

Is there ELF in ELT coursebooks?

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Abstract

This article aims to explore whether well-attested findings in the fields of World Englishes (WE) and of English as a lingua franca (ELF) have determined a shift in perspective in the overall approach to English language teaching (ELT), and how far this shift has permeated teaching materials and coursebooks. The research study was carried out in Italy, a country where ELT coursebooks have often played a relevant role in introducing innovations in language teaching methodology. The research design included a corpus of ten coursebooks that have been published and adopted in Italian secondary schools in the last 6 years. The coursebooks were evaluated in terms of the presence or absence of references to WE and/or ELF, of awareness-raising activities, of the promotion of using English outside the school environment and of the use of effective English communication and intercultural strategies among nonnative speakers. Findings show that there have been no significant changes in the inclusion of WE- and ELF-oriented materials and related tasks, apart from the area of promotion of cultural and intercultural awareness.

Keywords: English as a lingua franca (ELF), World Englishes (WE), ELT materials, intercultural awareness, language awareness, communication strategies, localization, nonnative bilingual speakers of English

The central role that coursebooks play in English language teaching (ELT) is undeniable, since they have always represented a reference point both for teachers and learners, and are “an almost universal element of ELT teaching” (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994, p. 315). Even if coursebooks have been under scrutiny and criticism on several grounds (see among others Alptekin, 1993; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Gray, 2002, 2010b; Prodromou, 1988), textbooks still constitute one of the main teaching tools “because they satisfy certain needs, . . . and prosper because they are the most convenient means of providing the structure that the teaching-learning system – particularly the system in change – requires” (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994, p. 317).

Many innovations in foreign language teaching have been successfully anticipated and diffused mostly thanks to their implementation in teaching materials, particularly through coursebooks and their teacher’s guides. Indeed, in Italy foreign language manuals have in many cases played an important role in familiarising both teachers and students with new, and often innovative, methodological routes, at times anticipating themes and approaches that were then tackled during in-service courses. More recently, the web has also provided many opportunities for access to linguistic and cultural resources to materials authors, publishers, as well as to teachers and students, whose more traditional paper-and-audio format coursebooks may be thus complemented. Web resources, mostly videos, are at times presented for teaching purposes in their original unadapted versions, thus exposing learners to a variety of authentic language excerpts that can be exploited in class in addition to, and together with, the materials specifically created for teaching purposes. One of the main goals in foreign language (FL) teaching materials and coursebook development is to support classroom language work oriented at making learners effective language communicators, and to familiarize them with real communicative settings. This, particularly in ELT, is even more so in a period when communication has become more and more global, with English functioning as a common means of communication across linguacultural boundaries and reaching out to local cultures. The fields of World Englishes (WE), and, increasingly, English as a lingua franca (ELF) studies have represented in the last couple of decades two of the most vibrant and challenging research areas in linguistics and applied linguistics. In their different but complementary fields both research areas have shown how English cannot any longer be considered as a monolithic entity, not least in didactic terms. In this light, activities and tasks in the FL classroom should be oriented at fostering the development of language and (inter)cultural awareness as well as communication strategies, that is, at providing learners with tools to become effective communicators with English in its pluralized forms and differentiated contexts of use in today’s

interconnected world. Taking into account the widespread diffusion of Englishes and the emergence of English as a lingua franca both in terms of contents and of teaching approaches would thus entail a shift in perspective, particularly as to the range of views and contexts presented in teaching materials. Given the major changes the English language has gone through over the last decades, and the subsequent theoretical and methodological challenges, one would expect to find clear guidelines included in the materials addressed to teachers (teacher guides, resource packs, web extensions, etc.) so that an up-to-date and comprehensive approach to Englishes and to ELF can effectively be put into practice in the classroom. Having the chance to be provided with “appropriate” and realistic materials would allow teachers to go beyond an exclusive focus on English-as-a-native-language standard varieties, with British English (and culture) as the traditionally acknowledged main point of reference. Alongside appropriate teacher training measures, it would help sensitize teachers to the deep changes English is going through, and to make them effective agents in taking them into account in their teaching practices (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2003, 2004, 2011).

This article aims to explore whether well-attested findings in the fields of WE (e.g., Kachru, 1986, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 2010) and ELF (see Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011 for a comprehensive overview) have led to a shift in perspective in the approach used in the design of ELT coursebooks, and how far this shift has permeated English teaching materials employed in Italian secondary schools.

