will be involved in a 30-minute academic discussion with other members of the group that you are taking an academic activity together. Your performance will be video-recorded for later analysis. Shortly after that, you will be invited to attend a short interview (about 30 to 60 minutes) in which I will ask you to watch the video and explain what you are thinking at various points and some other questions related to how you communicate in academic settings and complete a short survey which may take you about 20 minutes to complete.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study will be kept absolutely confidential at all times, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Quotes from your responses to the questionnaire will be used in the thesis or resulting publications but they will always be de-identified. Only the researcher and her supervisor (Ms. Thu Nguyen and Prof. Lynda Yates) will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the study can be made available to you on request if you contact Ms. Thu Nguyen at the email given above.

I, *(participant's name)* have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email [ethics@mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@mq.edu.au)). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(PARTICIPANT'S COPY)

Vietnamese version

Phân khoa Ngôn ngữ học  
Khoa khoa học xã hội  
ĐẠI HỌC MACQUARIE, NSW 2109



Người hướng dẫn: Giáo sư Lynda Yates

**Bản thông tin và xác nhận đồng thuận  
của người tham gia nghiên cứu**

**Tên đề tài:** *Giao tiếp trong môi trường học thuật*

Anh/chị được mời tham gia vào dự án nghiên cứu về cách thức giao tiếp bằng tiếng Anh của sinh viên quốc tế người Việt trong môi trường học thuật tại Australia. Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện bởi chị Nguyễn Thu trong chương trình nghiên cứu sinh tại Phân khoa Ngôn ngữ học, Khoa Khoa học xã hội, Đại học Macquarie University dưới sự hướng dẫn của Giáo sư Lynda Yates. Sự tham gia của anh/chị là hoàn toàn tự nguyện: anh/chị không bắt buộc phải tham gia và nếu tham gia, anh/chị có thể rút khỏi nghiên cứu bất cứ khi nào mà không cần phải giải thích nguyên nhân hay phải chịu hậu quả nào. Thông tin liên lạc như sau:

Chị Nguyễn Thu: số điện thoại: [REDACTED]

Giáo sư Lynda Yates; số điện thoại: +61 9850 9646; email: [lynda.yates@mq.edu.au](mailto:lynda.yates@mq.edu.au)

Mục đích của nghiên cứu này là mở rộng hiểu biết về những kiến thức và kỹ năng sinh viên cần nắm được để có thể giao tiếp thành công trong tiếng Anh.

Nếu đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này, anh/ chị sẽ tham gia một cuộc thảo luận là nhiệm vụ của môn học mà bạn đang học. Hoạt động này sẽ được quay video để phục vụ việc phân tích sau này. Sau khi thảo luận, anh/ chị sẽ được mời tham gia một cuộc phỏng vấn ngắn (thời gian khoảng 30 tới 60 phút), trong đó anh/ chị sẽ xem lại đoạn video cuộc thảo luận mình đã tham gia và giải thích về một số suy nghĩ của mình tại một vài thời điểm trong đoạn hội thoại đồng thời trả lời một số câu hỏi liên quan tới video và hoàn thành bảng khảo sát về chủ đề giao tiếp tiếng anh (thời gian khoảng 20 phút).

Bất kỳ thông tin cá nhân thu thập được sẽ được đảm bảo riêng tư tuyệt đối trừ khi pháp luật yêu cầu. Trong các ấn phẩm có liên quan tới nghiên cứu này, các cá nhân đều không được nhận diện. Các trích dẫn trong các câu trả lời trong bảng hỏi có thể được sử dụng trong luận án hoặc các ấn phẩm có liên quan nhưng sẽ được để khuyết danh. Chỉ có nghiên cứu sinh và giáo sư hướng dẫn được quyền sử dụng số liệu. Nếu anh/chị muốn có thông tin tóm tắt về kết quả nghiên cứu, xin vui lòng liên hệ chị Nguyễn Thu theo địa chỉ email đã cung cấp ở trên.

Tôi, (tên người tham gia) \_\_\_\_\_ đã đọc và hiểu những thông tin ở trên và tất cả những câu hỏi của tôi đều được trả lời thỏa đáng. Tôi

đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này và hiểu rằng tôi có thể rút khỏi nghiên cứu này bất cứ khi nào tôi muốn. Tôi đã giữ một bản của tài liệu này.

