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*ELF in the Speaking and Listening Activities of Recently
Published English-language Coursebooks*

ABSTRACT:

This paper focuses on the presence of ELF-oriented approaches in the listening and speaking activities of recently published English-language coursebooks for adult learners and Upper Secondary School students. The listening and speaking tasks are analyzed to investigate whether they provide exposure to a plurality of accents, and offer opportunities to exploit the communicative strategies necessary for effective communication in an increasingly multilingual/multicultural environment that recognizes the lingua-franca status of English.

Introduction

Today English is increasingly being used in contexts of international communication where most participants are non-native speakers (NNSs) who use English as a «contact language» (Firth, 1996: 240) to interact with each other and achieve mutual understanding. It is arguably «the chosen foreign language of communication» (Firth, 1996: 240), which users employ alongside their own and other languages they may know, showing a remarkable ability in making dynamic and active use of their linguistic resources (e.g. Mauranen and Ranta, 2009; Archibald *et al.*, 2011). The international status of the language has fostered the regular occurrence of ‘ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) situations’ (e.g. business and/or academic meetings, exchanges on social networks etc.), namely, «de-territorialized speech events» (Seidlhofer, 2011: 4) in which «there is not necessarily a coincidence of linguistic forms but rather an acceptance that people need to communicate within a certain functional realm despite their possible pronunciation, grammatical, vocabulary, cultural and rhetorical difference» (Friedrich, 2012: 44).

Native speakers (NSs) of English do take part in these lingua franca situations, but «the native-speaker community is irrelevant anyway»

(Seidlhofer, 2011: 16). Indeed, while the world's population who has English as a first language (L1) is declining, that for whom English is either a second language (L2) (e.g. India) or a foreign language (FL) (e.g. China) is growing exponentially (Crystal, 2008, 2012). The increasing majority of NNSs using English in their daily practices is likely to make the non-native (NN) group «the primary force fostering the emergence of “new Englishes” [with] implications for the future character of the language» (Crystal 2008: 5), a view which is shared by many linguists (e.g. Seidlhofer, 2004, 2011; Graddol, 1997).

Changes in the perception of the role of English in the globalized world have indeed influenced the discourse about approaches to English language teaching (ELT) (e.g. Jenkins, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2004, 2011; Dewey, 2012). However, there still seems to be a divergence between what is happening to English in the real world and how English is thought of as a language-subject in the context of ELT (e.g. Seidlhofer, 2011).

A crucial point is whether or not, and to what extent, the recognition of the special status of English as ‘the’ global lingua franca has so far resulted into any adjustments in ‘how’ the language is taught (methodology, materials, contexts), ‘what’ is taught of the language, ‘by whom’ (ideally) and to ‘what purpose(s)’. A critical rethinking of these aspects should include (if not be based on) careful considerations of the changes, in both learners and learners’ needs, brought about by globalization. It should address the «(un)suitability of conventional frames of reference for learning/teaching English» (Dewey, 2012: 143), particularly with respect to «inherited beliefs about standardization and the monolithic approach this entails» (Dewey, 2012: 153), to the assumption that the goal for learners of English is to achieve native-like competence to be able to use English in interactions with native speakers only, and to those linguistic models traditionally regarded as ‘the’ learning targets (e.g. Alptekin, 2002; Seidlhofer, 2011).

In the light of the change in the role (and nature) of English, the adoption of an ELF-oriented perspective in ELT (e.g. Brumfit, 2002; Gnutzmann and Intemann, 2005; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Dewey and Cogo, 2007; McKay and Bokhorst-Heng, 2008; Seidlhofer, 2004, 2011) would imply a shift of the pedagogical focus from ‘form’ to ‘use’, making reference to what learners actually do with the language, and to how and with whom they actually communicate and will communicate in English. In other words, a shift towards a pedagogical focus that includes the ‘user’ and the ‘context of use’, and not only the ‘learner’ and the ‘context of learning’. Indeed, people who learn English today are both ‘learners’ and

‘users’ of it (D’Andrea, 2012). In Seidlhofer’s words «[l]earners of English as a foreign language assume the role of users of English as a lingua franca. As they move into contexts of use outside the classroom, EFL learners become ELF users» (Seidlhofer, 2011: 187).