English(es) and ELF in Coursebooks: Emerging Issues

Given its spread at a global level, English is increasingly seen as the language to be obligatorily learnt, particularly in Expanding Circle countries, in Europe and elsewhere in the world, both in state and in private institutions. Indeed, over the last couple of decades English has become part of most school curricula, and increasingly so from an early age, in Europe and in the rest of the world (Graddol, 1997, 2006).

At the same time, the spread of English at a global level has resulted in a kaleidoscopic plurality, where “the grammatical ‘rules’ and lexical forms of English used today are far more varied than ever before” (McKay, 2012, p. 73). Furthermore, the majority of English users are nowadays bilingual speakers (e.g., Crystal, 2012), who communicate more frequently with other L2 users than with native speakers, in contexts that are multilingual and multicultural by default. Rather than adherence to standard English norms, it is the ability to effectively communicate about aspects of one’s own and of the interlocutors’

culture and to negotiate meaning which is salient in these contexts (e.g., Hülmbauer, 2009; McKay, 2002; Seidlhofer, 2011).

Traditionally, however, one of the main goals in ELT has been that of orienting teaching to communication with native speakers, within contexts that are largely Anglophone both in terms of a standard language and cultural references. The plurality into which English has developed has deeply questioned the appropriateness of such a model, which does not seem any longer realistic, or, at least, cannot account for the diversity of English users and contexts of use in the present world. In addition, a monocentric model based on native-speakerism (Holliday, 2006; Houghton & Rivers, 2013; Waters, 2007) has important implications in terms of linguistic goals: The feasibility as well as the relevance of reaching native-like proficiency has been thoroughly questioned (Cook, 2002; Seidlhofer, 2011), not least since it entails that the status of the language learner is conceived of as a permanent and insurmountable state. Given that the benchmark is that of the (idealised) native speaker who should be carefully and fully imitated, such a view can also have problematic repercussions in identity terms, and result in linguistic insecurity (Jenkins, 2007). As Cook has repeatedly pointed out (2002, 2005, [2008] 2013), rather than being continuously confronted with a native speaker model, L2 users ought to be considered in their own right as multicompetent language users, who draw upon several and multifaceted resources to effectively communicate. English is in fact employed by ELF users as a shared means of communication, in settings that are cross-linguistic and cross-cultural by definition and characterized by the interweaving linguacultures of the participants, who may or may not include native speakers of English, according to meaning-negotiation strategies that are peculiar to each situation (e.g., Cogo, 2009; Hülmbauer, 2007, 2009, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011).

The coursebook is still mostly perceived as an indispensable and fundamental classroom tool for teachers and students alike, and the global spread of English has greatly impacted the ELT publication industry (Gray, 2002, 2010a), both in terms of selling figures and of contents, which have in many cases become “cosmopolitan” to accommodate the global demand for English. ELT publishing has been a fast growing and highly competitive multi-million industry, flourishing mainly (even though not only) in native speaker Inner Circle countries, guided by market forces with these global products to be sold in as many parts of the world as possible (Pennycook, 1994). As Gray (2002) summarizes, “coursebooks are commodities to be traded, but what they contain is the result of the interplay between, at times, contradictory commercial, pedagogical and ethical interests” (p. 157).

Textbooks, whether addressed at an international or at a more local audience, seem to increasingly contain the term *international* either in the subti-

tle, or in the teaching/learning aims they promise to attain. Content appears most often as globalized, either through a “deterritorialization in which the UK ceases to function as the main locus of action” (Gray, 2010a, p. 109), or via globalized themes (e.g., travel) and characters, in close connection to a consumerist perspective (cf. also McKay, 2012; Thornbury, 2013).

At the same time, as will be shown below, recent research about ELT materials and publications has shown that a tendency to introduce sociolinguistic reflection related to the global spread of English is starting to appear. This is usually and mostly visible in the coursebook sections aimed at developing (inter)cultural awareness, thus starting to acknowledge that English, both as an international language (EIL) and as a lingua franca (ELF) is not any longer tied to one (Anglophone) culture, but rather moulded by the many and different lingua-cultures of participants and speakers.