Tên người tham gia: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chữ viết hoa)

Chữ ký người tham gia: \_\_\_\_\_ Ngày: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chữ viết hoa)

Chữ ký người thực hiện nghiên cứu: \_\_\_\_\_ Ngày: \_\_\_\_\_

Tiêu chuẩn đạo đức của nghiên cứu này đã được Hội đồng thẩm định các nghiên cứu về con người Trường Đại học Macquarie chấp thuận. Nếu anh/ chị có bất kỳ thắc mắc hay lưu tâm gì về mặt đạo đức khi tham gia nghiên cứu này xin vui lòng liên lạc với Hội đồng (theo số điện thoại: +61298507854 hoặc địa chỉ email: [ethics@mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@mq.edu.au)). Mọi băn khoăn của anh/ chị sẽ được lưu ý riêng tư và anh/chị sẽ nhận được phúc đáp về những băn khoăn của mình.

(BẢN LƯU CỦA NGƯỜI THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU)

### Appendix 3: Non-VISs' consent form

Department of Linguistics  
Faculty of Human Sciences  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW2109



Chief Investigator's: Professor Lynda Yates

#### Participant Information and Consent Form

**Name of project:** Communication in academic settings

You are invited to participate in a research project on how Vietnamese students communicate in English in academic settings conducted by Ms. Thu Nguyen to meet the requirements of her PhD study at Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University under the supervision of Professor Lynda Yates. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and anonymous: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence. Contact details are as follows:

Professor Lynda Yates: work phone: +61 9850 9646; email: [lynda.yates@mq.edu.au](mailto:lynda.yates@mq.edu.au)

Ms. Thu Nguyen: [REDACTED]

The aim of the study is to expand our knowledge of what students need to know in order to communicate successfully in English.

If you decide to participate, you will be involved in a 30-minute group discussion with other members of the group (one of whom is a Vietnamese international student) that you are involved in an academic activity together. Your performance will be video-recorded for later analysis.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study will be kept absolutely confidential at all times, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Quotes from your responses to the questionnaire will be used in the thesis or resulting publications but they will always be de-identified. Only the researcher and her supervisor (Ms. Thu Nguyen and Prof. Lynda Yates) will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the study can be made available to you on request if you contact Ms. Thu Nguyen at the email given above.

I, *(participant's name)* have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_



(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email [ethics@mq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@mq.edu.au)). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(PARTICIPANT'S COPY)

#### Appendix 4: Group discussion details

Group	Major/ Level	Units	Discussion topics	Discussion Goals	Nationality of group members
1	Accounting / Master's Coursework	Accountants in context	Tax and accounting practices	Preparing for a group presentation	Vietnamese, Australian born of Chinese origin, South Korean, Ukraine
2	Speech, Hearing and Language Sciences / Undergraduate	An introduction to audiology	Differences between hearing aid devices and cochlear implants	Consolidating the lesson together	Vietnamese, Australian born of Filipino origin, Australian of Pakistani ethnicity
3	Media / Undergraduate	Australian Media	Cultural identity in media	Consolidating the lesson together	Vietnamese, Australian, Chinese
4	Psychology / Undergraduate	Gender foundation	Differences between Australian and Asian women	Consolidating the lesson together	Vietnamese, Australian, Australian
5	Actuarial studies / Master's Coursework	Finance and Finance Reporting	Contemporary issues in the global finance market and estimation of risks	Discussing unit topic of common interest	Vietnamese, South Korean, Australian born of Chinese ethnicity
6	Information and Technology / Master's Coursework	Cryptography and information security	Security evaluation of credit cards and Apple pay	Preparing for a group writing assignment	Vietnamese, Bangladeshi, Nigerian
7	International Business / Master's Coursework	Social Media Management	Social Media Management for a start-up firm	Preparing for a group presentation	Vietnamese, Bangladeshi, Chinese
8	TESOL and Applied Linguistics / Master's Coursework	Language Teaching Methodologies	Activities for the micro teaching task	Preparing for demo teaching lessons	Vietnamese, Japanese, Chinese, South Korean
9	Creative Industry/ Master's Coursework	Creative Entrepreneurship	How to get ideas for start-ups	Discussing unit topic of common interest	Vietnamese, Australian of Chinese ethnicity, American
10	Marketing / Undergraduate	Market research	Evaluation on a project of market research for student backpacks	Improving a research proposal for resubmission	Vietnamese, Malaysian, Singaporean of Indian ethnicity



## Appendix 5: Interview guide

Department of Linguistics  
Faculty of Human Sciences  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW2109



### **Section 1: Retrospective recall session**

***Researcher reviews the video of the task with the participant and asks the following questions***

***as appropriate at various points:***

- Why did you keep silent/ pause/ hesitate/ repeat/ etc. at that points?
- What were you thinking at that moment? Were you experiencing any difficulty?

