

Where are we with BELF? And where are we going?

Evan Frenedo

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BIRMINGHAM

Cross-cultural Job Interview Communication in
Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) Contexts:
A Corpus-based Comparative Study of Multicultural
Job Interview Communications
in World Maritime Industry

by
Seunghee Choi

A thesis submitted to
The University of Birmingham
for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

5 Conflict Talk and ELF Communities of Practice

Anne Kari Bjørge

Introduction

In the field of ELF research, relatively little attention has been paid to the expression of conflict (Bjørge, 2009; Bjørge, 2012; Ehrenreich, 2009; Knapp, 2002). However, as ELF is used in all kinds of contexts it is also of interest to look into situations where

Perspectives on the Use of English as a Business Lingua Franca in Hong Kong

Stephen Evans¹

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DE GRUYTER MOUTON

JELF 2015; 4(1): 31–53

Patricia Pullin Culture, curriculum design, syllabus and course development in the light of BELF

Abstract: Research into the use of BELF, notably through the analysis of authentic data from business contexts, has shown that BELF communication is intrinsically intercultural, with BELF being used in a wide range of settings and with diverse

EXPLORING ELF IN JAPANESE ACADEMIC AND BUSINESS CONTEXTS: CONCEPTUALISATION, RESEARCH AND PEDAGOGIC IMPLICATIONS

10 Language is only a tool

[Japanese expatriates
working in China and
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Ryuko Kubota

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Workers, who are capable of doing their job well in Japan, can manage [language demands] once they are overseas. Basically, we don't consider language skill as the goal. . . . in

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Anne Kankaanranta*, Leena Louhiala-Salminen and Päivi Karhunen

English in multinational companies: implications for teaching “English” at an international business school

Abstract: In recent years, the use of English has become everyday practice in multinational companies (MNCs), and it has been investigated in three disciplines:

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Business English as a Lingua Franca in Advertising Texts in the Arabian Gulf: Analyzing the Attitudes of the Emirati Community

Catherine Nickerson¹ and
Belinda Crawford Camiciottoli²

Lying in Intra-Asian Business Discourse in an ELF Setting

Hiromasa Tanaka¹

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Article

Mismatch: Globalization and Native Speaker Models of Linguistic Competence

Kevin Michael Hodgson
United Arab Emirates University, United Arab Emirates



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2014, Vol. 45(2) 113–134
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Defining BELF

(Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013, p.17)