As outlined above, ELT materials can either be globally produced, addressing generalised, globally-set classrooms, or designed to suit more local audiences. Generally, the scientific literature investigating the representations of English in ELT coursebooks has focused mostly on specific contexts, from Japan (Matsuda, 2002; Takahashi, 2010) and Vietnam (Truong & Phan, 2009) to European contexts (Kivistö, 2005; Kopperoinen, 2011 for Finland; Lopriore & Ceruti, 2012; Vettorel, 2010a; Vettorel & Corrizato, 2012 for Italy), while a more general perspective has been taken into account in some other studies (cf. e.g., Gray, 2010a; Naji Meidani, & Pishghadam, 2013; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013). On the whole, these studies have shown that, although the focus is still predominantly on standard Inner Circle English and norms, some exemplifications of Outer and, to a lesser extent, Expanding Circle interactions are starting to be included in listening and reading sections.

As Matsuda (2012) has pointed out, materials “tend to focus on the ‘standard’ varieties from the UK and the US” because “the EFL curricula by default have focused almost exclusively on these varieties of English” which “have dominated the ELT profession for a long time, and thus seem ‘natural’ to most teachers and students” (p. 171). Despite an increase in the representation of English varieties when compared to the past, as shown by Eggert (2007) for listening sections in two textbooks published respectively in 1994 and 2003, coursebooks still seem to be largely centered on standard Received Pronunciation (RP), or on General American English. For instance, in Takahashi’s study (2010), ELF-orientedness appeared greater in junior and more limited in senior high school Japanese textbooks; some were more ELF-inclusive in terms of representation, and others in terms of content and/or different accents.¹

¹ This was probably due also to the different styles of junior and senior school materials (cf. Takahashi, 2010, p. 137).

In Naji Meidani and Pishghadam's (2013) investigation of representations of cultural aspects of Inner, Outer and Expanding Circles and non-English speaking countries in four ELT textbooks popular around the world (as well as in Iran), multicultural viewpoints seemed to be increasingly included (cf. also Gray, 2010a, p. 109), moving away from an Anglophone-only perspective and taking into account also the learners' home cultures. However, celebrity mainstream (American) culture was still widely present (cf. also Clanfield, 2009; Gray, 2010b), and Expanding and Outer Circle cultural aspects were not always balanced and fairly represented. As to accents, only some of the material in Naji Meidani and Pishghadam's corpus included dialogues with nonnative speakers.

Other studies, too, have shown that the areas of culture and civilization seem to be more open to a plurilithic approach in ELT materials. Encouraging findings in this respect emerged from a study on ELT textbooks addressed to Italian lower and upper secondary school learners (Vettorel, 2010a), as well as primary school ones (Vettorel, 2008, 2010b), in which a broader view in the representation of culture and intercultural issues starts to become more manifest (Lopriore & Ceruti, 2012). The same appears true for *civiltà*² coursebooks, which increasingly present awareness-raising activities related to the spread and pluralization of English, also in its role as an international language (Vettorel & Corrizzato, 2012).

However, this seems to happen more rarely with respect to L2, bilingual users of English. Although real-world interactions increasingly take place among nonnative speakers (NNSs) through English as a lingua franca, and they may or may not involve native speakers (NSs), L2 users are rarely envisaged in textbooks as successful communicators, and they tend rather to be represented as tourists or visitors (Cook, [2008] 2013, pp. 173-174). Even when bilingual speakers are present, they are frequently relegated to a minor role, and their utterances are most often pronounced in interactions where NS characters play a major role (see Matsuda, 2002 and Sherman, 2010 for occupational roles).

Indeed, representations of the plurality of English in today's communications do not frequently occur in recorded materials or in interactions among book characters: Kivistö's study of accents in Finnish textbooks revealed that only 3% were representative of NNSs (2005). These results are confirmed in a more recent study, too: Kopperoinen (2011) showed that the great majority of accents in two upper secondary school Finnish coursebooks are by far native and generally RP, with a few exceptions, following the National Curriculum and CEFR guidelines. The 12 instances that were retrieved, some related to Outer Circle speakers, but mostly to European nonnative speakers, were connected to the spread of English in the world, or attention was drawn to cross-cultural misunderstandings.

² Coursebooks focusing on civilization.

In their recent study of adult coursebooks, Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) have shown that “the courses seem to give priority to criteria that are more connected to face validity, to the achievement of instant ‘progress’, and to preparation for examinations than to helping learners towards the achievement of communicative competence” (p. 246). However, despite the fact that “the main focus of all the courses is still on linguistic accuracy” (p. 247), the authors notice that some coursebooks devote attention to “helping their learners achieve appropriacy and effectiveness of communication” (p. 247).³ Tomlinson and Masuhara’s investigation has also shown that almost none of their materials include activities aimed at encouraging the use of English in outside-classroom environments, either face-to-face or virtual, whereas some activities connected to the students’ own culture, and thus related to localization, are partly taken into account. When looking at whether the material helps “learners to use ELF” (p. 244), the authors conclude that the focus is overwhelmingly on British English, and on “the same educated, English, middle-class, native-speaker voices” (p. 244), even when some NNS interactions are present (one textbook) and references to several countries are made.

To sum up, the areas where the pluralization of English seems to be taken into account in ELT materials is that of culture and interculture, while ELF settings and ELF bilingual, nonnative users seem to be still largely marginal; when present, this inclusion is generally not accompanied by adequate reflection and language activities, nor does it take into proper account the students’ actual and future experiences as language users, thus resulting mostly in a lip-service-type “global orientation” (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013).

The Study

A survey of how recent and most sold ELT coursebooks in Italy respond to and represent the global spread of English and the new forms of communication was thus needed. The study meant to investigate whether a perspective on WE and ELF had been taken into account in the best selling ELT coursebooks in Italy, starting with the following initial research questions:

1. Do ELT coursebooks currently used in Italian high schools for pre- and intermediate learners represent WE and ELF?
2. How far do the observable changes in ELT manuals reflect, and are consistent with, most relevant findings in WE/ELF both in terms of the lan-

³ As to appropriateness in ELF cf. Seidlhofer (2011, pp. 199-200) and Widdowson (2012).

- guage presented and in terms of language awareness and language use/language practice activities?
3. Do changes in ELT manuals include representation of WE/ELF in listening and speaking skills and related activities, as well as learners' pragmatic and intercultural competence?

Method

The study identified some among the most recently published coursebooks addressed to Italian secondary school students at the pre- and intermediate levels, that is, at the *biennio* (the first two years of high school) and the *triennio* (the following three years) school levels.

Our analysis focused primarily on the aural and oral skills components, the listening and speaking activities, taking into account all sections of the material available to students as well as in teacher's guidelines. Specifically, we looked into the degree of inclusiveness as to speakers and contexts in the situations presented, and in terms of tasks provided to raise learners' language, sociolinguistic and cultural awareness of different instantiations of English, both in terms of WE and ELF.

We also examined whether the coursebook materials and activities were in any way connected to the learners' experience of language use in ELF settings, and to the presence of English(es) in their linguistic environment; in other words, to *effective localization* (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013). We investigated if, and how, the materials and tasks aimed at creating a link with the use of English in real, outside-school contexts and situations (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013), in order to familiarize learners with the role of language (and ELF) use in such settings. One further point of investigation was the presence of activities oriented at fostering communication strategies, given the importance they play in spoken interactions, particularly among speakers of different linguacultures (e.g., Mariani, 2010; Seidlhofer 2011).

The analysis was carried out by systematically examining all units, and different sections within units, in each textbook in the corpus, encompassing both linguistically oriented and culturally oriented texts and tasks.

Criteria of evaluation. Our main research interest was focused on establishing whether the several pedagogical issues and implications brought about by research into WE and ELF have been in any way taken aboard in coursebooks. Taking into account the developments in WE and ELF studies, as well as the most recent research in textbook analysis (Gray, 2010a; Matsuda,

2012; McKay, 2012; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013), the following criteria were agreed upon in evaluating the coursebooks under consideration:

1. Presence or absence of references to WE and ELF.
2. Awareness-raising activities of WE and/or ELF.
3. Promotion of the use of English outside the school environment and flexibility for effective localization.
4. Promotion of the use of effective communication and intercultural strategies.

These criteria were identified as the most relevant to our research study, aimed at investigating to what extent awareness of the plurality of English is promoted, and what support is given in classroom activities to a pluralistic and ELF-oriented language use. Some of the criteria are partly derived from Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013), given their relevance in contexts of use related to the plurality of English and ELF. It is also noteworthy that Tomlinson and Masuhara's recent coursebooks survey is to our knowledge the first to have taken into account ELF-related criteria, too, and specifically the issue of to what extent ELT materials "help the learners to develop cultural awareness" (p. 241), to "make use of the English environment outside the classroom" (p. 242), "to use ELF " (p. 244), "to become effective communicators in English" (p. 245), and to "provide the flexibility needed for effective localization" (p. 243).

A number of questions were associated with the criteria:

1. Presence or absence of references to WE and ELF.
 - a) Are there references to WE and ELF in:
 - reading and listening materials?
 - the activities (opportunities for reflection, localization)?
 - teachers' guidebooks?
 - b) Are dialogues in ELF settings included as to characters (NSs, NNSs) and/or settings?
 - c) Does the representation of NNS characters go beyond that of linguistic "tourists"?
2. Activities raising awareness of WE and/or ELF.
 - a) Are speaking and/or listening activities aimed at raising awareness of varieties of English, of WE and of ELF?
 - b) What type of awareness is mostly elicited and how?
3. Promotion of the use of English outside the school environment and flexibility for effective localization.

- a) Is there any sort of support to the promotion and use of English outside the school environment in the activities proposed?
 - b) Are learners encouraged to reflect on localized environments both in language and (inter)cultural terms?
4. Promotion of the use of effective communication strategies./Help to learners to use ELF supporting effective communication strategies.
- a) Are learners sustained in the development of communication strategies? Where? How? In what way?
 - b) Are these communication strategies only related to native vs. nonnative interaction or is their use encouraged in NNSs-NNSs cross-cultural interactions?
 - c) Are communication strategies in speaking activities overtly included?
 - d) Are models, and reflection on successful NNSs in listening activities, provided?

Our research aim was first of all to find out whether a pluralistic and ELF-oriented approach has been incorporated in recently published ELT materials; secondly, we aimed at investigating whether the promotion of intercultural and communication strategies has been overtly given room to, in order to support effective language use in the outside-class environment. Indeed, although ELT materials are addressed to learners, with activities that take place in classroom contexts, opportunities for learners to become ELF users are widely present in today's world, so that the roles of learner and user can be seen as overlapping rather than separate (e.g., Seidlhofer, 2011): Not only do L2 learners become L2 users "as soon as they step outside of the classroom" (Cook, 2002, p. 3; cf. also Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 187), but opportunities to step into the role of ELF users are very often provided also within educational activities, international school exchanges in the first place (Vettorel, 2013), as well as telecollaboration (e.g., Grazzi, 2013; Guth & Helm, 2011; Kohn, in press). Giving room to effective examples of ELF users' language on the one hand, and to communication strategies on the other, would therefore appear highly advisable in ELT materials in order to prepare learners for actual language use beyond the classroom walls.

The corpus of coursebooks. The coursebooks were chosen among those most adopted in the last 6 years (2008-2013), published by Italian and/or British partner publishers, either written by NSs, or by native and nonnative authors. All but one coursebook in our corpus can be defined as locally-suited, in that (a) they are addressed to Italian secondary school learners, (b) they are produced either by locally-based publishers or, at times, jointly by international and Italian

ones, and (c) the coursebook authors include Italian, or Italy-based, ones. This choice of coursebooks was intended to provide as comprehensive a picture of materials on the Italian scene, with their local characteristics, as possible.

Ten coursebooks were eventually selected for the analysis and constituted our audio-video and written corpus of reference.⁴ All the components of the selected coursebooks were analysed, that is, the student's book, the teacher's guide, their accompanying booklets (lexical books, CLIL, culture, test, etc.) and their audio and video components and, if available, web-based materials.

Findings

The findings were quite informative and answered the research questions initially posed. All coursebooks make reference, to some extent, to issues related to the role of English, to its varieties and to the effects of globalization, particularly in the areas devoted to intercultural communication, and in the choice of nonnative characters. However, most of the overall coursebook structure and of the language activities offered very rarely represent WE, not to mention ELF, and the gap between what is announced and what is implemented is still a largely unexplored territory. Findings are summarized below and organized according to the criteria listed earlier in the paper and the related questions. References to each coursebook will be provided in brackets (see the appendix for the complete corpus).

Presence or absence of references to WE and ELF and of awareness-raising activities (Criteria 1 and 2). One of the main purposes of the analysis was to find out whether varieties of English, World Englishes or ELF had or had not been included in the coursebooks and, if so, to what degree. All ten coursebooks contain more or less explicit references to both British and American English, mostly with the aim of showing differences in their spelling and pronunciation. However, this is something that has almost always been present in coursebooks, at least in those sold in the Italian market during the last 30 years. In one of the coursebooks (Book 5) the explicit statement that the course "offers a variety of accents, in particular British and American English" (Book 5, Vols. A & B, Teacher's Guide, p. 6) is mirrored in the activities of a unit (Book 5, Vol. B, Unit 14, pp. 136-142) on this theme, as in the workbook listening tasks where learners are

⁴ Two different coursebooks (Books 1 & 2; see the appendix) from the same publisher, written by the same authors, with the same title, but geared at different level groups were included in the corpus since, even if published at a short time difference (2008-2009), the most recent one showed some signs of a new perspective in terms of intercultural issues.

asked to “listen to different speakers and decide whether they are American or English” (Book 5, Vol. B, pp. 278-279). One aspect that, on the contrary, has been introduced more recently in order to raise learners’ awareness are different English accents (Irish, Welsh, Scottish, etc.), which have been included in a number of the coursebooks analysed (Books 3, 5, 6, 8). These accent differences are usually presented as part of the listening, pronunciation or vocabulary sections, where learners are asked to focus on comprehension and to compare these varieties with Standard English. One interesting example is the “How we speak” section in Book 8, which focuses on dialects in Britain and Ireland and also includes reflection on accents and dialects in the students’ own country. A similar reflection activity is found in another coursebook with reference to New Zealand English and Maori (Book 7).

On the other hand, only some of the coursebooks under examination either just mention or explicitly address the issues of World Englishes, ELF and NNSs. They usually use the notion of “authentic English” (Book 9, Teacher’s Guide, p. 5), a notion underlying all those coursebooks that include the use of web-based materials (Books 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10), corpora-informed language (Book 3, Teacher’s Guide, p. 8), or samples of “wrong English usage” (Books 1, 2) derived from learner corpora.

Specifically, it is interesting to note when and where these references are made and the way in which they are exploited. References to global English or WE are often made in readings and in cultural sections (Books 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10). In the video “Varieties of English” linked to a unit on British and American English of one of the coursebooks (Book 5), several NSs of various English dialects are being interviewed while learners are asked how difficult they find to understand them, without however the provision of further opportunities for guided reflection.

As for the presence of NNSs, despite a growing tendency to use them as main characters in the storyline or in the dialogues, they are more than once (and still) portrayed as tourists or visitors to an Inner Circle country (the UK mostly; Books 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9). Not always though their accents in the recordings can be defined as authentic, as at times they sound like fake foreign accents produced by NS actors. In some coursebooks WE and ELF interactions are introduced both in readings and in activities, but seldom with clearly defined awareness-raising tasks. In one coursebook (Book 5) in the activities related to a video on varieties of English, explicit mention is made of ELF and learners are invited to read the Wikipedia section on the theme, and to answer the question “Do you think that ELF is a valid form of English?”, which sounds somewhat biased.

In almost all coursebooks NNSs are seldom represented in interactions with other NNSs. At times it is done in the context of the Outer Circle (e.g., call

centres in India, Book 9, p. 10), even though not with the specific purpose of highlighting ELF interactions. Even if they are occasionally presented in non-native (ELF) settings, the NNS characters are already part of a NS context, and the English produced is ELF only in terms of pronunciation, while lexis, and discourse markers are predominantly NS ones (Books 1, 2, 9, 6, 10); their presence does not therefore lead to reflection on the part of the students on differences or similarities between varieties of English.

In one coursebook (Book 3, p. 10) a specific paragraph in the Teacher's Guidebook introduction is devoted to Englishes and to ELF. It mentions how English has changed and explicitly draws teachers' attention to WE and the emerging ELF; however, even if several NNS characters often interact in the activities of that same book, the tasks are not specifically meant to highlight communicative linguistic and strategic characteristics of ELF interactive settings.

To sum up, signs of a shift in perspective in a number of coursebooks in terms of WE do emerge, but that shift is in the majority of cases only realized in terms of acknowledging the co-existence of varieties besides standard British English, of stimulating recognition of differences in vocabulary, in spelling or in pronunciation, and in the use of varieties of English in the audio and video materials. Explicit encouragement for teachers to focus their and their learners' attention on the existence of WE and ELF is provided in only one of the coursebooks (Book 3); however, the shift to a consistent presence of NNSs as successful bilingual users of English, and of activities aimed not just at developing learners' recognition but at actively involving them in enacting communicatively effective ELF strategies, is still largely missing. In some of the coursebooks (Books 2, 3, 9, 10) several activities are set in non-Anglophone countries, but the locations are predominantly used only to illustrate aspects of local history, geography or cultural elements.