### **Section 2: Follow-up interview**

- What did you think of the task? Was it a successful discussion? Was it challenging? Why?
- How well you think you communicate? Did your group achieve all the communication goals? Were any questions left unsolved?
- Did you encounter any difficulty expressing what you wanted to say at any points? If so, what kind of difficulty and how did you deal with it?
- Did you encounter any difficulty understanding what others were saying at any points? If so, what kind of difficulty and how did you deal with it?
- Did you encounter any difficulty in initiating, maintaining and developing the discussion at any points? If so, how did you deal with it?
- Were there any times when you have communication difficulties but you did not make any effort to express yourself, understand others or promote interaction?
- Tell me more about your academic communication on campus? etc.

*(Note: The exact nature and number of questions will depend the nature of the task and the participant's performance)*



## Appendix 6: Communication questionnaire

Department of Linguistics  
Faculty of Human Sciences  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109



### COMMUNICATION SURVEY

#### International students' oral communication in academic contexts in Australia

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond. You will be helping us to understand more about international students and how they achieve their communication goals their academic contexts in Australia.

Please answer the questions as honestly as you can. There are no *right* or *wrong* answers to these questions.

#### **Part 1: General background information**

1. Age: 21

2. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐ Not specified ☐

3. Name of your university:

Name of your department:

4. Level of your study: Undergraduate ☐ Master (Coursework) ☐  
Master (Research) ☐ Doctoral ☐

5. Which year of study are you?

Year 1 ☐ Year 2 ☐ Year 3 ☐ Year 4 ☐ Year 5 ☐

6. Your most recent English proficiency scores.

Name of the test:

IELTS ☐

TOEFL ☐

TOEFL (iBT) ☐

PTE ☐

Other

Year in which the test was taken:

Overall score:

Speaking score:

Listening score:

7. How confident were you in your speaking and listening skills in English before studying here?

Very confident ☐

Quite confident ☐

Not very confident ☐

Not at all confident ☐

Please explain your answer in the box below.

8. Do you think you are becoming more confident in your speaking and listening skills in English?

Yes ☐  
No ☐

Please explain your answer in the box below.

9. How would you self-evaluate your English speaking and listening skills?

Speaking: excellent ☐ very good ☐ fair ☐ limited ☐  
Listening: excellent ☐ very good ☐ fair ☐ limited ☐

10. Did you have any experiences in any other English-speaking countries before coming to Australia?

Name of country/ countries	Experience(s)	Yes	No	If Yes, for how long?
	Living	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....years ..... months
	Studying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....years ..... months
	Working	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....years ..... months
	Leisure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....years ..... months

11. Whereabouts in Australia are you living? .....

12. How long have you been in Australia?  
.....years ..... months

**Part 2: Experiences in oral English communication in academic contexts.**

1. How often do you talk about study-related topics with ...

	<i>never</i>	<i>rarely</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>often</i>
... peers who are native speakers of English?				
... peers who are non-native speakers of English?				
... your lecturer(s) or supervisor(s)?				

2. What do you like about your English-speaking environment at our university?

--

3. What do you dislike about your English-speaking environment at our university?

--

4. Which of the below would you like your academic English speaking environment at your university to be? Why?

	Yes	No
Speaking English with peers/ lecturers/ supervisors who are native speakers of English		
Speaking English with peers/ lecturers/ supervisors who are non-native speakers of English		
Speaking English in an environment, which involves both native and non-native peers/ lecturers/ supervisors?		
Other answers:		
Please explain your answer:		

5. How often do you take part in the following communication activities in your academic settings?

	<i>never</i>	<i>rarely</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>often</i>
Pair work discussion				
Group work discussion				
Whole-class discussion				
Oral individual presentation				
Group presentation				
Meeting with your lecturer(s)/ supervisor(s)				

6. When you use English in your academic contexts, how often do you experience difficulty in communicating with ...

	Frequency			
	<i>never</i>	<i>rarely</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>often</i>



... peers who are native speakers of English?				
... peers who are non-native speakers of English?				
... your lecturers/supervisors?				
... other(s)? Please specify.				

