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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest issue of VIEWS – this time firmly in applied linguistic hands! We are happy to present current research into two very active research areas; firstly, the study of English as a lingua franca (ELF) and secondly, genre analysis and its relation to educational issues.

Two papers of this issue present some results of the VOICE (Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English) project dealing with the description of ELF and serve to show how diverse the approaches towards studying this phenomenon can be: Angelika Breiteneder investigates ELF from a grammatical point of view, presenting insights into the use (or non-use) of the problematic 'third-person-s' of the present tense in ELF interactions in a European context. She shows how one can explain apparent 'irregularities' in the use of this particular grammatical marker by taking into account both the similarities to general linguistic processes and the differences related to the special situation of using a lingua franca.

The second contribution on ELF is Marie-Luise Pitzl's paper, which presents research into the pragmatics of ELF. More particularly, Marie-Luise Pitzl focuses on instances of non-understanding in ELF business interactions, one of the proto-typical uses of a lingua franca. She uncovers the manifold dimensions on which ELF speakers can face problems of understanding and presents some insights into how speakers solve these problems – an essential precondition for professional interactions in the lingua franca to be successful!

The other two papers deal with genre analysis, and focus on the educational issues arising from it. Julia Hüttner shows how genre analysis is related to important questions regarding the teaching of academic English. She shows how student genres can be considered as distinct genres from their expert counterparts and points towards issues of choosing appropriate teaching models that ought to be addressed following these research results.

Finally, Ute Smit presents a report on a course developed and taught at this department aiming to integrate genre analysis into teacher training. By doing so, the course designers attempt to prepare students for their future profession as ESP teachers and strike a blow for making research in linguistics relevant for and accessible to future teachers.

We hope that you will find the current issue an interesting read that might even spark your comments and VIEWS on the topics discussed.

We wish all our readers a happy and successful 2006!

THE EDITORS

The naturalness of English as a European lingua franca: the case of the 'third person -s'

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1. Introduction

At the beginning of the third millennium, the need for intra-European[1] communication has long exceeded the limits set by language barriers. As a result, English extensively acts as a linking force on the continent, tying Danes to Austrians and Greeks to Poles. Graddol (2001: 47) even claims that "[n]o world region has been more affected by the rise of English than Europe". In terms of the speed of its spread, the number of its speakers as well as the range of functions that English fulfills in the multilingual setting of Europe, its place is indeed unique in history. In present-day Europe, English is employed by a continually rising number of speakers and no longer restricted to an educational elite but the language of bus drivers and intellectuals alike (cf. Preisler 1999: 241). English is assigned an increasing number of uses and functions and has become an indispensable modus operandi throughout Europe in a large number of domains such as politics, science, education, information technology, economics and culture.

English in Europe is also exceptional in that so-called non-native speakers greatly outnumber native speakers (House 2002: 246). Additionally, when Europeans use English they do so in the majority of cases entirely among non-native speakers (Beneke 1991: 54), often in settings far removed from native speakers' linguacultural norms. It follows then that if one speaks of English in Europe, what one is predominately referring to is English as a lingua franca (ELF), i.e. English as "an additionally acquired language system that serves as a means of communication between speakers of different first languages" (Seidlhofer 2001b: 146). In the context of this paper, the term *English as a European lingua franca* (henceforth EELF) will be used since it

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1 In the context of this contribution, the terms *Europe* and *European* denote a geographical classification which is not limited to the member states of the European Union.

highlights the European roots and the active role of the European ELF speakers in appropriating English.

Yet, despite its omnipresence, EELF has so far been ignored as a serious object of linguistic enquiry. This is quite surprising and indeed seems paradoxical considering that EELF is the most common contemporary use of English in Europe. Due to the lack of descriptive research into English as it is used by the majority of its speakers in Europe, the default referent for 'English' in Europe remains English as a native language (ENL) (cf. Seidlhofer 2001a: 44). As a consequence, any departure from standard ENL norms is regularly condemned as 'bad' English (e.g. McArthur 2002: 417). References to EELF usage as "broken, deficient forms of English" (Görlach 2002: 12), "instances of half-English" (ibid.) or "garbled English" (Görlach 2002: 13) which are "'polluting' the standards of native speakers" (ibid.) are commonplace even among informed scholars. EELF is therefore not only ignored but also stigmatised – by linguists and the general public alike.

In response to the stigmatisation of EELF, it is the aim of the present paper to illustrate by way of an exploratory case study of the 'third person *-s*', i.e. the morphological marking of third person singular present tense main verbs, that EELF is an entirely natural language usage "deserving of unprejudiced description" (Firth 1996: 241). By looking at the usage of a single morpheme, i.e. the *-(e)s* suffix, the following analysis of a sample of EELF talk intends to highlight that EELF usage is actually fairly similar to ENL usage and follows general principles of language usage that have been observed in various varieties of English around the globe.

2. The case of the 'third person *-s*'

In comparison to other languages, Standard English has a reduced number of inflected verb forms. But there are striking irregularities, particularly when it comes to the present tense verb morphology. Standard English is peculiar in that only the third person singular among the present tense verb forms (with the exception of the verb *be*) receives morphological marking by adding the suffix *-(e)s*, which is therefore commonly referred to as the 'third person *-s*'[2].

> Standard English is unusual among the languages of the world in having marking in the present-tense only on the third-person singular [...]. (Trudgill 2002: 104)

[2] It is also a peculiarity of Standard English that *-s* is the regular inflection for singular in the verb but for plural in the noun.

The exclusive marking of the third person singular among the present tense verbs therefore represents a "typological oddity" of Standard English (Trudgill 2002: 98) and reveals a highly marked nature[3].

Owing to its marked nature, 'the third person *-s*' is one of the perceptually most salient features of Standard English. In this respect, it is similar to the '*th*-sounds', i.e. the dental fricatives /ð/ and /θ/. Both the 'third person *-s*' as well as the '*th*-sounds' are sometimes regarded as "the most typically English" features (Seidlhofer 2001b: 149).

In fact, the 'third person *-s*' is communicatively redundant and accordingly finds itself among the "afunctional grammatical categories" of Standard English (Trudgill 2002: 92). As argued by Widdowson (1994), it is because of their communicative redundancy that certain grammatical features carry another function, i.e. that of a marker of social identity and prestige.

> [P]recisely because grammar is so often redundant in communicative transactions [...] it takes on another significance, namely that of expressing social identity. (Widdowson 1994: 241)

Accordingly, the 'third person *-s*' assumes considerable importance as one of the "markers of in-group membership" (Seidlhofer 2000: 53) in ENL communities. Quirk et al. (1997: 755) confirm that as far as ENL is concerned "[t]he most important type of concord [...] is concord of 3rd person number between subject and verb".

Given the idiosyncratic nature of the 'third person *-s*' and the social importance this single morpheme seems to carry for ENL communities, it appears most intriguing to find out how EELF speakers actually deal with this irregular and indeed unnatural marking system of Standard English. It is for this reason – as well as the limitations of space which make it difficult to focus on more than one feature in the context of this contribution – that the following case study of EELF talk will fix upon the 'third person *-s*'.

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3 The analytic principle of markedness refers to a distinction of "the presence versus the absence of a particular linguistic feature" (Crystal 2003: 282) and is thus based on "a recognition of various polarities within the different systems of language, from the lexicon to its sound-system" (Myers-Scotton 1993: 80). The unmarked form of an opposition is identified as the simpler and also the more frequent one. The marked form, on the other hand, is defined with respect to the unmarked form and "distinguished as conveying more specific information" (Myers-Scotton 1993: 81). Thus, the marked form may be thought of as the "unmarked member plus additional specifications" (ibid., original emphasis).

3. A mini-corpus of English as a European lingua franca

The present analysis is based on a small-scale EELF corpus of about 50,000 words, equalling 3.75 hours of recorded conversation. This EELF corpus comprises four working group discussions between representatives of the EU government and national agencies of higher education. The participants are members of two European associations that focus their policies on the development and implementation of the Bologna process, a process envisaging the creation of a cohesive European higher education area by 2010. The participants of the meetings represent rather close "discourse communities"[4] (Swales 1990: 24) whose members meet regularly to discuss narrowly specialised subject matters. The interactions compiled in the corpus took place in Copenhagen and Vienna in "influential frameworks" (House 1999: 74) of top-level higher education policy-making.

The conversations recorded are naturally occurring, as opposed to elicited or arranged, insofar as it is "talk that would have happened anyway, whether or not a researcher was around to record it" (Cameron 2001: 20). The content of the interactions is highly specialised and their predominant nature transactional[5]. A strong focus on goals is realised as a prominent feature of each of the meetings. The participants follow a strict agenda made up of a list of questions and issues requiring consideration. It is highly interactive, non-scripted talk-in-action that is recorded in my corpus since "it is in the immediacy of interaction and the co-construction of spoken discourse that variation from the familiar standard norms becomes most apparent" (Seidlhofer 2004: 223).

The speakers recorded in my EELF corpus are native speakers of 21 European languages/varieties who were socialised in one of the European countries. The first languages (L1) represented are Austrian German, British

4 Cf. Swales' (1990: 23-24) distinction between a "discourse community" and the sociolinguistic concept of a "speech community". Whereas the "communicative needs of the group, such as socialization and group solidarity" tend to prevail in the speech community, in the discourse community "the communicative needs of the goals tend to predominate in the development and maintenance of its discoursal characteristics" (Swales 1990: 24).

5 Cf. Brown & Yule's (1983) differentiation between interactional and transactional dimensions of communication. The scholars define the transactional function as purely referential and "message oriented", for it is "that function which language serves in the expression of 'content' [...] in the efficient transference of information" (Brown & Yule 1983: 1-2). The interactional function, on the other hand, is defined as "that function involved in expressing social relations and personal attitudes" (op.cit.: 1). This function is therefore associated with the socio-communicative relations of speech.

English, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Estonian, Finnish, Flemish, French, German German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish. The following tables offer an overview of the speakers participating in each of the four data sets (DS) as well as their respective mother tongue and gender.

DS 1	L1, gender
S1	Danish, m
S2	Finnish, m
S3	Finnish, f
S4	Hungarian, m
S5	Spanish, f
S6	Danish, f
S7	Austria German, f

DS 2	L1, gender
S1	Danish, m
S2	Austrian German, f
S3	Danish, f
S4	British English, m
S5	Czech, m
S6	Flemish, m
S7	Flemish, m
S8	Slovenian, f
S9	Norwegian, m
S10	Latvian, m
S11	Finnish, m

DS 3	L1, gender
S1	Norwegian, f
S2	Slovak, m
S3	French, f
S4	Italian, f
S5	Austrian German, f
S6	Latvian, m
S7	Portuguese, m
S8	Czech, f
S9	Slovenian, m
S10	Greek, f
S11	Spanish, f
S12	Austrian German, f
S13	Austrian German, f
S14	Finnish, m
S15	French, f

DS 4	L1, gender
S1	Swedish, m
S2	Austrian German, f
S3	Austrian German, m
S4	Portuguese, f
S5	Austrian German, m
S6	French, f
S7	Polish, m
S8	Estonian, f
S9	Croatian, m
S10	French, m
S11	Danish , m
S12	German, m
S13	French, f
S14	Austrian German, m

The participants, then, comprise a group of speakers from diverse linguacultural backgrounds who make use of EELF as an indispensable tool in order to negotiate their tasks. All speakers involved in the recordings have received formal instruction in English in an educational setting. They have thus been schooled in conforming to Standard English norms over several years. Owing to the cross-national and cross-linguistic nature of their jobs, they use English habitually and are highly experienced, competent and fluent speakers of EELF.

4. An exploratory case study of the 'third person *-s*'

It should be explicitly stated at the outset of the following case study of EELF talk that the observations and subsequent interpretations are restricted to my particular data sets. Given the narrow range of sampling, extrapolations are not legitimate, as is rendered explicit in the following quotation:

> There is no consistency in form that goes beyond the participant level, i.e., each combination of interactants seems to negotiate and govern their own variety of lingua franca use in terms of proficiency level, use of code-mixing, degree of pidginization, etc. (Gramkow Anderson 1993: 108 quoted in House 2003: 557)

Additionally, it should be emphasised at this point that the discussion of findings presented in the following is meant to be exploratory. Various explanations will be suggested for the usage of the 'third person *-s*' as observed in my EELF data. Given the fact that no research has yet systematically looked at the grammar of EELF talk, it is necessary to draw on descriptive and interpretative categories and frameworks of related fields of study in my attempt to account for the EELF speakers' linguistic behaviour. Yet, none of the explanatory approaches tried can account for the usage of the 'third person *-s*' on its own. Therefore, this paper does not claim to come up with general findings nor with any kind of hierarchy of the different parameters proposed.

4.1. Analysis[6]

In my EELF corpus, 141 instances of main verbs (other than the primary verb *be*)[7] used in the present tense indicative and combining with third person singular subjects can be identified. In other words, my corpus comprises 141 'slots' which could be filled with morphologically inflected third person singular verbs. Out of these 141 instances, 29 verb tokens, i.e. 20.57% of all third person singular main verbs used in the present tense indicative, show

6 The following analysis is based on my M.A. thesis (Breiteneder 2005: 70-116). This thesis was written at the Department of English at the University of Vienna under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Barbara Seidlhofer.

7 The primary verb *be* in its function as a main verb is excluded from the following discussions for reasons of limited space and the fact that it forms a special case in Standard English as an irregular verb which is inflected on all persons in the present tense (*am, is, are*).

zero marking (henceforth 3sgØ)[8]. Whereas five of these verb tokens combine with a personal pronoun, either singular masculine *he* or singular non-personal *it*, all the others combine with a singular noun. In the following extract, for example, S7 uses 3sgØ for the verb *function*:

Extract 1 (DS3)[9]:

> S7: er i i i suppose that e:r (.) e:rm both (.) possibilities (.) er are e:rm (1) e:r possible (.) e:r for good reasons <4> not </4> for bad reas<5>ons. </5> <6> u:h </6> i suppose it's possible <7> that </7> e:r the thing function in both er (.) possibilities.

Extract 2 offers another example of 3sgØ in my data:

Extract 2 (DS3):

> S8: that means (.) if he (.) e:rm m- make disser- dissertation work in er french
>
> S1: mm
>
> S8: he get the <LNde> diplom {diploma} </LNde> of charles university (.) and french university can give him also the <LNde> diplom {diploma} </LNde>

As for the spread of 3sgØ across speakers, one finds that 14 different EELF speakers of my corpus use 3sgØ. Considering the spread of 3sgØ across speakers with different first languages, it can be noted that interlocutors with nine different linguacultural backgrounds use 3sgØ. It is interesting to note, however, that no single speaker lacks the 'third person *-s*' completely, i.e. all 14 EELF speakers make use of 3sgØ at some points but stick to 3sg-*s* at others.

It is also worthy of note that my data comprise 15 instances of what could be called 'superfluous' *-s* marking. Ten individual EELF speakers with nine distinct linguacultural backgrounds morphologically mark verbs by adding an *-s* suffix where it would not be grammatical according to Standard English. Nevertheless, with the exception of two individuals, all EELF users recorded in my corpus either stick to the intermittent absence of the 'third person *-s*' marker or its overgeneralisation, but they tend not to do both.

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8 For the sake of brevity, the description *third person singular present tense -s marking* will be abbreviated as *3sg-s* in the following, while *third person singular present tense zero marking* will be abbreviated as *3sgØ*.

9 All extracts quoted are specified in the heading for the data set (DS) they are taken from. Within each data set, speakers are numbered consecutively depending on their first contribution to the interaction. All extracts quoted conform to the VOICE Transcription Conventions [2.0], available on http://www.univie.ac.at/voice.

As regards the overgeneralisation of the 'third person *-s*', my data reveal 12 instances in which present tense main verbs receive morphological marking though they combine with overtly marked plural or coordinated subjects. Extracts 3 and 4 illustrate two of these 12 occurrences:

Extract 3 (DS1):

> S4: e:r many of the questions relates to the operation of the system itself.

Extract 4 (DS1):

> S1: it's e:r and that's very awkward because the russians wishes to make a conference on the (.) proceedings of the (.) berlin (1) process.

In addition, two instances of morphologically inflected verbs can be identified after the modal auxiliaries *can* and *have to*. Another instance of the 'superfluous' use of the 'third person *-s*' is illustrated in extract 5, in which S10 applies the third person singular present tense inflection to a third person singular past tense verb:

Extract 5 (DS2):

> S10: we worked together to have (.) a relatively similar standards and procedures and we knew very well <fast> what we </fast> that was a committee that mets (.) every couple of months.
>
> S6: yah

Extract 5 probably illustrates the most striking example of 'superfluous' *-s* marking. Yet, resembling the other 14 occurrences of extra *-s* marking, the overprovision of the *-s* marker does not hamper mutual intelligibility between the EELF speakers. Similarly, all instances of 3sgØ found in my corpus illustrate that 3sg-*s* is not essential for mutual intelligibility in the EELF interactions. Repeated backchannels (e.g. *mm, mhm, yeah*) and straightforward answers from other participants confirm that the 'third person *-s*' is communicatively redundant in the EELF talk recorded.

4.2. Discussion of findings

When it comes to the inflectional marking of present tense main verbs in EELF talk, the observations outlined in the preceding section illustrate clearly that EELF usage in fact very largely corresponds to Standard English norms. In the vast majority of cases, the EELF users do not divert from the

prescriptive grammar[10] rule saying that "[a] singular subject requires a singular verb" (Quirk et al. 1997: 755). The fact that the EELF speakers have gone through years of formal instruction in English, where they have been taught to conform to Standard English norms, obviously is a factor in their performance. Nevertheless, even though the EELF speakers recorded apparently know the 'third person *-s*' rule and conform to it in almost 80% of the cases, they still disregard it in some instances. These deviations from the standard cannot, however, be condemned by simply categorising the EELF speakers as "permanent learners" (Medgyes 1994: 83) who are inherently limited in their ability to acquire a 'complete' grammar of the language (cf. Selinker 1992). Instead, they call for a more comprehensive and satisfactory explanation. This also includes the question why EELF speakers drop the 'third person *-s*' or overuse the *-s* marker in some instances while they conform to the Standard English norm in others. The present section thus sets out to discuss several linguistic and extra-linguistic circumstances that might be favourable for one or the other deviation from Standard English rules as observed in my EELF corpus.

4.2.1. The naturalness of a phenomenon

Before starting the discussion about deviations and differences, however, the observations of the preceding section clearly call for a consideration of similarities between my EELF data and other varieties of English. In fact, the departures from Standard English rules as observed in my data are by no means peculiar to EELF talk. Both leaving out the *-s* suffix and applying it to all persons are regular features of various varieties of English in all three of Kachru's (1992) circles[11].

Dialectologists confirm, for example, that 3sgØ is a regular feature of East Anglian dialects:

> In the East Anglian area, for example, including in Modern Dialects, present-tense verbs are entirely regular and have no *-s* ending at all. (Trudgill 1999b: 101)

10 Quirk et al. (1997: 14) define prescriptive grammar as "a set of regulations that are based on what is evaluated as correct or incorrect in the standard varieties".

11 Kachru (1992: 356) divides the English-using countries into three circles which he terms the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. Roughly speaking, these terms refer to contexts where English is either used as a first and official language (Inner Circle), as an additional language for intranational purposes (Outer Circle) or as a foreign language for international use (Expanding Circle).

There are also several dialects of the British Isles, particularly many western and northern dialects, which are based on a system in which the present tense *-s* occurs with all persons, not only with the third person singular of the present tense. It has also been pointed out that Black English Vernacular, for example, uses the suffixless form for present tense verbs throughout (cf. Labov 1977).

The loss of morphological marking of the third person singular present tense verbs also tends to be a regular feature of New Englishes[12], which are found in Kachru's Outer Circle. Based on a review of studies available then, Platt, Weber and Ho (1984) offer the first summary of linguistic tendencies "common to some or most of the New Englishes" (Platt, Weber & Ho 1984: 64-65). Among these one finds "a tendency not to mark the verb for third person singular in its present-tense form" (op.cit.: 85).

Consequently, given that 3sgØ and the overgeneralisation of the 'third person *-s*' cut across European linguistic boundaries and moreover extend over all three of Kachru's circles, EELF usage – considering both its adherence as well as its deviations from Standard English norms – cannot be perceived as an 'odd' or unnatural phenomenon. On the contrary, the fact that both ways of departing from the prescriptive norms are reflected in various Englishes around the globe suggests that the grammatical manifestations of EELF usage actually resemble not only a common but also a natural language usage.

4.2.2. The regularisation of a grammatical idiosyncrasy

The fact that speakers of various varieties of English in all three of Kachru's circles either overgeneralise the 'third person *-s*' or use 3sgØ instead leads to the question whether these linguistic manifestations might actually also be due to the peculiarity of the 'third person *-s*' as such. Indeed, as already pointed out, the exclusive morphological marking of the third person singular among the present tense verbs forms one of the "[g]rammatical idiosyncrasies of Standard English" (Trudgill 1999a: 125). Both the dropping of 3sg-*s* as well as the use of the *-s* affix for all persons therefore represent a regularisation of the non-natural system of Standard English and are "chief ways in which simplification is accomplished" (Moag 1982: 44). Accordingly, the intermittent deviations from Standard English norms as

12 The term *New Englishes* commonly refers to emerging and increasingly autonomous varieties of English that have principally emerged in non-Western, post-colonial settings such as India, the Philippines, Singapore, Nigeria or Ghana (McArthur 1992: 688).

observed in my EELF data could, at least partly, be ascribed to the idiosyncratic nature of this one particular feature of the present tense verb morphology of Standard English. As Trudgill (2002: 95) puts it, "such an unusual system must be more susceptible to simplification than most".

In grammatical terms, the conflation of all present tense verbs is called *analogy*, i.e. "a process of regularisation which affects the exceptional forms of the grammar of a language" (Hopper & Traugott 1994: 32). In my EELF corpus, the speakers omit the third person singular inflection by analogy with the regular pattern of the other present tense verbs. Consequently, 3sgØ is more to be characterised as neglect of sub-rules than a change of grammar rules as such. In short, the EELF talk recorded illustrates analogical processes leading to a maximisation of economy or simplicity as well as minimal differentiation.

4.2.3. A focus on content and the exploitation of redundancy

The 'third person *-s*' has been observed to be communicatively redundant. It is one of the "afunctional grammatical categories" (Trudgill 2002: 92) which takes on the function of a social marker in ENL communities instead (cf. section 2). In the EELF interactions recorded, however, these markers of social prestige are secondary. To let the EELF users speak for themselves, "what really matters is that we are sort of basically understood" (S1, DS1). During their meetings, the EELF speakers focus on their joint communicative enterprises and use EELF as a transactional language for the successful exchange of information. They direct their attention not to the language, but rather to the content of their discussions. It is under these conditions, i.e. speakers do not consciously monitor and control their speech patterns but focus on what they are saying, that speakers tend to depart from standard norms. This is consistent with Labov's (1970) findings on unmonitored speech patterns. EELF usage as recorded in my corpus could thus be compared to the vernacular of ENL speakers as described by the scholar.

In the piece of EELF communication quoted in the extract below, the pressure of communicating a message might actually trigger the use of 'superfluous' *-s* marking:

Extract 6 (DS2):

> S5: (1) e:r with the new autonomy (.) came the necessity to evaluate all: (.) insti<2>tutions </2> and study programmes (.)
>
> SX: <2> mhm </2>
>
> S5: and er in e:r our case or hungary and and e:rm probably it's a <un> xxxxx </un> approach (.) we have accreditation of study programmes and evaluation of institutions. and (.) and accreditation of study programme is based on (.) EVALUATION of study programmes. so in fact e:r the accreditation commissions usually (.) evaluates study programmes and institutions (.) and (.) provide advice to ministries of (.) education which (.) issues accreditation decisions er this certificate. so e:rm in fact accreditation commission (.) DOESN'T issue any (.) accreditation certificate to institutions
>
> SX: mhm

In extract 6, S5 switches between morphologically marking and not marking verbs which refer to plural subjects in a single utterance. While S5 uses 'superfluous' *-s* marking with *evaluates* and *issues*, he adheres to the Standard English norm in the case of *provide*. At the time when the utterances quoted occur, S5 has already been talking for a while, i.e. he might be getting tired. S5 also makes a considerable effort to make himself understood, which implies a focus on the rather intricate content instead of the language form. Both conditions are definitely favourable for doing away with a standard which demands the use of a communicatively redundant feature. Both conditions are also favourable for performance mistakes, which are

> explicable from the psycholinguistic constraints of a limited short-term memory and the pressure of online construction of linguistic output. (Biber et al. 1999: 189)

The departures from Standard English norms as observed in my EELF data might therefore partly be triggered off by the communicative redundancy of the 'third person *-s*'. Under the circumstances of the absence of an identificatory value of this *-s* marker, a greater focus on the message rather than the language form as well as the pressure of the online construction, the EELF speakers recorded seem to exploit the built-in redundancy of Standard English in their usage of the 'third person *-s*'.

The interrelation of form and content of a message is, of course, not in any way specific to EELF talk. Todd (1990), for example, argues that speakers of English-based pidgins and creoles also simplify by means of redundancy reduction when communication of the message is more critical than the quality of the language used. Redundancy reduction is also a common feature of informal speech of proficient ENL speakers. As Carter and McCarthy (1997) illustrate, ellipses and clipping are common characteristics of "real,

authentic, and natural" English (Carter 1998: 43), which is their way of describing ENL. Accordingly, speakers from different first languages, be they adults learning an additional language, using EELF or employing ellipses and clipping in ENL speech[13], simplify English in very similar ways. Consequently, EELF usage as observed in my data can, once again, only be seen as a completely natural language usage.

4.2.4. Conflicting principles: grammatical concord, notional concord and the principle of proximity

The principle of grammatical concord refers to the rule that the verb matches its subject in number. Quirk et al. (1997: 766) point out that it is this principle which tends to be followed in formal language usage of ENL speakers and which "has the sanction of teaching and editorial tradition". Grammatical manifestations of, particularly informal, ENL speech, however, are determined by two other principles as well, namely notional concord and the principle of proximity. Notional concord means that "[t]he choice of verb form may be determined by the meaning rather than the form of the subject" (Biber et al. 1999: 187) whereas the principle of proximity is defined as "the tendency for the verb to agree with a noun which is closer to the verb [...] but which is not the head of the subject phrase" (Biber et al. 1999: 189). "The government *have* broken all *their* promises" (Quirk et al. 1997: 757, original emphasis) illustrates the principle of notional concord. The collective noun *government* is treated as notionally plural in the example. "*No one* except his own supporters *agree* with him" (ibid., original emphasis) is offered as an example of the principle of proximity. The head of the noun phrase that functions as the subject of the utterance is grammatically singular, yet the verb is chosen in agreement with the closely preceding noun phrase *his own supporters*. In contrast to the principle of grammatical concord, that of notional concord is most natural to colloquial ENL speech (Quirk et al. 1997: 766). The principle of proximity, on the other hand, has only "a minor decisive role in cases where the other two [principles] provide no guidance" (ibid.) or "an auxiliary role in supporting notional concord in colloquial speech" (Quirk et al. 1997: 767). Generally, however, it is "felt to lack validity in its own" (ibid.) in ENL speech.

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13 In fact, children learning their L1 could also be listed in this context. See Bittner (2003) for the phenomenon of overgeneralisation in first language acquisition.

Both notional concord as well as the principle of proximity can also be observed to be at work in my EELF data. This is illustrated in the following four extracts.

Extract 7 (DS4):

> S4: and on the aspect of funding (in) even at the national level you could have er this this e:rm additional e:rm sort of of e:rm compet- competitive factor because for example in austria the <spel> e u </spel> have a lot of e:r possibilities of financing e:rm the students in their masters' e:rm er phase

Extract 8 (DS3):

> S4: so (.) i think tha- i don- i don- really i don't know if it it will be possible to do so (.) but i think if er (.) the community ask (.) to us to push this kind (.) of er initiatives i think that they have er also (.) to be able (.) no? to be FLEXIBLE (.) <6> in </6> regulation and rules.

Extracts 7 and 8 exemplify the application of the principle of notional concord in my EELF data. In both extracts it is S4 of the respective data sets who chooses the verb form in agreement with the subject according to number rather than the actual presence of the grammatical marker for the subject. The EELF speakers obviously focus on the different representatives or members of *the EU* and *the community* and consequently treat the subjects as notionally plural.

Extracts 9 and 10 serve as illustrations of the principle of proximity as it is found in my EELF data:

Extract 9 (DS3):

> S11: this er joint degrees or master whatever are not only for US (.) but for students (.) and (.) of course the students who apply for a master (.) needs to know (.) this master is useful in some sense for his job (.) <3> or whatever. </3>

The verb *needs* actually refers to the plural head noun *the students*. Hence, when sticking to the principle of grammatical concord one finds an instance of superfluous 'third person *-s*' in extract 9. The overprovision of the *-s* marker is, however, easily explicable by the principle of proximity. The verb form is seemingly chosen in agreement with the immediately preceding noun *a master*.

Extract 10 exemplifies another instance of the proximity effect:

Extract 10 (DS2):

> S1: surprise the european universities association they go all for (.) institution reviews (.) and the students go all for programme reviews. so the <un> x </un> cooperation between students and universities
>
> SX-m: mhm
>
> S1: unfortunately fail on this very important (issue).

The subject of the utterance highlighted in extract 10 is grammatically singular since the head noun (*cooperation*) is singular. S1, however, seems to choose the verb form (*fail*) in agreement with the closely preceding noun phrase *students and universities*, which is not the head of the subject phrase. The effect of proximity might therefore well account for 3sgØ in this case. In addition, the unknown speaker's backchannel *mhm* might strengthen the proximity effect as it expands the distance between the head of the subject phrase and the verb phrase. This interpretation is backed by Quirk et al.'s (1997: 757) observation of ENL speech:

> Conflict between grammatical concord and attraction through proximity tends to increase with the distance between the noun phrase head of the subject and the verb, for example when the postmodifier is lengthy or when an adverbial or a parenthesis intervenes between the subject and the verb.

Quirk et al. (1997: 757) highlight that difficulties over concord in ENL speech may stem from occasional conflict between the principle of grammatical concord and the other two principles, i.e. notional concord and the principle of proximity. The scholars specify three areas where concord repeatedly causes problems in ENL speech, namely "where the subject contains (a) a collective noun head; (b) coordination; and (c) an indefinite expression" (ibid.). It is most intriguing to find out that it is particularly in these areas that deviations from Standard English norms can be found in my EELF data as well.

4.2.4.1. Collective noun heads in EELF

When it comes to collective noun heads, it is the principle of notional concord which tends to conflict with the principle of grammatical concord. The conflict between these competing principles arises from the fact that grammatically singular collective nouns may be notionally plural. In British English, the verb combined with a singular collective noun may be either singular or plural depending on whether "the group is considered as a single undivided body, or as a collection of individuals" (Quirk et al. 1997: 758). American English, on the hand, "generally treats singular collective nouns as

singular" (ibid.). Extracts 7 and 8 already provided examples of my data illustrating that the EELF users tend to combine singular collective nouns with plural verbs in accordance with the principle of notional concord rather than the principle of grammatical concord.

Extract 11 illustrates another instance where notional concord might prompt the EELF speaker to use 3sgØ and contradict grammatical concord:

Extract 11 (DS4):

S1: but universities make suggestions (.) ministry decide?

S9: yes

What is particularly interesting about extract 11 is that *ministry*, when denoting a government department as it does in extract 11, is not classified as a collective noun in ENL (Sinclair 2001: 983)[14]. The EELF speaker thus seems to draw an analogy between *ministry* and the conceptually related nouns *government* and *parliament*, which are collective nouns in ENL (Biber et al. 1999: 188, 247), and to perceive *ministry* as a collective noun as well. In accordance with the principle of notional concord, S1 focuses on the meaning rather than the form of the noun and uses 3sgØ for the verb (*decide*), thereby stressing the individual members of the ministry rather than its collectivity.

Consequently, even though a singular verb form would be 'safer' in obedience to grammatical concord, the EELF speakers recorded repeatedly chose to use plural verbs in accordance with the principle of notional concord. For ENL speech, Quirk et al. (1997: 758) say in summary that

> [o]n the whole, the plural is more popular in speech, whereas in the more inhibited medium of writing the singular is probably preferred.

EELF speech as observed in my data again turns out not to be 'odd' but in fact very similar to spoken ENL.

4.2.4.2. Coordinated subjects in EELF

Another area of ambivalence for subject-verb concord is that of coordinated subjects, which grammatically count as plural and are obviously a tricky matter for ENL speakers, presumably also in written discourse (cf. Quirk et al. 1997: 757). Similarly, coordinated subjects involve departures from

14 Interestingly, *ministry* in the sense of members of the clergy, however, is a singular collective noun (Sinclair 2001: 983).

Standard English rules in my EELF data. It seems that it is particularly the effect of proximity that prompts these deviations. Consider extract 12 first:

Extract 12 (DS3):

> S15: because (.) the institutions and the network (.) thinks that it's important.

S15 employs 3sg-*s* for *thinks* in spite of the fact that according to Standard English "[s]ubjects realized by noun phrases coordinated by *and* take plural concord" (Biber et al. 1999: 182). The use of the *-s* marker can be explained by the principle of proximity, however. The concord of the verb might thus be determined by the immediately preceding singular noun *the network*, which forms part of the coordinated subject phrase.

In extract 13, the subject in question is coordinated by *or*. For Standard English, the rule is that "[w]here one of the noun phrases coordinated by *or* is plural, plural concord is the rule" (Biber et al. 1999: 183). Nevertheless, S12 combines the subject phrase *the rectors or a task force* with *decides*, which is marked for third person singular:

Extract 13 (DS1):

> S12: top-down (.) would be: that the rectors (.) NOT (.) us (.) the rectors <1> or </1> a (.) task force (1) <2> decides </2>

It looks as if the EELF speaker in extract 13 takes the concord in accordance with the proximity effect since the noun immediately preceding the verb is the singular noun *a task force*. The fact that *a task force* forms part of a coordinated subject phrase seems to be ignored by S12. The following quote, referring to subjects coordinated by *or* in ENL speech, clearly highlights that EELF usage, as illustrated in extract 13, finds a clear parallel in spoken ENL:

> A dilemma arises when one member is singular and the other plural [...]. Notionally, *or* is disjunctive, so that each member is separately related to the verb rather than the two members being considered one unit, as when the coordinator is additive *and*. Since the dilemma is not clearly resolvable by the principles of grammatical concord or notional concord, resource is generally had to the principle of proximity: whichever phrase comes later determines the number of the verb [...]. (Quirk et al. 1997: 762)

Once again the naturalness and comparability of EELF talk becomes evident.

4.2.4.3. Indefinite expressions in EELF

Indefinite expressions form the third area highlighted by Quirk et al. (1997: 757) to cause problems for subject-verb concord in ENL. In ENL speech, it is

the proximity principle, the principle least acknowledged, that often prompts disobedience to grammatical concord when it comes to indefinite expressions.

> The proximity principle may lead to plural concord even with indefinites such as *each, every, everybody, anybody* and *nobody* (or indefinite phrases such as *every one, any one*), which are otherwise ambivalently singular. (Quirk et al. 1997: 764)

For ENL Quirk et al. (1997: 764) stress, however, that although sentences like "Nobody, not even the teachers, were listening" (ibid.) might well be uttered in informal speech, "most people would probably regard them as ungrammatical, because they flatly contradict grammatical concord" (ibid).

In accordance with instances from casual ENL speech, my data reveal several instances where the indefinite pronouns *someone, everybody, anybody* and *anyone* are used with morphologically unmarked verbs. Yet, I would suggest that it is actually the principle of notional concord (sometimes combined with the proximity principle) that could primarily be drawn on as an explanation for the EELF speakers' linguistic behaviour. Consider extract 14:

Extract 14 (DS4):

> S4: disinterest for example for astrophysics (.) and er space er sciences (.) on the concrete er case. okay. everybody initially talk about it. but (.) since this is a very er expensive field (.) er austria is not er belonging to iso

Since S4 uses 3sgØ for the verb *talk* it could be reasoned that the choice of the verb form may be prompted by the meaning of the subject *everybody* rather than its form since the indefinite pronoun *everybody* is actually plural in meaning and denotes several persons.

In fact, Standard English exhibits a rather difficult system when it comes to the concord with indefinite pronouns:

> The definite pronouns *anybody/anyone, everybody/everyone, nobody/no one,* and *somebody/someone* combine with singular verb forms, even though co-referent pronouns and determiners may be plural forms [...]. (Biber et al. 1999: 184)

An example Biber et al. (1999: 184) provide of this rather difficult system of Standard English is "Everybody**'s** doing what **they** think **they**'re supposed to do" (original emphasis). The referent pronouns *they* are plural while the verb combining with *everybody* is singular (*is*). Based on the idea of notional concord, the EELF speakers recorded seem to simplify this system of Standard English.

On the evidence provided in the last three sections it would seem clear that EELF is a completely natural language usage which finds clear parallels in, particularly informal, spoken ENL. Several of the deviations from Standard

English norms found in my data can be explained by the principles of notional concord and proximity. According to Quirk et al. (1997: 757), in ENL, proximity concord occurs mainly in spontaneous speech and "[w]hen the proximity principle is followed in defiance of the other principles, the result is likely to be condemned as an error" (ibid.). In my EELF interactions, however, it seems that the principle of proximity stands on an equal footing with the principle of notional concord. This is supposedly because the EELF speakers are less inclined to pay attention to the socially sanctioned rules of prescriptive grammar and markers of social prestige. EELF speakers are therefore freer to apply natural principles of English language usage – including the principle of proximity.

4.2.5. Consonant cluster simplification

Referring to New Englishes, Platt, Weber and Ho (1984) offer an additional factor which could account for some instances of 3sgØ in my EELF data. "It could also be due to differences in pronunciation" Platt, Weber and Ho (1984: 67) mention rather vaguely. Without specifying exactly what they mean they do explain that "consonant groups at the end of a word are often reduced in the New Englishes" (ibid.). Drawing a parallel to New Englishes, phonological reduction could also be seen as an explanation for five instances of 3sgØ in my EELF corpus. The verbs not marked for third person singular in their present tense forms are *function*, two times *want*, *last* as well as *ask*. As consonant clusters are generally more difficult to pronounce, it could indeed be that their avoidance or simplification – a typical tendency in rapid speech – explains the absence of the 'third person -*s*' in five cases of my data.

4.2.6. The extra-linguistic environment

Above and beyond the explanations offered for the linguistic behaviour observed so far, the question arises as to whether external circumstances might also cause or assist processes of simplification and regularisation of the present tense verb morphology. Trudgill (2002: 99) speculates on explanations for the absence of the 'third person -*s*' in many native English dialects and arrives at the conclusion that "[t]he explanation lies in language contact". For East Anglian English, for example, Trudgill (2002: 97) suggests that

> [...] East Anglian third-person singular present-tense zero is in origin a contact feature which developed as a result of the presence of large numbers of non-natives in Norwich who, in using English as a lingua franca among themselves and with the

> native population, failed to master, as non-native speakers often do, the non-natural person-marking system of English verbs.

Even though the sociolinguistic circumstances of EELF are markedly different from those characterising native English dialects and New Englishes, EELF, too, is used in multilingual settings, necessarily creating contact situations which are not only limited to two different languages and linguacultures. The remarkable international overlap as far as the regularisation of the present tense verb morphology is concerned might therefore also be ascribed to the comparable milieus in which English is used and spoken in the contexts of e.g. early East Anglian English, New Englishes and EELF. This assumption is backed by Myers-Scotton (2002), who forcefully argues that "types of language contact phenomena often seen as separate in fact result from the same processes and can be explained by the same principles" (Myers-Scotton 2002: cover). She points out that within such contact situations grammatical manifestations can in fact be predicted:

> But my basic argument is that not just 'anything structural' can happen in contact situations. The general principles and processes at work provide a set of options, but a limited set. All this is in line with my premise that – viewed through the lens of such generalizations – grammatical outcomes in contact situations are not at all that surprising and certainly not unique. (Myers-Scotton 2002: xi)

As repeatedly emphasised, the grammatical manifestations of EELF talk as recorded in my corpus are indeed neither surprising nor unique. Since EELF is developing under broadly comparable circumstances it can also "be expected to undergo the same processes that affect other natural languages, especially in contact situations" (Seidlhofer 2004: 222).

5. Conclusion and outlook

When scrutinising the usage of the 'third person *-s*' in my EELF data it turns out that EELF usage conforms to Standard English rules in almost 80% of the instances. The normative pull of the standard norms thus seems to be rather extensive. Nevertheless, the data comprise 29 occurrences of 3sgØ and 15 instances of 'superfluous third person *-s*'. The exploratory analysis of the data indicates that it is the correlation of various linguistic and extra-linguistic circumstances that might eventually account for the variation in the usage of the 'third person *-s*' in the data. Generally, the most salient principles have been proposed as triggers for the intermittent absence of the 'third person *-s*' as well as its overgeneralisation. It has been suggested that departures from standard norms may be triggered by the highly irregular nature of the present tense verb morphology of Standard English and additionally motivated by the transactional nature of the EELF interactions, i.e. there is a focus on the

content rather than the form of the message. Regularisation by analogy turns out to be a common EELF strategy. The principles of notional concord and proximity as well as the tendency to simplify consonant clusters might also account for some of the instances of zero marking and overgeneralisation. Furthermore, the dropping of the *-s* marker as well as its overprovision have been shown to be natural characteristics of language contact situations. A mix of these linguistic and extra-linguistic environments as well as speech processing constraints might ultimately account for most of the instances of 3sgØ and 'superfluous' 3sg-*s* in my EELF data. Indeed, out of 29 instances of 3sgØ and 15 instances of 'superfluous third person *-s*' only six instances of 3sgØ cannot directly be ascribed to one of the explanations discussed.

Above all, however, the naturalness of the EELF usage has been stressed in the discussion of findings. As James (2000: 35) speculated, EELF shows

> a general reduction in structural redundancy relative to standard written English. However it does not show significant structural 'reduction' relative to other forms of naturally occurring informal *spoken* English. (original emphasis)

Additionally, it has been pointed out that EELF usage as observed in my data finds a clear parallel in various dialects of ENL, New Englishes and English-based pidgins and creoles. 3sgØ as well as 'superfluous' *-s* marking are used in different speech communities by adults and children, by ENL, New Englishes and EELF speakers alike. In this respect, EELF cannot but be considered a common and 'normal' language usage, which is also appropriate for its purpose and context of use.

In view of these observations the notion of error seems to be entirely misplaced in the context of EELF as recorded in my corpus. The highly proficient EELF speakers are observed to make use of analogised forms and to exploit the built-in redundancy of Standard English. They consequently do away with an idiosyncrasy of Standard English which proves to be irrelevant in their EELF interactions. In that manner, the EELF speakers exhibit highly effective linguistic behaviour. The English language has proven to be extremely vital and dynamic throughout its history and it seems that EELF speakers are now taking their part in that creative process. Consequently, EELF can no longer be ignored or decried as 'bad' or 'deficient' English but has to be acknowledged as a user language like any other and thus as a legitimate object of linguistic study.

Even though my analysis has been carried out on a very small scale and generalisations from one EELF speaker to another are hardly legitimate, my case study still yields valuable insights into basic processes of language usage found in EELF. Seeing that processes of simplification and regularisation are universal features of natural languages I would expect a full description of

EELF talk to confirm rather than contradict my findings. The paper at hand has exclusively been dealing with synchronic variation in the usage of the 'third person *-s*'. Nevertheless, based on the discussion of findings, an increase in and indeed conventionalisation of the deviations from Standard English norms in EELF talk may be expected as soon as the influential and powerful members of the European communities, such as teachers and the, often self-appointed, gatekeepers of 'good' English, start accepting that 'proper' and 'appropriate' are in fact relative notions. However, in order to arrive at valid generalisations regarding EELF usage, quantitative as well as diachronic descriptive analyses of much larger EELF corpora are indispensable. The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE)[15] opens up new possibilities in this respect.

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15 Cf. http://www.univie.ac.at/voice

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Genre analysis in educational settings: the case of student academic genres

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1. Introduction

Most university courses require their students to do serious amounts of academic writing, which may be in the form of exam answers, essays, lab or project reports and also longer student papers. Especially in a context where the medium of instruction and thus also the language to be used for these writing tasks is different from the first language of the students, writing a longer academic paper fills many students with apprehension. This task is new and frequently ill-defined, and a paper of maybe 3,000 words – the required length of student papers at the English Department of the University of Vienna – is considerably longer than other writing tasks in language classes, which involve 350 word essays at Vienna's English department. Students' apprehension is matched at times by the experience of teachers of academic classes who feel that their students' knowledge and abilities should have made them produce better papers than in fact they did. This feeling of dissatisfaction is not unique to the Austrian context, and the emergence of many writing programmes at English-speaking universities, both for native and non-native students, is evidence of this.[1]

From an applied linguistic perspective, the question emerges how best to investigate this problem area and ultimately improve it. The need for action related to the improvement of the teaching of academic literacy is, I believe, already apparent in the fact that the European Union aims at achieving a rate of 50% of all 18-year-olds in further education. In combination with the tendency in the development of school curricula in foreign languages to pay less attention to writing skills and more to speaking skills in this legislation will increase the demand for teaching academic writing at university level.

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1 As one example of many, see the University of Sydney at http://www.usyd.edu.au/cet/index.html

This paper aims at addressing one particular area of this problem, that is to say, the choice of appropriate models for student writing and, as a vital pre-requisite, a thorough analysis of student writing. The conceptual framework for this investigation is genre analysis in the ESP (English for Specific Purposes) tradition. This approach, following John Swales' and Vijay Bhatia's ground-breaking work, has already increased our knowledge of the various genres involved in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) considerably. There are, however, several issues that are still in need of closer investigation in the context of translating these findings into pedagogical applications. Arguably, the most important piece of information that we are still lacking is a thorough analysis of the genre structures of academic papers produced by students new to university. Such an analysis will also need to raise questions related to the factors that decide on the acceptability of individual student contributions. On the basis of such research, questions of appropriate teaching models and methods can be raised.

The aim tacitly assumed in most student academic writing has been that it ought to conform to expert norms. This has often taken the form of modelling writing structures on prominent expert genres of the field; in EAP, this is often the research article. Underlying this assumption are two interesting notions; firstly, that all or most students aim to become academic writers and continue as such also **after** their university studies. Although it is hard to establish just how much professional academic writing graduates will need to do after their studies are completed, the little information available on the numbers of graduates who enter academia professionally suggest that very few will ever need to master the expert academic genres assumed to be the targets of their writing curricula. The second underlying notion of using such expert targets like the research article is that student papers are **copies** of research articles, arguably in many ways weaker copies, but still essentially much the same thing.

Despite these notions, neither university teachers nor the student authors expect student academic papers to be exactly like expert ones, and I would assume that several of the rhetoric functions realised in expert research articles would not at all go down well in a student paper, and be mistaken either for facetiousness or for a misunderstanding on the part of the students of their task and position.

The question, however, remains just what exactly a student academic paper looks like, in what ways it is similar, but also in what ways different to more expert writing and what a 'good exemplar' of a student paper consists of. Involved in this issue are two further questions; firstly, an investigation according to which criteria student papers are or should be evaluated and

secondly, how the differences between expert and student writing can be explored and made apparent to both students and teachers in an attempt to demystify the processes involved in academic writing. In other words, the challenge for EAP instruction is to make the practices involved in academic writing both transparent and transferable for the students involved and thus make them relevant in university settings even if graduates will not need **precisely** these writing skills.

A first step towards such a change in EAP instruction needs to be an analysis of the genre structures of various parts of student academic writing in their initial phases of studying with a view to deciding whether these student academic text productions can be considered as distinct genres. This article will present such a genre analysis of student academic papers, more precisely the analysis of the introductions and conclusions of initial academic papers produced by non-native students, both sections that are dense and complex, yet vital for the success of a longer academic paper. Such an analysis aims to show, firstly, whether these sections of academic student papers are indeed different from their expert counterparts. The choice of initial student papers as an object of inquiry is a conscious one and taken in the awareness that student writing continues after these first student papers to more advanced papers and MA theses. It is, however, my contention that the transition from general writing tasks at school to academic writing tasks is the most difficult to make for students and that therefore these first academic papers require to be researched in order to ultimately inform the teaching practice in these initial phases.

The hypothesis put forward in this article that student academic productions can be considered as distinct genres also raises the difficult question of how to relate such student genres to their more expert counterpart; this forms part of the ongoing debate in genre analysis on the definition and operationalisation of genre relationships (Bhatia 2002b, 2004). Secondly, the issue of formulating adequate pedagogical models and aims for students throughout their academic 'apprenticeship' will be explored and through this, wider implications for teaching and evaluation discussed.

2. Theoretical background

The most basic definition of EAP is that it "refers to any English teaching that relates to a study purpose" (Dudley-Evans & St. John 1998: 34). Such a definition of EAP focuses mostly on the fact that EAP, like all other types of ESP, is driven by a purpose other than general language learning; importantly,

however, it also assumes that EAP is a rather homogeneous whole. Following this notion, many typical EAP courses are expected to enable students to cope with all types of language requirements made on them in their studies. Thus, this rather fuzzy concept of EAP is understood to include all areas of teaching (i.e. enabling students to follow lectures, read textbooks and other relevant materials, take part in seminars and tutorials, etc.), research (writing and reading research articles and reports, writing grant applications, presenting at and taking part in academic conferences), examinations (exam papers and answers, essays, project reports, theses and dissertations) and sometimes even aspects of academic administration (Bhatia 2002a: 28-29; 2004: 33-52 passim).

Clearly, however, there is no course that can even attempt to prepare students in all of these areas and, in general, EAP courses focus on a few areas within academia that are deemed most vital to students; this emphasis often lies on the writing that students will have to produce in the near future, such as exam papers or student essays. A further point to be taken into consideration is that a large number of courses (especially in English-speaking countries) and textbooks or guidelines on academic writing have an audience of international **postgraduate** students at English-speaking universities in mind (Swales & Feak 2005).

In such a setting, however, the student authors can already build on a substantial background of knowledge with respect to what academic writing in their disciplines looks like, albeit maybe in another language than English. Moreover, we can safely assume that the genres that postgraduates are involved in, e.g. theses or conference presentations, are in many respects similar to fully expert genres, given the postgraduates' position towards the end of their academic 'apprenticeship'.

Underlying such a broad classification of EAP as presented above is the assumption that most features of EAP will be present in all types of writing or speaking for academic purposes, and across all disciplines. This view has, however, been seriously challenged by research which found decided and systematic differences between the various types of writing used in academia. (Samraj 2004, 2005)

2.1. Genre analysis

Much of the research devoted to a close analysis of academic discourse has taken place within genre analysis. There are several schools of genre analysis that deal in the widest sense with "situated linguistic behaviour" (Bhatia

1997: 181). The so-called ESP approach, which informs this paper, is most prominently represented by John Swales (1981, 1990, 2005) and Vijay Bhatia (1993, 2002a, 2002b, 2004). As the name already implies, this school of genre analysis focuses clearly on academic and professional discourse, and defines genre as

> a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience (Swales 1990:58).

Such a focus on communicative purpose impinges on the perception of similarities between texts, as it is not the **surface** similarity of formal features, be they lexical or syntactical, but the similarity in writers' goals that determines membership of any particular text in one genre. If we consider the field of EAP, we can easily see how lectures, textbooks, lab reports, research articles, exam essays and research articles all fulfil clearly diverse communicative purposes and thus need to be considered separate genres. With regard to academic writing, the research article has been most extensively researched, thus taking account of its importance for researchers in a context of an ever-increasing pressure to publish.[2]

A further concept introduced by genre analysis is that of **discourse community**, whose defining characteristics are as follows:

- a discourse community has a broadly agreed set of common public goals
- a discourse community has mechanisms of intercommunication among its members
- a discourse community uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback
- a discourse community utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims
- in addition to owning genres, a discourse community has acquired some specific lexis

2 This focus can also be accounted for by the comparative ease of gaining access to expert exemplars of this genre within academia, and obtaining information from expert informants within academia.

- a discourse community has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise. (Swales 1990: 24ff)

The importance of the discourse community, which 'owns' particular genres, lies in its status as a source of ethnographic information regarding the prototypicality of particular texts as exemplars of a genre, and the position of individual genres within the professional field in which they occur. Obtaining such information is seen as a necessary factor in the analysis of particular genres, even though Bhatia (1993: 34-36) in his methodology for analysing unfamiliar genres does not specify exactly how this co-operation should ideally work.

Another problematic area within genre analysis is the systematic description of relationships between genres. Underlying the assumption of genre relationships is the fact that while letters of complaint, academic article introductions and letters of adjustment are all different genres with distinct communicative purposes, the proximity between these intuitively seems to vary greatly, and that this degree of proximity or distance between various genres ought to be included in descriptions of genres.

Bhatia (2002b, 2004: 54) in a development from previous attempts at clustering genres presents the notion of 'genre colony', which is seen as a "constellation of individually recognized genres that display strong similarities across disciplinary and professional boundaries". Unfortunately, we are not given much further information on how this 'strong similarity' is defined or operationalised, as even later on, the only specification we get is that a genre colony consists of closely related genres, which to a large extent share their individual communicative purposes, although most of them will be different in a number of other respects, such as their disciplinary and professional affiliations, contexts of use and exploitations, participant relationships, audience constraints and so on (Bhatia 2004: 57).

