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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear readers,

Here we are again, with our first number in the not-so-new "millennium", and at a time (for those whose autumn term is looming) when the irresistible urge to read this issue of VIEWS can serve as a welcome excuse for not preparing lectures, compiling reading lists

This is the new format in which we print out submissions for discussion by the editorial team and authors (if they can be

and photocopying handouts!

This is a real bumper issue again, and it offers you a varied fare: Bryan Jenner, in a contribution of the interactive kind we are particularly keen on, reacts to Niki Ritt's paper on trochees (*VIEWS* 8/2) by comparing it to work on foot-types conducted in Edinburgh in the 1960's. This is as 'diachronic' as it gets this time - the three longer papers all deal with contemporary English, but from very different perspectives and with very different purposes in mind. But what all three have in common is that they talk about corpora: Leiv Egil Breivik subjects an influential paper in a prestigious journal to close scrutiny, challenges the generalizations made therein and offers an alternative view based on his own work on the LOB Corpus and the Survey of English Usage. Hans Platzer, drawing on some 'main-stream' work in corpus linguistics, performs a detailed analysis of his corpus of letters written by Viennese students of Business English in order to tease out the factors which contribute most to the difference between 'model' and 'apprentice' business letters. Barbara Seidlhofer states the (probably controversial) case for a corpus whose time, she argues, has definitely come, and sketches a conceptual framework for the Vienna ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) Corpus, whose compilation is now in progress.

We had lively, at times even heated, discussions on all these contributions in our editorial meetings - and we would like to invite you to air your *VIEWS* by sending us a contribution and engaging in discussion with us. To encourage interaction, we have been experimenting with a new format for submissions. In order to give you an idea what this looks like, we have formatted this letter of

present). We'd like to invite any future contributors to let us have their sub-missions in this format. What you do is this: you simply mark off a generous margin on the right, in which you put questions which occur to you while you are writing this paper, and which you would like a reaction to from us (or anyone else reading your paper). The number of questions you pose is up to you, but maybe between 3 and 10 per paper would work best.

This helps focus our reading and ensures that our discussions really do deal with the questions which authors want to be addressed.

How about using this unique opportunity to home in on questions you want discussed? Send us your contribution!

the editors in the way we hope you will format your contributions. They won't need to look exactly like this, but the main point is to make sure you let us know what the questions in your own mind are that you are hoping we'll address in our discussions. We've tried this out and it works quite well.

As always, we are also hoping that you will feel provoked by one of the papers in this issue to send us a riposte. Please feel free to let us know what you think, even if you only have time to write a paragraph or a page!

We hope you will enjoy your copy of *VIEWS*. As in every first number of a volume, we'd also like to ask you for a small contribution in any currency. Thank you.

Please use the enclosed address sticker to send us a small donation for the two issues of VIEWS of the year 2000.

The Editors

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A foot-note on the trochee

Bryan Jenner, Vienna

Nikolaus Ritt's paper on trochees (*Views* vol.8, no.2, December 1999) sent me back to some work on foot-types in modern English conducted in Edinburgh in the 1960's by Abercrombie (1964a and 1964b), Albrow (1968) and others.

Their basic proposition was that, in modern English, rhythm was best accounted for by a system of feet of more or less equivalent perceptual length (i.e. stress-timed), the foot consisting of at least one syllable (the *ictus*), optionally followed by one or more additional syllables (the *remiss*). The trochee - the most frequent foot-type - therefore consists of an ictus and a one-syllable remiss.

Where Abercrombie and subsequently Albrow differ from other accounts of rhythm before and since that time is in the attention they pay to the length ratio between the two syllables that constitute a trochee, and it was here that they were able to establish an important difference between English and other Germanic languages: in English an ictus is not necessarily longer than a remiss.

Abercrombie (1964b) identified three possible variants of the two-syllable foot: Type A consists of a short (accented) syllable followed by a long (unaccented) syllable, as in *shilling, coffee* and *cuckoo*. Type B consists of two syllables of more or less equal length, so that the difference between ictus and remiss consists of some feature other than length. Examples are *greater, firmly* and *always*. Type C feet have a long first syllable followed by a shorter second syllable, and in these there is always a lexico-grammatical boundary between the two syllables. Examples of this third type are in the phrases *|come to | tea*, *per|haps she|will* and *|old and|wise*.

Albrow (loc.cit) subsequently made a further simplification of this analysis by grouping Abercrombie's types A and B together as 'second-syllable non-short' and relabelling his type C 'second-syllable short'.

He also pointed out that where the two elements of a phrasal verb occur within a single foot, these are treated as a single word and the second syllable is non-short, as in *|David |<u>gets up</u>| early*. In addition he demonstrated that any syllable in utterance-final position in a remiss is non-short: e.g. *|this is |meant to |eat <u>with</u>|*, or *|what's it | good <u>for?</u>|*

This simplification may be generalized, in my experience, as 'weak syllables adhere to the adjacent strong syllable to which they are more closely related structurally'. Prepositions, therefore, are short, and 'accelerate' to a following noun, while the adverbial particles of phrasal verbs, or auxiliary verbs in the same foot as a noun or pronoun, are extended to show this 'backward-adherence'. The same is true when a single foot consists of two auxiliary elements, as in *he| must have| gone*: the second syllable is non-short, implying that the two elements are handled as a single lexical unit.

Albrow was also able to show that in phonemically identical sequences with different phrase-structures it was rhythm alone that enabled meaning-distinctions to be preserved. In the famous (Chomskyan) example *old men and women*, the scope of the adjective *old* is clarified by a simple adjustment in the length of *and*: if *old* applies to both *men* and *women*, *and* is non-short. Conversely, if only the *men* are old, then *and* will be short.

Abercrombie (1964b) claims that in this respect the rhythm of English differs substantially from both German and the Scandinavian languages: in particular he suggests that it is common for German speakers to use type C feet (second syllable short) instead of his type B (second syllable non-short), "which misleads the listener into thinking a word-division is present". (34)

Both writers apply the same analysis to feet consisting of 3 or more syllables, and show that it is common to find instances of both non-short and short weak syllables within a single foot, as in *I | got up at | ten*, where *up* is non-short and *at* is short.

I have found this simple analysis, which is missing is most recent introductory phonetics textbooks, to be pedagogically very useful and productive.

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On relative clauses and locative expressions in English existential sentences

Leiv Egil Breivik, Bergen

In an influential paper, Fox & Thompson (1990) argue that the grammar of relative clauses in spoken American English is affected by interactive and cognitive factors pertaining to the communication situation. Existential sentences containing a relative clause as well as an overt locative expression figure prominently in their analysis. The present paper examines Fox & Thompson's analysis of such sentences in the light of a wide range of data. It is shown that the generalizations they make on the basis of their limited corpus (25 tokens) rest on false premises. Their analysis fails to take account of some of the most salient properties inherent in existential sentences in all varieties of English; it also disregards relevant cross-linguistic data. An alternative analysis is offered.[*]

1. Introduction

The present paper is intended as a contribution to the study of the ways that speakers and writers, hearers and readers use language.[1] It compares data derived from two computerized corpora of British English with the findings presented in Fox & Thompson's (1990) influential paper on relative clauses. On the basis of a quantitative analysis of a corpus of (finite) relative clauses in American English conversations, Fox & Thompson argue that the grammar of the clauses in question is affected by interactive and cognitive factors inherent in the communication situation. Altogether their corpus consists of 414

* The present paper is a revision of Breivik 1999. I am grateful to Christiane Dalton-Puffer, Bryan Jenner, Gunther Kaltenböck, Nikolaus Ritt, Barbara Seidlhofer, Toril Swan and Henry G. Widdowson for useful discussion of issues raised in the paper. This is of course not to say that any of them would necessarily agree with what I say here.

1 Much recent work in linguistics has been concerned with the relation of utterances and sentences to contexts and situations. For example, this relation has been examined by Abbott (1997), Baker (1995), Chafe (1987, 1994), Dillon et al. (1985), Downing & Noonan (1995), Firbas (1992), Fox & Thompson (1990), Geis (1995), Givón (1984, 1990, 1994), Gundel (1998), Gundel et al. (1993), Hopper & Thompson (1980), Huck & Na (1990), Kiss (1998), and Prince (1988, 1992). Although scholars working in this field may differ in their approaches, their modes of explanation, and their characterization of data, they share the view that regularities and generalizations about language are to be found not only in the rules of its grammar, but also in the way these rules interact with pragmatic factors such as information status and contrastiveness.

relative clauses, representing a wide range of categories (see §2 below). There has been no dearth of research into relative clauses in spoken and written English (see Johansson 1995 and references given there). However, Fox & Thompson's study is the first to examine the relevance of information-flow principles to relative clauses in their conversational contexts. In recent literature, the empirical data and analysis provided by Fox & Thompson have often been taken as conclusive evidence that discourse-level explanations can account for grammatical facts.

In what follows, I shall restrict my attention to EXISTENTIAL-HEAD RELATIVES, i.e. relative clauses with existential heads, as exemplified by 1-2:[2]

(1) There are *many people* here [who like Christmas pudding].
(2) There was *a girl* [I had met before].

This is the category which is given the most detailed treatment in Fox & Thompson's study. Locative expressions play an important role in their analysis of the constructions in question (cf. *here* in ex. 1). Such expressions will therefore also be dealt with in the present paper. Fox & Thompson's corpus of existential-head relatives is very small, consisting of only 25 tokens. My primary goal is to find out to what extent their claims about existential-head relatives and locatives hold when confronted with a larger database.[3] All the existential-head relatives in the Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen (LOB) Corpus of British English[4] will be subjected to a systematic examination. Data will also be cited from the Survey of English Usage at University College London.[5]

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2 Throughout this paper, the relative clause will be given in square brackets and the head NP in italics.

3 For a full discussion of existential constructions, see Breivik 1981, 1990, 1997a, Ebeling 1999, Erdmann 1976, Hannay 1985, Lumsden 1988, McNally 1997, and Milsark 1974.

4 The LOB Corpus is a one-million word collection of present-day British English written texts (published in 1961). Like its American counterpart, the Brown Corpus, it contains 500 text samples of approximately 2,000 words distributed over 15 text categories. The LOB Corpus is now available on CD-ROM and is distributed by the Centre for Humanistic Information Technology at the University of Bergen.

5 The one-million word Survey Corpus samples spoken and written British English produced between c. 1955 and 1985. It comprises 100 spoken and 100 written texts, each of approximately 5,000 words. The texts range from learned and technical writing to the most spontaneous colloquial English, including telephone conversations. The Survey Corpus was originally compiled on paper, in the form of many thousands of slips, with detailed grammatical annotations. It has now been computerized and is available on the network of computers at the Survey premises at University College London.

Finally, reference will be made to relevant cross-linguistic data, an aspect which is not mentioned at all by Fox & Thompson despite the vast amount of research carried out in this field.

In discussing relative clauses and their contexts of use, it will be convenient to adopt some of the most important concepts and terms in Fox & Thompson's analysis. For the sake of clarity, therefore, I shall first introduce, define and exemplify these concepts and terms, as well as present some of Fox & Thompson's data and hypotheses that are relevant to my own investigation (§2). §3.1 outlines the syntactic and distributional characteristics of the various types of existential-head relatives occurring in the LOB Corpus. In §3.2, I propose explanations for my findings in terms of semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic factors. Here I relate my findings to Fox & Thompson's analysis and show that when the database is extended, their analysis fails to account for some of the most salient features of existential sentences. The main results of my investigation are summed up in §4.

2. Fox & Thompson's analysis

Fox & Thompson categorize relative clauses according to the role of the head NP within the main clause and of the coreferent (NP_{rel}) within the relative clause. Note that the NP_{rel} may not be explicitly expressed, as in ex. 2 above. In addition to existential heads (Ex), the head-NP roles occurring in Fox & Thompson's corpus are: subject (S), Object (O), prepositional phrase object (PPO), and predicate nominal (PN). S, O, and PPO also occur in NP_{rel} roles. The term X-RELATIVE refers to the role of the NP_{rel}; thus OBJECT-RELATIVE, for example, stands for a relative clause in which the NP_{rel} is the object. The examples below, taken from Fox & Thompson (298-99), illustrate some of the combinations of head NP and NP_{rel} occurring in their corpus:

(3)	S-S:	*the blond kid* [that's been setting the fires] is on the 3rd floor
	S-O:	*This man* [who I have for linguistics] is really too much
	O-S:	I know *somebody* [who has her now]
	O-O:	if you give them *the dimensions* [you want]
	O-PPO:	you know *the place* [where she lives]
	PN-S:	it's *the only place* [that carries the book]
	Ex-S:	there's *something really sad* [that happens]
	Ex-O:	there was *something* [we needed]
	Ex-PPO	there's *three courses* already [that I'm not going to do well in]

Like Fox & Thompson, I shall distinguish between two types of subjects in the relative clause: 'A' (NP_{rel} is the subject of a transitive verb) and 'S' (NP_{rel} is the subject of an intransitive verb). The term 'subject' will henceforth refer to the grammatical role 'subject' (including 'A' and 'S'),

while ‘S’ will refer only to the subject of an intransitive verb and ‘A’ only to the subject of a transitive verb.

Fox & Thompson posit five information-flow factors that are claimed to play an important role in explaining the grammatical patterns of relative clauses: ‘These factors are both cognitive and interactional, being constituted in terms of both the speaker’s model of the hearer and the interaction between the speaker and the hearer’ (299).[6] Only the first three factors mentioned by Fox & Thompson have bearing on the issues discussed in §3.2 below. We shall therefore content ourselves with a brief look at these.

The first factor is the information status of the NP containing the relative clause. To explore this dimension of the problem, Fox & Thompson use the following categories: NEW (the referent is presumed not to be in the addressee’s focal consciousness), GIVEN (the referent is presumed to be in the addressee’s focal consciousness), and IDENTIFIABLE (the addressee is able to identify the referent, e.g. by prior knowledge).

The second factor that is claimed to play a prominent role in explaining relative clause patterns has to do with the way the referent of an NP is located in conversational space, how it is made relevant to the addressee at the point where it is introduced. This is called GROUNDING. Or, to be more specific, to ground an NP is to relate it to a given referent in the immediate context, i.e. to a referent that is presumed to be in the addressee’s focal consciousness. ANCHORING, MAIN-CLAUSE GROUNDING, and PROPOSITION-LINKING are special types of grounding. These types can be illustrated by the following examples from Fox & Thompson’s material:

Anchoring

(4) (talking about upkeep on houses)
But uh – the original price of it, eh – you can’t even (inaud.) the original price,
just that little screen porch alone is five hundred dollars,
the air condish – *the uh heater thing* [we put in] I think was a hundred uh five six hundred dollars,

6 Here Fox & Thompson’s analysis is strongly influenced by Chafe’s important 1987 paper entitled ‘Cognitive constraints on information flow’. Chafe interprets a piece of discourse in terms of cognitive factors that interact to determine its content and shape. He assumes ‘that the linguistic phenomena which have been given names like [“given and new information” and “topics and comments”] are manifestations of basic cognitive processes, and that we can never understand them fully until we understand the psychological phenomena underlying them’ (1987:21).

Main-clause grounding

(5) he’s got – *a spring* [that comes way up],

Proposition-linking

(6) The mother’s sister is a real bigot. Y’know and she hates *anyone* [who isn’t a Catholic].

Following Prince (1981), Fox & Thompson define anchoring as the linking of a new referent in an NP to another referent in the same NP. In ex. 4 the subject of the relative clause, *we*, is given since the speaker is a participant in the conversation, and the relative clause anchors *the uh heater thing* by linking it to the given referent. In the case of main-clause grounding, ‘the Head NP is grounded by virtue of being associated with a Given referent in the same main clause, as opposed to being grounded by virtue of its relative clause’ (Fox & Thompson 1990:301). 5 provides an example of this; the main-clause subject *he* (given referent) grounds the object *a spring*. Finally, Fox & Thompson give 6 as an example of proposition-linking. Here the NP *anyone who isn’t a Catholic* is grounded by its link to the preceding proposition where the mother’s sister is characterized as a bigot.