7. Do you encounter any difficulties in your communication in academic contexts? If so, please explain.

### **Part 3: Your previous experience in OCS use and views on OCS instruction**

1. Were you taught or introduced to any strategies to promote understanding or to develop conversation in English communication while you were in Vietnam?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please explain your answer in the box below.

2. Have you been taught or introduced to any strategies to promote understanding or to develop conversation in English communication since you came to Australia?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please explain your answer in the box below.

3. Do you think it is a good idea to teach such communication strategies to Vietnamese learners of English?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Please explain your answer in the box below. Please give examples.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

## Appendix 7: VIS's full feedback to the questionnaire

While VISs' responses to the follow-up interviews were used throughout the two finding chapters of 5 and 6 to illuminate the findings, the data from the survey brings some insight into the VISs' general background and English background information, how they viewed their English speaking skills prior to their current study, and their current academic communication. In general, the majority of Vietnamese participants in the study had at least intermediate level of English proficiency and did not very confident with their communicative ability prior to their study in Australia. However, most of them felt that they are becoming better at their spoken in English due to having more chance to speak the language as it is a must for their academic and daily life in Australia. In addition, most of them had positive attitude towards their English-speaking environment, which involve staff members and peers from different lingua-cultural backgrounds. Most of them were aware of the fact that ELF it is the real English communication context in the current world. However, some revealed some challenges they had when interacting with NSs or NNSs in their current environment. They also strongly supported the integration of CSs and a more focus on communicative effectiveness in the teaching of English speaking in Vietnam. These opinions are important points to consider in the teaching of spoken English to Vietnamese EFL students.

### **Demographic information and English background**

All the 31 student participating in this study were undergraduate and postgraduate coursework students of a variety of disciplines at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia where there is a large number of international students come and Vietnam is one of the top four countries with the biggest number of overseas students in Australia (Australian

Department of Education, 2018). To commence their study at most programs at Macquarie University, students must meet the requirement of 6.5 of Academic IELTS (with no band under 6.0) or the equivalent. Those who do not meet these requirements but are eligible for a particular program may be offered an English preparation course at the University's English Language Centre (ELC) and can commence the study if they can meet the exit requirements of this English course. ELC offers a wide range of English programs including General English, Academic English, and Direct Entry programs leading into Macquarie University degrees, Foundation or Diploma programs, etc. (University's Website, 2020). These courses prepare students with both academic study skills and English language skills. All the participants had met the requirements for entry to their respective course. The overall English proficiency score of IELTS or equivalent of these 10 VISs ranged from 5.5 to 8.0. It is worth noticing that most of the participants did not have experience in living in English speaking environments overseas prior to their university life in Australia. The exceptions are V6, who had five years living and studying undergraduate degree in the USA, and V1, who stayed in Singapore for pleasure for one month. Their length of time staying in Australia was also different among participants: less than one year (4), one year and a half (2), two years and a half (2), and two more than three years (2).

Most of the participants (V1, V2, V3, V4, V5, V7, V9) reported that they were not very confident with their speaking and listening before coming to Australia. The reasons cited include starting to study English late (V2, V3); Australia as the first overseas English speaking destination (V2, V3); not having many chances to speak English in general (V3, V7) or speaking with native speakers (V9) when in Vietnam; having trouble with pronunciation (V4, V5); previous English study focusing on writing and grammar (V9); or spending most of the time studying another language (V2). Only 3 VISs were confident with their speaking

prior to their study here: V6 had lived and studied in the USA; V8, had a bachelor degree in English and used to work as a teacher of English in Vietnam; and V10 had been a gifted student in English in high school in Vietnam. Only some of them who had been involved in some special situations when they had a bit experience with some basic strategies. For example, V5 was introduced with some tips for lengthening the answer to meet the time requirement, V7 was taught to ask the interlocutor about something that she did not understand or know when taking an IELTS course. Similarly, V10, who used to be a gifted student in English, reported that most of the speaking skills she got came from her own experience in actual situations when I was working as a translator and teaching assistant.