It should be noticed, however, that one interesting dimension emerging in many of the coursebooks sold on the Italian market, and partly present in our corpus too, is the elicited reflection on learners' L1 as compared to English (Books 1, 2, 3, 6, 7). More and more frequently translation activities and pragmatic differences between the two languages are presented as part of the learners' general language education, as well as, in one case in particular (Book 6), instances of other languages and of the presence of English in the students' environment (e.g., Book 7). This might be considered as a first step in terms of language and sociolinguistic awareness and may lead to further activities and tasks on both WE and ELF.

Furthermore, most of the explicit or implicit references to global English/Englishes emerge in the coursebook sections officially dedicated to notions of cultural and intercultural communication, which are gradually substi-

tuting the so called culture and civilization (*civiltà*) sections where most traditional British culture samples, for instance, the English breakfast, the Royal family, the British parliament, were once introduced. In one case, the objective to “build across-cultural awareness” is explicitly mentioned in the Teacher’s Guide together with that of encouraging discussion and “lead up to mini-projects” (Book 7, Teacher’s Guide, p. 5). In another case, the Teacher’s Guide specifies that the culture sections deal with the UK and “world culture” (Book 4, p. 14, our translation). The notion of culture underlying these new sections is linked to the emerging multiculturalism and to the multilingual contexts typical of most European countries. Sometimes, even though not explicitly stated, the texts and activities are focused on other parts of the world (e.g., Book 3, Vol. 2, section on India and Bangladesh, pp. 140-141; and section on the “all different, all equal” European policy, pp. 146-147). In most cases the sections devoted to culture/s make specific reference to religion, food or historical events. For instance, themes include breakfast around the world or world food (Book 3, 5, 7), carnivals in the world (Books 3, 6), and even social situations in different areas (Book 6; Book 3, Vol. 2, p. 137, section on Muhammad Yunus and micro-credit in India and Bangladesh). In some cases stereotypes about what is “typically English” are presented (Book 4, “British food sucks”), or several points of view are introduced (e.g., Brazilian, Dutch, Turkish, Italian and Spanish people, Books 3, 8). Very seldom specific references to other languages or to how English is used in those contexts are made. However, activities aimed at fostering reflection on the students’ own culture are increasingly present (Books 1, 2, 3, 4), particularly in web-based materials (Books 1, 2, 3, 6, 7); the fact that specific reference is made to intercultural communication may naturally lead in the near future to further reflections on the way English is being used also among bilingual users in cross-cultural WE and ELF settings.

Promotion of the use of English outside the school environment and flexibility for effective localization (Criterion 3). Very little overt encouragement to use English outside the school environment is to be found in the corpus of coursebooks analysed. When present, it is almost always meant to encourage students (and teachers) to visit the related website where materials such as songs, webpages, radio, TV and film excerpts, often unadapted, can be consulted and/or downloaded (Books 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10). The notion of linguistic landscapes and of how the surrounding environment is permeated by English, and possibly of WE and ELF interactions, has not yet become integral part of these coursebooks. Rather than actively discover and reflect upon English usage in their own contexts and in their own experience as, and with, potential ELF users, references and activities are often limited to tasks that encourage

learners to look for English in the press, on TV or on the Internet, and active critical reflection on the presence of English in the learners' environment is rarely included (e.g., Books 3, 7).

Promotion of effective (ELF) communication strategies (Criterion 4). Almost all coursebooks include suggestions on effective strategies to communicate, although not always specifically in relation to how they can be developed. The use of communicative strategies is generally highlighted either within the general heading of "study strategies," or elicited in self-assessment activities (Books 1, 2 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). Very rarely are distinctions between speaking and interactive strategies made, very few references to effective strategies to communicate among NNSs (Books 4, 5, 6), and none to ELF settings, are present. There appears to be no explicit reflection on successful communication as carried out by, or among, NNSs, who, as illustrated above, are largely not represented in the listening materials of most coursebooks, either.

Conclusions and Implications

In line with previous studies, our findings show that, on the whole, there have not been significant changes in the recently published ELT coursebooks in our corpus, particularly as to a shift towards awareness-raising activities related to the plurality of Englishes, not to mention ELF. Characters continue to be prevalently NSs, settings and accents overwhelmingly Inner Circle, Anglophone ones. The idea that interactions among nonnative bilingual users of English can be successful, which may constitute a positive and attainable model, is not taken into consideration, apart from one textbook, where the characters do nevertheless sound like native speakers in the recorded materials. In a similar vein, there seems to be no consistent encouragement to take advantage of outside-school opportunities for language use.