The third information-flow factor that supposedly affects the grammar of relative clauses in Fox & Thompson’s data is humanness. It is argued that the humanness of both the referent of the NP_{rel} and of the other NPs in the relative clause is relevant in explaining the distribution of the various types of relative clause.

As far as *there*-sentences are concerned, Fox & Thompson are mainly concerned with human existential heads. They claim that relative clauses generally do not serve an anchoring function in such constructions: ‘in Existential-Head utterances grounding is often accomplished with main-clause grounding by means of a locative expression or by proposition-linking, rather than with anchoring, as in an Object-relative’ (309). Thus the utterances in question are claimed to be very different from those constructions which have an ordinary (nonhuman) subject. In the latter case the grounding is typically provided by the relative clause. The authors give the existential-head utterances in 7 and 8 as examples of main-clause grounding and proposition-linking respectively.

(7) There were *two people* there [who were constantly on stage]

(8) B: Y’know I’ve been reading about very old people lately,(0.4)
A: Yea//:h?
B: Like they had an article in the Rolling Stone with this guy who’s supposed to be a hundred and thirty. The oldest American. He’s a black guy who lives in Florida and they interviewed him, ...

B: and one thing they said in the article that was really intriguing was, in the United States at this point, there are *over a hundred thousand* people [who are over a hundred years old]

In 7 the existential head is made relevant by the locative expression *there*, while in 8 the relative clause *who are over a hundred years old* provides the grounding for the existential head, the relative clause being linked to the earlier proposition *I've been reading about very old people lately*.

3. Existential-head relatives in LOB

3.1. Presentation of data

The LOB Corpus contains 399 finite relative clauses with an existential head. Following Fox & Thompson, no distinction has been made between restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses. Table 1 summarizes the distribution of grammatical roles for the NP_{rel} in the LOB material. To facilitate comparison with Fox & Thompson's analysis, the relevant figures from their corpus are also given in Table 1. As far as the LOB material is concerned, the NP_{rel} role in the 'other' category is PPO in the vast majority of cases.

Table 2 gives the frequency of the various types of NP_{rel} subsumed under 'other' in Table 1. The whole prepositional phrase in which NP_{rel} occurs usually functions as an adverbial. Table 2 distinguishes five categories according to the semantic role of the prepositional phrase: space, time, cause, manner, and instrument. In adverbial expressions of space, time, and cause, the prepositional phrase can be replaced by the special adverbs *where*, *when*, and *why* respectively. Cases where the relative pronoun is the possessive determiner *whose* are also included in the 'other' category in Table 1, irrespective of the syntactic function of the NP in which *whose* occurs. Finally, items which are not captured by the above categories or which do not readily lend themselves to a semantic classification are assigned to the 'miscellaneous' category in Table 2.

Table 1. Distribution of grammatical roles for all NP_{rel} in existential-head relatives in LOB and in Fox & Thompson's (FT) corpus.

NP_{rel}	A	S	O	Other	Total
LOB	143 (36%)	65 (16 %)	71 (18 %)	120 (30 %)	399 (100%)
FT	7 (28%)	13 (52%)	4 (16%)	1 (4%)	25 (100%)

Table 2. Frequency of the various categories subsumed under ‘other’ in Table 1.

Category	Frequency
PPO/Space (preposition + NP_{rel})	19
PPO/Space (Where(ever))	19
PPO/Time (preposition + NP_{rel})	2
PPO/Time (When)	26
PPO/Cause	23
PPO/Manner	1
PPO/Instrument	3
Whose	8
Miscellaneous	19
Total	120

The categories displayed in Tables 1 and 2 are illustrated by specimens from the corpus in exx. 9-32.[7] The textual examples in 33-39 contain various other clauses which will be briefly discussed in connection with some of the points made in §3.2. In 33 and 34 the head of the main-clause subject (the existential head) is postmodified by a nonfinite infinitive clause. Such clauses are allied to finite relative clauses and are therefore often referred to as relative infinitives (for a full discussion, see Geisler 1995). 35-37 have postmodification by *-ing* and *-ed* participle clauses, while 38 and 39 illustrate appositive postmodification by finite and nonfinite clauses.

A-relatives

(9) there are *many Australian citizens* [who will fill the office as well or better than Lord de l’Isle will fill it]. (A:Press:reportage A13:83)

(10) there may indeed be *books* [which compel a good reading in the sense that no one who reads in the wrong way would be likely to get through more than a few of their pages]. (G:Belle lettres,biog G38:63)

(11) there wasn’t *a man* in the world [who would have given her a second glance while Lois was in the room]. (P:Romance,love story P14:84)

(12) the main body of the company was fully engaged in a training programme but there were at times *quite large numbers of men* [who had completed their training and were waiting to be drafted overseas]. (G:Belle lettres,biog G23:84)

S-relatives

(13) there was *the severe-looking man* [who went about with the heavy plaster round his neck, looking a little sinister as he stiffly turned his body to talk]. (G:Belle lettres,biog G25:62)

(14) there had been *a feeling of hope* then [which had gone later]. (K:General fiction K06:105)

7 Quotations from the LOB Corpus are provided with the appropriate reference-code (e.g. A:Press:reportage A13:83).

(15) there were *desks* [which looked as if they had come from massive Victorian offices], and there were *dressing-tables* [which looked as if they had come from penurious Victorian servants' dormitories]. (L:Mystery,detective L13:69)

Object-relatives

(16) but there are *other important features of the concept of desiring or wanting* [which this modern picture simply can not accommodate] and which therefore spell disaster for this view of the matter. (J:Learned,scientific J54:25)

(17) there was *nothing* on the floor [that I could see]. (L:Mystery,detective L12:83)

(18) there was *a surprised excitement* in his voice [that I should have found extremely flattering had not experience counselled me against a readiness to believe that here, at last, I was about to meet the perfect, that dream reader whom every novelist is convinced must exist somewhere, the one reader who has not only read everything that he has written, but read between the lines]. (P:Romance,love story P19:66)

PPO/Space

(19) there is *another point* [at which he swerves from the strict Stoic creed]. (D:Religion D09:72)

(20) there are *a dozen countries* [where a man could easily hide up and change the money without danger]. (L:Mystery,detective L04:124)

(21) there are no white horses, though there is *a thin white line* [wherever wave meets rock along the island shores] and, beyond them, a slow heave along the line of the horizon which shows that, away out there, a fair swell must be running, still. (E:Skills,hobbies E15:79)

PPO/Time

(22) for all that, as far as England is concerned, there have been *only two occasions* [on which a body has been found in a tunnel in circumstances pointing to murder]. (F:Popular lore F04:51)

(23) education as a profession, like other professions, has fluctuated and there was *a time* [when teachers were shockingly underpaid]. (B:Press:editorial B27:68)

(24) there had been *no moment* [when I reassessed her character, noticed new qualities, or passed less harsh judgements on the old ones: which seemed to imply that I now loved her for the same things for which I had previously disliked her heartily; if indeed I had ever disliked her]. (K:General fiction K15:15)

PPO/Cause

(25) there is *every reason* [why he should have a home farm], but otherwise he should live by rents. (G:Belle lettres,biog G35:33)

(26) there is, admittedly, no overriding reason for picking 100 years as the natural term of life for a house, rather than, say, eighty years; nor is there *any special reason* [why the backlog should be cleared in twenty years, rather than in ten or thirty (J:Learned,scientific J47:7

PPO/Manner

(27) prices of course depend on local availability of materials and, there are *many ways* [in which costs can be saved]. (E:Skills,hobbies E04:43)

PPO/Instrument

(28) there's *an old trick* [whereby you can, theoretically, disarm a man if he'll stand still for it]. (N:Adventure,western N15:5)

Whose

(29) until 1940 it was an observable fact that there were *composers* [whose music was highly prized in some countries and entirely neglected by their neighbours], and this was explained by the difference in national characters. (A:Press:reportage A17:4)

Miscellaneous

(30) the spinel unit cell (see fig 2.1) consists of a close packed cubic array of 32 oxygen anions, between which there are *96 spaces or interstices*, [24 of which are filled with a cation, the remaining 72 being empty]. (J:Learned,scientific J70:14)

(31) in the first case the fact is there waiting to be discovered as it were, but there is *no intention* [of which one is ignorant in the second case]. (G:Belle lettres,biog G63:29)

(32) there are *places* in Africa [of which this can not be said]. G:Belle lettres,biog G73:35)

Relative infinitives

(33) all was safe here; there were *no ditches* [to fall into], but close on either side tall hedges grew with shoots of many flavours. (G:Belle lettres,biog G19:64)

(34) there is *no time* [to examine the victim], *no time* [to loosen clothing or clear the airway] - these matters must be left until artificial respiration by any recommended method has been commenced. (J:Learned,scientific J16:60)

Participle clauses

(35) while there is *a story* [meandering through the book], the main object of many chapters is to record some improbable and unpleasant anecdote. (C:Press:reviews C01:59)

(36) there were tins of food all over the floor, and there were *women's magazines* [scattered around]. (A:Press:reportage A12:33)

(37) where the big gates of the Hall should have hung between their massive pillars, there was simply *a gap* [giving on to a driveway, green and mossy, its twin tracks no longer worn by wheels, but matted over by the discs of plantain and hawkweed, rings of weed spreading and overlapping like the rings that grow and ripple over each other when a handful of gravel is thrown into water]. (L:Mystery,detective L09:45)

Appositive clauses

(38) there seems to be *little doubt* [that the inculcation of the habits of mind and behaviour of a constitutional sovereign has been successfully achieved in the cases of George 5, George 6, and the present Queen]. (G:Belle lettres,biog G59:34)

(39) so there seems to be *a need* [to re-think the official political philosophy in terms of the realities of power and the demands for strong government]. (G:Belle lettres,biog G60:31)

3.2. Discussion of the corpus data

Before embarking on a discussion of the examples cited above, it is necessary to say a few words about spatial and temporal reference. This question, which is passed over in silence by Fox & Thompson, is of considerable importance when it comes to understanding the interaction between the constituents (including relative clauses) of existential sentences and their contexts of use.

The semantics of existential *there* in present-day English is a controversial issue. Many scholars claim that it is an NP which is completely devoid of semantic content, its only function being to serve as a syntactic slot-filler (dummy subject). Other scholars posit close affinities between existential *there* and the locative adverb *there*. In Breivik (1997a), I argue that existential *there* has not undergone complete desemanticization; both synchronically and diachronically it can be shown to extend from the homonymous locative adverb. However, the location which existential *there* designates must be regarded as an abstraction and metaphorical extension. Or, to put it in cognitive terms, it designates what Fauconnier (1985) calls a MENTAL SPACE, i.e. a space where conceptual entities are located. Similar proposals are put forward by Bolinger (1977:90-123) and Lakoff (1987:462-585). Whether we take this view of the matter or not, the locative basis of existential sentences is hardly open to doubt and has been widely recognized. Bolinger states:

> Something can be brought into awareness by relating it to a concrete scene or to an abstract one (existence). Location and existence are the two extremes, but there is no dividing line between them. Whether we say *Is there a God?* or *Is there a God in the universe?* we are expressing the same locative. To exist, a thing as to be somewhere (1977:99).

This takes us to my next point.

The spatialization of time is a pervasive phenomenon in the grammatical and lexical structure of the world's languages. We shall not go into the various controversies associated with localism, which 'is the belief that semantic and conceptual information is reducible to concrete spatial

information (whence the name *localism*, or locale). Adherents of localism point to the ontological primacy of the physical world to argue for the spatial base of all reference and predication' (Frawley 1992:229; see also Anderson 1971:5-9). There are stronger and weaker versions of the localist hypothesis. The weak version 'is restricted to the incontrovertible fact that temporal expressions, in many unrelated languages, are patently derived from locative expressions' (Lyons 1977:718). For our purposes, Haspelmath's (1997) recent cross-linguistic study of temporal adverbials is of particular interest. Here the author cites data showing that languages frequently express temporal and spatial notions in a similar way: 'This phenomenon is so widespread in different languages across the world, and in different parts of the vocabulary, that we have to conclude that space and time are linked to each other in human thinking as well' (1997:1).

Finally, in a discussion of how language denotes and encodes spatio-temporal concepts, it is also relevant to mention deixis, the way an expression is anchored to some point in context. It is well-known that temporal (as well as personal) deixis follows the spatial parameters (cf. Frawley 1992:274).[8] Note that the example Fox & Thompson cite to illustrate main-clause grounding (ex. 7) contains a prototypical deictic expression, the locative adverb *there* ('not in the vicinity of the speaker'). Alongside *there* and *here*, the temporal adverbs *now* and *then* are the most obvious instances of expressions that reflect what Lyons (1968:275) calls 'the spatio-temporal co-ordinates of the typical situation of utterance'.

Once the spatialization of time has been postulated, the way lies open for assigning the same (localistic) interpretation to both locative and temporal expressions in existential sentences. In this connection we may note the following statement by Lyons (1968:390): 'from the point of view of their semantic analysis, existential sentences might be described as implicitly locative (or temporal). The assertion that something exists, or existed, requires "complementation" with a locative (or temporal) expression before it can be interpreted'. With these preliminaries in mind, we shall now take a closer look at the LOB data and Fox & Thompson's analysis.

All the examples cited in §3.1 locate entities and events in space and time. As I have shown elsewhere (Breivik 1997b), the LOB Corpus contains 2,730 existential sentences. In nearly half of these sentences (1,232), temporal and locative relations are overtly expressed by adverbials or (less commonly) by

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8 The relations between language and space are discussed from various perspectives in Bloom et al. 1996. The fifteen contributions in this volume bring together theoretical viewpoints from such diverse areas as linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and neuroscience.

finite or nonfinite clauses postmodifying the head of the subject NP (84); in the remaining cases, a locative/temporal specification can be inferred from the context. Since I am not concerned, in this paper, to push the hypothesis of localism to the limits of its coverage or to develop it in any detail, I shall make no attempt to relate it explicitly to the other semantic categories posited in §3.1. Here it is sufficient to note that adverbials of cause, manner, and instrument may also be analysed in spatial terms. Lyons (1977:721-22) writes: ‘Even instrumental adverbials and adverbials of manner, which, like locative, temporal and causal adverbials are characteristically adjuncts, rather than nuclear constituents, in simple sentences, may be brought together, from a localistic point of view, and analysed in terms of the notion of a path (cf. Anderson, 1971:171)’. As can be seen from Table 2 and the examples cited in §3.1, it is precisely the categories mentioned by Lyons that are found in existential sentences.

There can be no doubt that Fox & Thompson’s analysis captures some important generalizations about relative clauses in spoken American English. However, it is equally clear that their account of this type of discourse does not provide a principled explanation of the LOB data. Indeed, as we shall see below, my findings cast serious doubt on some of the rather bold claims they make about the existential sentences in their corpus which, consisting of only 25 tokens (cf. Table 1), can hardly be said to be a reliable basis for an empirical investigation.

First, main-clause grounding in the sense of Fox & Thompson is not a salient feature of existential sentences in LOB. Admittedly, my material does contain instances where a locative expression in the main clause could be said to provide the grounding necessary to make the head of the subject NP relevant, as in ex. 17, but the prototypical *there*-sentence in LOB (regardless of whether the existential head is human or nonhuman) cannot be given such an analysis; the vast majority of the corpus sentences resemble examples like 9 and 10 where the locative is not overtly expressed, or examples like 11 where the locative is expressed but does not represent given information. In other words, the vast majority of the LOB sentences have no main-clause grounding of the existential head.