### **Experiences in academic English communication contexts in Australia**

However, all of these 10 VISs revealed that they were becoming more confident in their English listening and speaking since being here. They explained for such improvement by saying that they had had more exposure to authentic communication in English in general and the use of CSs in their communication in particular since being a member of their current English-speaking community at university, at work or at home with people from different countries.

*"As I have been here for **more than a year, academic and working environment force me to communicate in English. Having many chances to practice, I believe I'm getting better.**"*  
(V3)

*"I have to speak English in university, at work. I also talk to the other foreigner friends as well as the native speakers here. That's why I feel more confident and my ability of English is getting better."* (V7)

*"In Australia, I have to **speak English every day and converse with people from different backgrounds**, so I think that **my skills are improving**. I am more **used to speaking promptly and listening to what others are trying to say**." (V8)*

*"Yes, I do as I **make friends with people from many countries and also native English speakers**." (V9)*

*"I've gained much confidence with my speaking since I started studies at MQ. **Daily conversation with my housemates, peers and tutors helps me a lot with my linguistic skills**. I've **acquired a number of new words and the process in which I convert my ideas into verbal expression has been quicker than it used to be**." (V10)*

Some others shared the process of adapting to the differences in accents and culture or practicing pronunciation in order to improve their spoken English:

*"After having some **challenges** in listening in English (due to **differences in accents and cultures**), my **spoken English has been improved gradually**." (V1)*

*"After watching **tons of video on pronunciation**, I am now a lot **better at sound production**. I have also **learned the basics of phonetics and phonology**, which allows me to **understand why sounds are produced the way they are**." (V5)*

Most of them reported that they were involved in academic communication with both NS and NNS peers and their lecturer(s) but communicated more with non-Vietnamese NNSs than NSs. There are reasons for this. First, the participants' university are very international and multilingual-cultural so apart from domestic students who are native, there is a huge population of students from overseas, most of which are from Asian countries speaking English as an additional language. Second, certain disciplines, such as accounting or business-related ones, may attract more international students. V7 reported in the interview that the majority of her classmates during her two year candidature were Asian,

mostly Chinese. However, unlike V7, V3, who was majored in media, said that there were almost no NNSs in her classes so that she rarely communicated with them.

It is interesting that all of the participants like their current English-speaking environment. I was careful not to lead the students by not talking about the term English as a lingua franca; however, they frequently spoke about their attitude toward their current academic speaking environment, which is truly ELF. All of them reported that they were aware of the fact that their speaking environment at university is multi-linguacultural, which involved both NS and NNS staff from diverse background, cultures, and languages. Most of them had positive attitude toward their English speaking environment on campus saying that they could have more chances to expose to different kinds of English and cultures in order to improve their speaking skills and develop themselves academically and professionally.

V10 reported that *"This is an active environment. Everyone is always open to share ideas actively, which urges me to raise my voice and get involved."* Many expressed that they liked the environment its people from diverse background, cultures, and languages so that they could have more chances to expose to different kinds of English in order to improve their speaking skills or to learn from: *"It's **multicultural.**"* (V3); *"I have **a better opportunity to practice English by communicating with students who are from different countries as well as domestic students.**"*; *"There are **students from different backgrounds. Their English accents and abilities are diverse,** so I have a chance to **expose to different types of English.**"* (V8). This English-speaking environment is particularly interesting and useful to V8 as she is a Master student in Applied Linguistics *"As I major in Linguistics and Language Teaching, I am **quite interested in the influence of native languages on English speaking styles.**"* (V8); V5 revealed that it is good to learn from those who are better at English speaking *"Almost **everyone else is better at speaking English than I am, so there's always something***

for me **to learn when speaking** with other people.” (V5). V9 said that that he liked the university environment due to its speakers: “Well, the good thing I got at uni(versity) is about my lecturers and friends who are **friendly native speakers**.” (V9). Two participants liked the way staff members in this environment speak English: “The **lecturers and professors speak very clear** and they are **easy to understand**. (V2); “I like the way that **people are trying to speak English, they try to speak in a way that foreign students can understand, and this is an environment that I can learn and fix my mistakes.**”

