

English as a business lingua franca in an intercultural simulation game via Zoom

GAL conference, September 15, 2021

Dr. Milene Mendes de Oliveira

University of Potsdam

ReDICO is a joint project of the universities



JOHANNES GUTENBERG
UNIVERSITÄT MAINZ



sponsored by
the
 Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research

BELF

“It’s like...we’re all swimming in water, and you either sink or swim. ‘No English’ is not an option”
(Ehrenreich 2010: 417)

ELF-English as employed in interactions between language users of different linguacultural backgrounds.

BELF - “shared communication code... used for conducting business within the global business discourse community” by speakers from different backgrounds” (Louhiala-Salminen et al. 2005: 404)

BELF characteristics: “its domain of use (international business), the role of its users (professionals), and the overall goal of the interactions (getting the job done and creating rapport).” (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen 2018: 309).

Communication strategies, such as requests for repetition, clarification, confirmation checks, content summary, rephrasing, repair (Vettorel 2018)

Interculturality

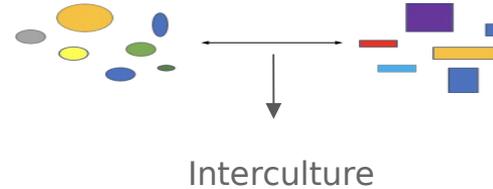
Unfamiliar multiplicity of life-worlds (Bolten 2015)

Structure vs. process (Bolten 2020)

Structure



Process



Intercultural Competence

"as the ability <...> to transform the 'fleeting' interculture, characterized by its sense of foreignness, into culture by creating cohesion through normality" (Rathje 2006,13)

BELF



Interculturality



Interculturality in the making in
BELF communication

Negotiation of meaning through collaboration



- "Middle-aged town"

- "Medieval town"

- "self-sufficient"

“Although we differed in culture, native language, age or gender, I was really impressed by our harmonic cooperative work. Everyone was accepted and appreciated and our communication was very respectful and friendly.”



S2: we have different backgrounds, we have different knowledge about the country, about the development of a country or cities, so we have a completely different way of thinking of the... of thinking about the development of a city, we always focus about the plans, uh.. specific specifically political or the way how to develop the cities, and what we should do, and how much money we have to invest to the city, and in which area we should build which cities or which buildings, or the about the government, about the rules that for the College... for the students from the European uh countries... they think about... they always want to contribute to the Earth.. They want ecosystems, sustainable life, and..

S3: Sustainability, like that?

S2: yeah, We always focus: ,Oh, we should make money, we should make the city better.."

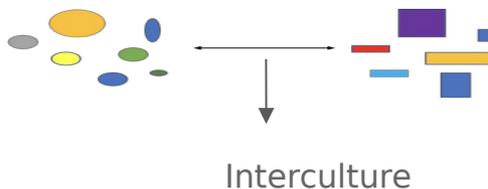
Reflection

Interculturality as both:

Structure



Process



BELF is NOT a 'culture-free' medium of communication; it is connected not only to one's L1 socialization (see Mauranen's 2018 concept of 'similects') but also to language ideologies.

References

- Ehrenreich, S. (2010). English as a business lingua franca in a German multinational corporation: Meeting the challenge. *The Journal of Business Communication*, 47(4), 408-431.
- Kankaanranta, A., & Louhiala-Salminen, L. (2017). ELF in the domain of business—BELF: What does the B stand for?. In *The Routledge handbook of English as a lingua franca* (pp. 309-320). Routledge.
- Louhiala-Salminen, L., Charles, M., & Kankaanranta, A. (2005). English as a lingua franca in Nordic corporate mergers: Two case companies. *English for Specific purposes*, 24(4), 401-421.
- Mauranen, A. (2018). Second language acquisition, world Englishes, and English as a lingua franca (ELF). *World Englishes*, 37(1), 106-119.
- Vettorel, P. (2018). ELF and communication strategies: Are they taken into account in ELT materials?. *RELC Journal*, 49(1), 58-73.