In exx. 19-24, the locative/temporal specification is realized by finite relative clauses, while 33 and 34 make use of nonfinite relative clauses. In 33 and 34 the subject NP (existential head + postmodifying infinitive clause) expresses locative and temporal meaning respectively. In such cases it is often possible to introduce a relative pronoun and retain the infinitive clause, or to use a full relative clause with preposition + relative pronoun or the adverbial

relative *where/when* without preposition (cf. Quirk et al. 1985:1266). The locative/temporal meaning of constructions like 33 and 34 is made explicit in the following examples: *The place to stay is the new hotel near the river / The place at which to stay is ... / The place at which you should stay is ... / The place where you should stay is ...; The time to visit Vienna is August / The time at which to visit Vienna is ... / The time at which you should visit Vienna is ... / The time when you should visit Vienna is ...*

Exx. 35 and 36 further demonstrate that Fox & Thompson's analysis is not optimal for existential sentences in my material. In 35 the locative expression occurs in the postmodifying participle clause. In the two coordinated *there*-clauses in 36, we find main-clause grounding in the first clause only; the second *there*-clause has the grounding element in the subordinate clause. Note also that it is not uncommon for existentials to have the locative specification in a finite relative clause (cf. *There is a famous linguist who lives here*). I would claim that the key to understanding the occurrence of locative (and temporal) expressions in the sentences under discussion is provided by semantic rather than by information-flow factors. As we saw above, the localistic interpretation of such sentences is eminently plausible.

As far as proposition-linking is concerned, it does not play an important role in the LOB Corpus. Although it occurs in my material (cf. exx. 12 and 26), the principal function of relative clauses is to identify and describe the referent of the existential head, and not to make it relevant by a link to an earlier proposition. It should be borne in mind that existential sentences are presentative constructions; the most important information is carried by the subject NP. In view of this, it is not surprising that existential-head relative clauses in LOB are often long and complex, containing embedded clauses and modifiers, as in ex. 18. Pragmatically, relative clauses have the same function as other finite and nonfinite postmodifiers. Indeed, postmodifying *-ing* and *-ed* clauses correspond to finite relative clauses in which the relative pronoun is subject (cf. *There was a girl (who was) sitting next to my sister*; *There is also a scathing report (which has been) written by the Dean*). Compare in this connection 18 with 37 which contains a postmodifying participle clause. Both of these examples illustrate how the *there*-construction makes it possible for subjects to carry very heavy informational loads. In 18 and 37, the location of the head referent is encoded by *in his voice* and *where the big gates of the Hall should have hung between their massive pillars* respectively. Note that in both examples the position of the locative adverbial allows (the heaviest part of) the subject to occur in end-position, in accordance with the principles of end-focus and end-weight. (In 18 the subject NP is discontinuous; the long

and heavy postmodification is separated from its head by the locative expression.)

In this connection it is worth pointing out that the spoken material of the Survey of English Usage, which includes conversational English, lends no support to the claims Fox & Thompson make about main-clause grounding and proposition-linking. Altogether the spoken Survey material contains 1,976 instances of existential *there*. Also in this type of English, the *there*-construction is used to present new information by locating entities and events in space and time (which, as pointed out above, is different from grounding them in the sense of Fox & Thompson). Proposition-linking is of marginal importance, and existential-head relative clauses have the same function as other finite and nonfinite modifiers. Needless to say, such modifiers (and the subject NPs in which they occur) are generally less complex than in written English. Indeed, in this material the subject NP frequently occurs without postmodification, and locative/temporal expressions tend to be left out when they represent given information. Examples from the Survey material are given in 40-47 below:[9]

(40) there are *so many people* living in London at present [who loathe living in London] (S.2.4b.23)
(41) there's *a friend of mine* [that wants to do surgery] (S.2.9.82)
(42) but there were *plenty of people like Ludendorff* [who had absolutely no kind of family or anything behind them] (S.2.3.18)
(43) I ought to ring up the others, didn't I? there was *another one* [I sent it to] (S.4.2.10)
(44) there's *another case of it* [that she'd heard of at least] (S.4.8)
(45) well, is there *anybody* apart from you [that is strong on that]? (S.2.6.9)
(46) I didn't mean by making that distinction to suggest that there could be *somebody* [who would go on a lot about staging plays] (S.2.6.25)
(47) there must have been *many northwest Londoners* on Thursday [who like your critic set out manfully for Kensington Gore] (S.1.11a.35)

In view of what has been said above about grounding, it is not surprising that the syntactic patterns exhibited by existential-head relatives in LOB are different from those in Fox & Thompson's database. There are two (closely related) issues which should be discussed with respect to the difference between the two corpora: first, the use of S-relatives, A-relatives, and object-

9. Examples from the Survey material are provided with the appropriate reference-code (e.g. S.2.4b.23). In the present, paper, these examples are simplified in that no suprasegmental or paralinguistic features are given. For a full discussion of *there*-constructions in the spoken Survey material, see Breivik 1990:ch. 3.

relatives, and second, the use of human vs. nonhuman nouns in the existential-head slot.

In Fox & Thompson's material, there is a preponderance of S-relatives over object-relatives in clauses with an existential head, the figures being 13 (52%) and 4 (16%) respectively (cf. Table 1). In their attempt to account for the high percentage of S-relatives, they restrict their attention to cases (12 instances) where the existential head has a human referent. Such cases are compared with nonexistential utterances where the referent of the subject NP is nonhuman. The latter type tends to prefer object-relatives (77% of the instances). Fox & Thompson give the following explanation of the skewings in the distribution of S-relatives and object-relatives in their material:

> Human referents that need grounding ... do not need to be related to (other) humans to be grounded. Instead, our data show that they tend to be grounded by being related to their own activities, that is, to earlier predicates, as with a locative or by proposition-linking, as illustrated in [7] and [8]. And this produces S-relatives rather than Object-relatives, since no other NP in the clause is needed to accomplish the grounding (1990: 309) .

This explanation does not hold for the LOB data. As shown by Table 1, the distribution of grammatical roles is different in my material, which contains 71 (18%) object-relatives and only 65 (16%) S-relatives. Note also that A-relatives as well as relatives belonging to the 'other' category are more frequent than S-relatives, the percentages being 36 and 30 respectively. Exx. 9, 11, and 12 contain human head NPs as well as A-relatives. Interestingly, the majority of both S-relatives (44=68%) and A-relatives (88=62%) have a nonhuman head NP. Note also that A-relatives are very common in the spoken Survey material (cf. exx. 40-42). Furthermore, instances where NP_{rel} has the role prepositional object (PPO) occur quite frequently. It does not seem to matter whether the head NP is human or nonhuman (cf. exx. 43 and 44).

Another of Fox & Thompson's claims which is inconsistent with my data concerns existential heads with nonidentifiable human referents. The 10 heads in their corpus 'are all specific; that is, one does not find nonspecific humans mentioned in existential constructions' (311). These heads are compared with object heads with nonidentifiable human referents. The 16 instances of the latter type fall into two categories: relational terms like *brother* and *sister* and heads with nonspecific reference like *anybody* and *somebody*. Exx. 48-52, which are taken from Fox & Thompson (311), illustrate the types mentioned above. According to Fox & Thompson (312), these findings have important theoretical consequences for the discourse roles of English subjects and objects.

(48) but there's *a woman* in my class [who's a nurse]
(49) there was *a boy* [that played the trombone] that he kind of knew
(50) and they have *a son* [who's 24 or 25]
(51) and she hates *anyone* [who isn't a Catholic]
(52) Someday I'll find *someone* [that wears a six and a half]

However, in the LOB material, human existential heads with nonspecific reference are by no means rare, as illustrated by exx. 9, 11, 12, and 29. Equally important, such cases occur frequently in British English conversations. The Survey extracts in 40, 42, and 45-47 should be compared with Fox & Thompson's examples in 48 and 49. Note especially exx. 45 and 46 which have *anybody* and *somebody* respectively in the existential-head slot. As we have seen, Fox & Thompson posit that these items typically occur as object heads. It would appear that Fox & Thompson again make generalizations on the basis of insufficient data. Anyone who has listened to sizeable stretches of American English conversations will know that sentences like 40, 42, and 45-47 occur in this variety too.

The facts described in the preceding paragraphs, then, argue against Fox & Thompson's information-flow analysis of existential sentences. We shall now confront more directly their claim that it is a sine qua non for all NPs containing relative clauses to be related to given referents in the discourse. In their discussion of existential-head relatives, Fox & Thompson explicitly state that 'all Head NPs must be grounded' (308). Although this is a characteristic feature of the 25 heads in their material, it certainly does not apply to all existential sentences in English. It is not uncommon for existential sentences to contain new information only (and hence no element that can be related to earlier predicates). This is often the case with existential constructions that are concerned with ontology, i.e. whether an entity exists or not (cf. Lakoff 1987:565, Milsark 1974:passim). Such constructions occur in both written and spoken English (including conversational English). 53 and 54 illustrate ontological existentials without a relative clause, while 55 and 56 both contain an existential-head relative. If the locative is not expressed in cases like 53-56, it can be inferred: *There is no God* and *There is no God in_the universe* express the same proposition (cf. the discussion above of the locative basis of existential sentences).

(53) There is no God.
(54) There is a Santa Claus.
(55) There are *children* [who never stop complaining].
(56) There are *men* [who hate football].

Similarly, discourse-initial existentials may contain a head NP that cannot be associated with a given referent. The fairy-tale opening is well-known:

(57) Once upon a time there was *a king* [who had three daughters].

Finally, it should be mentioned that my claims about existential sentences are consistent with the quantitative findings, as well as the functional interpretation of these findings, presented by Biber et al. (1999:943-56) in their *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Biber et al. base their description of grammatical and discourse patterns on a large collection of spoken and written texts. In all, the Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus (the LSWE Corpus) contains over 40 million words of text representing four main registers: conversation, fiction, newspaper language, and academic prose. The LSWE Corpus includes British and American English subcorpora for each of these registers. As far as the subcorpus for conversation is concerned, it 'is probably the most representative sampling of this register compiled to date' (Biber et al. 1999:28), containing 3,929,500 words of British English and 2,480,800 words of American English.

Biber et al. subscribe to the widely held view that existential sentences are primarily used to introduce new elements into the discourse. Of particular interest is the following observation (951): 'One context where it is appropriate to focus on the existence of something is at the beginning of a story' (cf. ex. 57 above). Note also that existential sentences occur discourse-initially in the LSWE subcorpus for conversation. In such cases the subject NP commonly takes a demonstrative pronoun, as in 58:

(58) There was this really good-looking bloke and he was like – We, we'd given each other eyes over the bar in this pub and Lottie goes, well if you don't hurry up with him I'm gonna go and have him, if you don't hurry up, you know, and just like marched over. I said, Charlotte give me a break (Biber et al. 1999:951-52)

None of the discourse-initial existentials Biber et al. cite from their subcorpus for conversation contain a finite relative clause.[10] However, among their examples we find sentences where the existential head is postmodified by a non-finite clause. As stated above, postmodifying *-ing* and *-ed* clauses correspond to finite relative clauses in which the relative pronoun is subject. Biber et al. cite (952) the following example from newspaper language to

10 Biber et al. do not make explicit mention of existential-head relatives, apart from stating that such clauses have the same frequency in conversation and academic prose. About 10% of all the existential sentences in these registers contain a relative clause, as opposed to only 5% in fiction and newspaper language.

illustrate that *there*-sentences are frequently used for an opening line in a conversational narrative:

(59) There was *this wonderful little old lady* [called the tissue collector]. She was grey haired, quite dumpy with a white coat on and she came to collect sperm if you wanted it stored.

Furthermore, their corpus data demonstrate that '[a]nother way of using existential *there* as a springboard in developing the text is when it is used to introduce a series of elements' (952), as in the following example from academic writing:

(60) There are *three basic rules* [to consider in planning a farm enterprise]:

In 60 the existential head is postmodified by a relative infinitive.

Another interesting fact which emerges from the LSWE Corpus is that '[m]inimal existential clauses, i.e. clauses which lack both adverbial expansions and subjects with postmodification, are most common in conversation, with academic prose at the other extreme' (Biber et al. 1999:949). As many as 25% of all the existentials in the subcorpus for conversation belong to this category. In these sentences, then, there is no main-clause grounding in the sense of Fox & Thompson. This further corroborates my claim that their approach to existential sentences in conversational English is a blind alley.

Finally, the following statement ties in very well with the observations I made on the basis of the spoken Survey material (cf. above): 'Minimal existential clauses occur most frequently in conversation, where there is a tendency to present information in smaller chunks and where information is more often left unexpressed, for the addressee to infer' (Biber et al. 1999:950).

4. Conclusion

In the preceding pages, I have been concerned with existential sentences in general and relative clauses and locative/temporal expressions in particular. My starting-point was Fox & Thompson's (1990) study of relative clauses in American English conversations. I have used a wide range of corpus data (including data from conversational English) to show that Fox & Thompson's claims are not borne out. Clearly, Fox & Thompson have fallen into the trap of making generalizations on the basis of insufficient data. For example, their claim, based on a handful of examples, that 'one does not find nonspecific humans mentioned in existential sentences' (311) is patently false. In general,

the smallness of their corpus of existential sentences is bound to make one sceptical about their observations (some of which are claimed to have far-reaching theoretical implications). 25 tokens can hardly be said to provide a sound basis for reliable analyses of grammatical and information-flow patterns. Fox & Thompson themselves appear to have no reservations about the size of their corpus of existentials. In their conclusion they state categorically:

> We have shown that the information-flow patterns characteristic of English discourse can explain why nonhuman Subject Heads tend to occur with Object-relatives, whereas nonhuman Object Heads show no such tendency. We have also shown that Existential-Head relative clauses tend to be S-relatives, since the grounding for the human Existential Heads is typically either main-clause grounding or proposition-linking, and the relative clause generally does not serve an anchoring function (1990:314).

While my data are mainly drawn from written British English, Fox & Thompson's analysis is based entirely on conversational American English. I am of course aware that written and conversational data can be very different both grammatically and pragmatically. However, it is generally agreed that there are certain syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic properties that are inherent in existential sentences in all varieties of English, and it is these properties that have been the focus of the present paper. I submit that the principles embodied in my British English data (as well as in cross-linguistic data) also apply to the existential sentences in Fox & Thompson's corpus. Here it should be pointed out that my analysis is compatible with the account of existential sentences presented by Biber et al (1999). The extensive corpus used by Biber et al. includes conversational data from both American and British English.

In their discussion of existential-head relatives, Fox & Thompson make no reference to the widely recognized similarity between locative and temporal notions, but restrict their attention to locatives. In sentences like *There is a person here who is seriously ill*, the referring expression *here* is claimed to be an important information-flow factor (main-clause grounding). I have argued that the use of locative and temporal expressions in such cases should be explained on purely semantic grounds. *There*-sentences express propositions concerning existence; that is, they locate new entities and events in space and time. This is the *raison d'être* for the locative/temporal expressions in such sentences. Hence it is not surprising that all *there*-sentences in the LOB Corpus (as well as in the spoken Survey material) contain a locative/temporal specification which is either overt or can easily be inferred from the context. The locative-semantic argument advanced in the present paper is consonant with much previous research on English existential sentences (see e.g.

Bolinger 1977:90-123, Kuno 1971, Lyons 1967, 1968:389-90, 1975, 1977:722-23).

It should be emphasized that in the present paper 'locate in space and time' is not used synonymously with 'ground in space and time', and that my data are incompatible with Fox & Thompson's analysis. In the prototypical existential sentence, the locative expression does not serve to ground entities in the sense of Fox & Thompson: according to them, to ground an NP is to relate it to a given referent in the immediate context. In the vast majority of my corpus sentences, the locative (or temporal) expression is either provided by the context or it represents new information; hence Fox & Thompson's principle of information flow is not even secondary to the ontological conditions on knowledge. In view of my data as well as data presented by other researchers, I find the whole notion of main-clause grounding in existential sentences less than convincing.