When being asked whether there was anything that they disliked about their academic English-speaking environment, 4 participants said “nothing” (V1, V2, V4, and V10). Two of them reported that they have problems with accents of their peers (V3, V5). For example, according to V3, “it takes time to **get used to other accents**”; V5, who reported earlier “watching tons of videos” to practice his pronunciation, expressed this concern that the heavy accents of many international students who are non-native “**negatively influence my own accent**”. Two participants revealed that students coming from the same or similar cultural backgrounds tend to group with one another (V3, V9) in the classroom. According to V9, in her major, there are “too many Chinese students who don’t often speak English”. V8, who was studying applied linguistics and language teaching and worked as a teacher of English prior to her study, expressed her expectation to work with Australians “to have a better understanding of their way of speaking” but “there are not many Australians” in her major. V7 shared one problem that she sometimes had to face faced: people speaking too fast and “the speakers cannot repeat them again, so the information I got can be lost.”

The majority of respondents (9 out of 10) would prefer their academic speaking environment to involve both NNSs and NSs of English and shared many interesting ideas which might involve their academic, cultural, professional or psychological perspectives. V2 explained his answer simply by saying “I don’t feel challenging when listening to different

*dialects of English*". Some others reported that is the nature or reality of the working or academic environment to include both NNSs and NSs: *"English is for everyone, so I am not expecting that only native speakers can speak (a) good English... I do not only work with native speakers, I will work with people from all over the world."* (V7); *"I believe that diversity is the true reflection of real-world communication. There are a variety of people with different English-speaking styles both in the **academic environment and outside.**"* (V8). V7 and V8 added that this multicultural environment at university can prepare them to be communicatively competent in their professional communication: *"understand(ing) their accents as well as their cultures can help me a lot"* (V7); *"it would be better for me to be exposed to both native and non-native speakers **to effectively communicate and complete real-life tasks**"*. They acknowledged the benefits of having NSs in his university context as *"It's always beneficial to be around native speakers, who speak (nearly) perfect English so that their nearly **perfect English is ingrained in my brain**"* (V5), or *"native speakers helps me **improve my pronunciation**"* (V10); however, these participants said that it is great to have both type of speakers in their academic communication. According to V5, it is good to have non-native peers or lecturers because he *"can analyze **the differences between the way they speak English and the way native speakers do**"*. According to V9, both kinds of speaker help her *"**gain new vocabulary and ideas**"* (V9). Being aware of understanding problems among NNSs *"There's sometimes **misunderstanding among non-native speakers when discussing in class**"*, she expressed that she is interested *"the **process of trying to understand each other**"*.

V3 was in line with the above participants in that *"it is good to have both"* in her English speaking environment but *"the number of NNSs should be dominant."* She reported that she feels more comfortable and not isolated when being with other non-native peers:



*"As a non-native speaker, I usually feel alienated when in a group of all native. I think they don't really care if I'm there or not, because **most of the time I don't know what to say in the group** if it isn't about the lesson."*

*"Being in a group with all internationals make me feel more comfortable. Sometimes we can easily understand each other without a probable word."*

As she is both concerned about "improving my English" and "**being comfortable with communicating with native speakers**" if she is in a group with NSs also, according to her, "it's good to have both but I **prefer a higher number of international because it might be a chance for native people to be patient and listen respectfully to our "broken English"**."

Although the majority of VISs had positive attitude towards their English-speaking environment which is truly ELF, there were several difficulties they were facing in their academic communication reported. Some participants shared the difficulties they have in their English communication with people from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds in their academic context. These include fast speaking speed and complex language and structures of NSs (V2, V5, V7); one's own accent/ pronunciation, specialized terminology or contextually appropriate vocabulary (V3, V4, V5, V9); one's own grammar when speaking (V5); ensuring proper grammar while speaking; accents of NNSs (V5, V9), misunderstanding other speakers due to their word choice and unclear explanation (V5, V9, V10).

Some participants shared the difficulties they have which revolve around fast speaking speed of NSs; one's own accent/ pronunciation, vocabulary, ensuring proper grammar while speaking; accents of NNSs, misunderstanding among speakers. The following quotes serve as illustrations.