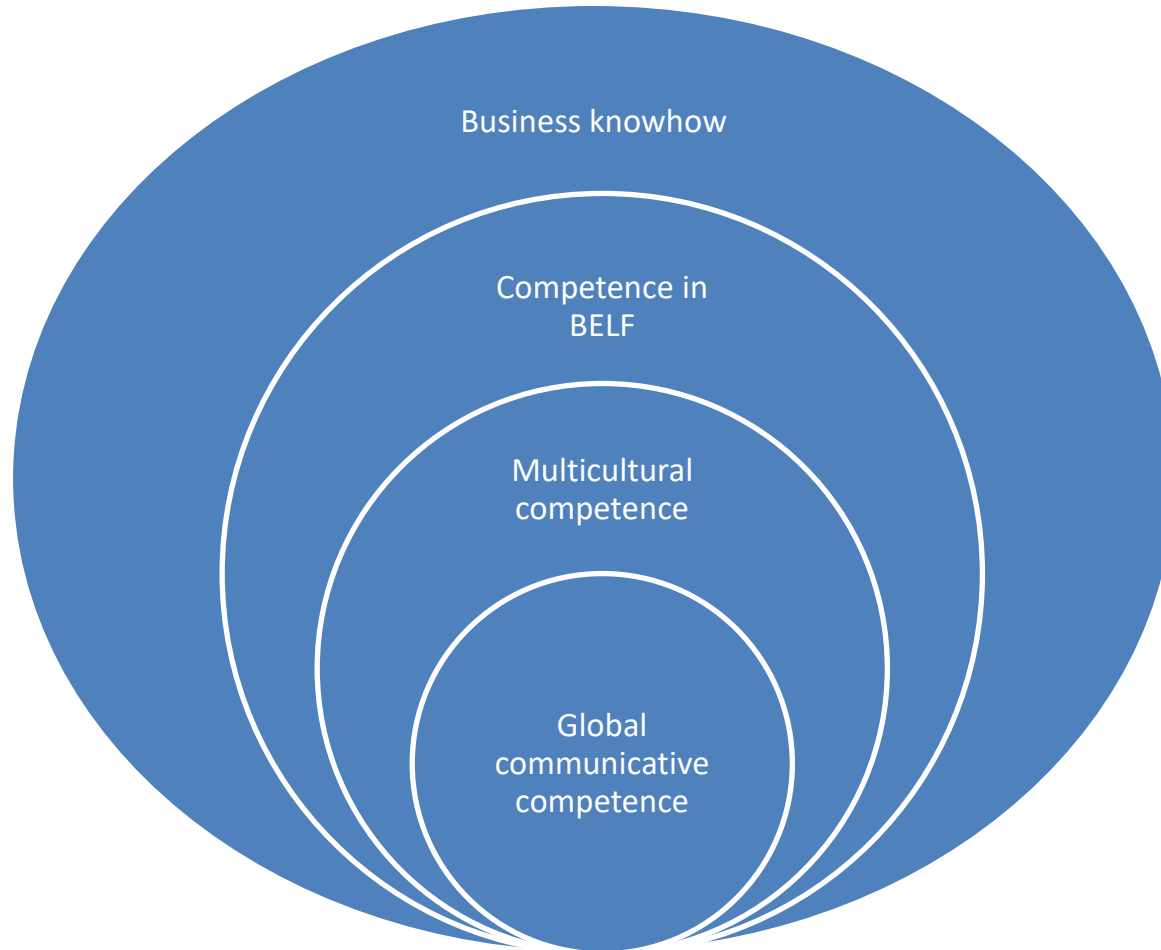
“today most researchers seem to agree that English as a lingua franca is used in **communication by speakers of different native languages**, which suggests that also **native speakers are included.**”

“In other words, **ELF is considered distinctly different from ENL and must thus be learned by native speakers as well.**”

(but compare Nickerson & Planken (2016), who **distinguish between ELF and IBE**)

Model of Global Communicative Competence

(Louhiala-Salminen & Kankaanranta, 2011, p.258)



Comparison between EFL and BELF approaches

(Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013, p.29)

Criterion	EFL	BELF
Successful interactions require	NS-like language skills	business communication skills and strategic skills
The speaker/writer aims to	emulate NS discourse	get the job done & create rapport
NNSs are seen as	learners, “sources of trouble”	communicators in their own right
Main source of problems	inadequate language skills	inadequate business communication skills
“Culture”	national cultures of NSs	business community cultures and individual cultural backgrounds
English is “owned” by	its native speakers	nobody – and everybody

BELF or EBLF?

BELF = “Business English as a Lingua Franca”,
but increasingly refers to:

“English as a Business Lingua Franca”

“emphasize the domain of use rather than the
type of English.”

(Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013, p.17)



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Lying in Intra-Asian Business Discourse in an ELF Setting

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Context:

- 40 job interviews in maritime industry
- Four different countries – India, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam

Focus:

Differences between successful / unsuccessful interviews in terms of

- contextual and schematic structures,
- interactional pragmatic features,
- lexico-grammatical characteristics

Methodology:

Interviews transcribed and analysed

Findings:

“**the key** to successful job-interview communication **is not a high level of English language competency, but an effective presentation of the candidate’s qualifications** based on the content of the information, interactional style, professional verbal performance, and strong passion and desire for work” (p.392)

“not only did understanding the **other interlocutors’ native culture not have much influence on the final outcome ... but the different cultural identities and distinctive linguistic features** did not significantly hamper the smooth communicative flow, ... these differences ... **were regarded as quite natural**, and therefore practically acceptable ... (p.396)

Article



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United Arab Emirates University, United Arab Emirates

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Context:

- 83 Japanese employees in a large international company in Japan, dealing with factories in China and Thailand
- Only 27 had travelled abroad for work-related purposes

Methodology:

- Mix of questionnaire and exam results (TOEIC)

Focus:

- Examine the extent to which working in international contexts influences NNS's beliefs towards NS norms
- Investigate the degree to which NS models affect linguistic self-confidence and performance

Findings:

“participants who lack experience using English in international contexts have a **greater tendency to valorize NS norms**, a belief which, in turn, negatively affects their linguistic self-confidence and attitudes towards the target language” (p.113)

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Context:

Japanese and Indian small
business owners

Methodology:

Analysis of three recorded interactions
(54 minutes total) & interviews

Focus:

Investigation of lying behaviour: “what they said was not exactly true”

Findings:

“Because presenting truth tactfully requires of interlocutors’ high linguistic and communicative competence, **ELF users use lies as an easy strategy for avoiding conflicts**” (p.58)

“**Both Indian and Japanese participants claimed that their business partners lied.**” (p.65)

“**ELF could also entail an approximation of facts that could be interpreted as deceptive messages.**” (p.69)

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Context:

- Service industries in Hong Kong
- Two written codes (English, Chinese) & three spoken codes (English, Cantonese, Putonghua)

Methodology:

- 28 interviews
- Four case studies (record of discourse over 5 days, (30 minute intervals)
- Discourse analysis (10 telephone conferences & 306 emails)
- Survey (2030 respondents)

Focus:

Language choice and use in Hong Kong's service industries

Findings:

“Notwithstanding scholarly fascination with English as a business lingua franca, the study underlines the need to view **English as one element in the linguistic ecology of the contemporary workplace ... interplay between English**, the default language of written communication, **and Cantonese**, the unmarked medium of spoken interaction, being an **especially conspicuous feature of the findings**. (p.248)

English is evidently viewed as a tool to expedite business rather than as a language whose conventions need to be observed. (p.248)

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Context:

- 28 simulated negotiations involving 118 master's level students (coursework / exam)
- 28 different national backgrounds

Focus:

How do expressions of unmitigated disagreement (direct / indirect communication styles) impact on the ELF negotiations process?

Methodology:

Negotiations filmed, transcribed and analysed.

Findings:

“In **essentialist theory** preferences for a **direct versus indirect communicative style** are **linked to national cultural differences**. ... Investigation revealed little systematic interference from any such interactional norms ... nation-based cultural traditions may not be transferrable to an ELF context ... **Cultural hybridity** may come into play.” (p.129)

“the **use of unmitigated disagreement did not prevent negotiators from reaching an agreement** as long as the negotiators adhered to the negotiation scenario and paid attention to the other party's arguments.” (p. 129)

10 ‘Language is only a tool’

Japanese expatriates working in China and implications for language teaching

Ryuko Kubota

In China, Japanese, rather than English, is used [in the workplace] in many cases; but there, the language needed is basically not Japanese or English but Chinese. . . . What’s necessary is for the Japanese (expatriates) to learn Chinese.

Workers, who are capable of doing their job well in Japan, can manage [language demands] once they are overseas. Basically, we don’t consider language skills as the goal in

Context:

- Six Japanese manufacturing / IT companies
- Three subsidiaries in China

Methodology:

29 interviews with Japanese expats / Chinese office workers

Focus:

Language use in the workplace in China

Findings:


“English ... use is restricted to certain individuals who engage in tasks involving English- speaking clients ... **Japanese and Mandarin are major languages of workplace communication.**”

“**neoliberal promise of English** – that proficiency in English as a global language enables communication universally and that it is **indispensable for jobs** – should be reconsidered.”

“There seems to be a **perceptual gap between language educators and transcultural workers**. Language educators pursue formal language teaching and assessment to foster **communicative competence**, while transcultural workers acquire and **use language in ways quite different from ‘getting a perfect score on a paper exam’.**”

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Context:

- Corporate communication strategies - communicating with external stakeholders (e.g. consumers)
- Use of English in advertising texts in UAE texts builds on the assumption that English is not only neutral but also widely understood

Focus:

focus on attitudes toward English-language advertising in the UAE

Methodology:

- Two equivalent texts, one in English only and the other in Arabic with an English corporate slogan
- Survey of attitudes (306 responses)

Findings:

“language used ...did not significantly influence participants attitudes ... Except ...

“study revealed social drivers that suggest an underlying concern with the preservation of Arabic language and culture ... **English may therefore be viewed in a less neutral way**”

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English in multinational companies: implications for teaching “English” at an international business school

Abstract: In recent years, the use of English has become everyday practice in multinational companies (MNCs), and it has been investigated in three disciplines:

Findings:

international management & corporate communication – “practically synonymous to English as a native language” – very little focus on “how English is conceptualised, how it is used, or what the discourse is like.” (p.134) ... “The ENL paradigm seems to dominate but remains implicit.” (p.135)

Continuum between “official English” (ENL) and working language (BELF) (p.139)

“corporate communication ... **there is a need for language which operates on a more general level than the highly situation-specific and context-dependent BELF.**” (p.142)

Context:

International business school in Finland

- applied linguistics
- international management
- corporate communication

Focus:

Research into English as a shared language in MNCs - - and the needs of future business graduates

Methodology:

Literature review

Patricia Pullin

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Abstract: Research into the use of BELF, notably through the analysis of authentic data from business contexts, has shown that BELF communication is intrinsically intercultural, with BELF being used in a wide range of settings and with diverse

Findings:

“Research on employers’ needs has emphasised effective communication, both in terms of transactional and relational functions of language.” (p. 42)

“Research-informed approach to curriculum development can go beyond, whilst not precluding, focus on form, to include intercultural competence. (p.49)

“Whilst many business English courses are based on published materials and the teaching “market” is driven by these ... truly relevant TBLT materials are, unfortunately, unlikely to be included in courses in many contexts. Teachers thus also need training in materials’ development.” (p.49)

Context:

Undergraduates studying business administration & economics in Switzerland

Methodology:

Literature review
/ case study

Focus:

BELF research-based approaches to curriculum development, with an emphasis on intercultural competence & socio-pragmatic competence

Where we are now?

“BELF is perceived as an enabling resource to get work done. Since it is highly context-bound and situation-specific, it is a moving target defying linguistic description.”

“BELF competence calls for clarity and accuracy in the presentation of business content, knowledge of business-specific vocabulary and genre conventions, and the ability to connect on the relational level.”

(Kanraanranta, Louhiala-Salminen, & Karhunen, 2015, p.129)

Where is BELF going?

- BELF = English as a business lingua franca
- Research is bitty / incremental, but insights are useful
 - Ongoing discussion about definitions
 - “Enough already! Angelic accounts of ELF.”
(Mackensie, 2014, p. 140-163)
- More international – was Eurocentric, but no longer
- Multidisciplinary
- More business contexts (not just university based research)
- Influencing the classroom

My English

Chia Suan Chong

Levels	<i>Intermediate+</i>
Context	<i>Pre-experience and in-work</i>
Aims	<i>Build awareness of English competence in an international context</i> <i>Understand personal attitudes to language learning</i>
Class Time	<i>60–90 minutes</i>
Preparation Time	<i>5 minutes</i>
Resources	<i>Questionnaire (see ...)</i>

As English cements its role as the it has now become important for mar communicate internationally and to prioritize they operate in, rather than focusing of English and trying to understand th

This shift consequently leads us to rev cy, fluency, and communicative comp munication. Yet most learners still bas the idealized native-speaker model an inability to seem British or American confidence often stems from distorted up against British or U.S. role models

Comparing Business Genres From Different Cultures

Clarice S. C. Chan

Levels	<i>Intermediate+</i>
Context	<i>Pre-experience and job-experienced</i>
Aims	<i>Develop cross-cultural awareness</i> <i>Share knowledge and learn from one another</i>
Class Time	<i>20–40 minutes (depending on class size and grouping)</i>
Preparation Time	<i>Minimal if the teacher already has some sample business texts</i>
Resources	<i>Sample business texts in English</i>

Business genres in different cultures are all more or less different. Transferring writing conventions from one culture to another may make texts ineffective or inappropriate for the target readers. This activity makes use of learners' knowledge of genres in their own culture to raise their awareness of the cultural differences in business genres and to help them notice the differences between business texts written in their own language and those in English. The activity is particularly suitable for multicultural and multiethnic classes and for learners who use English as a lingua franca.

BELF Accommodation Strategies

Evan Frendo

Level	<i>High intermediate +</i>
Context	<i>Any</i>
Aims	<i>Build awareness of useful accommodation strategies such as repetition and code-switching</i> <i>Listen to and practice unfamiliar accents/speech patterns</i>
Class Time	<i>30 minutes</i>

minutes

audio/video recordings of people with different accents
References and Further Reading

described by Cogo (2009) as “the process by which speak- ictive behavior to that of their interlocutors in order ation” (p. 254), has long been recognized as a feature of tion; recent research in English as a lingua franca (ELF) s a lingua franca (BELF) has emphasized its importance ort. One typical strategy is to repeat a particular word or to sound similar to the other interlocutor. Another com- switch (change from one language to another) in order ling. Such strategies are particularly useful in situations speak different varieties of English (often influenced by corporate/national culture) or where one interlocutor is a English speaker than the other.



7 handle

Listening 1: Job interview at a hotel

1.26

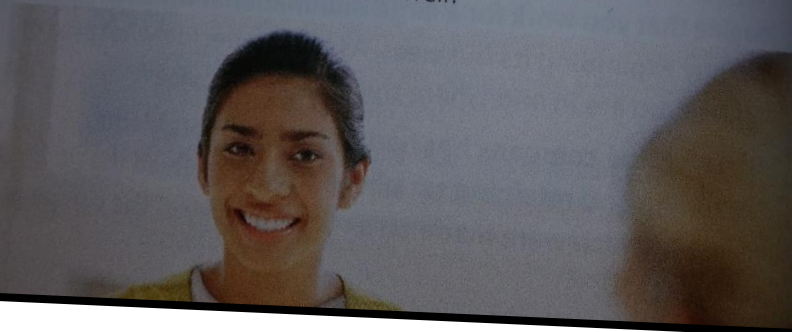
You are going to listen to some extracts from job interviews. You will hear graduates of a Hotel and Catering Management course being interviewed for a job in a hotel in Hong Kong. The job is for trainees who want to work in front office in a hotel.

1 Listen and note down the questions asked by the interviewer.

- 1 Does she ask any of the questions you had in exercise 3 in the Introduction?
- 2 Does she ask any different questions?

2 Listen again and answer these questions.

- 1 What answers does the interviewee give?
- 2 Are any of the answers the same as ones you talked about in exercise 3 of the introduction?
- 3 Do you think she answered them well?



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12-15 June 2017

Helsinki

ELF & Changing English

10th Anniversary Conference of English as a Lingua Franca

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Key information

- **Conference dates:**
12-15 June 2017
- **Abstract submission opens:**
1 September 2016
- **Deadline for abstracts:**
1 December 2016
- **Deadline for registration:**
20 May 2017

ELF and Changing English

10th Anniversary Conference of English as a Lingua Franca
12-15 June 2017, Helsinki

The University of Helsinki ELFA group warmly welcomes you to the 10th Anniversary Conference of English as a Lingua Franca. After a grand world tour of ELF conferences through Southampton (2009), Vienna (2010), Hong Kong (2011), Istanbul (2012), Rome (2013), Athens (2014), Beijing (2015) and Lleida (2016), ELF10 now returns to its roots in Helsinki where the first ELF conference was held. Over the years, ELF conferences have grown and ELF has established itself, attracting attention of both academics and language practitioners worldwide. It is time to celebrate the achievements and explore future vistas.

With two 'Changing English' conferences (2013 and 2015), our Helsinki group has established a profile of linguists eager to push the boundaries and explore possibilities of cross-fertilisation between different approaches to contemporary change in English. For us,

ELF is a pivotal driver of change in English, and in the perception of language for theoretical and practical purposes. In this conference, we aim to try out the cutting edge viewpoints of evolutionary linguistics, complexity theory, human cognition, varieties of English and historical sociolinguistics at the same time letting ELF take the lead, as the selection of the invited speakers and colloquium conveners suggests. We hope that this conference will serve as another stepping stone in bridging the gap between ELF, different traditions of English studies, and Applied Linguistics, and help to further promote and consolidate collaboration between them.

See you in Helsinki in 2017!