My claim that the sentences under discussion are used to locate new entities and events in space and time can also be linked to the broader research context. It is a commonplace that the syntactic properties of existential sentences make them suitable for presenting new information into the discourse in accordance with universal pragmatic principles; they introduce a new referent into locative or discursive space (cf. Bolinger 1977:90-123, Lakoff 1987:462-587). The use of existential-head relative clauses should also be seen in this perspective: it is the subject NP that carries the most important information in a *there*-sentence, and like other NP modifiers relative clauses are used to identify and describe the referent of the existential head. Fox & Thompson's proposition-linking plays a negligible role in my material. Needless to say, an explanation along the lines proposed above is consistent with the hypothesis advanced in §3.2 that existential *there* itself designates a mental space where conceptual entities are located.

The above account of the use of existential-head relatives and locative/temporal expressions is corroborated by cross-linguistic and typological data; in many languages, sentences which express existence in space and time are the only means of introducing indefinite non-generic NPs into the discourse (cf. Givón 1976:173).

In his insightful discussion of *there*-sentences, Lakoff (1987:581) speaks of 'the enormous complexity of the data'. Fox & Thompson's account shows very little awareness of the range of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic phenomena involved.

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Being ‘involved’ in Business English

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1. Preliminaries

This paper explores to what extent 1st-year business students whose L1 is German manage to imitate the style of English business letters. We shall also informally deal with how possible deviations from the expected style choices might be incorporated into the teaching of business correspondence. This paper is thus located at the juncture of (a) stylistics of ESP (in particular Business English / BE) and (b) a description of learner language. As far as BE stylistics is concerned, matters of style are still fairly under-represented among BE publications. That is not to say that there is a general scarcity of publications concerned with BE. On the contrary, certain aspects are abundantly discussed such as e.g. text macro-structure (cf. Ashley 1992), specialist vocabulary / terminology, and typical collocations (cf. e.g. MacKenzie 1995 and 1997, Mascull 1996, and Flower 1990). Emphasis is also laid on correctness of sentence grammar in a business context (cf. e.g. Duckworth 1995, Brieger-Sweeney 1994).

Discussions of characteristic syntactic choices, however, are still fairly restricted. Gains’ (1999) investigation into e-mail correspondence from “commercial sources” (Gains 1999: 82) is a case in point. His prime concern is to ascertain whether there exists “a stylistic protocol for writing e-mail messages” (Gains 1999: 82) and he duly identifies the “stylistic register” as “semi-formal” (Gains 1999: 86), yet no indication is given which linguistic phenomena are responsible for making this type of correspondence appear semi-formal. Similarly, he identifies specific instances where

> the stylistic register appeared to have been raised to a more formal level […]. When this change occurs, it is evidenced by the adoption of “stock” business phrases of a more formal nature […] (Gains 1999: 87)

Examples of such “more formal” usage are given, but again no indication follows whether it is the vocabulary or the syntactic choices of the examples (or both) which characterise them as formal. And the same is true of messages in which a “more informal and impersonal tone is adopted” (Gains 1999: 97). Again no individual features are identified as being responsible for this style change.

On a different level, Eustace (1996) discusses some aspects of style that are to be avoided in business writing, but the only syntactic feature he identifies (on an impressionistic basis) as negatively characteristic is "sterile passive constructions such as 'it was decided'" (Eustace 1999: 56). Other comments which should serve to improve the level of business writing merely relate to vocabulary, punctuation, and paragraphing (Eustace 1999: 56), but not to grammatical choices. And lastly, Louhiala-Salminen (1996) reports the findings of "[…] a study conducted among Finnish business people on their English written communication" (Louhiala-Salminen 1996: 37). One question in her survey was aimed directly at eliciting responses regarding changes in the style of business communication. From the relevant answers Louhiala-Salminen concludes that the "first, and strongest, tendency [is] towards a more informal, less conservative, […] language" (Louhiala-Salminen 1996: 47). However, it should be understood that the "study did not examine the text as it appears in the messages at all, but the conclusions drawn only reflect people's opinions, and attitudes towards language use" (Louhiala-Salminen 1996: 47). And for this reason, again no linguistic features are identified that are responsible for this "more informal, less conservative" style.[1]

Given this state of affairs concerning stylistics in BE, Dudley-Evans - St John's (1998: 79) observation is not surprising that "[…] there is not as yet an established 'common-core' of business language […]". This lack of core stylistic features[2] is all the more surprising since the importance of meeting reader expectations in professional communication is routinely stressed in BE publications. Cf. e.g. Dudley-Evans - St John's (1998) comment

> that knowledge of genre is a key element in all communication and especially significant in writing […] professional texts. Knowledge of genre involves an

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1 It would appear that this lack of specificity in respect to style markers translates to teaching materials as well. Emmerson (1999) is a case in point. Even though one third of his teacher resource book focuses on business correspondence and characterises the style of business letters as "simple, direct and positive; polite rather than formal, and certainly not like spoken English; [with] much use of standard expressions" (Emmerson 1999: §5.1a), there is little indication of how such a style is to be achieved apart from vocabulary choice ("words of Latin origin" e.g. *verify, inform, return* vs. "words of Anglo-Saxon origin" e.g. *check, tell, send back*; Emmerson 1999: §5.1b). Grammatical information is limited to (a) the observation that letters contain "longer sentences" (Emmerson 1999: §5.1b) than e-mails and (b) the implication that "[i]nformal (spoken) language" correlates with the use contractions. (Emmerson 1999: §5.2a)

2 Biber (1988) includes professional letters in the corpus on which his study is based but since his concern is to establish the relationships among a whole host of different text types he does not provide a specific description of the subcorpus of professional letters.

> understanding of the expectations of the discourse community that reads the text and of the conventions that have developed over time […]. (Dudley-Evans - St John 1998: 115)

Such an immediate relevance of the readership addressed to specific style markers is in fact not a mere postulate but has been empirically shown by Jucker (1992). Jucker observes a clear correlation between different readership profiles and corresponding stylistic choices. He reports for instance that differences in aspects of NP usage correlate significantly with differences in the socio-economic make-up of the audience addressed.[3] This obviously indicates that the style of texts is determined by the type of readership (discourse community). So even though a knowledge of receiver-centred stylistic constraints would be an important asset for business students enabling them to follow these constraints, there is as yet no clear understanding which stylistic choices are involved in 'business texts' in general or business letters in particular.

As far as the description of learner language is concerned there is fortunately more of a basis for discussion. The description of stylistic constraints of non-native speakers has become especially prominent with the availability of learner corpora, such as the *International Corpus of Learner English / ICLE* (Granger 1998: 9ff). In the context of such learner corpora Leech (1998) identifies two key research questions, viz.,

> What linguistic features of the target language do the learners […] use significantly more often ('overuse') or less often ('underuse') than native speakers do? How far is the target language behaviour of the learners influenced by their native language (NL transfer)? (Leech 1998: xiv)

Both of these questions will concern us in the following sections and Granger (1998: 13) adds explicitly that such "differences in the frequency of use of certain words, phrases or structures, some being overused, others underused" have "important implications for language teaching" - again a point which we shall return to below. Apart from their importance to language teaching, aspects of producer-centred constraints are also discussed against the background of contrastive analysis (Granger 1998). But the most important point for our discussion is the fact that whatever aspect of learner language is being discussed, the relevant observations are always based on frequency counts of clearly defined grammatical features. Ringbom (1998), for instance, discusses L1 transfer on the basis of the use of first and second person

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3 Cf. e.g. Jucker's (1992:109) statement that "[…] the newspaper category [i.e. up-, mid-, or down-market] appears to be a significant factor for the number of modifiers that are used for a given number of noun phrases […]".

pronouns, coordination (*or, but*), subordination (*if*), and demonstratives, while Petch-Tyson (1998) focuses on writer / reader visibility and reports on the behaviour of a whole host of different features such as, among others, first and second person reference, emphatic particles (*just, really*), fuzziness (*and so on*), reference to situation of reading / writing (*this X, here, now,* etc.), evaluative modifiers, imperatives, questions (direct / rhetorical), and quotation marks (Petch-Tyson 1998: 111). And lastly, Granger - Payson (1998) base their discussion of developmental aspects of learner language on the frequencies of first and second person pronouns. In other words there already seems to be a much firmer basis for the discussion of stylistic markers from the point of view of learner language than from that of ESP proper.

After this introductory section we shall discuss aspects of the corpus in Section 2. Section 3 will concern itself with methodological issues, while the results of the investigation are summarised in Section 4 and discussed in detail in Sections 5-10. The paper concludes with Section 11.

2. The corpus

This brings us to considerations concerning the choice of corpus texts. Dudley-Evans - St John (1998) report Nickerson's (1998) observation that in a business context non-native speakers will use English in two main types of communication, viz. either "for inter-company and, in international conglomerates, intra-company dealings" (Nickerson 1998 quoted in Dudley-Evans - St John 1998: 55). For the propagation of a positive corporate image, the proper execution of inter-company dealings is particularly important and this in turn entails a focus on fulfilling reader expectations in the communication process. If these considerations are to be taken seriously, then students ought to be sensitised to the stylistic constraints of specifically those text types that address other business organisations.

Lang - Markwitz (1996) in their textbook *Written business communication (WBC)* deal with 4 basic text types, viz. (a) letters, (b) internal memoranda, (c) reports, and (d) minutes. Of these, business letters are most consistently concerned with communication between different companies, while the use of the other types is largely restricted to the same business organisation. I have therefore limited my investigations to business letters. The actual corpus investigated consists of the following two sections: (A) The first subcorpus (2669 words; 21 letters) comprises business letters from Lang - Markwitz (1996). These letters also serve as the model texts presented to 32 1st-year students of economics, all of whom are L1 speakers of German with at least 8

years of prior schooling in English. (B) The second subcorpus[4] (2795 words; 32 letters) consists of the letters written by these students in direct imitation of the model letters in subcorpus (A). The model letters therefore function as a reference corpus for student performance. It should be stressed at this point that only the student corpus consists of authentic material. Even though Granger (1998: 13) holds that "there is no lack" of corpora of authentic English which could serve as a control corpus, this is unfortunately not true of specialised text types and the availability of authentic business communication is particularly problematic. For this reason the control corpus was taken from *WBC,* which does not consist of authentic business letters but rather of "traditional intuition-based materials" (Granger 1998: 7) composed by the authors. This is not normally considered to be an ideal situation. But since the model letters from the control corpus (*WBC*) serve as the immediate stylistic input for the students, we have the unique possibility of directly contrasting this input with student output thus identifying the relevant divergences.[5] This advantage should go some way towards making up for the lack of authenticity in the control corpus.

3. Methodology

In the context of this paper, the concept of 'style' will be limited to a selection of linguistic features investigated by Biber (1988). Biber (1988: 102-3) lists seven sets of linguistic phenomena whose frequencies correlate with different communicative functions such as (1) 'involved vs. informational production', (2) 'narrative vs. non-narrative concerns', (3) 'explicit vs. situation-dependent reference', etc. I shall concern myself in the following only with the style markers making up the first opposition, i.e. 'involved vs. informational'. Biber (1988: 104) regards this as "an extremely powerful factor" which

> has many of the features that have been associated previously with basic discourse dichotomies, for example, nominal versus verbal style […] and oral versus literate discourse […]. (Biber 1988: 108)

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4 At this point thanks go to B. Zehetmayr and R. Zeilinger for providing a collection of student letters, from which my ultimate student corpus was selected.

5 Moreover, Granger (1998: 13) herself makes the point that "it is essential to use control corpora of the same genre" and since a corpus of authentic business letters does not seem to be available at the moment, the use of *WBC* is a plausible alternative, which has the added advantage of serving as the immediate model for students in the first place.

The mean frequency of the relevant style markers locates individual texts on a cline between the poles ‘involved vs. informational’ so that it becomes possible to compare the relative positions of different text types along this cline. Texts located towards the ‘involved’ end of the scale are represented e.g. by the text types telephone and face-to-face conversation, while academic prose and official documents are situated at the opposite end and have to be regarded as highly ‘informational’ texts. (Biber 1988: 128-9).

All 34 markers identified by Biber as being relevant for the ‘involved vs. informational’ opposition are listed in table 1 below. Two main sets of style markers have to be differentiated in this context, viz. features with positive weights and those with negative weights. Under point I in table 1, I list features bearing **positive** weights, where **high scores** of these style markers characterise texts as more ‘involved’ and less ‘informational’. As regards the features under point II (i.e. those with **negative** weights), it is the **low frequencies** which correlate with a primarily “interactive, affective, and involved” communicative purpose, but not an ‘informational’ one (Biber 1988: 107).

In Platzer (at press) I report some preliminary observations which indicate that certain stylistic aspects of student letters place these texts further along the scale towards the ‘involved, affective’ end than would be warranted by the stylistic choices in the model letters. In order to ascertain whether this is only true of isolated features or whether we are dealing with a more general tendency, we will formulate the following hypothesis:

If it is indeed true that the student corpus is characterised as more ‘involved, affective, interactive’ than the model corpus, then we should find a clear trend among the student letters of significantly higher frequencies for features with (I) positive weight and lower frequencies for those with (II) negative weight.

All of Biber’s (1988) 34 features in the ‘involved vs. informational’ dimension are listed in groups A-K (see table 1). However, seven of them, viz. A1-4 and H26-8, were not included in the count since (manual) tagging of these items would have been too cumbersome. For the remaining 27 features, table 1 lists the raw numbers of occurrences as well as the corresponding counts per 1,000 words.

4. Results

A tentative subgrouping of the features has been introduced in *Table 1* (see pages 36-7) to reflect some general tendencies of the frequencies involved. Thus, the items under both B5-9 and J29-31 seem to follow the expected trend

to a significant extent, i.e. the student letters indeed appear more 'involved' than the reference corpus. On the other hand, two features (see C10-11) significantly go against the trend. These three sets of features will be discussed in greater detail below (cf. Sections 5-10).

All other subgroups of features are deemed not significant or relevant for various reasons. Thus, even though D12-14 behave as expected, the differences between the corpora do not reach a level of significance. Conversely, E15-18 go against the trend, but again no significance seems to be involved. Group F consists of items which do not appear at all (F19, 21-22, 25) or only once in either of the corpora (F20, 23, 24). This is not deemed sufficient to even establish a trend. Finally, K32-34 do not seem to show different trends among the negative factors.

5. First and second person items[6]

The first major difference between student and model letters concerns the frequency of first and second person items, i.e. personal pronouns and possessive determiners[7]. By and large it is true to say that the student corpus favours the use of first and second person items but as we shall see below, this observation does not hold across the board.

The normalised frequencies per 1,000 words for B6-7 clearly show that the student corpus features more first and second person items than the model letters but this difference is not equally large for both groups. While the divergence in regard to the second person (*WBC* 75.68; student corpus 107.69) works out to a ratio of 1:1.4 and is statistically significant, the contrast in the use of first person items is less pronounced with 62.94 in *WBC* as against 72.99 in the student letters. I.e. the student letters only feature 1.2 times more first person items (compared with 1.4 times as many second person items). This difference is not statistically significant, but under B'a-c (see table 1) several items are listed which make it probable that we are still dealing with a sensitive divergence here. For instance B'a shows that differences in use concerning the first person singular are statistically significant as is the difference if we only consider first person personal pronouns (either singular or plural). And last but not least, B'c bears out that

6 Biber includes in this set personal pronouns, reflexive pronouns, possessive determiners but not the possessive pronouns *mine, ours*, and *yours*. (Biber 1988: 225) Since his label 'personal pronouns' is slightly misleading, I use the general term 'item' when I intend to cover first and second person pronouns and determiners.

7 No possessive pronouns appear in either the model or the student corpus.

we also see a significant deviation if we collapse first and second person Since Biber has identified the usage of first and second person items as two important features where high scores clearly relate to a more ‘involved’ character, the students’ preference for these features clearly shifts their letters towards the ‘involved, affective’ end of the functional scale and away from the scores of the reference corpus.

Table 1. Style markers ‘involved’ vs. ‘informational’ (cf. Biber 1988: 102)[8]

		WBC	**STUDENT CORPUS**	***WBC***	**STUDENT CORPUS**
	Number of words:	*2669*	*2795*		
		N[9]	**N**	**per 1,000**	**per 1,000**
	I. Positive factors				
A.	1. Non-phrasal coordination	-	-	-	-
	2. Present tense verbs	-	-	-	-
	3. Private verbs	-	-	-	-
	4. THAT deletion	-	-	-	-
B.	**5. Contractions[10]**	0	5	0	1.79
	6. 1st Person pronouns[11]	168	204	62.94	72.99
	7. 2nd Person pronouns[12]	202	301	75.68	107.69
	8. Subordination, causative	1	2	0.37	0.72
	9. Subordination, conditional[13]	18	33	6.74	11.81
(B’.)	**(a. 1st Person singular[14])**	5	41	1.87	14.67
	(b. 1st Person personal pronouns[15])	123	171	46.08	61.18
	(c. 1st + 2nd Person[16])	370	505	138.63	180.68
	(d. Conditional + causal subord.[17])	19	35	7.12	12.52

8 Judgements on statistical significance are based on the Pearson-χ^2 and a probability level of 0.05, except in the case of contractions under B5. Here the calculation is based on the log likelihood as calculated by *WordSmith* (s.v. *log likelihood*).

9 These columns list the number of occurrences in each corpus except for “J31. Type / token ratio”, which gives a percentage of types among tokens, and “K34. Word length”; this reports the average length of words in letters.

10 Statistically significant log likelihood at p=0.010.

11 Statistically not significant, but see under B’a-c.

12 Statistically significant: χ^2=16.735, df=1, p=0.000.

13 Statistically not significant: χ^2=3.784, df=1, p=0.052; but see under B’d.

14 Statistically significant: χ^2= 26.778, df=1, p=0.000.

15 Statistically significant: χ^2=6.111, df=1, p=0.013.

16 Statistically significant: χ^2=17.950, df=1, p=0.000.

17 Statistically significant: χ^2=4.074, df=1, p=0.044.

C.	10. Analytic negation[18]	10	1	3.75	0.36
	11. Demonstrative pronouns[19]	9	1	3.37	0.36
D.	12. Amplifiers	6	13	2.25	4.65
	13. BE as main verb	72	78	26.98	27.91
	14. Pronoun IT	2	3	0.75	1.07
E.	15. Adverbs	20	15	7.49	5.37
	16. General emphatics	5	2	1.87	0.72
	17. Possibility modals	28	24	10.49	8.59
	18. WH clauses	5	1	1.87	0.36
F.	19. Discourse particles	0	0	0	0.00
	20. DO as pro-verb	1	0	0.37	0.00
	21. Final prepositions	0	0	0	0.00
	22. General hedges	0	0	0	0.00
	23. Indefinite pronouns	1	0	0.37	0.00
	24. Sentence relatives	0	1	0	0.36
	25. WH questions	0	0	0	0.00
	II. Negative factors				
H.	26. Nouns	-	-	-	-
	27. Attributive adjectives	-	-	-	-
	28. Agentless passives	-	-	-	-
J.	**29. Pres. part. WHIZ deletions[20]**	10	3	3.75	1.07
	30. Past part. WHIZ deletions[21]	10	1	3.75	0.36
	31. Type / token ratio (standardised)[22]	50.63	40.04	-	-
K.	32. Prepositions	321	333	120.27	119.14
	33. Place adverbials	1	1	0.37	0.36
	34. Word length	4.5	4.48	-	-

18 Statistically significant: χ^2=7.804, df=1, p=0.005.

19 Statistically significant: χ^2=6.790, df=1, p=0.009.

20 Statistically significant: χ^2=4.111, df=1, p=0.043.

21 Statistically significant: χ^2=7.804, df=1, p=0.005.

22 These figures do not give the type / token ratio over all words in the corpus - this would be 11.69 for *WBC* vs. 8.98 for the student corpus - but rather a standardised type / token ratio. I have taken over the standardisation procedure from *WordSmith*: "[…] the ratio is calculated for the first 1,000 running words, then calculated afresh for the next 1,000, and so on to the end of your text or corpus. A running average is computed, which means that you get an average type / token ratio based on consecutive 1,000-word chunks of text." (*WordSmith:* s.v. *type / token ratios*) I have, however, changed the setting quoted above from 1,000 to 400 words to better fit the results given by Biber. Biber uses a standardised form of the type / token ratio as well "by counting the number of different lexical items that occur in the first 400 words of each text, and then dividing by four;" (Biber 1988: 238).

In this context, Biber reports some further figures which are pertinent to our discussion by contrasting the mean frequencies of first and second person items in personal vs. professional letters. Thus, personal letters show a much higher mean average of first person pronouns (62 per 1,000 words) than professional letters (40.9); this is roughly a ratio of 3:2 in favour of personal letters (see table 2).

Table 2. Mean averages (per 1,000 words) of 1st & 2nd person items (Biber 1988: 262-3)

	1st person	2nd person
Personal letters	62	20.2
Professional letters	40.9	15.2
Ratio personal : professional letters	3 : 2	4 : 3

The preference is less pronounced for the second person with a mean average of 20.2 items per 1,000 words in personal letters versus 15.2 in professional letters, which comes to a ratio of 4:3; but this again runs in favour of personal letters (Biber 1988: 262-3). Returning to our own figures, it is therefore certainly true to say that with an increased use of first and second person items the student corpus moves away from the domain of professional (business) letters into the direction of the more ‘involved, affective’ personal letters. It is not unlikely that potential addressees might perceive such a shift as a deviation from what they typically expect in business correspondence, particularly if further features occur which create the same effect. (Such additional features can indeed be found and will be discussed in the following sections.)

Before moving on, however, we shall briefly discuss possible remedies if indeed we feel that the student corpus ought to resemble the model letters more closely in terms of first and second person usage. Since these features are perceptually fairly salient a simple remedy might seem to merely discourage their use. I believe, however, that there are wider issues at stake here which have to do with text micro-structure.

First and second person items characterise the NPs they occur in as definite and identify them by direct reference to the speaker(s) and addressee(s) concerned. But there is a different way of marking NPs as definite which is neither speaker- nor addressee-based and that is the use of third person pronouns (*he, she, it, they, this - these, that - those*) and definite determiners (*the, that - those, this - these*)[23]. It is not implausible to conclude that the preference among students for first and second person definite NPs leads to a corresponding underuse of third person definite NPs. This would

23 For a discussion of the systemic relationship between third person personal pronouns and demonstrative determiners and pronouns cf. Halliday - Hasan (1976: 58).

clearly reflect wider-ranging differences in the character of the texts since one of the main functions of third person *he, she, it,* etc. and *the, that,* etc. is to establish textual cohesion.

To uncover possible differences concerning third person definite NPs, the relevant items[24] were extracted from both corpora and their frequencies compared. 139 items were duly recorded in *WBC*, but only 103 in the student corpus, which represents a highly significant divergence.[25] It therefore seems true to say that the student corpus does not only favour first and second person-based NPs but that it favours them at the expense of third person-based definite NPs. Two specimen texts[26] are shown below illustrating the resulting differences.

(1) a. *WBC* (91 words)
[Dear Mr. Nußbaum,]
[1] In reply to your letter dated 12th June we have pleasure in enclosing patterns of our Quality 5871[a], which may be of interest to you. / [2] **The** composition of **this** quality[a] is 75 percent camel hair and 25 percent wool, while **the** weight is 20/21 ounces. / [3] Today's price of **this** cloth[a] is £22.50 per yard. / [4] We have a limited number of pieces[b] of each shade available for immediate delivery, / [5] but **these**[b] are, of course, subject to **their**[b] being unsold on receipt of your order. / [6] We are looking forward to your early order.
[Yours sincerely,] (*WBC:* §B4)

b. Student corpus (108 words)
[Dear Mr. Simons,]
[1] We have received your letter of Feb. 21, from which we are pleased to note that you are interested in our products[a]. / [2] Our enclosed brochure describes our special features of lambswool wear. / [3] We have sent, under separate cover, a shade card and all infos about **the** qualities and quantities which we are able to supply. / [4] Subject to price ruling at time of dispatch. / [5] We grant a trade discount of 25% on our list-prices. / [6] All prices are EXW. / [7] **The** goods[a] can be delivered immediately on receipt of order. / [8] Payment within 60 days from date of invoice. / [9] We trust that our favourable prices will induce you to place an order.
[Truly yours,] <x bz170599c>

It is apparent that while the model text consists of fewer words (91 against 108) and independent clauses (6 against 9), it nevertheless contains six of the

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24 These items were: *he, his, she, her/s, it* (only with referential meaning, but not in empty subject function), *its, they, them, their/s, the, that, those, this, these*.

25 χ^2=7.479, df=1, p=0.006.

26 Independent clauses are marked off as t-units by slashes "/" and numbered. The relevant search words are marked in bold and where they form cohesive chains, the respective items are underlined and lettered with a superscript to indicate co-reference.

search words, only two of which are not directly cohesive (***the** composition, **the** weight*) while the other four establish two cohesive chains[27] linking up the items (a) *our Quality 5871 - this quality - this cloth* (clauses 1, 2, 3) and (b) *pieces - these, their* (clauses 4, 5). I.e. all t-units except the final one are involved in these two sets of items.

The student letter, on the other hand, contains only one cohesive chain consisting of two items, viz. *our products* (clause 1) - *The goods* (clause 9). Thus, the student text is much less overtly cohesive even though it is longer by a third. This fact corresponds well with Biber's characterisation that texts with higher scores of features with positive weights do not only tend to be "verbal, interactional, affective" but also appear "fragmented […] and generalized in content" (Biber 1988: 105). This seems to characterise the student letter fairly well, though I would like to add that in this case it is high scores of the first and second persons together with low scores of definite third person NPs that are responsible for this appearance. To remedy such an appearance does not mean discouraging the use of the first and second persons directly. One would rather encourage students to stick with the same topic for longer, which automatically entails using more definite third person NPs, which in turn probably reduces the amount of first and second person items proportionally. And this would bring them stylistically more in line with the model letters.

6. Present and past participial WHIZ deletion relatives

Biber's WHIZ deletion relatives are non-finite constructions postmodifying nominal heads as illustrated under (2) below:

(2) a. Present participial WHIZ deletion relative: *the event causing this decline is…*
b. Past participial WHIZ deletion relative: *the solution produced by this process*; (Biber 1988: 233)

The actual number of occurrences of these constructions is not particularly high, but table 1 shows that both features are consistently underused in the student corpus to a statistically significant degree (see table 1, J29-30). It is important to remember that since these features have **negative** weights, it is **low** frequencies in the student corpus which mark it as more involved, affective, etc.

Biber characterises the function of features with negative weight as being

27 For the concept of the cohesive chain cf. Halliday - Hasan (1976: 15ff) and Hasan (1984, 1989).

> associated with a high informational focus and a careful integration of information in a text. (Biber 1988: 104)

Particularly "[w]ord length and type / token ratio […] mark high density of information" and "very precise lexical choice resulting in an exact presentation of informational content." (Biber 1988: 104) The relevance of WHIZ deletion relatives for this overall function of condensing information is that their use as modifiers of nouns elaborates "the nominal content" (Biber 1988: 105) contributing further to informational density.

The underuse of WHIZ deletion relatives in the student letters therefore marks a move away from the 'informational' towards the 'involved' end of the scale. The same difference can be observed again by comparing the figures for personal and professional letters given by Biber (see table 3). Both features are clearly much less frequent in the personal letters and a comparable underuse in the students' letters might presumably lead to a perception of their texts as less 'professional' and more 'personal' and 'involved' in nature than those of the model corpus.

Table 3. Mean averages (per 1,000 words) of 'Present & Past participial WHIZ deletion relatives' (Biber 1988: 262-3)

	Present prt.	Past prt.
Personal letters	0.0	0.2
Professional letters	2.5	1.3
Ratio personal : professional letters	0 : 2.5	1 : 6.5

There seem to be two factors contributing to the observed lack of these non-finite postmodifiers in the student corpus. First of all, finite, relative clauses represent the default among English postmodifying clauses, while non-finite constructions are comparatively more marginal choices.[28] And secondly, this quantitatively secondary status in English is probably aggravated by negative transfer from the students' L1, since German typically does not support non-finite clauses in postmodifying function. This is evidenced for instance by the fact that the English non-finite constructions exemplified under (3a-b) below are ungrammatical in German if rendered as parallel non-finite phrases.

(3) a. Present participle:
English: […] an enterprise dealing with [sic] dressing-gowns, pyjamas and underwear […] <x rz001298b>

28 Cf. e.g. Jucker (1992: 277-8), whose figures consistently report more occurrences of finite, relative clauses than of all types of non-finite clauses taken together (i.e. present participle-, past participle-, and infinitive constructions).

German: […] *ein Unternehmen handelnd mit Morgenmänteln, Pyjamas und Unterwäsche […]
b. Past participle:
English: […] together with samples of leathers used in your articles […] (*WBC:* §A2)
German: […] *zusammen mit Mustern der Leder verarbeitet in Ihren Produkten […]

Such non-finite postmodifiers are thus not a (typical) feature of German grammar and therefore unusual for L1 speakers of German. Ringbom (1998) makes the same point arguing that

> L2-constructions without direct equivalents in the L1 tend to be avoided or underused. If a particular English category or structure is missing in the L1 it is generally underused even by advanced learners. (Ringbom 1998: 49)

This describes the state of affairs concerning WHIZ deletion relatives in English and German fairly accurately.

At the same time, however, non-finite constructions are judged to be highly characteristic of English, even though they are not high-frequency features in absolute terms. Witness e.g. Lamprecht's (1980) observation below:

> Diese infiniten Verbformen [Infinitiv, *ing*-Form, Perfektpartizip] geben dem heutigen Engl. weitgehend seine charakteristische Prägung. Dies gilt vor allem, wenn sie als *verbal phrases* auftreten, d.h. wenn sie - durch hinzutretendes Objekt, (Sinn-)Subjekt, Attribut oder Modaladverb - zu infiniten Konstruktionen im eigentlichen Sinn erweitert sind. (Lamprecht 1980: §659)

Consequently, the use of non-finite postmodifiers[29] should be actively encouraged in the teaching process particularly because a failure to use such postmodification to a sufficient extent seems to have repercussions for the style of writing - certainly as far as the 'involved vs. informational' opposition is concerned.

7. Type / token ratio (standardised)

We have seen in the previous section that Biber (1988: 104) reports a correlation between a high type / token ratio on the one hand and high informational density and "very precise lexical choice" on the other. Considering the figures under J31 (table 1), the student corpus again features

29 A more general and far-reaching remedy would be to emphasise linguistic features which belong to both of the following categories at the same time: (a) constructions which are quantitatively marginal in the target language; and (b) such target-language constructions which are not supported by the learners' L1. Such a step would boost the currency of features which are not high-frequency items in either L1 or L2, such as the above mentioned non-finite clauses.

a substantially lower ratio with 40.04 against 51.63 in *WBC*. The students' vocabulary is thus less varied, which is not surprising in view of their learner status. But this difference is even more remarkable considering the ratios Biber reports for his corpus of professional and personal letters. Accordingly, professional letters show an average ratio of 53.0 against 52.5 in personal letters (Biber 1988: 262-3). In other words the ratio is only half a percentage point lower in the personal letters, which makes the drop of the student letters by 11.59 points even more remarkable.

This drop should be seen in conjunction with the significant under-use of both present and past participial WHIZ deletion relatives reported in Section 6. All three features are supposed to promote "an exact presentation of informational content" (Biber 1988: 104) in texts which are "carefully crafted and highly edited" (Biber 1988: 115). If this at least partly characterises audience expectations of business letters, then a significant shift towards the other end of the scale in the three features mentioned might plausibly lead to undesired reactions among addressees.

Possible remedies for the low frequencies of non-finite postmodifiers have already been mentioned in the previous section, but the comparatively low type / token ratio seems to call for vocabulary development beyond only terminological aspects since these tend to be stressed anyway in BE coursebooks. A divergence of over 10 points presumably calls for an emphasis on general vocabulary as well.

8. Conditional and causal subordination

As can be seen under B8-9 above, conditional subordination just misses the 0.05 significance level and causal subordination does not appear frequently enough to generate safe χ^2-results. But since these two types of subordination are fairly similar structurally (viz., adverb clauses) as opposed to the two other types of subordinate clause listed in table 1, viz. WH clauses[30] and THAT deletion, I have decided to collapse conditional and causal subordination into one group. Apart from these structural considerations mentioned, Biber also ascribes similar discourse functions to conditional and causal subclauses:

> Causative and conditional subordination can […] be considered as markers of affect or stance, that is, as justification for actions, beliefs (*because*) or conditions for actions or beliefs (*if, unless*). […] they seem to mark a range of affective functions relating to the elaboration of personal attitudes or feelings. (Biber 1988: 107)

30 These are subclauses of the type *I believe what he told me.* (Biber 1988: 231)

Accordingly, a high incidence of usage of *if, unless,* and *because* correlates with more 'involved' texts. With the figures for conditional and causal subordination collapsed under B'd (table 1), the resulting calculations show a significantly more frequent use of these types of subordination in the student corpus, again representing a tendency toward a more involved character of the student letters. As far as the use of subordinating conditional *if* is concerned, Ringbom (1998: 48) supports this conclusion as he also reports the overuse of the subordinating conjunction *if* by learners.

9. Contracted forms

The figures for contracted forms are fairly low (see table 1, B5) as the model corpus features a categorical absence of this feature while the student corpus contains at least five instances of it, i.e. 1.79 per 1,000 words. The log likelihood reports a significant difference at the 0.01 level so that this has to be judged as a relevant divergence between the two corpora. Moreover, this feature is probably the most salient one discussed so far so that deviations from what is expected become apparent to readers instantly. However, this high salience of contractions offers the advantage of making it comparatively easy to discourage their use where they seem inappropriate, i.e. in more informational or formal text types. For an instance of contraction from the student corpus see example (4).

(4) I'm interested on [sic] it [i.e. the new product] and I would like to have the new prospect [sic] and the actual [sic] preis-list [sic], […] <x rz001298j>

10. Features going against the trend (demonstrative pronouns, analytic negation)

In the previous sections I have shown that the student corpus shows substantial divergences in at least eight of the features making up the 'involved vs. informational' dimension. All of these divergences may be interpreted as characterising the student corpus as significantly more involved, affective, interactional and less informational than the model letters. Two features, however, go against this trend, viz. C10 analytic negation and C11 demonstrative pronouns (see table 1). These show frequencies that locate the student letters further to the informational end of the scale than the model corpus.

Demonstrative pronouns. The lower frequencies of demonstrative pronouns must be seen against the background of the different syntactic and textual functions in which they may occur. The examples below, all coming from

WBC, illustrate the major uses of demonstrative pronouns. (5a) typifies probably the most difficult one for learners because there is an element of ellipsis involved since the presumed NP head *pieces* from the preceding clause may be inserted after *these*.[31] In this context Seidlhofer (1986: 226-7) indicates that ellipsis (and substitution) tend to be avoided by learners, who usually turn to easier types of cohesive ties such as lexical cohesion or reference if they have this choice. It is therefore not surprising to find no instances corresponding to type (5a) in the student corpus.

(5) a. Demonstrative reference + ellipsis: We have a limited number of pieces of each shade available for immediate delivery, / but these [pieces] are, of course, subject to their being unsold on receipt of your order. (*WBC:* §B4)
b. Extended demonstrative reference: […] and we always require payment by sight draft, documents against payment. / However we would be prepared to review this once we have established a firm trading association with you. (*WBC:* §C2)

Theoretically instances like (5b) should be easier. No element of ellipsis is involved since no plausible preceding nominal head can be inserted after the demonstrative *this* as it does not refer to a single preceding NP head but rather to the extended stretch of text underlined. This constitutes extended demonstrative reference in Halliday - Hasan's (1976: 66-7) scheme and carries a medium facility value according to Seidlhofer (1986: 226). But in spite of this medium value, no exactly parallel instance appears in the student corpus. However, it must not be forgotten that Seidlhofer's facility values stem from the answers in a cloze test, while the student letters are based on an exercise in free composition. In such a context the difficulties with more complex linguistic features presumably increase and furthermore there is always the possibility of avoiding these features altogether, which apparently is what happened in the student letters. Such avoidance strategies are also reported in Seidlhofer (1986: 226) but mainly in the context of ellipsis and substitution.

This brings us finally to the one instance of a demonstrative pronoun actually used in the student corpus (see example 6). At first glance this looks like a regular instance of extended reference comparable to (5b), but in this case it is possible to delete the demonstrative altogether without a change of

31 Cf. Halliday - Hasan (1976: 157)

meaning because in effect it merely forms part of the conjunct *in addition (to this)*.[32]

(6) It would be very kind of you to send me your current catalogues as well as your list prices [sic]. Could you, please, name me [sic] in addition to this your terms of payment and time of delivery. <x rz001298r>

Assuming that the use of demonstrative pronouns is indeed difficult for learners, it is not surprising to find the only instance in the student corpus in this quasi-lexicalised form of a conjunct as in (6) above. It is interesting to note that Ringbom (1998: 48) reports comparable findings pointing out that underused words in his learner corpus include "the demonstratives *this* and *these*". We therefore seem to be faced with a more general trend among non-native learners.

Concluding the discussion on demonstrative pronouns, we can say with some confidence that the particularly low frequency of these items in the student corpus stems from their comparative difficulty for learners rather than an over-extension of the tendency of informational texts to feature fewer demonstrative pronouns. The use of demonstratives could therefore be encouraged to some extent because the levels of the model corpus have not been reached anyway and more usage of demonstratives would have the added advantage of potentially increasing cohesion levels in the student letters (cf. Section 5).

Analytic negation. The low frequency of analytic negation in the student letters can only be explained in so far as they contain no instances of negation whatsoever apart from the one listed under C10, either analytic or otherwise. I.e. the topic choice in the student letters is probably somewhat constrained and does not involve the necessity for negation of whatever sort. This is probably aggravated by the comparatively small size of the corpus, which prevented this bias from equalling out in the long run.

11. Conclusion

In this section we come back to our initial purpose, viz. that of ascertaining whether the divergences discussed in Sections 5-9 amount to an overall drift of the student letters towards the 'involved' end of Biber's scale. Such a drift would result in an altogether different character than is presumably expected of business correspondence. We have certainly seen that major differences are apparent in the use of the following features, viz. first and second person

32 Cf. also Halliday - Hasan (1976: 230-1) for this change in function from demonstrative proper to conjunct.

items (cf. Section 5), present and past participial WHIZ deletion relatives (cf. Section 6), type / token ratio (cf. Section 7), conditional and causal subordination (cf. Section 8), and contractions (cf. Section 9); i.e. in eight among 27 features. However, given the fact that (a) first and second person items and (b) causal and conditional subordination had to be collapsed to yield significant results, we should reduce the total of features by two (thus, 25) and the number of significant features by two as well, thus six (or 24%). Thus, a quarter of the stylistic markers observed in student writing diverge from the expected norm set by the reference corpus. This is certainly far from the majority of items but it still has to be regarded as a substantial portion of them.

If we further consider that another seven features are either not used at all (F19, 21-22, 25), or only once in one of the two corpora (F20, 23-24) and that in these cases usage is arguably too infrequent to make any judgements on possible trends at all, we might plausibly subtract these seven features from the total of 25. This gives 18 and in relation to these, the six ‘deviant’ features represent exactly a third. I.e. depending on the basis of calculation, at least a quarter of the observed stylistic features deviate from the expected norm, but this level plausibly goes up to a third. I would assume that such levels are substantial enough to lead to perceptible changes in the overall character of the student letters making them indeed appear more “interactive, affective, and involved” (Biber 1988: 107) than the control corpus.

A very similar result is in fact reported by Petch-Tyson (1998: 108), who investigated the phenomenon of writer / reader (W/R) visibility in English essays written by French, Dutch, Swedish, and Finnish students. The features investigated by her[33] overlap to a large degree with Biber’s style markers of the ‘involved vs. informational’ opposition and on this basis she concludes that the learner writers

> use all of the features of W/R visibility under investigation much more often than the control NS [i.e. native speaker] writers, and can thus be said to be focusing more on interpersonal involvement (Petch-Tyson 1998: 116).

And she further observes “that the learner writers are much more overtly present within the discourse than the NS writers […].” (Petch-Tyson 1998: 117). This leads her to the ultimate conclusion that

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33 These features include first person reference, second person reference, speaker’s mental processes (*think, believe,* etc.), monitoring of information (*you know, I mean* etc.), emphatic particles (*just, really*), fuzziness (*and so on, etc.,* ‘…’), reference to situation of reading / writing (*this X, here, now* etc.), evaluative modifiers, imperatives, questions (direct / rhetorical), quotation marks, italics. (Petch-Tyson 1998: 111)

> [o]ne result of this may be that their writing may be felt to conform less to the conventions of the particular genre (Petch-Tyson 1998: 116).

It should be understood, however, that Petch-Tyson makes these observations on the basis of the text type of essays written in English by native speakers of several European languages other than German. Nevertheless, her results precisely mirror the ones that I have reported concerning English business letters composed by German native speakers. Thus, the trend towards ‘involved, personal, affective’ communication appears to be an overall tendency affecting learners generally, irrespective of their L1 and irrespective of the text type aimed at. In this context, Granger - Payson (1998: 130) conclude that “the learners’ more spoken style” is an “essentially developmental feature” and they report Shimazumi - Berber Sardinha’s (1996) observation that

> [o]rality and involvement are thus more to be viewed as features of novice writing, found in both native and non-native speakers. (Shimazumi - Berber Sardinha’s 1996 quoted in Granger - Payson 1998: 130)

Making sure that students hit the right style despite this basic tendency means taking into account the following three points:

(A) Since the tendency towards a more ‘involved’ style seems to be a developmental given, teaching should not necessarily discourage the use of features associated with this style but rather encourage the use of features associated with ‘informational’ text types. This would specifically include encouraging, a.o. things, the composition of more cohesive texts (cf. Section 5) and greater lexical variability (cf. Section 7). Only in the case of contractions (cf. Section 9) would one resort to actively discouraging their use in unsuitable instances.

(B) Moreover, particular emphasis should be put on those stylistic features which are not only underused for developmental reasons but because they lack direct equivalents in the learners’ L1 like present- and past participial WHIZ deletions (cf. Section 6).

(C) Lastly, it should be clear that the tendency among students towards a more ‘involved, affective, personal’ style creates problems in specifically those text types which tend towards the ‘informational’ end of Biber’s scale - (formal) business letters being a case in point, as I have shown above. Such potentially problematic text types have to be identified and student over-/underuse of the relevant stylistic features ought to be monitored. However, it should be equally clear that the teaching of business communication also involves text types like telephone conversations where the observed tendency is clearly unproblematic because these texts are supposed to be ‘involved’ and ‘interactive’ in the first place. I.e. to say there will only

be a need to monitor student style in more formal or informational text types - at least as far as the problem of 'involvement' is concerned.

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Mind the gap: English as a mother tongue vs. English as a lingua franca

Barbara Seidlhofer

Over the last two decades or so, a great deal has been published about English as an International Language (EIL)[1]: apart from books that chart the different varieties of L1 English around the globe, the greatest amount of work has been done on indigenized varieties in the 'Outer Circle', where English is an institutionalized additional language, both in terms of extralinguistic aspects and descriptions of linguistic manifestations. In addition, the last decade has seen numerous discussions of the geographical spread, the history, politics and ideology of EIL, as well as arguments for an 'appropriate methodology' for the teaching of English as a foreign language in different parts of the world[2]. English teaching, which once seemed such a straightforward activity, has become a much more complicated affair. Whereas language teachers used to be preoccupied mainly with the description and instruction of the language as such, we now find a much wider variety of concerns, with cultural, political, social, ecological, psychological, technological, and managerial issues demanding at least as much attention as the language proper. This has led to a broader conception of the profession, and to a discourse of ELT in which notions of 'correctness', 'norms', 'mistakes' and 'authority' seem to have largely given way to an ethos characterized by 'learner-centredness', 'cooperative learning', 'awareness' and 'reflection'. In the discourse of

1 The following widely-used abbreviations are employed here: EIL: English as an International Language; ELT: English language teaching; (T)EFL: (Teaching of) English as a foreign language; EMT: English as a mother tongue. The acronym ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) is much newer, but its use has been spreading quite fast in recent years.

2 The literature in this area is vast, so the following references are intended simply as examples. Varieties of L1 English around the globe & indiginized varieties: eg Bailey & Görlach 1982, Cheshire1991, Schneider 1997, Todd & Hancock 1986, Trudgill & Hannah 1995, Kachru 1986, 1992a); geographical spread: eg Crystal 1997, Graddol 1997, McArthur 1998; history, politics and ideology of EIL: eg Brutt-Griffler, forthcoming, Canagarajah 1999, Pennycook 1994, 1998, Phillipson 1992, Smith & Forman 1997, Tollefson 1995, "appropriate methodology": eg Holliday 1994, Kramsch & Sullivan 1996.

language planning and education policy, monoculturalism, monolingualism, monomodels and monocentrism have been replaced by multiculturalism, multilingualism, polymodels and pluricentrism (cf eg Bamgbose 1998, Bhatia 1997, Kachru 1992b)

The most important consequence of these developments for so-called non-native teachers of English, who after all constitute the majority of teachers of English worldwide, has probably been that the notion of native speakers' 'ownership of English' has been radically called into question (Widdowson 1994) and that a discussion has gathered momentum which highlights the special potential expertise 'non-native' teachers have on the grounds that they know the target language as a foreign language, that they share with their students the experience of what it is like to try and make it their own, often through the same first language 'filter' (cf eg Braine 1999, Medgyes 1994, Rampton 1990, Seidlhofer 1999). The native speaker has even been declared "dead" (Paikeday 1985).

The whole orientation of TEFL, then, seems to have fundamentally shifted: from correctness to appropriateness, from parochial domesticity and exclusive native-speaker norms to global inclusiveness and egalitarian licence to speak in ways that meet diverse local needs.

Or has it?

My contention would be that while pedagogic ideas about teaching and learning on the one hand and sociolinguistic ideas about the sovereignty and prestige of indigenized varieties of English on the other may have changed quite dramatically, while the empire writes back and non-native teachers assert themselves, assumptions about the "E" in TEFL have remained curiously unaffected by these momentous developments. In TEFL, what constitutes a valid target is still determined with virtually exclusive reference to native-speaker norms. True, at least the definition of what constitutes a 'native speaker' is widening, but a question in urgent need of exploration is just what the "English" is that is being taught and learnt in this new global era, how it squares with the sociopolitical and socioeconomic concerns discussed in the profession, and what its relevance is for the subject taught in classrooms all over the world. That this issue has not really been on the agenda so far is borne out by the way English is talked about in the relevant literature - the default referent, implicitly or explicitly, is EMT:

> ...we suffer from an inferiority complex caused by glaring defects in our knowledge of **English**. We are in constant distress as we realize how little we know about the language we are supposed to teach. (Medgyes 1994:40, emphasis added)

> I believe in the fundamental value of a common language, as an amazing world resource which presents us with unprecedented possibilities for mutual understanding, and thus enables us to find fresh opportunities for international

> cooperation. In my ideal world, everyone would have fluent command of a single world language. I am already in the fortunate position of being a fluent user of **the language** which is most in contention for this role, and have cause to reflect every day on the benefits of having it at my disposal. (Crystal 1997: viii, emphasis added)

Consider what Medgyes means by “English”, and what Crystal is referring to when he says “the language”. They are both making reference to one particular variety of English, that used by educated native speakers (like Crystal himself). Like any natural language, this is full of markers of in-group membership such as characteristic pronunciations, specialized vocabulary and phraseology, and references and allusions to shared experience and cultural background. And this is precisely the reason why educated non-native speakers of it (such as Medgyes himself) are so resigned and defeatist about the “glaring defects” in their knowledge of it: they cannot, by definition, be members of that native speaker community, no matter how hard they try, no matter how long they study.

The crucial point, surely, is however that “English” does not simply transfer intact from one context to another - the “E” in *English as a Mother Tongue* (EMT) is bound to be something very different from the “E” in *English as a Lingua Franca* (ELF). But this difference is still waiting to be recognized, explored and acted upon in mainstream English language teaching. Widdowson (1997), in a paper probing the nature of ‘language spread’ with reference to English as an International Language, offers a conceptual framework for capturing two modes of thinking about “the spread of English” which makes the fundamental differences between them quite clear:

> ... I would argue that English as an international language is not *distributed,* as a set of established encoded forms, unchanged into different domains of use, but it is *spread* as a virtual language. ... When we talk about the spread of English, then, it is not that the conventionally coded forms and meanings are transmitted into different environments and different surroundings, and taken up and used by different groups of people. It is not a matter of the actual language being distributed but of the virtual language being spread and in the process being variously actualized. The distribution of the actual language implies adoption and conformity. The spread of the virtual language implies adaptation and nonconformity. The two processes are quite different.
>
> And they are likely to be in conflict. Distribution denies spread. So you can think of English as an adopted language, and then you will conceive of it as a stabilized and standardized code leased out on a global scale, and controlled by the inventors, not entirely unlike the franchise of Pizza Hut and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Distribution of essentially the same produce for consumers worldwide. (Widdowson 1997:139f.)

It seems clear, then, that in order to capture the nature of the global use of EIL we need to think of this process in terms of spread, not distribution. There has as yet, however, been no systematic effort to record what happens linguistically in this process - instead, the general picture we get is that there is an established English being described more and more precisely in terms of native-speaker behaviour and then distributed. This not only does not recognize necessary diversity but acts against it: “Distribution denies spread”, as Widdowson puts it in the above quotation. This increasing precision in description is said to get closer and closer to the reality of native-speaker language use. But it is important to realize that native-speaker language use is just one kind of reality, and not necessarily the relevant one for lingua franca contexts. Also, as long as all the descriptive effort is geared to capturing L1 language use, the profession’s attention is deflected from the increasingly urgent issues concerning the use of English as a lingua franca, and attitudes are reinforced which are antipathetic to ELF. However, I would argue that now that the right to descriptions in their own terms is finally accorded to nativized varieties of English, it is high time that we granted the same right to ELF. My contention, then, is that ELF should be conceived of not as a globally distributed, franchised copy of EMT, but that we must assume that it is spreading, developing independently, with a great deal of variation but enough stability to be viable for lingua franca communication. This assumption is of course one that has to be investigated empirically, but the point I wish to make here is that the need to do so has not even been acknowledged so far, and accordingly no comprehensive effort in this direction has been undertaken to date.

Talking about the distribution of English through TEFL in its “established encoded forms” is not to say, of course, that the description of “E” in TEFL has not moved in the last decade or two - it has moved considerably, but in the other direction as it were, closer and closer to the home base: linguistic descriptions proper have been focusing on English as it is spoken and written as a first language[3]. Technological developments have made it possible to sharpen that focus, so that we can now say with precision which speech acts prevail in calls to the British Telecom helpline (McEnery 2000) or which features of spoken English characterize casual conversations among friends and acquaintances in specific parts of the UK (Carter & McCarthy 1997), not to mention the precision with which written and spoken genres can now be profiled (cf Biber 1988). The British component of the International Corpus

3 But see below for the International Corpus of Learner English based in Louvain, Belgium.

of English is now completed; it is a corpus of a million words of spoken and written English, fully grammatically analysed, and its spoken part is "the biggest collection of parsed spoken material anywhere" (ICE-GB website: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/ice-gb/index.htm). Such corpora make it possible to conduct fine-grained analyses such as that, say, of the rhetorical adverb *simply* in present-day British English (Aarts 1996), or, on a larger scale, studies of "vague language" (Channell 1994) and "patterns of lexis in text" (Hoey 1991).

The last quarter of the 20th century thus saw momentous developments in the study of L1 English, and the sheer scale and sophistication of corpus-based descriptions, eg drawing on the British National Corpus (cf Aston & Burnard 1998), the Collins COBUILD Bank of English or the Longman-Lancaster Corpus, have revolutionized our thinking about what constitutes legitimate descriptions of any language. In terms of products for the general public, we now have entirely empirically-based reference works such as the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English,* "Grammar for the 21st century" [flyer for LGSWE] or the *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary*, "helping learners with real English" [cover]. But also the scope of descriptions of "the English language" has widened dramatically: while until recently the only well-documented varieties of L1 English were British and North American, the International Corpus of English (ICE) encompasses over a dozen regional varieties including, for instance, Australia, East Africa, India, New Zealand and Singapore. ICE is described as "the first large-scale effort to study the development of English as a world language" (ICE website: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/ice/index.htm). But, again, it needs to be pointed out that this world language is defined in terms of speakers for whom English is "either a majority first language ... or an official additional language" (Greenbaum 1996:3).[4] So although it is international and indeed global, it does not include a description of the use of English by its largest group of speakers, those who primarily learnt English as a lingua franca for communicating with other lingua-franca speakers.

This state of affairs is reflected in the literature on teaching English: there is a myriad of books and articles on teaching "English as an international

4 "Its [ICE's] principal aim is to provide the resources for comparative studies of the English used in countries where it is either a majority first language ... or an official additional language. In both language situations, English serves as a means of communication between those who live in these countries" (Greenbaum 1996:3).
"Excluded from ICE is the English used in countries where it is not a medium for communication between natives of the country" (p.4).

language" and "intercultural communication", but the linguistic model these make reference to as target competence has, generally speaking, remained very much that of first-language speakers (cf Abbott & Wingard 1981, Brumfit 1982, Quirk & Widdowson 1985, Smith 1981). It thus seems fair to say that on the whole, changes in the perception of the role of English in the world have influenced current thinking about approaches to teaching (if not necessarily the teaching itself) (eg Holliday 1994, Kramsch & Sullivan 1996) but so far no coherent and comprehensive lingua franca model has been proposed which does justice to these changes in terms of the actual language taught. This means that the how is changing, but linked to a what that is not.

The situation that presents itself, then, is oddly contradictory and paradoxical: on the one hand, we have a very lively and prolific field of research producing extralinguistic treatments of how English is – depending on the specific researcher's domain of interest and ideological orientation – being variously spread, used, forced upon, or withheld from the world at large, coupled with assertions of local values and the importance of intercultural communication in pedagogy. On the other hand, the rapid development in computer technology has opened up hitherto undreamt-of possibilities in language description. The main research efforts in this area, however, are not expended on studying how English is actually used worldwide, but instead concentrate very much on English as a native language. We thus have an inverse relationship between perceived significance and relevance of English in the world at large and linguistic description focusing on the "ancestral home" of the language (Achebe 1975: 62).

The two contrary developments are interdependent and even reinforce one another: the more global the use of English becomes, the greater the motivation, and of course the market, for descriptions of it, which, for historical and socioeconomic reasons, are largely provided by the 'Centre'. The more such products on offer, the more these are regarded as promoting the dominance of (L1) English, and thus the more forceful the attempts in (or on behalf of) the 'Periphery' to resist 'linguistic imperialism' (cf Phillipson 1992, Canagarajah 1999).

But the intellectual battles which are being fought over issues rooted in vested interests, moral convictions, market forces, ownership and social identities go largely unnoticed by the largest group of users of English: those to whom English serves on a daily basis as a lingua franca for conducting their affairs, more often than not among so-called 'non-native' speakers of the language, with no native speakers present at all. These are people who have learned English as a foreign language, and to whom it serves as the most

useful instrument (for reasons discussed, celebrated and lamented in the literature) for communication that cannot be conducted in the mother tongue, be it in business, travel, science or politics - in conversation, in print, on television, or on the internet. The manifestations of this lingua franca are, of course, extremely diverse, and ephemeral – in the final analysis, there will be as many varieties as there are individual speaker constellations. However, since people clearly do communicate with some degree of success, there is obviously also substantial shared ground.

Wherever such interactions take place and whatever the specific motivations and uses of English as an international lingua franca, the mismatch noted above is quite striking: ELF speakers are usually not particularly preoccupied with the two prevailing research foci, viz. ‘corpus-based description of native English’ and ‘linguistic imperialism’. They are not primarily concerned with emulating the way native speakers use their mother tongue within their own communities, nor with socio-psychological and ideological issues. Instead, the central concerns for this domain are efficiency, relevance and economy in language learning and language use. The reasons why the linguistic imperialism school has had little impact on mainstream ELT are rather obvious: people need and want to learn English whatever the ideological baggage that comes with it, a fact acknowledged even in Canagarajah’s 1999 *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching* (eg 180f.). Another reason of course is that it is not in the interest of those who are still largely seen as the ‘owners’ of the commodity ‘English’ to encourage a discussion about ethical questions and the suitability of the goods they have to offer. However, while discussions of the ethical questions are now available in the public domain, freely accessible and there to be taken up by anyone who chooses to, the suitability question has hardly been addressed at all, although some scholars have been insisting for a long time that “the unprecedented functional range and social penetration globally acquired by English demands fresh theoretical and descriptive perspectives” (Kachru 1996:906). In what follows, I shall argue that it is both necessary and feasible to enquire into a suitable model for ELF, and offer suggestions as to how this might be done and which implications such an enquiry might have.

While I am hoping that the urgent (extralinguistic, real-world) need for an ELF model is apparent from what I have said so far, more needs to be said about the (linguistic) feasibility of such an enquiry as well as its fit with current research paradigms. Of course, there have been various attempts in the past to do this, either as conceptually devised models of a reduced inventory as a first step, lightening the learning load as it were, from Ogden’s Basic

English (1930) to Quirk's Nuclear English (1982) or as empirically derived suggestions based on manual vocabulary counts, the most famous of these being West's General Service List (1953). The big opportunity which offers itself now is that it has become possible to base investigations on a large empirical foundation while at the same time being able to take into account the considerable amount of conceptual work undertaken in the past.

The feasibility of undertaking a study of ELF use is basically a question of methods and consequently has much to do with technology. But, as John Sinclair, the pioneer of corpus-based language description, so vividly demonstrates in his work, computational research on language has revolutionized language observation, analysis and description, in short, the whole research paradigm. And it is this, I would argue, which is waiting to be extended to research into ELF.

Let me suggest what it might mean to genuinely carry both the spirit and the technology of recent developments of language description over into the realm of ELF, to follow them through into a truly global view of English. Here are a few extracts from Sinclair's introduction to his book *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation* (1991), in which he writes about new ways of approaching language description with reference to native English. Readers are invited to engage in a thought experiment: simply imagine that what is being talked about is not native English but English as a Lingua Franca:

> This book charts the emergence of a new view of language, and the technology associated with it. Over the last ten years, computers have been through several generations, and the analysis of language has developed out of all recognition.
>
> The big difference has been the availability of data. The tradition of linguistics has been limited to what a single individual could experience and remember ... Starved of adequate data, linguistics languished - indeed it became almost totally introverted. It became fashionable to look inwards to the mind rather than outwards to society. Intuition was the key, and the similarity of language structure to various formal models was emphasised. The communicative role of language was hardly referred to. (Sinclair 1991:1)

Utilizing this extract as an aid for reflection about, and from, an ELF perspective, it is fairly easy to see how "the availability of data" would make "the big difference" and allow us to focus on the "communicative role" of ELF. When Sinclair talks about changing from looking "inwards" to looking "outwards" he is of course referring to introspection vs observation, but assuming this point is well taken, an advocate of ELF might be forgiven for extending this extract to an analogy: this is that "starved of adequate [ELF] data" the description of English "became almost totally introverted", ie analysing the use of native English only, that it "became fashionable to look

inwards" into L1 English "rather than outwards to society", for whom, seen on a global scale, *English* means *English as a Lingua Franca*.

It would seem, then, that there is considerable scope for research into how English is actually used as a lingua franca. However, the work actually published in this field is still very scarce: even studies making use of the label 'English as an international language' are usually geared to helping learners become (more) intelligible to native speakers and to achieving, ideally, 'near-native' competence. Even where quite a low level of proficiency is aimed at, the guiding model is still EMT rather than ELF. This is not surprising, since as far as the linguistic description of ELF is concerned, very little research has been done that could serve as a potential basis for formulating a curriculum for the teaching of ELF. Having said this, a description of the phonology of English as an international language (Jenkins 2000) has just become available, and important work on the pragmatics of non-native – non-native communication in English has been, and is being, conducted (Meierkord 1996, House 1999, Lesznyak forthc.). Much could be said about the extremely intriguing findings of these studies, but I can only give a small glimpse here of the kinds of insights offered by them. Jenkins' work (eg 1998; 2000) centres around "a pedagogical core of phonological intelligibility for speakers of EIL" (2000:123) which she was able to propose after establishing which pronunciation features impeded mutual intelligibility in her empirical studies of what she terms "interlanguage talk". This procedure provided an empirical basis for her suggestion "to scale down the phonological task for the majority of learners by ... focusing pedagogic attention on those items which are essential in terms of intelligible pronunciation" (ibid.) and to prioritize features which constitute more relevant and more realistic learning targets for EIL speakers. What I should like to emphasize in the present context is that Jenkins' phonological Lingua Franca Core does not include, for instance, some sounds which are regarded, and taught, as "particularly English" (and also as particularly difficult) ones by most learners and teachers, such as /θ/ and /ð/ as well as the 'dark l' [ɫ], that is to say, mastery of these sounds proved not to be crucial for mutual intelligibility and so various substitutions, such as /f, v/ or /s, z/ or /t, d/ for /θ, ð/ are permissible.

While phonology is a fairly 'closed system' (although it does have fuzzy edges), pragmatics is a more open-ended affair, and accordingly findings in this area as regards ELF communication are different in nature and probably should not be expected to be 'conclusive' in the same way. Also, House states that "studies of intercultural communication in the scientific community have practically ignored ELF interactions" (1999:74).But the findings about ELF

pragmatics which are beginning to emerge make it clear that there is a vast, complex and absolutely crucial area here waiting to be explored and exploited for ELF communication. Interestingly, while Jenkins emphasizes the feasibility of successful communication by means of a scaled-down phonological repertoire, House takes a much more sceptical stance, as reflected in the subtitle of her (1999) paper[5] "Interactions in English as *lingua franca* and the myth of mutual intelligibility" (emphasis added). Again, I can only give a glimpse of findings here. At the most general level, the consensus-oriented, cooperative and mutually supportive nature of ELF interactions has been stressed, and a tendency has been observed to adopt a 'Let-it-Pass' principle, that is to say, interactants tend to gloss over utterances which cause difficulty rather than trying to sort them out explicitly (cf Meierkord 1996, Wagner & Firth 1997). On the other hand, and this is what House is getting at in her subtitle, this 'Let-it-Pass' behaviour can also be interpreted as an indicator of interactants' mutual dis-attention, a "palpable lack of mutual orientation", which, as House points out, is "the most basic social alignment between speaker and hearer" (1999:82). Interactants in the data analysed are shown to often act as initiators only, not as initiators and recipients, and to lack "pragmatic fluency" characterized by such features as smooth management of turn-taking and topic-changes as well as appropriate use of pragmatic routines such as gambits (in the sense of Edmondson & House 1981). It has to be pointed out, however, that only a limited repertoire of interaction, notably casual conversations and group discussions, has been analysed so far, so that it is conceivable that further research might show the present findings to be a function of the type and purpose of the interactions investigated. At all events, whatever ways speakers use to interact my means of a lingua franca and how far they compensate for 'normal conversational behaviour' is a matter for further empirical enquiry.

There is also one large-scale project focusing on the written English produced by learners of English coming from a great variety of first language backgrounds. This is the International Corpus of Learner English (cf Granger 1997). However, the main thrust of this research enterprise is to identify and compare characteristics of learner English from different L1 backgrounds, with the intention to facilitate comparisons between these foreign-language productions and native-speaker writing, and so to highlight the difficulties specific L1 groups have with native English in order to make it easier for those learners to conform to EMT if they so wish. What this project does not

5 I focus on House (1999) here because this paper conveniently summarizes and discusses the state of the art in the pragmatics of ELF.

aim at, then, is the devising of a comprehensive description of lingua franca English which could presumably be gleaned from the combined profiles of different learner Englishes.

Taking all these observations into account, it seemed desirable and timely to embark on the compilation of a corpus of English as a Lingua Franca. For the purposes of this corpus the term 'lingua franca' (cf eg Kahane & Kahane 1976) is understood in the strict sense of the word, ie an additionally acquired language system that serves as a means of communication between speakers of different first languages, or a (pidgin) language by means of which the members of different speech communities can communicate with each other but which is not the native language of either - a language which has no native speakers:

> ... if the members of two or more cultures which do not use the same language come into regular contact with each other over a prolonged period ... it is probable that the resultant language contact will lead to the development of a pidgin language by means of which the members of the cultures can communicate with each other but which is not the native language of either speech community. A pidgin language is thus a lingua franca which has no native speakers, which is often influenced by languages spoken by people who travelled and colonized extensively ... and by the languages of the people with whom they interacted repeatedly. (Malmkjær 1991:81)

The compilation of this corpus ("the Vienna ELF corpus") is now in progress. The focus is on unscripted (though partly pre-structured), largely face-to-face, communication among fairly fluent speakers from a wide range of first language backgrounds whose primary and secondary education and socialization did not take place in English. The speech events to be captured include private and public dialogues, private and public group discussions, and one-to-one interviews, all of them judged to make use of ELF in a largely unselfconscious, instrumental way. For the time being, the size aimed for is approximately one million words.

The first aim will be to take stock of how the speakers providing the data actually communicate through ELF, and to attempt a characterization of how they use English to do so. The main focus will be on the levels of lexico-grammar and discourse and on the investigation of what (if anything), notwithstanding all the diversity, can be shown to be common features of ELF use, irrespective of speakers' first languages and levels of proficiency. Questions investigated will include the following: What seem to be the most relied-upon and successfully employed expressions, grammatical constructions, lexical items? Are there aspects which contribute especially to smooth communication? What are the factors which tend to lead to 'ripples',

misunderstandings or communication breakdown? Is the degree of approximation to a variety of L1 English always proportional to communicative success? Or are there commonly used constructions and sound patterns which are ungrammatical in Standard L1 English but generally unproblematic in ELF communication? If so, can hypotheses be set up and tested concerning simplifications of L1 English which could constitute systematic features of ELF? The objective here, then, is to establish something like an index of communicative redundancy, in the sense that many of the niceties of social behaviour associated with native-speaker models and identities might not be operable and certain native-speaker norms might be seen to be in suspense. Indeed, it may well be that situations occur in which 'unilateral' approximation to native speaker norms and expectations not shared in ELF interaction leads to communication problems, and that mutual accommodation[6] is found to have greater importance for communicative effectiveness.

Of course, it is early days yet and all these questions will have to be addressed with care and circumspection. Nevertheless, I should like to offer a brief example. This is a dialogue between L1 speakers of Swiss German and French respectively. They have been asked to choose one picture out of several options which will best serve for a campaign for a charity:

(1) *Reto (L1 Swiss German) & Stephanie (L1 French)*

1 R: I think on the front xx on the front page should be a picture who-which only
2 makes p- people to er spend money, to the charity
3 S: yes
4 R: and I think er yeah maybe
5 S: I think a picture with child
6 R: Yeah, child are always good to
7 S: Yes
8 -R: to trap people spend money
9 S: Yes. I think, erm, let me see, erm ...
10 R: I don't know ... but maybe we should er choose a picture who gives
11 the impression that this child needs needs the money or
12 S: So I think, then that's my, this one, no
13 R: Yeah it's quite happy
14 S: Yeah, she's happy er … Maybe this one
15 R: Yeah.
16 S: He look very sad … and he has to carry heavier vase
17 R: Mm, that's right.
18 S: Too heavy for him, or …

6 Accommodation (in the sense of Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991) was found to be an important factor in Jenkins' (2000) study, and lack of it may have contributed to the impression of "mutual dis-attention" House (1999:82) got in the analysis of her data.

19 R: Hm hm
20 S: But also this one, even if he's smiling
21 R: Yeah, that's right … And maybe this one can show that the
22 that the chari-er charity can really help
23 S: Uh huh
24 R: and that the charity can er make a smile on a on a chil -on on a child's face
25 S: Yes
26 R: Yeah I think this one would be
27 S: A good one
28 R: It would be good

...	long pause
-	self-correction
-R	continuation
xx	unintelligible

(Data incl. transcription donated by Jennifer Jenkins)

It is obvious that the interactants are satisfied with their discussion: they agree on their criteria and negotiate a consensus, so in that sense we can regard this exchange as successful communication. The conversation also has a constructive, collaborative feel to it: in contrast to the data discussed in House 1999 (see above), there is ample evidence of the interactants acting as recipients as well as initiators: the *yes*'s and *yeah*'s tend to be genuine expressions of agreement, backchannelling is provided in the form of *Hm hm* and *Uh huh*, and there is even one instance of one speaker completing an utterance for her interlocutor (lines 26-27). But the point to be noted is that this communicative success comes about despite the fact that there is hardly a turn which is 'correct' or idiomatic by EMT standards. We find a wide range of oddities in terms of 'deviation' from EMT: the unintentionally comical phrase *a picture with child* in line 5 (though of course only comical for someone familiar with the native English meaning of *with child*), idiosyncrasies such as *makes people to spend money* (line 2), *to trap people spend money* (line 8) and *make a smile on a child's face* (line 24) and what would traditionally be called 'serious grammatical mistakes', such as missing third person *-s* in *He look very sad* (line 16), wrong relative pronoun in *a picture who gives the impression ...* (lines 10-11), missing indefinite article and unwarranted comparative in *he has to carry heavier vase* (line 16) as well as wrong preposition (or wrong verb) in *to spend money, to the charity* (line 2).

Despite all these 'errors' which most EFL teachers would certainly consider in need of correction and remediation, the exchange between Reto and Stephanie can be regarded as an instance of successful ELF communication. Of course this type of interaction relies heavily on shared context and has a limited potential for misunderstanding and conflict, and. in many situations in which ELF is used these conditions will not apply. But this caveat does not invalidate the observation that for the purpose at hand, the kind of English that is employed works, it serves the participants quite adequately for doing the job they have to do. The investigations I have carried out so far have confirmed that a great deal of ELF communication is conducted at roughly the level of Reto and Stephanie's 'interlanguage', and that quite often it is features of English which are regarded as "the most typically English", such as 3rd person *'s*, tags, and idioms, which turn out to be non-essential for mutual understanding. This observation thus closely parallels Jenkins' finding that mastery of the sounds often perceived as "particularly English", ie /θ/ and /ð/, is not crucial for ELF communication.

Of course, to most people who have experienced the use of English as a lingua franca all this might seem rather obvious: we all know intuitively that this is how it works. But this is exactly the point I wish to make: while we know intuitively, there has been no proper investigation into how it is done, and hence no descriptions are available that would help make things more tangible and teachable. And this is where the parallels are with what descriptions of L1 English used to be like before the advent of computer-aided corpus linguistics: native speakers intuitively knew, but what they really said and wrote was not captured on a large scale, and hence was not accessible for close investigation and description and thus difficult to explain to learners, especially in cases where teachers had not grown up as speakers of the language they were teaching. In the case of ELF, nobody has grown up as a speaker of it. One could argue that this makes the need for an empirically based description even more urgent than in the case of EMT, where at least there are native speakers who can serve as informants. So whereas the question usually asked about EMT by EFL learners and teachers is "can one say that in English as a mother tongue?", it would not make sense to ask the same question about ELF; rather, one might usefully ask "has this been said and understood in English as a lingua franca?" The Vienna ELF corpus is intended as a first step towards addressing this question.

In conclusion, then, I agree with Sinclair when he says that we need to "overhaul our descriptive systems" (1985:252). I would like to add, however, that this needs also to apply to ELF if we want to describe real ELF: precisely the same arguments that Sinclair is making for the description of native-

speaker language, for establishing the 'real English of native speakers', apply to the requirement of establishing the 'real English of ELF speakers'. However, the vast new technological apparatus available now has not been used for ELF so far.

Once available, a description of ELF use would have potentially huge implications for curriculum design and for reference materials and textbooks. But what exactly the relevance of such a description is will have to be decided with reference to locally established pedagogic criteria: I would obviously not wish to claim that just because a description is available it should determine what is taught in specific settings or for specific purposes. And anyway, how far any new findings will be acted upon is of course an open question. To be realistic, a description which goes against the grain of people's linguistic tradition and etiquette is likely to meet a great deal of resistance due to prejudice, market forces, vested interests, aesthetic arguments and practical questions. But there are likely also to be positive reactions: for instance, to go back to the quotations from Crystal and Medgyes near the beginning of this paper, rather than claiming that EMT should be the global language, recognizing ELF as a viable variety is more likely to present us with "unprecedented possibilities for mutual understanding", and many 'non-native' teachers of EMT might recognize that they are competent speakers of ELF who have no need to "suffer from an inferiority complex caused by glaring defects in [their] knowledge of English", since it will be their knowledge of ELF rather than EMT that will be relevant to their teaching. As Jenkins so aptly puts it,

> There is really no justification for doggedly persisting in referring to an item as 'an error' if the vast majority of the world's L2 English speakers produce and understand it. Instead, it is for L1 speakers to move their own receptive goal posts and adjust their own expectations as far as international (but not intranational) uses of English are concerned. ... (This) also drastically simplifies the pedagogic task by removing from the syllabus many time-consuming items which are either unteachable or irrelevant for EIL. (Jenkins 2000:160)

To reiterate the main point of this paper, then, I should like to argue that it is time to take ELF on board, to invest the same research effort into it as has gone into EMT, and to work towards mapping out and exploring the whole spectrum of Englishes used across the world, in an attempt to complement EMT not to replace it.

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*From Anglocentrism to TEIL: reflections on our English programme**

Daniel Spichtinger

Why TEIL?

The notion of "English as an international language" has recently received considerable attention by linguists. To reflect the global use of English as a lingua franca, ELT at school and at the university would have to move away from a purely anglocentric model towards teaching English as an international language (TEIL). In my Diplomarbeit (MA dissertation) I have looked at the spread of English from a multiregional perspective; with this approach in mind I have identified the following possible components for a TEIL course (see Spichtinger 2000: 78-81 for a more extensive discussion):

Colonial education policy and ELT
Features of non-native varieties of ELT: "the Empire talks back".
Postcolonial literatures in English: "the Empire writes back".
English as a world language: issues of power and ideology.
How English is used for local purposes
International Englishes as ESP
English in Europe
English in Austria

EIL at the Viennese Department of Anglistik and Amerikanistik

It seems pertinent to ask to what extent these topics have been taught at the University of Vienna's English department. To answer this question I turned to the lecture guides (KOVOs) from the academic winter term (WS) 1995/1996 to WS 2000/2001. In this period Smit held two courses on "World Englishes" (summer term [SS] 1996, SS 1997). This semester (WS 2000/01) guest professor Brumfit will deal with English as an international language.

* I would like to thank Barbara Seidlhofer and Henry Widdowson for valuable comments.

Thus, counting courses dealing exclusively with international English we arrive at three courses in 5 years (or ten academic terms).

However, from SS 99 onwards "international English" is also listed as one of the topics discussed in Widdowson's applied linguistics seminar (SS 99, WS 99/2000, SS 2000, WS 2000/01). Non-native varieties were discussed in Jenner's "English in the World" [optional course in WS 1999/2000] and formed a small part of his lectures on the varieties of English (in WS 96/97, SS 97 and WS 97/98). There has been one course on (post) colonial literature (Rubik, WS 98/99).

Notably absent are any courses dealing with the appropriation of English, that is how English has been used in non-native countries for local purposes. There were no lectures focusing on the status or role of English in Europe (if we discount a forthcoming lecture which deals only with ESP at the EU level). Furthermore, although English is prominently used in Austrian daily life (just look at commercials or in the newspaper) this has not been discussed either.

Thus, to say that EIL has held a marginal position at the institute could still be considered an exaggeration. The question is whether we want to change this or not. After all, this is the "Anglistik and Amerikanistik" Institute and not the Institute for "English as an international language". Still, I would argue that the topics outlined above have a place at a department dealing with "English and American studies". Of course, to what extent they should be incorporated is open to debate but it seems fair to say that the powerful global trend of using English as a lingua franca is hardly reflected adequately in the current curriculum.

Deconstructing the “Sprechpraktikum”

If we want to incorporate the underlying principles of lingua franca English (as discussed in Seidlhofer, this volume) in the curriculum it is not enough to add an occasional EIL lecture. Rather, structures would have to be changed. First and foremost, the role of the native speaker needs to be questioned and reassessed. Currently, conservative tenets are largely upheld in the Austrian education system: the ideal English teacher is still a native speaker and the ideal pronunciation is native-speaker like (see the analysis in Spichtinger 2000: 73-77, 95).[1]

1 For a discussion of "native-speakerism" see Seidlhofer (1995, 1999) and Widdowson (1994). Generally I regard a polymodel approach as most suitable for European countries (see Spichtinger 200: 49-51).

In this respect, one item in the current Anglistik curriculum which particularly needs to be revised is the so-called "Sprechpraktikum" (pronunciation course). Its aim is to enable students to "become as native-like as possible, taking either standard British or standard American as the model" (KOVO 2000/01: 29). The effect of this is that the student in turn becomes the perpetuator of the "native speaker fallacy" (see Phillipson 1992: 193-199), or as the KOVO puts it: "if you are aiming at qualified teacher status, you will be able to provide a good model of British and American pronunciation for your students" (KOVO 2000/01: 29-30).

I would argue that this aim is unclear, unrealistic, unnecessary and psychologically damaging.[2] It is unclear because it is not elaborated in the KOVO what "as native-like as possible" actually means. It is unrealistic because with the time and resources available only very limited progress can be made. It is unnecessary because the ability to ape a native speaker seems a doubtful achievement at best. Should students not rather be encouraged to find their own identity in English? The current practice may be psychologically damaging to students because of the sense of insecurity or even failure it breeds.

Reconstructing the “Sprechpraktikum”

This does not mean that I am against language tuition in general. On the contrary, it could be a valuable device in making students realise the richness and diversity of the English language. This cannot be done, however, by mindlessly repeating silly phrases ("how now brown cow"). Rather, a large number of native and non-native varieties would have to be presented and analysed (as done in Jenner's class on "English in the World" [WS 1999/2000]). The goal of such a reconstructed Sprechpraktikum would not be to become as native-like as possible but to be intelligible in global communication (this approach is admirably outlined in Jenkins [2000], see also Modiano [1999]).

2 In case anyone suspects that I hold a personal grudge against the Sprechpraktikum I can assure them that his is not the case. I passed on the first try.

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