*"It is difficult communicating with native English-speaking peers, in particular within a group discussion context. Their **speed of speaking** is fast. They often use **complex or native structures** in their languages, in particular when they switch the discussion content from academic to casual."* (V2)

*"**Expressing myself and using the right words.** My **accent/ pronunciation** is sometimes a limit too. And sometimes I **don't understand completely**; I guess instead, or ask again."* (V4)

*"Using **contextually appropriate vocabulary**" or "using **proper grammar without having to think about when speaking**" (V5)*

*"For **native speakers**, they **speak too fast** and they have **many slangs** which sometimes are hard to understand. For **non-native speakers**, the **accents** are the difficulties for me. For lecturers, I think **they have more experience to the international students**, so they speak quite slow and clear."* (V5)

*"Sometimes I could **not find suitable words or expressions** to explain my ideas. With non-native English speaking peers, I sometimes have **difficulty in understanding** them because of their **word choices** or **unclear explanation**."* (V9)

*"Mostly the difficulty **misunderstanding among speakers**" (V10)*

### **Reflection on their previous CS use and CS instruction in Vietnam**

With the exception of three VISs (V7, V8, V10) who reportedly had a bit more exposure to practice speaking and using one or two simple strategies in their English communication prior to their study here, most of the participants had had very little exposure to English speaking inside and outside the classroom in general, had not been introduced or taught any strategies to cope with communication problems or enhance communication in their previous formal spoken English instruction prior to their study in Australia.

They reported that that previous English instruction in Vietnam did not well prepare them with necessary techniques to deal with communication break down or facilitate communication in authentic communication.

*“Somehow in Vietnam, we tend to **focus more on the grammar rather than the fluency of the speech.**” (V2)*

*“My English teacher in Vietnam **did not teach us any strategies** and we did **not have many opportunities to speak with native speaker.**” (V9)*

*“When I study English in Vietnam, I was never taught any special strategies when communicating with foreigners. Most of **my skills come from experience in actual situations** when I was working as a translator and teaching assistant.” (V10)*

They reported becoming increasingly aware of the importance of CSs in their intercultural communication in English, the majority of VISs (9) strongly agreed that CSs should be integrated in to teaching of spoken English to Vietnamese students.

*“In the first year living in Sydney, I **lived with an Australian family**, so I could know how to **maintain and keep conversation** in English like a native speaker.” (V4)*

*“I was **taught to try to talk** as much as I can, the interlocutor **would fix me** and I will **learn more when I speak more.**” (V7)*

They all expressed their expectation that the amount of time for teaching speaking English in the classroom in Vietnam should be increased and there should be more focus on fluency and communicative effectiveness rather than accuracy and linguistic.

*“From what I have experienced, **maintaining and developing a conversation in English is more important than keeping everything correct.** Native speakers can easily guess or understand what you are trying to say. You just need to have a basic level of grammar and pronunciation. Moreover, **there are fewer strategies to learn and remember than***

*hundreds of grammatical rules. Hence, **mastering these strategies may be more efficient for English learners.***" (V2)

*"Introducing communication strategies to Vietnamese students is necessary. Although the learners **may be well aware of these strategies when speaking in Vietnamese** but are, most of the time, **not familiar with their English equivalents.**"* (V5)

*"English is the second language, so the strategies may help students like me a lot. For example, when I had the part time job as a cashier, I spoke a lot, **I sometimes made it wrong and the lovely interlocutor has fixed me** with the right pronunciation or the new vocabulary."* (V7)

*"These strategies also **help students to communicate more effectively** in English and make their speech more natural. While students may have used them unconsciously already, **they would be able to use them better if they receive proper training** on how to understand others and make themselves understood in English."* (V8)

*"It is good to help Vietnamese students improve their speaking skill by **teaching them some strategies** but they also **need to practice a lot.**"* (V9)



## Appendix 8: Transcription conventions

The transcription conventions used in this book are adopted from the VOICE project (VOICE 2011). Retrieved from [https://www.univie.ac.at/voice/documents/VOICE\\_markup\\_conventions\\_v2-1.pdf](https://www.univie.ac.at/voice/documents/VOICE_markup_conventions_v2-1.pdf)