The area where more comforting findings emerge is that of intercultural awareness. Several viewpoints appear to be increasingly acknowledged, especially in supplementary materials downloadable from websites. These materials not only provide reflection activities, but also support for learners' use of the language in their local contexts.

Although it has often been the case that Italian English language teachers have been made familiar with methodological innovations through ELT materials, and teacher guides have played an important role in familiarizing

educators with innovation in didactic approaches,⁵ this does not seem to have taken place yet for WE, and even less so for ELF. In the ELT profession ELF is still a highly debated issue (e.g., Maley, 2010), and a tendency towards conformity to established and traditional conceptions in materials can indeed contribute to the reinforcement of ideologies of native-speakerism and language standards (Houghton & Rivers, 2013), which are however challenged by the widespread changes that have affected English over the last decades. The non-inclusion of bilingual L2 speakers in their role of ELF users can also be seen in relation to “traditional” teachers’ expectations (Kivistö, 2005) and beliefs (Dewey, 2012), to which coursebooks still seem largely to conform.

Acknowledging the deep changes English has been going through in terms of language use, as well as contexts of use (exposure to several varieties, effective ELF interactions), could have an empowering effect, both on teachers and learners. Including a plurilithic approach in ELT materials would not only support the legitimization of their role of language users, setting bilingual expertise as an attainable goal, but also foster awareness that English is increasingly (and authentically) used in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural settings. This could be done by positively building on aspects of language and intercultural awareness which, as we have seen, are increasingly included in textbooks, to “reach out” to reality and prepare today’s learners to effectively interact in real-life communicative settings

⁵ For instance, this happened with respect to early versions of communicative language teaching in the 1980s, or an increased attention to vocabulary through the lexical approach (Lewis, 1993, 1997; Porcelli, 2004), as well as, more recently, the development of cross-curricular topics and CLIL.

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Appendix

Coursebook corpus

No.	Authors and materials	Title	Publisher(s)	Year of publication
1	Puchta, H., Stranks, J., & Thacker, C., & Ackroyd, S. Student's Book, Workbook with CD, Companion, Revision	<i>English in Mind Pre-intermediate</i>	Loescher / Cambridge University Press	2008
2	Puchta H., Stranks, J. Student's Book, Workbook with CD, Companion, Revision	<i>English in Mind Intermediate</i>	Loescher / Cambridge University Press	2009
3	Lopriore, L., Ceruti, M. A. 2 volumes Student's Book, Workbook, Voicing Word, Voicing Progress, Voicing Grammar, DVD Viewing Voices	<i>Voicing English</i>	Loescher	2010
4	Vol. 1: Prodromou L., with Cowan, A., Minardi, S., Prodromou, P., Bowie, J.; Vol. 2: Prodromou L., with Elliot, R., Minardi, S., Prodromou, P., Bowie, J. Teacher's Guide (one volume): Tite, J., Bowie P.	<i>Flash on English</i>	ELI	2011
5	Calzoni D., Viviani, A. with Brelstaff, T., Phillips, A., Walker, S. Vols. A and B Student's & Resource Book, Vocabulary Notebook, DVD	<i>Star Prize</i>	Loescher	2011
6	Vols. 1 and 2: Garton-Sprenger J., Prowse, P.; Workbook: Garton-Sprenger, J., Prowse, P. with Gomm, H.; Teacher's Guide Vol. 1: Garton-Sprenger, J., Prowse, P. with Bailry, A., Gomm, H., Smith, P.; Teacher's guide Vol. 2: Garton-Sprenger, J., Prowse, P. with Bladon, R.	<i>New Inspiration Italy</i>	MacMillan	2011
7	Spencer D.	<i>New Gateway</i>	MacMillan / Mondadori Education	MacMillan 2011/ Mondadori Education 2012
8	Vol. 1: Comyns Carr J., Parsons, J. with Foody, E.; Vol. 2: McKinlay, S., Hastings, B. with Foody, E.; Teacher's Guide Vol. 1: Fricker R., Kent, J., Kempton, G. with Bettinelli, B., Fantoni, P. E.; Teacher's Guide Vol. 2: Kent J., Kempton, G., Fricker, R., Reilly, P. with Bettinelli, B., Fantoni, P. E.	<i>Speak Your Mind</i>	Pearson	2102

9	Radley P., Simonetti, D.	<i>New Horizon Digital</i>	Oxford University Press	2012
10	Latham-Koenig, C., Oxenden, C. Student's Book, iTutor , Video	<i>English File Intermediate</i>	Oxford University Press	2013