Taking this dual role into account, an ELF perspective in ELT would imply closer attention to all the resources the ‘learner’ can exploit to become an efficient ‘user’. Particularly, learners should be encouraged to wholly draw upon their linguistic resources, including their L1, and take advantage of their previous experience(s) of (at least) one other language. This would help them learn how «to language» (Seidlhofer, 2011: 189), that is, get the meaning across irrespective of the possible (non-)conformity of their English against ENL (English as a Native Language) norms. It is this capability to naturally put the language to effective communicative use that traditional ELT pedagogy fails to foster. In fact, by setting ENL as the only legitimate ultimate goal, it does not allow learners to appropriate the language for themselves and their communicative needs. In an ELF perspective, instead, «the focus should not be on the *forms* of learner language and how far they deviate from NS norms, but on how effectively they *function* in making meaning» (Seidlhofer, 2011: 195, italics in original).

One way in which this alternative approach in ELT could be implemented may be that of designing didactic materials, particularly ELT coursebooks, with activities reflecting the heterogeneity of contexts of use outside the classroom, and developing the communicative competence which is needed in such diverse contexts.

1. ELF and ELT textbooks

ELF research and empirical findings concerning current principles and practice in ELT (e.g. Howatt and Widdowson, 2004) could help shed light on how an ELF-oriented pedagogy might work, and at the same time offer teachers some useful tips about what they could possibly change/incorporate in their teaching practices. The language coursebook – a crucial tool for ELT teachers – might be a good starting point.

Given the pedagogic implications connected with the change in the role of English, and the theoretical and methodological challenges posed by ELF studies, one would expect teaching materials to reflect the new multifaceted reality that English represents today. As Hutchinson and Torres (1994) maintain, «[...] the textbook has a vital and positive part to play in the day-to-day job of teaching English, and [...] its importance

becomes even greater in periods of change» (Hutchinson and Torres 1994: 317). The great importance of textbooks in a changing environment is highlighted also by Matsuda (2012), who maintains that «few teachers [...] have a rich enough knowledge of and personal experience with all of the varieties and functions of English that exist today, and thus they need to rely on teaching materials in order to introduce students to the linguistic and cultural diversity of English» (Matsuda, 2012: 169).

However, investigation into teaching materials (e.g. Gilmore, 2004; Gray, 2010; Tomlinson, 2011) and, in particular, recent research on the presence of ELF in English language coursebooks (e.g. Kivistö, 2005; Eggert, 2007; Takahishi, 2010; Vettorel and Corrizato, 2012; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013; Naji Meidani and Pishghadam, 2013; Vettorel and Lopriore, 2013) have shown that even though «[some] recent textbooks [adhere] more to the principles of EIL [...] [and] try to depict more aspects of the Expanding and Outer Circle countries» (Naji Meidani and Pishghadam, 2013: 93), and «some changes have occurred between the recorded materials of a decade ago and more recent textbook recordings» (Eggert, 2007: 30), it seems that «ELF/EIL have not yet taken hold in English language teaching» (Eggert, 2007: 32).

Apart from a generally recognized trend to include in textbooks multiculturally-oriented content and 'globalized' topics, and in spite of an emerging tendency to reflect on the sociocultural aspects of the spread of English on a global scale (Vettorel and Lopriore, 2013), merely linguistically speaking, ELT coursebooks appear to have remained quite traditional in their approach (Seidlhofer, 2011). ENL (especially the standard British and American English) is still proposed as the target model, despite the variety of grammatical and lexical forms that English displays today (McKay, 2012). Particularly, «the existence of multiple legitimate varieties of English is rarely represented in ELT textbooks» (Matsuda, 2012: 171). If, on the one hand, there seems to be acknowledgment that EIL/ELF is «not any longer tied to one (Anglophone) culture» (Vettorel and Lopriore, 2013: 487), on the other hand ELF settings of language use appear to be regarded as largely marginal. This is confirmed both by the representation of English users and accents and by the kind of interactions where English is employed. The main characters in textbooks still come from Inner-Circle countries and contribute more substantially than NNSs to the dialogues, while accents are only marginally representative of NNSs (e.g. Matsuda, 2002; Kopperoinen, 2011; Naji Meidani and Pishghadam, 2013); most interactions are still among NSs or between NNSs and NSs (e.g. Matsuda, 2002). Therefore, what emerges from the analyses of textbooks is that «[o]verall,

materials published specifically for classroom use [...] tend to be based on and reinforce a common assumption in the field of ELT that English is the language of the Inner Circle, particularly that of the US and of the UK, and the reason for learning English is to interact with native English speakers» (Matsuda, 2012: 171).

Such representation of English and of its users does not seem to mirror today's complex reality, since it fails to acknowledge the increased use of this language among non-native speakers, and the heterogeneity of its forms and functions. This is not likely to help learners become aware of and prepare for the encounter with other varieties (and non-native interlocutors) outside the language classroom. An inclusion of ELF research findings in the designing of ELT materials might be helpful for learners to exploit the proposed tasks/activities to familiarize with the multifaceted reality of English (use) outside the classroom. In turn, this would entail more realistic expectations about attainable linguistic goals, and enhance students' confidence in achieving successful communication as legitimate members of the community of English users. As Vettorel and Lopriore put it (2013: 484), «English cannot any longer be considered a monolithic entity, not least in didactic terms». A more comprehensive approach in the designing of language coursebooks that would provide «“appropriate” and realistic materials» (Vettorel and Lopriore, 2013: 485) and take into account the increasingly wider range of contexts and users employing English as the global lingua franca of communication could «help sensitize teachers to the deep changes English is going through» (Vettorel and Lopriore, 2013: 485).

Investigations into the extent to which recently published English-language coursebooks have actually integrated an ELF perspective into their design may shed light on the current availability of teaching materials enabling teachers and learners to approach English as *the* lingua franca of the twenty-first century (Kirkpatrick, 2006). It is precisely the purpose of this study to contribute to such investigation by providing the findings of the analysis of four recently published coursebooks, as illustrated in the next sections.

2. The study

2.1 Aim of the study and research focus

This study aims to report on the extent to which the listening and speaking activities of recently published English-language coursebooks

for adult learners and Upper Secondary School students are designed to foster aural and oral skills for effective communication in an increasingly multilingual environment, where English works as *the* lingua franca. Considering that the major area of investigation of ELF research is speech, a focus on the listening and speaking components seemed particularly suitable for this kind of investigation.

For the purpose of my study, I concentrated my analysis mainly on the following elements:

- A) Listening activities
 - i.* exposure to/reflection on authentic NNSs' accents engaged in authentic spoken discourse;
 - ii.* exposure to/reflection on NNSs-NNSs oral exchanges providing examples of use of accommodation strategies;
 - iii.* exposure to a variety of purposes of interaction in (realistic) international contexts of language use.
- B) Speaking activities
 - i.* active engagement in tasks fostering the use of learners' linguistic resources and/or communication strategies for an intended communicative goal;
 - ii.* discussion/reflection on cross-cultural/global topics and multi-culturally-oriented content;
 - iii.* engagement in activities connected/comparable with learners' experiences of ELF use outside the classroom.

2.2 Coursebook selection and methodology

The first step was to identify the English-language coursebooks that would form the corpus of my analysis. Eventually, I chose four texts (see [Appendix A](#)) hereafter referred to as Book 1 (B1), Book 2 (B2), Book 3 (B3) and Book 4 (B4). These coursebooks are designed by native speakers and not addressed to any specific «local culture of learning» (McKay, 2012: 81). The reasons for choosing them were their recent year of publication (2010 to 2013), and the challenging EIL/ELF-oriented (sounding) claims they make as far as their approach and objectives are concerned. Indeed, the overviews of the four textbooks maintain, to some degree, to be aware of issues such as EIL/ELF, English varieties, native and non-native voices, and claim to have been designed with the purpose of offering authenticity, real-world and international settings of language use (see [Appendix B](#)).

For the sake of homogeneity, I decided to analyze the intermediate level of the four book series. The analysis involved only the students'

book (SB) «as this is the only course component used by many teachers around the world» (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013: 235). Accordingly, the teacher's book (TB) and the audio/video material connected with the units examined in the student's book were also analyzed in parallel, while the workbook and the web-based material (normally used for consolidation and/or self-study) were not considered.

The analysis was carried out by examining the listening and speaking activities of four units in each book (see [Appendix A](#)). The units were selected based on their topic and the extent to which it was deemed more likely to be permeated by an ELF approach (e.g. travel, work, language and culture, communications).

The analysis was conducted by examining closely all the sections and activities specifically presented as 'Listening' and 'Speaking', together with the 'Pronunciation' or 'Conversation Practice' sections, and all the speaking/audio material provided under other headings (e.g. 'Vocabulary') but connected with the listening/speaking tasks. Instructions and tips in the teacher's guide for each of the examined section were also considered.

3. Findings

3.1 Listening

With only some exceptions, the findings concerning the listening activities and tasks were to some extent disappointing if compared with the 'promises' and claims made in the books overviews, as the next sections will illustrate.

3.1.1 Exposure to/reflection on authentic NNSs' accents engaged in authentic spoken discourse

Being almost all the interactions in the examined material of the NS-NS kind, opportunities to hear NN accents are hardly to be found. The prevailing (if not the only) accent is Standard British English, with occasional instances of regional varieties, mainly northern British accents – like Scottish or Irish (B2, B3, B4) – and instances of American or Canadian English (B1, B2, B3, B4). As for the authenticity of the accent of those characters who are said to be from non-English-speaking countries, the general impression is that of simulation of foreign accents by native-speaker actors, which results in characters sounding like «exotic beings» (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013: 244). The artificiality of the alleged NN accents is also conveyed by the fact that none of the presumably foreign characters

seems to have problems with either the core (e.g. vowel length or contrastive stress) or non-core (e.g. inter-dental fricatives or intonation) features recorded by ELF research in the fields of phonology and prosody (Jenkins, 2000), with neither breakdowns actually occurring during the interactions, nor discourse markers (e.g. pauses, hesitations devices etc.) being heard. The only common trait the presumably foreign accents share (sometimes inconsistently) is the trill [r], which may simply reflect the tendency towards the inclusion of rhotic varieties of English, rather than of NN accents (B1, B2, B3). Moreover, none of the books encourages reflections on NN accents and on the issue of intelligibility, not even when, as in B3, it is maintained that the course «recognizes the diversity of spoken English today and includes a large variety of native and non-native voices in all of its audio recordings» (B3 overview) and «international intelligibility» is claimed to be «the principal aim» (B3, TB: 9) – claims which are in fact not reflected in any of the listening materials/tasks proposed by the book.

An attempt to go into the direction of including a plurality of accents is to be found in the ‘Global voices’ sections of B2, whose declared aim is «to provide students with exposure to authentic speakers of English both from native and non-native English backgrounds» (B2, TB: 26). In actual fact, the voices one can hear in these sections do not really provide exposure to genuinely NN accents, the ‘foreign’ characters still sounding fake non-natives. Yet, what differentiates B2 from the other material under examination is that the ‘Global voices’ sections provide, to some extent, the opportunity (though not explicitly elicited) to reflect not only on the plurality-of-accents issue, but also on a more inclusive approach to language teaching in terms of diversity. In this respect, the teacher’s is ‘warned’ against falling into the temptation «to hunt for specific pronunciation or language errors» as, it is explained, «in real-world communication not everyone speaks perfect English all the time, not even native speakers» (B2, TB: 26). Moreover, a number of short essays focusing on issues like Global English, Englishes, pronunciation differences, localization phenomena etc. arguably show (and foster) awareness of both the pluralization of English («English is an international language, spoken all over the world, by people with different accents and different “Englishes”», Clandfield, B2, TB: XXI) and of the new communicative needs connected with the status of English as a lingua franca («Swedish English, for example, [is] the kind of English I need to know when I go to Sweden, otherwise I will be unable to converse efficiently with Swedish speakers of English», Crystal, B2, TB: XXII).

3.1.2 Exposure to/reflection on NNSs-NNSs oral exchanges providing examples of use of accommodation strategies

On the whole, only a small percentage of the recordings in the analyzed units are oral exchanges. The listening material is mainly made up of either monologues or sentences/short texts read out by native speakers of British English and used as a model to drill phonetic or prosodic features. In Unit 13 of B1, for example, listening 13.2 consists of 12 mini-conversations, all between native-speakers, where the same pattern – expressions like «“What was...like?”», «“You must be...”» etc. eliciting a response including a ‘strong’ adjective like «“filthy” or «“delicious”» – is repeatedly used. The instructions in the teacher’s guide tell the teacher to do «a quick drill and focus on the intonation [...] exaggerating the stress/intonation» (B1, TB: 91), and then have the students «say the strong adjective to each other [and] check» against the recording (B1, TB: 91).

The few oral interactions are mostly of the NS-NS type, with only few examples of NNS-NS interaction, the NNS not sounding authentic, or being identified as such not so much because of his/her accent, but because of other clues, e.g. visuals or personal details, like «“You’re from Germany but resident in Spain, correct?”» (B3, TB, tapescript listening 5.5: 56).

There are no examples of oral exchanges between two or more NNSs. Moreover, in the proposed interactions there are no opportunities to hear examples of accommodation strategies, as in none of the conversations there seem to be problems of intelligibility or mutual understanding.

3.1.3 Exposure to a variety of purposes of interaction in (realistic) international contexts of language use

Though to a different extent, the interactions included in the listening materials of the examined units are hardly contextualized, and most of them do not provide any clues about the where-and-when of the situation; in many cases, not even the names of the interacting characters, their nationality or cultural/linguistic background are provided. In the ‘Global voices’ sections of B2, the (presumably) NNSs are presented through a photo, accompanied by their names and nationalities, but no information is given about the situational context which originated the speech event. The speakers are simply engaged in short monologues on topics like «What makes a good friend» (B2, SB: 51) or «some good news they have had» (B2, SB: 75). Similarly, the tasks the students have to perform during/after the listening never include questions concerning the context and purpose of the speech event. Rather, they focus mainly on identifying specific information concerning the conversation topic and/or the target language used to deal with it.

Moreover, the fact that for the most part the interactants are and/or sound native speakers of English makes it hard to imagine the situations as reflecting realistic international contexts of language use.

3.2 *Speaking*

As with the findings from the investigation of the listening materials, also those which emerged from my analysis of the speaking activities did not basically meet the expectations aroused by the books overviews, as illustrated in the following sections.

3.2.1 *Active engagement in tasks fostering the use of learners' linguistic resources and/or communication strategies for an intended communicative goal*

Of the four books, it seems that B1 offers the fewest opportunities for students to make use of (all) their linguistic resources and to employ communication strategies. The speaking activities are on the whole fully guided and designed more as drills than actual interactive tasks. Rather than a specific communicative goal, students are asked to respond to 'prefabricated' sentences using the target language presented in the relevant Unit (e.g. «should/should not have + past participle» for blaming people – B1, SB: 97) and they are repeatedly encouraged to «use as much language from these pages» as they can (B1, SB: 99). Similarly, the teacher is asked «to model» and «to monitor closely and note down any errors [...] in the target language» (B1, TB: 38). On the whole, the speaking tasks do not seem to be «specifically meant to highlight communicative linguistic and strategic characteristics in ELF interactive settings» (Vettorel and Lopriore, 2013: 495), mainly because students are told *how* to say something and encouraged to «memorise the conversations» (B1, TB: 38) and somehow mime them.

The other three books appear to offer more opportunities for the students to interact and for a higher degree of freedom/creativity in the performance of the speaking tasks. In B2, B3 and B4 there are a number of speaking tasks – e.g. making a group decision (B2, SB: 9); asking for clarification (B2, TB: 47); finding a solution (B3, SB: 7); reaching (an) agreement (B4, SB: 62) or role-playing (B4, SB: 115) – which imply active cooperation and/or negotiation between the speakers to achieve a specific communicative goal. In B2, the teacher is invited not to «over-correct» and recommended to «encourage students to use what language they can at this stage» (B2, TB: 12). However, the teacher is in general not explicitly made aware of *how* these activities can be exploited for the implementation of linguistic resources and/or communicative strategies.

3.2.2 Discussion/reflection on cross-cultural/global topics and multiculturally-oriented content

The speaking tasks proposed by the books do not seem to focus on global issues, or to provide a global perspective on local issues. In B1, for example, Unit 14 deals with technology. The topic would lend itself to generate a discussion on a global issue like the massive changes digital technologies have brought about in our lives. Instead, the questions eliciting the discussion (e.g. «What kind of computer do you have?» or «Why did you choose that make?») (B1, SB: 98) sound more technical than globally-oriented; the teacher's guide does not prompt the teacher to elicit questions in this direction either. This applies also to topics like the environment, or immigration, the focus of the speaking being more on the target language form than on the content.

In B2, opportunities to discuss cross-cultural issues are offered in the 'Global English' sections, extra reading lessons focusing on English and language in general. These sections include a speaking activity, the aim of which is claimed to be «for students to relate the material in the reading to their own language, culture and experiences» (B2, TB: 13). So, for example, the speaking activity in the 'Global English' section of Unit 1 (dealing with Englishes) offers a good opportunity for students to talk not only about English but also about their language «changing across regions according to culture» (B2, SB: 15); moreover, students are encouraged to observe and reflect on the use of English in their own language, which indirectly introduces the notion of 'linguistic landscape' and of «how the surrounding environment is permeated by English» (Vettorel and Lopriore, 2013: 496).

B3 and B4 rely on visuals to introduce their global topics. In the introduction to the teacher's guide, the authors of B3 claim that the coursebook aims to «take a broader view of the study of English in today's world [...] [and to] consider cultural contexts not only from the traditional English-speaking world but from a variety of different global situations» (B3, TB: 6). Indeed, just flicking through the coursebook one is immediately caught by the engaging images reminding of different cultures/parts of the world. Similarly, the main topic of each unit in B4 is introduced via an eye-catching colour photograph showing different parts of the world (e.g. Brunei, Kenya, etc.). If properly exploited, these pictures may provide a chance to deal with cross-cultural/global topics. Only occasionally, however, the proposed speaking tasks relating to the picture are used to initiate a multiculturally-oriented discussion.

Similarly, the videos at the end of each unit in B4 may provide opportunities to deal with multicultural content. For example, the video in Unit

4 is about Confucianism in China, and the related speaking activity is a role-play implying students to compare the Chinese culture with their own on the aspects of «respect», «learning» and «virtue and wealth» (B4, SB: 55). However, as with the pictures, no specific instructions in this sense are present in the teacher's guide (e.g. how to develop the conversation and include more comparisons between different cultures).

Linguistically speaking, no prompts are given, neither in the teacher's guides nor in the students' task descriptions, to encourage learners from different lingua-cultures to bring their languages into the classroom, or make any comparisons between English and their L1s. Instead, English is presented as an indispensable language to communicate with other people, but still in the traditional perspective of a native-speaker-like proficiency being necessary to «succeed», both professionally and socially (see for example Unit 11 of B3, where a Spanish/Basque speaker of English who is visualizing her future life in connection with her knowledge of English imagines she will live in England and be able to speak English «as well as [...] Spanish of Basque» (B3, SB: 123).

3.2.3 Engagement in activities connected/comparable with learners' experiences of ELF use outside the classroom

On the whole, not many opportunities are offered by the examined units for the students to engage in activities connected/comparable with experiences of ELF outside the classroom. This is particularly true with B1. First of all, no discussion in whatsoever form is elicited on topics like the use of English as a lingua franca. Moreover, even in those situations where a development of the task might have been in the direction of getting students to speak about their use of English in ELF settings, the teacher is given no prompts or instructions in this sense. For example, for the lead-in of the first speaking activity of Unit 13, students are asked to talk about their travel experiences. However, the questions suggested in the teacher's guide – e.g. if students enjoy travelling (B1, TB: 88) – do not contain any hint about, for instance, language-related problems the students might have faced, or the way they have overcome them. The focus is more on teaching collocations typically used when talking about travelling, rather than having students report on travelling as an experience of ELF use outside the classroom.

In general, almost none of the speaking activities in the examined books is accompanied by any reflections or suggestions for the students to notice, observe, experiment the language they are learning in contexts that might be relevant to their lives outside the language class.

Some opportunities are offered in the 'Global voices' sections of B2.

In the teacher's guide, the teacher is prompted to ask students whether they have «used their English as a “lingua franca” with other non-native English speakers», how they found it and what tips they have «on understanding or making themselves understood in an international context» (B2, TB: 27). Other opportunities are present in the speaking activities proposed in the 'Global English' sections, as they encourage learners to reflect on the existence of more than one English, their own English possibly being a legitimate one. The teacher's guide of B2 is also characterized by explicit notes and prompts aimed at developing awareness that learners have used and will be using English outside the classroom, in the «real world», and teachers are repeatedly invited «not to over-correct», (Tips in the TB for all 'Global voices' sections). It is also explicitly recognized that «it's important for all learners to have experience of listening to, and “tuning in” to a wide variety of different pronunciations from all over the world» (Marks, B2, TB: XXIX).

Some degree of engagement in speaking activities connected with learners' experience of ELF use outside the classroom is also present in Unit 1 of B3, where students are on more occasions invited to talk about whether they have ever found themselves in situations where they had difficulty communicating, and how they coped (e.g. B3, TB: 17). However, not much emphasis is put upon the consideration that L2 learners become L2 users «as soon as they step outside the classroom» (Cook 2002: 3; Seidlhofer 2011: 187, quoted in Vettorel and Lopriore, 2013: 492), at least not in terms of instructions and guidance for the teacher.

4. Conclusions

As illustrated in the previous sections, only B2 and B3 make explicit references to issues related to the new status and role of English in today's globalized world, to its varieties and accents, and to the effects of globalization on language practices and language use. B2 seems to be particularly concerned with these topics, offering a teacher's guide which contains experts' essays on the matter.

Similarly, though with less emphasis, B3 draws the teacher's attention to «the status of English as an international language» and to «the need to consider cultural contexts not only from the traditional English-speaking world» (B3, TB: 6), recognizing the priority of «international intelligibility» when it comes to pronunciation issues (B3, TB: 9). However, in both books there seems to be a mismatch between the claims made in the teacher's guide (or in the course presentation) and the actual content of the

coursebook, especially from a (merely) linguistic point of view. Neither book actually gives learners opportunities to listen to authentic non-native accents, nor to authentic natural discourse exemplifying the use of accommodation strategies; in fact, no examples of NNSs-NNSs interactions are given. The fact that learners can also listen to different English accents (though to a limited extent and with some of these accents sounding artificial) is generally not highlighted through specific tasks aimed at drawing the students' attention onto this aspect, or even less at helping students develop an ear for a plurality of accents. Opportunities for learners to actively engage in activities connected/comparable with their (past or future) experiences of ELF use in the real world, and specifically in international contexts, though at times provided, are only limitedly exploited. Such opportunities are rather controlled and guided, the possibility for students to experiment with communicatively effective ELF strategies and to exploit all their linguistic resources not being explicitly encouraged, but rather depending on the teacher's own initiative.

On the whole, the speaking and listening activities in the examined units of B1 and B2 resemble those that have always been present in ELT. Basically, receptive and productive skills for language use in *international* contexts are not actually practised through specifically designed tasks, and students are not guided to reflect and/or report on the kind of skills and competence they actually need to have in «the real world» to achieve successful communication.

B1 and B4 do not seem to consider the notion of ELF or international English, neither to be interested in raising students' and/or teachers' awareness of the lingua-franca status of English. B1 does use the expression 'English as a lingua franca' twice in the TB, claiming for example that «[v]ocabulary is carefully chosen to enable students to talk about the topic in the context of English as a lingua franca» (B1, TB: 4). However, the language target the course presents (not only in the 'Native Speaker Note') is still basically ENL, rather than EIL/ELF.

Of the four books examined in this study, B4 – despite being the most recent – is the one that never refers to the new status of English, neither in terms of international language, nor in terms of lingua franca of communication. Although no claims are specifically made in the book overviews to present English as either an international or a lingua franca language, the authors of B4, just like those of the other three books, declare that the aim of the course is to prepare learners to use the language in the real world. Moreover, the superb photographs showing places and countries from all over the planet seem to be designed to convey the idea

of a multicultural world connected through the language which is taught in the book. However, the way English is presented throughout the course does not seem to take into consideration any possible implications of ELF-oriented pedagogy, neither in the kind of instructions for the teacher, nor in the tasks students are invited to perform, which do not basically differ from the ones the ELT world is accustomed to; this applies in particular to aspects related to pronunciation, where there is a lot of emphasis on features that are typical of RP (such as 'exaggerated' intonation patterns, weak and strong forms, dark /l/) and that, instead, would appear as somewhat unnecessary in an ELF perspective, because not essential for intelligibility (Jenkins, 2000).