"?"	utterances with rising intonation are followed by a question mark
."	utterances with falling intonation are followed by a full stop "."
WORD (or syllable)	If a speaker gives a particular prominence, this is written in capital letters
(.)	every brief pause in speech (than 0.5 seconds)
(3)	longer pauses are timed to the nearest second and marked with the number of seconds in parentheses, e.g. (3) = 3 seconds.
<1> word	Whenever two or more utterances happen at the same time, the starting of the overlaps are marked with numbered tags: <1>, <2>, <3>  Everything that is simultaneous gets the same number. All overlaps are marked in blue.
=	Whenever a speaker continues, completes or supports another speaker's turn immediately (i.e. without a pause), this is marked by "=",
wo:rd	lengthened sounds are marked with a colon ":"word:: exceptionally long sounds (i.e. approximating 2 seconds or more)
(word)	Uncertain transcription
Word_	with word fragments, a hyphen marks where a part of the word is missing

@	all laughter and laughter-like sounds are transcribed with the @ symbol, approximating syllable number (e.g. ha ha ha = @@@)
(word)	Word fragments, words or phrases which cannot be reliably identified are put in parentheses ( )
<pvc> {word} </pvc>	If a corresponding existing word can be identified, this existing word is added between curly brackets { }
Hh/ hhh	Noticeable breathing in or out is represented by two or three h's (hh = relatively short; hhh= relatively long)
Speaking modes	Utterances which are spoken in a particular mode (fast, soft, whispered, read, etc.) and are notably different from the speaker's normal speaking style are marked accordingly. For example, (<fast> </fast> <slow> </slow> <loud> </loud> <soft> </soft> <whispering> </whispering> <sighing> </sighing> <reading> </reading> <reading aloud> </reading aloud> <on phone> </on phone> <imitating> </imitating> <singing> </singing> <yawning> </yawning>)
Speaker noises	Noises produced by other speakers are only transcribed if they seem relevant (e.g. because they make speech unintelligible or influence the interaction). If it is deemed important to indicate the length of the noise (e.g. if a coughing fit disrupts the interaction), this is done by adding the number of seconds in parentheses after the descriptor. For example, <coughs> <clears throat> <sniffs> <sneezes> <snorts> <applauds> <smacks lips> <yawns> <whistles> <swallows>

Non-verbal feedback	Whenever information about it is available, nonverbal feedback is transcribed as part of the running text and put between pointed brackets < >. For example, <nods> <shakes head>
Contextual elements	Contextual information is added between curly brackets { } only if it is relevant to the understanding of the interaction or to the interaction as such. If it is deemed important to indicate the length of the event, this can be done by adding the number of seconds in parentheses. For example, {mobile rings} {S5 reading quietly (30)}, etc.
<un> xxx </un>	Unintelligible speech is represented by x's approximating syllable number and placed between <un> </un> tags.
Speaker ID	A speaker ID is presented with the initial name of his/ her country and the number of his/ her group. This ID is given at the beginning of teach turn.  For example, V2: The Vietnamese participant in Group 2; J8: The Japanese student in Group 8





## Appendix 9: Reported frequency of CSs identified in the data

Communication strategies		Total	
Repetition	Self-Repetition	76	154
	Other- Repetition	88	
Paraphrase	Self-Paraphrase	66	93
	Other- Paraphrase	27	
Repair	Self-Repair	52	53
	Other- Repair	1	
Questioning strategies	Overt question	22	65
	Statements with rising intonations	36	
	Minimal queries	7	
Non-verbal sources	Laughter	60	155
	Head nod	63	
	Head shake	2	
	Gesturing	16	
	Combining verbal speech and PowerPoint slides	6	
	Combining verbal speech and worksheets	2	
	Combining verbal speech, gesturing and using mobile with Internet connection	4	
	Combining verbal speech, papers and drawing	2	
Backchannels		658	
Utterance completion		45	
Discourse management strategies		22	
Total		1200	



## Appendix 10: Ethics Approval

Dear Professor Yates,

RE: 'International students' use of and perspectives on oral communication strategies' (Ref No: 5201701110D)

Thank you very much for your response. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and approval has been granted, effective 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018. This email constitutes ethical approval only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research>

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Professor Lynda Yates  
Ms Thi Thu Nguyen

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019  
Progress Report 2 Due: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020  
Progress Report 3 Due: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
Progress Report 4 Due: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2022  
Final Report Due: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

<https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/ethics/human-ethics/resources>

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

<https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/ethics/human-ethics/resources>

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

<https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/ethics/human-ethics/post-approval>

<https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/ethics/human-ethics/resources/research-ethics>

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Naomi Sweller  
Chair  
Faculty of Human Sciences  
Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee