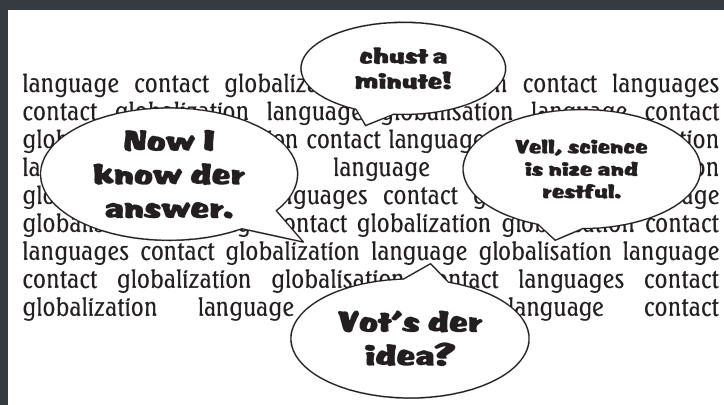


Amei Koll-Stobbe / Sebastian Knospe (eds.)

Language Contact Around the Globe

Proceedings of the LCTG3 Conference



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At sea with standards? The pluricentric nature of English and its impact on non-native speakers' attitudes and language use

Amei Koll-Stobbe and Laura Zieseler

Abstract

For more than five decades, both British and American English have been norm-providing learner targets in Europe. That non-native speakers are increasingly mixing the exonormative standardised varieties is reflected in concepts such as Mid-Atlantic English, or Euro-English. By means of a small scale multidimensional sociolinguistic study we contribute to the ongoing discussion in ELF and ESL frameworks on the symptomatic status of non-exonormative performance features: is the mixing of systemic features of standard Englishes and the diffusion of norms too erratic to be described as an emerging endonormative variety?

Some patterns are pervasive: in written usage, our data depict clear tendencies towards Americanisation, while in spoken usage, British norms are predominant. By foregrounding mixing and systemic fossilisation, and by integrative reflections on our subjects' language use attitudes, we can show that the analysed practices reflect a continuum of fossilisation to nativisation of non-exonormative features, and the fluidity and diffusion of a learner target torn between the norms of British and American English.

1 The Situation in Europe: EFL, ELF and “Euro-English”

In the 21st century, the global spread of English has reached a scale unparalleled in the history of mankind (Kachru 1985: 11, McArthur 1998: 57, Crystal 2003: 110, Melchers & Shaw 2003: 8, Jenkins 2003: 2, Schneider 2011: 2 ff.). One ground-breaking model to capture the nature of this spread is the *Three-Circle Model* of World Englishes developed by Kachru (1985, 1992). It departs from the notion of one monolithic “English as a world language” (EWL), and instead highlights the co-existence of several pluricentric “World Englishes” (WE) (ibid.). Conventionally, these are subdivided into English used as a first language in the Inner, norm-providing Circle, as a second language in the Outer, norm-developing Circle, and as a foreign language in the Expanding, norm-dependent Circle. However, it is an oversimplification that cannot capture the additional complexity that developed through the increasing use of English as an *intranational* and *international* lingua franca, and the growing world-wide urban multilingualism which led to more recent processes of nativisation of English even in areas of the world where English had been traditionally learned as an exonormative foreign language. Kachru (1982) himself explained that the boundaries between institutionalised varieties in the Outer Circle and performance varieties in the Expanding Circle are permeable, but Kachru's model did underestimate the roles that English would come to play in the Expanding Circle (Kirkpatrick 2007: 29).

By projecting the Kachruvian model onto the European community as a socio-linguistic unit, Berns (1995: 8 f.) identified three different types of European speech fellowships: the Inner-Circle of Britain and Ireland, where English acts as a standardised L1-variety, the Expanding-Circle of seven mainland countries (among others France, Italy, and Spain) where English has the status of a foreign language, and finally the three “dual circle countries” of Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands which defy unambiguous classification as they straddle the demarcation line between the Expanding and Outer Circle¹. This is due to the fact that in these countries, English serves *intranational* purposes in various social, cultural, commercial and educational domains rather than being purely restricted to the functional range EFL typically covers in *international* settings outside the classroom (Berns 1995: 8 f., Jenkins 2003: 14).

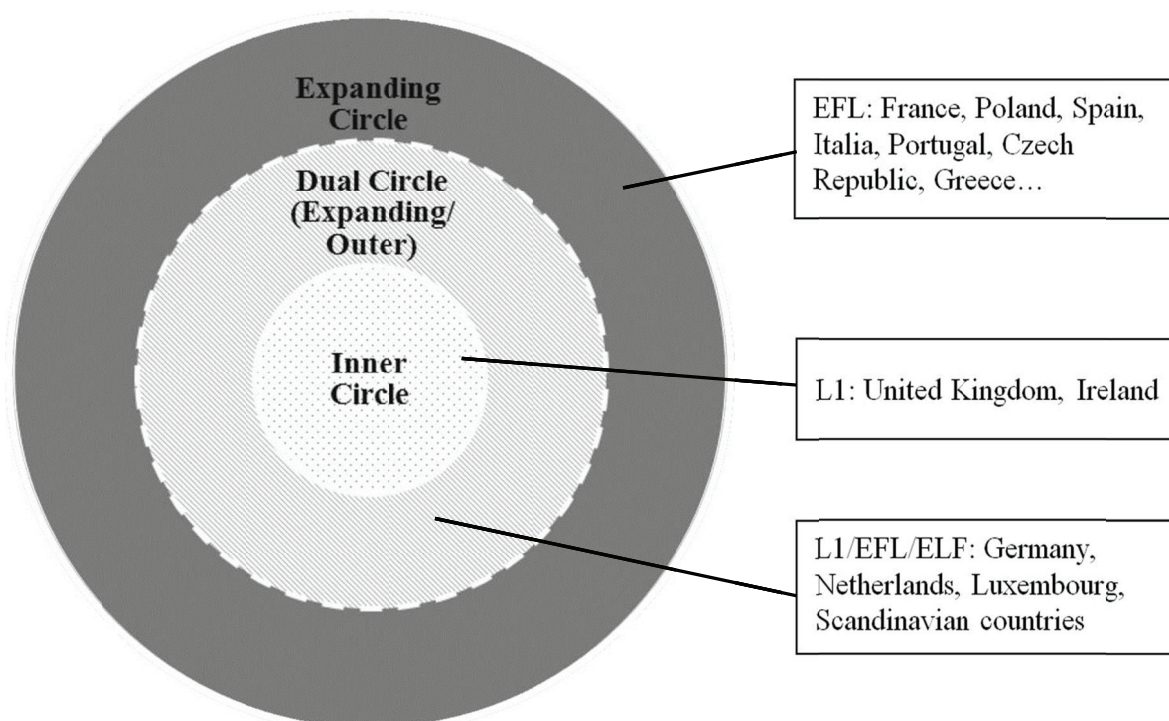


Figure 1: The concentric Circles of European Englishes (after Berns 1995: 9)

The English as a lingua franca (ELF) movement is trying to provide a theoretical framework for this ambiguous status of English in Europe and other parts of the world (Berns 2009: 193, Cogo 2008: 60, Jenkins 2003: 4, cf. also Meierkord's overview 2012:12 ff.²). ELF is regarded as a mode of communication among

-
- 1 15 years later, the Scandinavian countries have developed into prime examples of this particular ambiguity.
 - 2 Meierkord devises an *English across Interaction Theory* that scrutinises the complexity of the different interaction types (L1, L2, ELF/EFL) and their functions. Her core assumption is that the heterogeneity of lingua franca performances in English will poten-

bilingual users of English in the Expanding Circle, but one which “allows for local realisations as well as extensive use of accommodation strategies and code switching” (Cogo 2008: 58). Furthermore, it has come to be distinguished from the concept of English as an International Language (EIL), which includes communication with native speakers, while ELF exclusively refers to contact-situations among non-native users of English (Berns 2009). European ELF or “Euro-English” is seen as having the potential to develop into a distinctive variety of English, and a new learning target. Jenkins claims that Euro-English is already a reality in Europe:

Euro-English is only just emerging as a distinctive variety or group of varieties with its own identity which [...] rejects the concept of having to respect British English or American English norms. What has become clear is that English is evolving as a European *lingua franca* not only in restricted fields such as business and commerce, but also in a wide range of other contexts of communication including its increasing use as a language of socialisation [emphasis in the original]. (Jenkins 2003: 38)

But what if a new developing standard World English, or European English would rather be of a dynamic, hybrid character, open to influences from all existing Englishes, and shaped by the particular use and user contexts, developing into particular communities of practice rather than distinctive and codifiable varieties? What if the overt norms of a distinctive standardised variety of English such as British English or American English merge into dynamic covert prestige oriented ELF communities of practice?

British English (henceforth BrE) and particularly RP in pronunciation has been the long-standing learner target until recently in most European countries (Berns 1995: 4, Modiano 1996: 207 f., de Barros 2009: 35). But since the 1970s, American English (henceforth AmE) has been gaining prestige as well as a growing impact on BrE and other varieties of English world-wide (ibid., Modiano 1999: 25 f., Crystal 2003: 106). While BrE has managed for some time to stand its ground in educational contexts, AmE is gaining ground in various other domains. Most non-native users of English negotiate this double-standard situation by opting for a middle way, and the outcome is commonly referred to as “Mid-Atlantic English” (henceforth MAE).

2 Mid-Atlantic English (MAE)

Görlach & Schröder, who introduced the concept of MAE in 1985, noted that German pupils of English tended to use an “uncontrolled Mid-Atlantic” mixture of the two standards if schools didn’t follow a strict “one standard only” policy (quoted in Modiano 1996: 208). In 1996, Modiano revisited the concept of

tially merge into a rather heterogeneous array of new linguistic systems (Meierkord 2012: 2, 23).

MAE. But instead of dismissing it as some sort of unacceptable mongrel-English, he stated that it was in fact “already commonplace, not only among an increasing number of proficient non-native users in the European Union, but also among many native speakers” (ibid.). He described it as a hybrid variety whose word-stock is based both on British and American English vocabulary, and “in which decidedly British pronunciations have been neutralised” (ibid., 207), since GA variants of certain words are “more accepted internationally” than their British equivalents (ibid., 211 f.). Moreover, he stated that it did not have any strong traces of a regional accent or dialect or any extremely significant foreign accent (ibid., 211). Since MAE “requires an understanding of the differences between AmE and BrE” (ibid., 208), it is a “*communicative strategy*” to enhance mutual intelligibility rather than the “description of an arbitrary mixing of linguistic features” (Modiano 2000: 31). In EIL-contexts, i.e. in the interaction with native speakers of English, MAE-users would consciously choose features of the variety used by their interlocutors, while in ELF-contexts, i.e. “when interacting with non-native English speaking Europeans, [they] utilize a mixture of AmE and BrE features which are best suited for cross-cultural communication” (ibid.). This is very much in keeping with the “form follows function” tenet of EFL research. According to Cogo (2008: 60) research has shown that on a practical level, speakers of ELF are less concerned about adhering to native speaker standards and more concerned about their communicative skills. ELF users do not consider “imperfect” linguistic systems as problematic, since the priority is to achieve communicative success (cf. the “let it pass strategy”, Firth 1996)³. While they are more intent on communicating effectively, ELF users accommodate to each other both to ensure intelligibility and to display group membership. In these situations and communities, ELF is both form and function; besides, by performing certain functions it is appropriated by its speakers and changed in form. In other words, form seems to follow function and start a circular phenomenon of variation and change (see also Berns 2009).

In order to find out whether MAE is a reality in small developing communities of practice in Europe we devised a multidimensional sociolinguistic study to analyse the nature of hybridisation of the two exonormative learner varieties of English in Germany. We chose a setting in North-East rural Germany, where English has been systematically taught on secondary and tertiary education levels for only 25 years. According to Berns 1995 (see Figure 1 above), the former GDR region of Germany would have to be allocated to the Expanding Circle. We tested students of English at Greifswald University which is located in Western Pomerania, a region which can be considered peripheral both in geo-

3 This communication strategy involves that an ELF user lets the unclear situation, word or utterance “pass” on the common-sense assumption that it will either become interpretable or redundant as talk progresses (Firth 1996: 243).

graphic and demographic as well as in economic terms. The university, however, can compensate for that by providing its students with equal access to linguistic and symbolic capital due to a high-tech electronic infrastructure, high-end information processing infrastructure and a nurturing academic community life. A further asset is the highly developed tourist infrastructure and the scenic environment at the Baltic Sea coast. Overall, the student population at the Institute of English and American Studies is a decidedly local one: roughly 70% of the students hail from Mecklenburg Western-Pomerania and its neighbour states Brandenburg and Berlin (cf. "Deutsche Studierende"). Native speakers are rare in the region; we had a master student from New Zealand during the time of the survey, and there are always master students from countries across Northern- and Eastern Europe (cf. "Ausländische Studierende"). There are two native speakers (BrE/AmE) on the teaching staff of 16, and all classes are given in English.

The Institute of English and American Studies constitutes an interesting community of practice as it allows analysis of a heterogeneous group of students, and a heterogeneous group of teachers with varying proficiency in English as L1, EFL, ELF and L2, and thus maps various constellations of lingua franca interaction. It thus reaches across the categories of Expanding Circle performance variability to the Dual Circle English continuum of institutionalised to performance variability. We can therefore expect the students to be "torn" between focused and more diffuse norms for English language use, evidenced by mixing and hybridisation as well as strict attainment to the rules of one of the standard Englishes.

3 The study: At sea with standards? Or: torn between the norms

3.1 Design and implementation

Inspired by several studies (Dalton-Puffer et al. 1997, Preisler 1999, Pettersson 2008, de Barros 2009), we opted for a multidimensional approach by drawing together both attitude-focussed and performance-measuring elements. The study follows the methodology of semi-standardised experimental language feature testing and an interview to elicit language attitudes. 40 randomly selected students of English (all study programmes) were interviewed one by one by Ziesler in November 2009 in a small lecture theatre of the institute. The setting was of a fairly informal nature, the test batteries and interviews standardised for each informant. Although we do provide an exploratory statistical analysis, the focus will be on a qualitative in-depth analysis and interpretation of the results to allow for a differentiated appraisal of the complexity of language use. We thus want to complement large scale empirical studies (e.g. corpus-linguistic

studies such as the VOICE project⁴), which have to follow more reductionist methodologies.

We divided the test settings into four sections, allowing five minute to ten minute breaks between each. In the first section, basic information such as the informants' nationality was gathered. Next, we tested the informants' written performance by giving them nine sentences to translate from German to English. Afterwards, they were asked to read out twelve sentences as well as a word-list. Finally, the participants were presented with a questionnaire in which they were to comment on their "relationship to English" in general.

3.2 Qualitative analysis: findings and analytical close-ups

3.2.1 Translation task

The translation test was meant to trigger lexemes which either differed in spelling or were heteronymous in BrE and AmE. In total 13 items were tested, which are listed below in Table 1:

Table 1: Translation task – target-items

German equivalent	Target-items			
	heteronyms		orthographically different	
	BrE	AmE	BrE	AmE
"Programm(beschreibung)"			<programme>	<program>
"Kofferraum"	<boot>	<trunk>		
"Farbe"			<colour>	<color>
"Reisende"			<travellers>	<travelers>
"(Informations)Zentrum"			<centre>	<center>
"Keks"	<biscuit>	<cookie>		
"Herbst"	<autumn>	<fall>		
"Einschreibung"			<enrolment>	<enrollment>
"Selbstverteidigung"			<self-defence>	<self-defense>
"Bürgersteig"	<pavement>*	<sidewalk>*		
"alternden"			<ageing>	<aging>
"Dialog"			<dialogue>	<dialog>
"öffentliche Verkehrsmittel"	<public transport>	<public transportation>		
Σ total	2 (*3)	2 (*3)	4	4
	5		8	

All in all, six of those items were predominantly rendered in accordance with AmE, another six with BrE and the remaining one was utterly balanced between

4 The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (cf. <https://www.univie.ac.at/voice/>).

those two varieties. That one was the translation of “Bürgersteig” – which was equally often rendered as AmE “sidewalk” and its BrE heteronym “pavement”. One informant even came up with a genuinely Mid-Atlantic solution – “pavewalk”. Some items were particularly strongly associated with one of the two varieties. For example, BrE <ageing> did not occur once throughout the entire survey, and <program>, <cookie> and <trunk> were chosen much more often than their BrE equivalents, whereas <dialogue>, <colour> and <public transport> were more common.

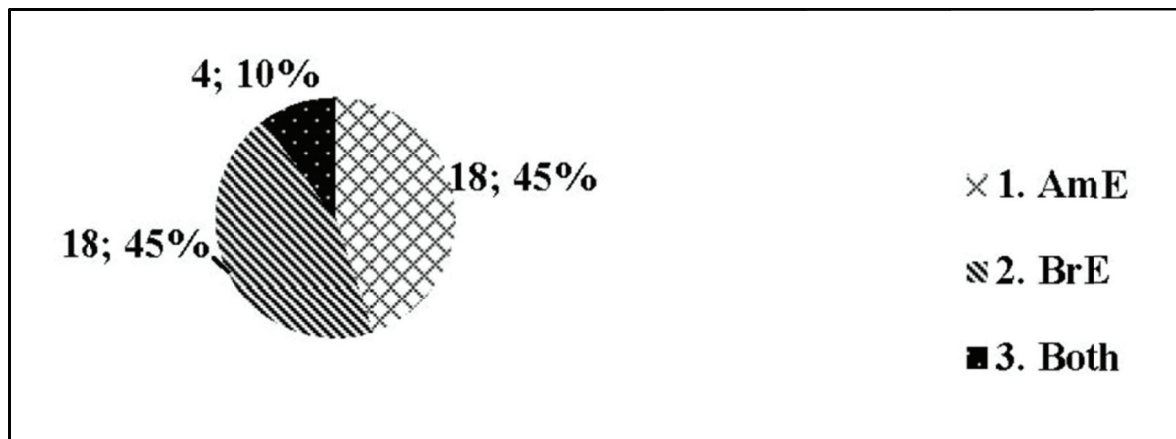


Figure 2: Translation task: informant-affiliation

As Figure 2 shows, neither variety turned out to be dominant within the group of students interviewed for this study. Most importantly, none of the informants adhered to one standard only, as even the most proficient ones deviated from their preferred standard and mixed in at least one variant from the other variety. On the whole, most of them displayed a high degree of normative flexibility, and four of them were even impossible to classify. Formerly focussed norms seem to be becoming increasingly diffuse, and this is not only owing to the pluricentricity of exonormative standards, as shall be demonstrated in the next paragraph.

Since one of the defining features of non-native Englishes is interlingual creativity (Kachru 1990: 11-12, Berns 1988), this section also contained a pseudo-Anglicism, i.e., a lexeme which is transferred from English into German and used in a non-native way (cf. Koll-Stobbe 2009: 26). The pseudo-Anglicism included in the translation task was *Oldtimer*, and it was embedded in the following sentence: *Du solltest Dich lieber auf öffentliche Verkehrsmittel verlassen als auf klappprige Oldtimer.*⁵

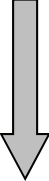
In native English, an *old-timer* is a ‘person with long experience of some place or position; an elderly person’ or an ‘old or old-fashioned thing; a vehicle, tool, etc., which has been in service for a long time’ (OED 2013). In German, it

5 ‘You should rely on public transport rather than on rickety classic/veteran/vintage cars.’

has undergone both orthographic and semantic nativisation to denote a ‘classic car’ in general or a ‘veteran car’ or ‘vintage car’ in more specific terms (OED 2013, Langenscheidt 2008). 75% of the informants used the pseudo-Anglicism in their translations with various orthographic and morphological renditions. On the other hand, of the remaining 10 informants, only three came up with *vintage cars*.

It is also worthwhile to examine the strategies employed to achieve this integration. In eight instances, the German upper-case initial letter was kept, either out of sloppiness or probably because it was perceived as a proper name or a generic noun. Fifteen informants did not inflect the term according to number and used it in the plural without adding the corresponding morphological marker, i.e. the {-s}-suffix. Sentences belonging to this category generally were variations on *You should rely on public transport(ation) rather than on shabby *oldtimer/ *Oldtimer*. This seems to be due to a morphological particularity in German. Here, the morphological marker of agent nouns, {-er}, does not take plural inflection, as for example in *der Lehrer* vs. *die Lehrer-Ø*, quite unlike its English counterpart, for which plural-inflection is obligatory, i.e. *the teacher* vs. *the teacher-s*. The German paradigm seems to have interfered with the English one, even in those instances where Anglicisation was partly implemented by lower-case spelling. By contrast, eleven informants did attach the regular plural marker, and one of them even “re-anglicised” it further by separating it into *old timers*. Interestingly, capitalisation and plural-inflection occurred in complementary distribution, since no-one came up with the variant “Oldtimers”. Instead, one informant chose to mark plural with the help of compounding (or possibly attribution), and devised *Oldtimer cars*. Based on these observations, the different translations can be grouped according to their “degree of re-structuring as re-integration or approximation to English” as follows:

Table 2: Translation task – target-items

Translation	Degree of re-integration			low  high
	orthographic	morphological	semantic	
“Oldtimer” (pl)	–	–	–	
“Oldtimer” (sg)	–	?	–	
“oldtimer” (pl)	+	–	–	
“oldtimer” (sg)	+	?	–	
“oldtimers”	+	+	–	
“old timers”	++	+	–	
“Oldtimer cars”	? ⁶	+	partly (attempted)	

6 Compound or attributive adjective derived from assumed proper noun?

3.2.2 Reading task

The 22 items in this section appeared first embedded in sentences and then isolated in a word list and were selected according to criteria such as rhoticity, vowel-quality and stress patterns. The most common pronunciation features will be presented in the subsequent sections.

Rhoticity (see Collins & Mees 2005)

A latent or inconsequent non-prevocalic rhoticity was very common, i.e. in many items the rhotic element defied clear classification as it was merely “hinted at” by some of the informants. Often, the preceding vowel displayed an “[ɹ]-coloured” quality, indicating regressive assimilation as it takes place in General American (GA), but the actual the [ɹ] itself was either realised extremely indistinctly or omitted completely. Especially word-final [ɹ] in items such as *hotter* or *winter* failed to be realised by most informants in an unambiguous manner. The overall predilection for non-rhotic articulation patterns might be attributed to the fact that these patterns are paralleled by similar ones in standard German pronunciation, where the uvular [ʁ] has suffered the same fate as counterpart in RP in that it has become silent in non-prevocalic position. This transference-based explanation is further backed by remarks some of the informants made off-record, in which they pointed out that for them, the omission of [ɹ] in these environments facilitates pronunciation.

Velar [ɫ]

Another feature of GA, the general velarisation of [l], was very uncommon and even self-professed and otherwise rather proficient speakers of GA mostly failed to deliver it in items such as *laugh* or *leisure*, and replaced it with its unvelarised allophone [l]. This might be due to the fact that the qualitative difference between these two allophones is rather subtle and likely to elude conscious attention, especially in the ears of a user whose L1 does not make that particular distinction. This is the case with (standard) German, in which all lateral alveolar approximants remain unvelarised, regardless of their phonetic surroundings. On the other hand, word-final [l] in *schedule* or *will* was velarised by the vast majority of informants, barring those with a distinct German accent. Therefore, most of the informants appear to model the distribution of those two allophones on RP instead of adopting the “simpler” GA solution.

Intervocalic flap [ɾ]

A third feature worth examining is the modification of intervocalic or post-nasal [t]. In the items *hotter*, *status*, *writing* and *tomatoes*, the rate of intervocalic flapping fluctuated between 35% to 58% of all instances, indicating an inconsistent pattern of implementation. In careful articulation, i.e. if the items occurred isolated in the wordlist, an overall drop in flapping could be noted. This

variability fits in with a phenomenon repeatedly observed since Labov's seminal study in 1966, and which has come to be attributed either to a formality-gradient, speaker-attunement or a variable focus of attention. In this case, variability according to different degrees of formality clearly is the most likely candidate of the three.

Conversely, pre-nasal weakening or even loss of [t] in the item *winter* was nearly non-existent. Voicing to [ɾ] occurred merely twice, and in the remaining instances, [t] was fully preserved.

Vowel qualities

Given the more "elusive" nature of vowels, it is not surprising that vocalic variability was even more pronounced than consonantal variability in this survey.

[ɒ] vs. [ɑ:]

A case in point is the different treatment of open back vowels in *hotter* and *bothered*. In the former item, there was only one clear case of unrounded GA [ɑ:], while most of the users, including many of those gravitating towards GA, realised this vowel with distinct rounding, i.e. RP [ɒ]. Oddly enough, the converse was true for the articulation of *bothered*. Here, the so-called "bother-father merger", i.e. the unrounding and lengthening of RP [ɒ] was present most of the time, albeit it with a slight variation in quantity: Some informants retained the shortness of RP [ɒ], but lost the typical lip-rounding, thus articulating it [ɑ] or even approximated [ʌ]. This intermediateness of pronunciation features is one of the most typical traits of English as used by a considerable number of informants, and will be examined later in this chapter under "Intra-lexemic mixing". The resulting "hotter-bother split" might be structurally motivated, i.e. they might follow a pattern of complementary distribution according to particular phonetic surroundings (viz. the following consonants), or it might be the product of analogy, in which the pronunciation pattern of frequent words such as *father* or *rather* (RP) is transferred to the similar *bother*.

[ɑ:] vs. [æ]

Another apparently inconsistent pattern was associated with the dichotomy of "broad" vs. "flat a", which was tested in the items *dance* and *laugh*. While *dance* was rendered as [dæns] at a rate of roughly 75%, the opposite held true for *laugh*, which was pronounced [lɑ:f] at approximately the same rate. Given the fact that the so-called "bath-trap split" is implemented inconsistently in RP⁷, it would not have been too surprising if the informants had adopted the much more regular GA-pattern. The variable vowel quality might be contingent on certain phonological parameters such as the quality of the following conso-

7 Witness "glass" [glɑ:s] vs. "crass" [cræs], or the variability in cases such as "circumstance", viz. [ˈsɜ:kəm, stɑ:ns], [ˌ, stæns] and [ˌ, stəns].

nant(s), with [ɑ:] only occurring before, say, single consonants such as [f], and [æ] before consonant-clusters such as [ns]. However, for want of further substantiating data, this reasoning is purely speculative in nature. One informant even used vowels that were downright unlocatable, i.e. [dɑ:ns] or [læf].

Other items that showed a particularly strong association with one of the two varieties were *leisure* and *progress* on the one hand (RP), and *status* and *laboratory* (GA) on the other. While *laboratory* was pronounced incorrectly more often than it was pronounced in accordance with GA, the American rendition of *leisure* was in fact unknown to virtually all of the informants. Thus, it appears that Modiano was only partly right in claiming that merely “decidedly British pronunciations have been neutralized” (1996: 207). Instead, it transpired that decidedly American phonetic features such as the velar l or post-nasal weakening are avoided as well, so that the resulting realisations are equidistant from both varieties. Roughly 70% of the items were pronounced in agreement with BrE norms, and 20% with AmE norms. This is quite different from what we have seen in written performance, where neither standard was as predominant. Finally, 10% were too ambiguous to be identified as either of these two. Some of the most notorious examples shall be portrayed in the next paragraph.

Intra-lexemic mixing

Many of the lexemes scrutinised in this survey combine two or more of the variety-sensitive variables characterised in the preceding sections. Thus, one item may vary both in terms of rhoticity and vowel quality (e.g. *bother*), rhoticity and consonant quality (e.g. *hotter*), consonant and vowel quality (e.g. *laugh*), stress-pattern and vowel quality (*laboratory*), or twice in consonant quality (*schedule*). They were selected on the assumption that they might trigger “cross-combinations”, i.e. intra-lexemic mixing of variants from both RP and GA. And indeed, this is precisely what could be observed:

Table 3: “Mid-Atlantic” – Intra-lexemic cross-combination & hybridisation of variables (cf. Wells 2000)

Item	RP	GA	“Mid-Atlantic”
schedule	[ˈʃedju:l]	[ˈskedʒu:l]	[ˈskedju:l]/[ˈskedl]
tomatoes	[təˈmɑ:təʊz]	[təˈmeɪrəʊz]	[təˈmeɪtəʊz]/[təˈmeɪtəʊz]/[təˈmætəʊz]
status	[stetəs]	[stærəs]	[steɪrəs]/[stætəs]/[stætjəs]
after	[ɑ:ftə]	[æftər]	[ɑ:ftər]
hotter	[ˈhɒtə]	[hɑ:rər]	[ˈhɒrər]/[ˈhɒrə]
bothered	[bʌðəd]	[bɑ:ðərd]	[bɑ:ðəd]
laboratory	[ləˈbɒrəˌtri]	[ˈlæbrəˌtɔ:ri]	[ˈlæbrəˌtri]/[ləˈbɔ:rəˌtɔ:ri]
progress	[ˈprəʊgres]	[ˈpra:gres]	[ˈprəʊgres]

Such intra-lexemic Mid-Atlantic mixing appeared to be relatively widespread in this survey, and seems to be the actual “[s]omething in between the two extremes [which] would place the speaker firmly in the folds of Mid-Atlantic” (Modiano 1996: 211), i.e. “the lack of pronunciation that can be exclusively associated with the standards of American and British English” (ibid.).

“Hard words“

In addition, we tested a few items which we referred to as “hard words”⁸ which are very often mispronounced even by advanced users of English. Three examples featured here are *ambiguities*, *examine* and *occur*.

In about 50% of the cases, *examine* was pronounced *[‘eksə,main], which might be explicable as yet another case of re-analysis (cf. *(<enrolement>)) or analogy. By contrast, the difficulty of *ambiguities*, which was mispronounced equally often as *examine*, seems to lie in its polysyllabic structure. Since it belongs to a group of Latin, Greek and French loanwords whose complex stress-patterns cannot be immediately inferred from their spelling, it is not surprising that non-native speakers struggle with its correct pronunciation. Most of the time, it was realised as *[æm’bigəti:z] or *[æm’bigwəti:z] instead of the correct [æmbɪ’gju:əti:z], i.e. both word stress and vowel/consonant quality were changed. A third lexeme which proved challenging was *occur*, which was realised as *[p’kju:ə(r)] by about one third of the informants.

Since these mispronunciations were fairly common (and persistent)⁹, they might be seen as potential candidates for what Modiano (2001: 13) termed *fossilizations*, where “non-standard” structures become acceptable forms of language” through recurrent use among non-native speakers of English. However, Modiano’s use of this particular term derived from the study of second-language acquisition (SLA) to describe these phenomena is not uncontroversial, since it is usually used to refer to an incorrigible “deviation”, “error” or “failure” in SLA (cf. Mukattash 1986). More to the point, it is the outcome of attempted, yet not successful learning (cf. Selinker 1972: 212) or the inability to attain native like language competence (cf. Han 2003), thus carrying a more or less “pejorative connotation” (Nakuma 1998: 249). On top of that, the phenomenon of “fossilisation” is not fully understood and accounted for (Nakuma 1998: 250). Central to the notion of “Interlanguage” (IL) as introduced by Selinker (1972), “[f]ossilizable linguistic phenomena are linguistic items, rules, and subsystems which speakers of a particular NL [native language] will tend to keep in their IL relative to a particular TL [target language], no matter the age of the learner or amount of explanation and instruction he receives in the TL” (Selinker 1972: 215 f.). On the other hand, Modiano’s use of this specific term in this specific

8 By extending the concept from historical linguistics to applied linguistics.

9 Koll-Stobbe encounters them persistently in teaching and exam contexts, see the discussion of fossilisation versus nativisation below.

context is not completely unjustified, as Selinker himself identified one source of fossilisations to be “*strategies of second-language communication*”, although in order to fit in with ELF as opposed to EIL, these would not include “an identifiable approach by the learner to communication with native speakers of the TL” (216 f.), but rather with other non-native speakers. In fact, Selinker even identifies such and other processes of fossilisation as an important driving and shaping force in the development of Outer- and Expanding-Circle varieties of English by pointing out that “not only can entire IL competences be fossilized in individual learners performing in their own interlingual situation, but also in whole groups of individuals, resulting in the emergence of a new dialect [...], where fossilized IL competences may be the normal situation” (ibid.). However, this notion of fossilisation clearly shades into what Modiano describes as “discoursal nativization” (2003: 40). Unfortunately, he does not elaborate on the grounds on which he bases his distinction between fossilisation and nativisation. As a compromise, one could speak of “nativised fossilisations”: “fossilisation” indicating a deviation from exonormative L1-standards, “nativized” indicating their endonormative potential.

Another observation made by Selinker is of particular interest: He points out that the reappearance of fossilisations or “backsliding”, as he calls it, is not random, but rather appears to be triggered by certain psychological states, especially those involving focussed concentration on a demanding task, anxiety or excitement (Selinker 1972: 215). Thus, it can be argued that the rather high number of documented fossilisations could be attributed to the design of this study which required the participants to focus their attention on a relatively taxing set of assignments and to “deliver” under class-room like conditions.

Yet again, none of the informants fully endorsed either standard since all of them, even the most proficient ones, mixed features from both standards, albeit to widely varying degrees. This finding is in keeping with the observation that an “ideal standard of pronunciation is achieved by only a very small percentage of students, which raises the question whether the aspired aim of near-nativeness is indeed a feasible or desirable one” (Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997: 116). However, on the whole, RP-like pronunciation features dominated both intra- and interpersonally. As Figure 3 reveals, 26 informants adhered mainly to RP, two mixed British pronunciation with a marked German accent, ten tended more towards GA, and the remaining two defied unanimous categorisation and were therefore labelled “Mid-Atlantic” speakers.

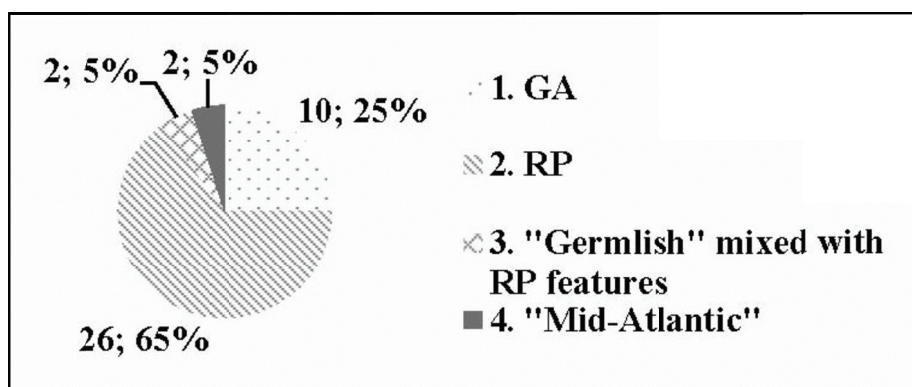


Figure 3: Reading task – informant affiliation

This result tallies with the general “trend” as predicted and described by Modiano and others – the watering down of focussed exonyms, most clearly recognisable in the “Americanisation of Euro-English”.

If compared to the overall affiliations in written performance, one major difference immediately strikes the eye: While preferences were very balanced between the two varieties in the translation task, the scales are tipped heavily in favour of RP in this one. This might indicate that “Americanisation” is more advanced in written than in oral usage, or conversely, that BrE stands its ground more successfully in speech than it does in writing.

3.3 Questionnaire

Variety taught

In the first section of the questionnaire, the informants were asked to name the variety of English they were taught at school.

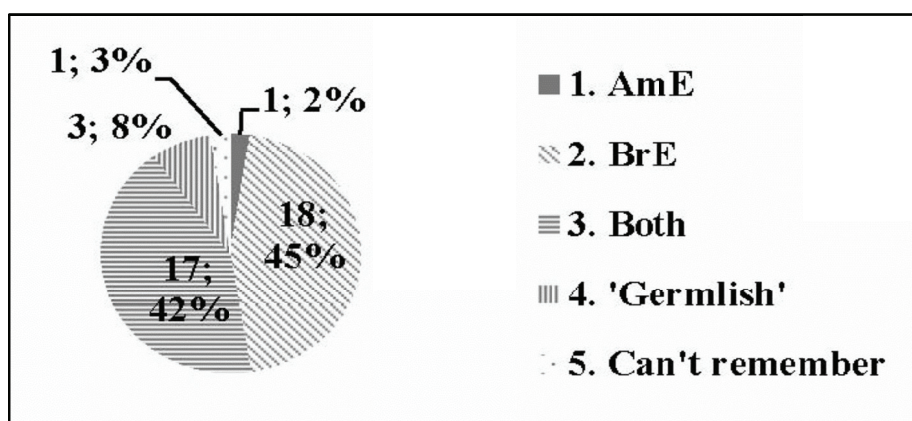


Figure 4: Questionnaire – variety taught at school

They could choose between the three major L1-varieties, “other” or “can’t remember/no idea”, and were allowed to select more than one option. Apparently, the former class-room hegemony of BrE has come under considerable pressure

from AmE, although it needs to be kept in mind that memory can be unreliable. While only one of the informants claimed to have been taught AmE rather than BrE, the number of informants who are positive about having come in touch with both varieties at school is remarkable, and yet again ties in with the overall picture of an ongoing change. Moreover, these results indicate that there are indeed more of those “enlightened educators” around who admit more than one variety into the classroom than has been suggested by Modiano almost 20 years ago (Modiano 1996: 209).

Stays: Anglophone cultures

Afterwards, the informants should state whether they had spent a longer period of time in an English-speaking country and to specify the country as well as the length of their stay(s). The US were by far the most popular destination: One third of the informants had spent most of their time there, while only a few had visited the UK or other countries. However, the majority of the students had not visited any Anglophone country for more than two weeks.

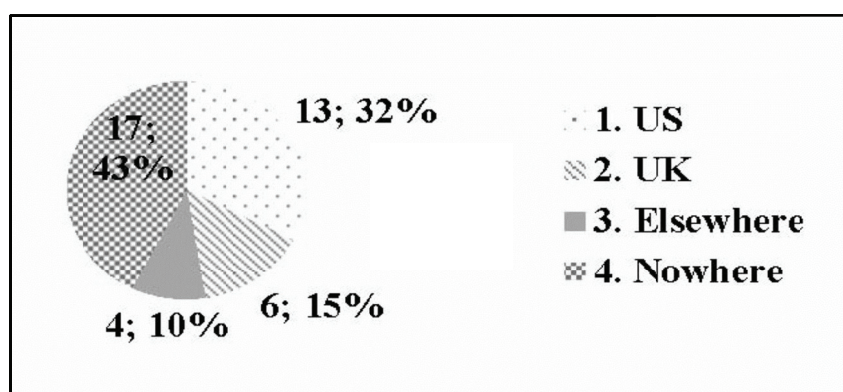


Figure 5: Questionnaire – stays abroad

On average, the periods spent in the US were by far the longest, often ranging from six to thirteen months in one go, mostly in the form of high-school years or study terms. Very few had left the well-trodden paths to the UK or the US and ventured elsewhere – one to Australia, one to South Africa, another to Gambia, and three to Ireland. This overall situation is basically the reverse of what has been noted with regard to school education: While BrE still has the upper hand as the mandatory variety of institutionalised education, AmE prevails in the context of global mobility, a constellation which certainly contributes to the heterogeneous character of the results discussed so far.

Variety preferred

This attitudinal question was deliberately asked after the informants had completed the translation and reading tasks, lest they were “primed” with regard to the purpose of the study, which might in turn have affected their performance.

Similar to the preceding section, the informants could again choose between one of the three major Inner-Circle standard varieties, as well as “none” or “other”. Preferences were remarkably evenly distributed, as BrE took the lead only by a small margin, while the numbers of those who were indifferent towards the standards and those who endorsed AmE were almost equal. None of the informants picked Australian English or any other alternative standard variety of English.

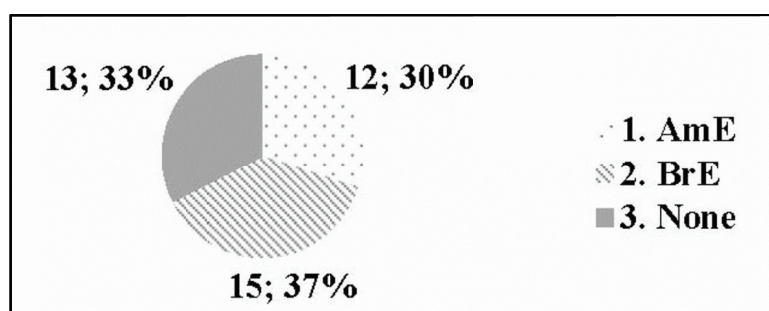


Figure 6: Questionnaire – variety preferred

This outcome provides another clue as to why inter- and intrapersonal variability was so pronounced in both oral and written performance. Modiano’s claim that “many pupils [or in this case, students] show greater interest in AmE” (1996: 208) could not be fully confirmed, as only 30% of all informants stated it as their preferred variety. Still, it is clear that BrE is losing its learner-target monopoly. In the final section of the questionnaire, some potential reasons for this development were looked at more closely.

Attitudes

The last part of the questionnaire, modelled on a study conducted by the Danish linguist Bent Preisler (1999), was meant to explore the potential motivations behind the informants’ preferences.

Table 4: Questionnaire – attitudinal statements (* *Statements added to Preisler’s original list*; ** *Modifications of the original statement “Because this variety is more natural.”*)

I prefer...	British English...	American English...
1. ... because this variety is more cultivated.	45% (n=18) P: 66%	5% (n=2) P: 3%
2. ... because this variety is more neutral.*	17,5% (n=7)	25% (n=10)
3. ... because this variety is more widely used than the other.*	5% (n=2)	52,5% (n=21)
4. ... because this variety represents progress and individualism.	5% (n=2) P: 1%	22,5% (n=9) P: 7%

I prefer...	British English...	American English...
5. ... because this variety represents tradition and values.	52,5% (n=21) P: 36%	0% (n=0) P: 3%
6. ... because the other variety is ugly. ¹⁰	12,5% (n=5) P: 17%	5% (n=2) P: 4%
7. ... because the other variety is stiff and formal.	7,5% (n=3) P: 2%	20% (n=8) P: 52%
8. ... because this variety is easier to understand.**	25% (n=10)	40% (n=16)
9. ... because this variety is easier to pronounce.**	10% (n=4)	42,5% (n=17)
10. ...because this variety is more appropriate in academic contexts*	47,5% (n=19)	0% (n=0)
	total 91 (51,7%)	total 85 (48,3%)

Most remarkably, only four informants found that BrE is easier to pronounce than AmE, while 17 informants stated the opposite. This stands in clear contradiction to what has been observed in the reading task, where most students spoke with an RP-like accent. The most interesting explanation, however, involves the possible impact of accommodation, since it has been observed that “interlocutors often tend to accommodate or ‘move towards’ the linguistic conventions of those with whom they are interacting in order to achieve greater rapport or **solidarity** [emphasis in the original]” (Green & Evans 2006: 132). As the interviews were conducted in English, the interviewer’s accent, in this case modelled on RP, might have impinged on that of the interviewees, so that what in other circumstances might have been closer to GA was eventually transformed into something resembling RP. Thus, it is not completely clear whether what we are dealing with here is in fact Americanised BrE or rather Britishised AmE. This linguistic malleability also ties in with the ELF-and subsequently the MAE-paradigm, in which accommodation plays a central role as a means of facilitating communication (cf. Modiano 2001, Cogo 2009). But, given the fact that the speech recorded was monologic rather than dialogic, it is more likely that the symbolic function to create groupness was of greater importance than the instrumental need to ease communication. The actual impact of interspeaker accommodation as well as its motivations could be tested in a follow-up study in which the interviewees are confronted with a GA-speaking interviewer.

An alternative to interpreting these results as related to attention to speaker (Giles 1991: 1 f.) is to regard them as style shift caused by attention to speech (Labov 1966). After all, despite all efforts to avoid unnecessary artificiality, the

10 The validity of these votes can be called into doubt as statements 6. and 7. are formulated in a way that requires definition *ex negativo*, whereas the remaining statements are all affirmative. Thus, it is likely that some informants might have misread them.

interviews were obviously not carried out under everyday circumstances and were marked by a fairly high degree of formality reminiscent of school-classroom settings which arguably all of the informants must have been familiar with. Given that most of the informants were predominantly exposed to BrE at school, it can be assumed that this variety was more likely to be triggered by this setting than AmE. If this is indeed the case, it can be concluded that the two varieties are no longer exclusively perceived as two distinct varieties according to user, but rather as two varieties according to use (cf. Halliday, McIntosh & Stevens 1970: 75 f.), as their use seems to follow a certain formality gradient¹¹, which in this study seems to be confirmed by the fact that 20% of the informants described BrE as “stiff and formal”. If form follows function, this might in turn indicate that the instrumental function of ELF increasingly overrides its symbolic function as an identity marker to express affinity to one or another norm-providing speech community and the culture it represents.

In addition, it appears that AmE is appreciated more on account of more concrete, pragmatic features, i.e. its linguistic makeup, its international spread and its “neutrality”, while BrE is considered to be more traditional, to have more cultural prestige and to be more appropriate in the academic domain – i.e. for more abstract or idealistic reasons. Figure 7 gives a systematic overview of the attitudes according to this particular dichotomy:

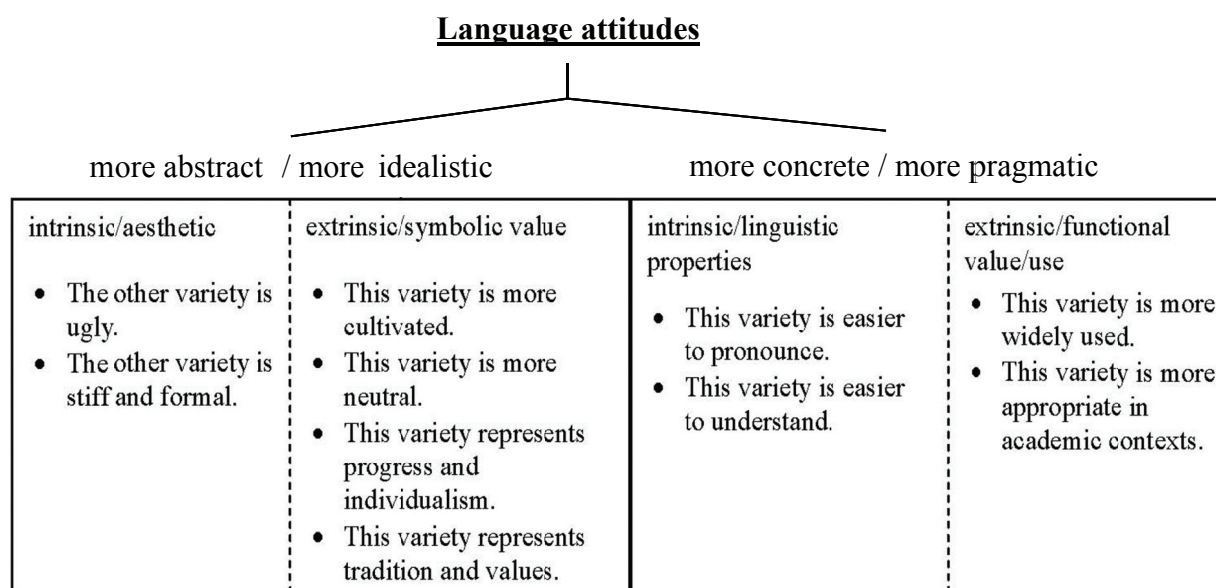


Figure 7: Categorisation of attitudinal statements

11 Although this tendency was only marginally evident in the difference between the ways lexical items were rendered when occurring in sentences and in isolation.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that only half of our informants were absolutely “loyal”, that is they chose statements in favour of one variety only.

Interrelations

Finally, a correlation of all three of the variables discussed in this chapter yields the following overall grouping:

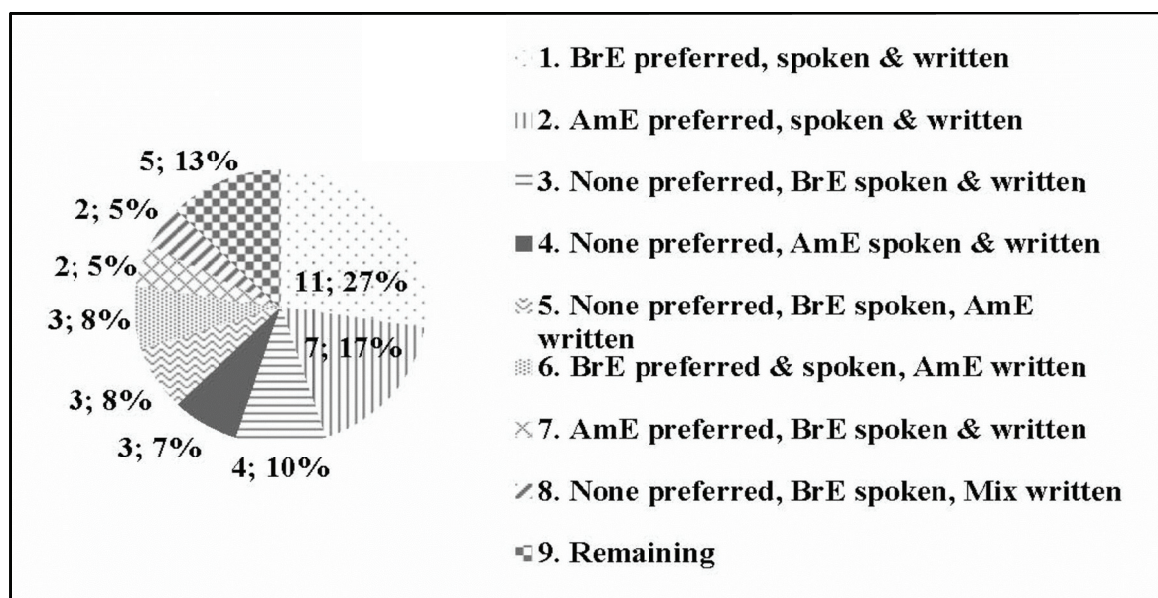


Figure 8: Interrelations – preference & oral & written performance

Less than half of the informants actually used their preferred standard both in reading and writing. A fifth of them were consistent in their performance despite having stated not to prefer any particular standard. The remaining two fifths either claimed to prefer one variety but constantly used the other, or they tended towards one standard in written usage, and to another in spoken, or mixed both varieties in equal parts both in reading and writing. Thus, it can be concluded that there is an attitudinal conflict between perceived linguistic norms and actual language behaviour. The findings also confirm the importance of personal exposure to English in L1 countries. AmE was most commonly preferred and used by those who had spent considerable time in the US, and BrE by those who had stayed in the UK over a longer period. On the other hand, written usage did not seem to depend so strongly on immersion in a native-speaker environment or on standard preference: Americanisms were also very commonly used by those who had not been to the US and those who did not have any favourite standard. It is also noteworthy that most of those students who mispronounced the “hard words” were at the same time those who were most prone to mixing both standards in reading and writing. This seems to indicate that those “fossilisations” are an important feature of MAE as it is spoken in the community of practice of the Institute of English and American Studies at the University of Greifswald.

And thus the “mispronunciations” may also be a symptom of nativisation for a developing array of hybrid ELF systems.

It is beyond the scope of our qualitative study to give a conclusive answer. But we could lay the path for large scale studies. Large scale corpus linguistic studies will be able to find evidence for the status of features that do not follow exonormative patterns: whether they are symptoms for an uncompleted L2 acquisition (and thus symptoms for a fossilisation), or symptoms of an emerging new system (and thus symptoms for a nativisation).

4 Conclusion and outlook

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which the pluricentric nature of English as a world language is reflected in both performance and attitudes of 40 non-native students of English at the Institute of English and American Studies at the University of Greifswald. In particular, we wanted to determine whether the users actually were “torn between the norms” (Bamgboşe 1998) of the two major Inner-Circle varieties BrE and AmE, and, if this was the case, to document the ways in which they negotiate this exonormative duality. The theoretical framework for these investigations was the ELF-paradigm and two of its associated concepts, namely Euro-English and MAE. As it turned out, the findings were in keeping with what has been observed in similar studies: BrE is on the wane as a learner target in Europe while AmE is gaining ground, which in turn results in intra- and extra-linguistic ambiguity. The patterns of variability in usage observed in this study can be summarised as follows:

Table 5: Systematic overview of different types of variability

Patterns of variation			i n t e r - m e d i a l	
			intra-medial: oral	intra-medial: written
i n t e r p e r s o n a l	→ i n t r a p e r s o n a l	i n t r a - l e x e m i c	hybridisation: phonemic → “latent rhoticity”, [ʌ] instead of [ɒ] or [ɑ:]	
			mixing: cross-combination of features from both standards → [ˈɑːftər], [ˈskedjuːt]	mixing: cross-combination of features from both standards → <pavewalk>
			non-native innovations (“errors”, (nativised) fossilisations): [ˈeksəˌmaɪn]	non-native innovations (“errors”, (nativised) fossilisations): <enrolment>, <i>Oldtimer</i>
		i n t e r - l e x e m i c	phonetic mixing: [dæns] and [lɑːf], [ˈraɪnɪŋ] and [ˈstɛrtəs]	
				orthographic mixing: <color> and <centre>, <programme> and <enrollment>
				lexical mixing: <i>public transportation</i> and <i>autumn</i> , <i>boot</i> and <i>sidewalk</i>

On the whole, it was extremely difficult to determine any consistent, let alone predictable performance patterns. Variability is evidently not restricted to any particular level or mode, but rather multidimensional. Normative inconsistency proved to be the rule, complete or at least near-complete consistency the exception. Nevertheless, certain tendencies could be noted. The first one, referred to here as a “medial split”, describes variability according to mode of discourse. While BrE dominated in oral performance, AmE drew level with it in written usage. This ties in with Mair’s (2006: 194) observation that “American influence operates selectively [...] it is pervasive in the lexicon, modest in the grammar, and almost nonexistent in pronunciation”. Several theories to account for this asymmetry were discussed, among them the communication accommodation theory as well as variability according to formality, which in this survey might have encouraged some of the informants to orient more towards RP than they normally would have done. Alternatively, it was suggested that this split might indicate the “subliminal Americanisation” of written usage foreshadowing similar developments in spoken usage, since oral norms are more resistant to change than written ones. Intra-medial mixing, on the other hand, was less regular and genuinely “Mid-Atlantic” in its nature. The informants showed a distinct ten-

dency towards hybridisation and, in some cases, innovations presumably occasioned by analogy or re-analysis. Due to their high frequency and uniformity, some of these innovations, such as the mispronunciation of *examine* or the misspelling of *enrolment* could arguably be symptoms of fossilisation, but also nativisation in the process of the emergence of potential systems of ELF performance *cum* institutionalised varieties. Long term corpus linguistic studies will be able to trace these non-exonormative renditions. Lexical L1-transference, or rather “re-transfer” was also fairly common, as the vast majority of students failed to translate the pseudo-Anglicism *Oldtimer* into native English, but rather re-integrated it by variable degrees.

When the participants were asked to elaborate on their attitudes through evaluative statements, their answers bore further witness to their normative predicament. Half of the informants split their loyalty among the two varieties despite having previously claimed to prefer just one of them. All in all, both standards appeared to be held in equal estimation, albeit for quite different reasons. These judgements reflect the different contexts in which the two varieties were acquired: As “English from above”, BrE dominates in institutionalised education in the region of most of North Germany, i.e. at school, while most of the students came into direct contact with AmE through travelling, and most likely were exposed to it indirectly via the mass media, hence “English from below”. Due to this, a certain functional distribution between the two standards – BrE as the code of academic education, AmE as the general code of cross-cultural communication – seems to have evolved in the perception of most of the participants surveyed in this study. In actual usage, these two exonormative standards are not clearly kept apart. However, this is exactly in keeping with the ELF paradigm. Instead of trying to mimic an idealised native speaker of BrE or AmE, ELF users are more likely to choose those features of the language which enable them to communicate as efficiently as possible.

Whether or not Mid-Atlantic English as analysed here may develop into an endonormative European ELF variety, or an array of varieties through fossilisation as nativisation, remains to be seen. As of now, the only fact that is beyond doubt is that “the relationship to English in Germany is a complex and contradictory one, often marked by strong opinion and conflicting behaviour (Hilgendorf 2007: 140)”. However, the German perspective merely represents a fraction of the sociolinguistic mosaic that is MAE/Euro-English; in order to obtain a complete picture of this emergent variety of European ELF, it is necessary to broaden the scope of its study by carrying out methodologically identical surveys in other “Dual-Circle” countries, and to conduct both large scale empirical studies and small scale ethnographic studies.

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Language Contact Around the Globe

The fifth volume in the series *Language Competence and Language Awareness in Europe* unites a collection of peer-reviewed papers delivered at the *Third Conference on Language Contact in Times of Globalization* (LCTG3) at the University of Greifswald in 2011. The papers are arranged in five thematic sections: Part I studies lexical and grammatical borrowing and pseudo-loans. Part II looks at code-switching and language intertwining in different contexts, while Part III is concerned with the power, political backup and use of different languages in multilingual settings. This is followed by Part

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