I can conclude that, despite claims of 'internationality' and explicit recognition (with the exception of B4) of the new status of English as a lingua franca, language models and targets presented by all books in the examined speaking and listening activities are still predominantly, if not exclusively, linked to the Anglophone world, with Standard British English representing the model par excellence, in terms of lexis, grammar and pronunciation, as well as linguacultural elements.

On the whole, it seems that the assumption on which the examined course-books are based is that the goal of teaching and learning English is for *all* learners to achieve, or approximate as much as possible, 'native-speakerness', with a lot of drilling and other controlled and guided tasks of the listen-and-repeat, ask-and-answer, or use-the-target-language type. Undoubtedly, there will always be situations where learners actually need (and/or aspire) to attain native-speaker competence, possibly in one specific Inner Circle variety. Yet, the idea of non-native bilinguals successfully communicating in English with each other (especially outside the classroom) still does not seem to be taken into consideration, and the increasingly overlapping roles of learners and users do not appear to be a matter of concern either.

Therefore, an ELF-oriented approach emerges only limitedly in my findings, and mainly in terms of content rather than language representation. For the time being, a possible integration of this perspective in language teaching seems to lie more in the hands of teachers than in those of teaching-material designers.

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APPENDIX A

Coursebook Corpus

Book	Title	Authors	Publisher	Year of publication
1 (B1)	<i>Outcomes Intermediate</i> Student's Book (SB) Teacher's Book (TB)	Hugh Dellar and Andrew Walkely Barbara Garside	Heinle Cengage Learning	2010
2 (B2)	<i>Global Intermediate</i> Coursebook (SB) Teacher's Book (TB)	Hugh Dellar and Andrew Walkely Barbara Garside	Macmillan	2011
3 (B3)	<i>The Big Picture Intermediate</i> Student's Book (SB) Teacher's Book (TB)	Ben Goldstein Sheila Dignen	Richmond	2012
4 (B4)	<i>Life Intermediate</i> Student's Book (SB) Teacher's Book (TB)	Helen Stephenson, Paul Dummett and John Hughes Mike Sayer	Heinle Cengage Learning	2013

Examined Units

B1:
Unit 5, *Working Life*; Unit 13, *Travel*; Unit 14, *Technology*; Unit 16, *News and Events*.

B2:
Unit 1, *Language & Culture*; Unit 4, *Friends & Strangers*; Unit 6, *Seen & Heard*; Unit 7, *Supply & Demand*.

B3:
Unit 1, *Communication*; Unit 5, *Bridges, Borders and Barriers*; Unit 6, *Global and Local*; Unit 11, *A Sense of Identity*.

B4:
Unit 4, *Opportunities*; Unit 5, *Travel*; Unit 9, *Trade*; Unit 11, *Connections*.

APPENDIX B

Coursebooks Overviews

Outcomes (B1)

«Understanding the way the world learns English, Heinle has created *Outcomes* [...] «Opportunities to practise the language in authentic settings»¹. «Real English for the real world. Natural, real-world grammar and vocabulary help students to succeed in social, professional and academic settings» (Teacher's Book, back cover). «Vocabulary is carefully chosen to enable students to talk about the topic in the context of English as a lingua franca (Teacher's Book: 4).

Global (B2)

«It enables you to learn English as it is used in our globalised world [...] and to learn about English as an international language» (Teacher's Book, back cover). «This course also includes a focus [...] on the English language as a subject itself. What is it? How is it changing? What kinds of English are appearing around the world?» (Clandfield, Teacher's Book: XXI).

The Big Picture (B3)

«The Big Picture is genuinely international. It is built around global topics and cultural materials which will be immediately relevant to the lives and experiences of learners. It also recognizes the diversity of spoken English today and includes a large variety of native and non-native voices in all of its audio recordings»². «Real-life, relevant, international contexts» (Teacher's Book, back cover).

Life (B4)

«Real life lessons model and practise everyday functions, preparing learners to use language in the real world. Driven by rich National Geographic content and the fundamental values inspiring people to care about the planet, celebrating human achievement and exploring diversity»³.

¹ *Outcomes* Guided Tour. Retrieved from <ngllmedia.cengage.com/resource_uploads/static_marketing/1111031096/1943/index.html> (last access 20.10.2014).

² Retrieved from <www.richmondelt.com/thebigpicture/about> (last access 20.10.2014).

³ Retrieved from <www.ngllife.com/content/course-overview-0> (last access 20.10.2014).