A further issue within genre relationships is the way in which genres can consist of various parts, which in themselves might also be seen as genres. To give an example, academic article introductions are generally referred to as genres within the ESP approach (Swales 1990); however, while these genres clearly are conventionalised and share a communicative purpose, they are also part of a larger genre, that is to say the research article as a whole. So far, the ESP approach does not allow for genre-constituents[3], which does, however, appear a necessary addition and I would argue for a classification of all genres that are parts of clearly identifiable other genres as genre constituents.

3 The term genre-constituent was first suggested by Herbert Schendl in personal communication.

2.2. Research on academic introductions and conclusions

Before going on to describe the analysis of student paper introductions and conclusions, I will briefly review previous research on expert article introductions and conclusions. Given the fact that no research has yet looked at the genre structures of student papers, it is necessary to look for comparisons in genres that might share at least some of the communicative purpose with student essays, and thus show similarities to the genres under investigation here. Looking at clusters of genres and studying their relationship to one another is also increasingly becoming important within genre analysis in the context of studying genre colonies.

Especially the introduction sections of research articles have received attention, arguably because this section needs to successfully integrate several communicative purposes, notably self-promotion, for the entire paper to be successful. (Swales 1981, 1990, 2005) Indeed, the overriding communicative purpose of introductions in research articles is seen as motivating the research and justifying its publication. As a secondary purpose we can also observe the aim of clearly informing the reader of what to expect in the remainder of the research article. The latest version of the frequently used Create-A-Research-Space (CARS) model is as follows (Swales 1990: 141):

Move 1: Establishing a territory
step 1: claiming centrality
and/or
step 2: making topic generalizations
and/or
step 3: reviewing items of previous research
Move 2: Establishing a niche
step 1A: Counter-claiming
or
step 1B: indicating a gap
or
step 1C: question-raising
or
step 1D: continuing a tradition
Move 3: Occupying the niche
step 1A: outlining purpose
or
step 1B: announcing present research
step 2: announcing principal findings
step 3: indicating research article structure

In this model, moves signal parts with specific communicative intentions seen as constituting together the overall communicative purpose of the genre. Steps are sub-ordinate to moves and indicate either possible variation in the realization of the intention of a move or constitute a clear sequence that only together constitutes the move.

Research has been conducted on other types of academic introductions, for instance, the introductions to MSc dissertations (Dudley Evans 1989)[4] or the introductions to lab reports (Bhatia 1993: 93-97). Bhatia (2004: 66ff) also uses the cluster of academic introductions as an example of genre colony, and includes student essays as part of that colony.

However, as has already been mentioned, the introduction sections of student papers, which in length and general set-up correspond most to research articles, have so far not been explicitly addressed. The term 'student paper' is used here as a cover term for longer student papers, of 3,000 words or more, based on library or empirical research. The term 'student essay' is not used as it carries connotations of shorter essays on more general, not research-related, topics.

Unlike the situation for Masters students who are much more familiar with the demands placed on them and where some clear guidelines are available (Swales & Feak 2005), novice student authors know little of what is expected of their written papers and are usually not given any clear guidelines.

The interest in the genre constituent of academic introductions is not matched by a similar interest in conclusions, and we find only scarce research literature focusing on the final sections of research articles, even though these are arguably as important to a successful research article as are the introductions. Both introductions and conclusions are sections used to frame the rest of the article; thus, they place heavy demands on the author who needs here more than anywhere else to combine clarity with rhetorical ability to place one's research favourably. Arguably, due to their density, these genre constituents are also most difficult for student writers.

Generally speaking, there seems to be much more variation within the concluding sections of research articles than within introductions, which is already apparent in the names given to the sections involved. Whether there are separate sections each for results, discussion and conclusion, or whether two or all three of these are conflated into one seems to depend largely on the writer and/or the editorial policy of the journal. Additionally, the precise

4 Although an interesting and insightful study, Dudley-Evans (1989) suffers from a small data base; only 7 MSc dissertation introductions and conclusions were analysed.

nature of the research questions asked and of the research reported in the article seems to create a greater variety within the structures permitted in these sections. To summarise the research that there is on the conclusion sections, we shall consider Peng (1987) as well as Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988), who helped to establish a tentative move structure for the concluding sections of the research article. Their move-structure proposals have been condensed by Swales (1990: 172-173) to the following model, where the moves printed in bold are frequent, and might be considered obligatory.

Background information
Statement of results
(Un)expected outcome
Reference to previous research
Explanation
Exemplification
Deduction and Hypothesis
Recommendations

Figure 1: Move structure of conclusions (Swales 1990: 171-173)

Interestingly, this structure contains no move which provides closure or conclusions of the research presented; thus the communicative purpose of showing the reader what information or implications to draw from the paper or what the main point of the paper is, appears to be missing. There is arguably room for including this under the move **statement of results**, but even so, this constitutes an unexpected absence.

A more general question that clearly needs to be addressed in greater detail is the communicative purpose of a conclusion. Tentatively, one might say that the main purpose is to highlight the most important findings of one's research and to thus evaluate more clearly what has been reported earlier. However, as we could see in the discussion regarding research article introductions, a closer analysis might also reveal more about the communicative purposes of writers. Of interest in this context is the observation made by Huckin (reported as personal communication in Swales 1990: 173) that the final move where future directions of research are recommended is increasingly being abandoned in order not to give academic competitors a head-start when establishing new research or applying for research grants. Whether this is an indication of a communicative purpose of creating as much closure as possible, which will then, of course, have to be opened again by creating a research space in the introduction to the next article on the same topic, remains unclear.

In general, however, it seems that more work is necessary to establish the genre structure and the underlying communicative purpose of the concluding sections of research articles. It would be interesting, for instance, to establish whether the CARS model of the introduction is taken up in any way in the final section of a paper. What we might assume very tentatively is that a research space created for one's own project would also need to be defended against competitors. Tentative evidence of this possibility is given by the observations by Huckin quoted above.[5]

In summary, we can see that despite previous work on the genre constituents of research article introductions and conclusions, the question of whether and in what way these can be seen as similar to student paper introductions and conclusions still remains to be answered. This question is, however, relevant for two reasons: firstly, educational questions relating to the demands made on novice students need to be linked to the genre **actually** required of students, i.e. the student paper. Secondly, the constitution of genre-colonies, i.e. clusters of related genres, will need to take into account the contributions to be made by student or apprentice members of the discourse community involved.

3. Empirical evidence: an investigation of student paper introductions and conclusions

The study described here involved the analysis of 56 student paper introductions and conclusions. The papers deal with various aspects of linguistics and were written by German-speaking students at the Department of English of the University of Vienna. The papers were written as part of the course requirement of six different classes of the "introductory seminar in linguistics" taught by three different lecturers. Regarding the curriculum, these papers represent the first attempts of students at longer academic papers in English as a foreign language, and in some cases (22.7%) also their first attempts whatsoever at writing an academic paper. Comparatively little explicit instruction with regard to academic writing is given to students, and language classes, which run before or parallel to the linguistics course where the papers were written, deal with much shorter and more general essay writing, thus focusing on 350-500 word essays of a generally argumentative nature.

5 cf. section 3 for results of a mini-analysis of research article conclusions in linguistics.

There are several reasons for focussing the analysis on the genre constituents of introductions and conclusions; firstly, they are clearly obligatory elements of all student papers and are mentioned as such in the guidelines students are given by their course lecturers. Secondly, they are comparatively similar in all types of research papers written by students, be they co-authored or not, of a more library-based or data-based nature and fairly irrespective of the topic chosen by the students. Finally, but very importantly, they constitute rather 'dense' sections of the student papers in that they rarely include direct quotations, which otherwise abound, and place heavy demands on students' language competence.

There were two points of comparison for these data; firstly, a corpus of 35 introductions and conclusions of student papers on various topics of linguistics written by English-speaking students[6] and secondly a body of 56 research articles on linguistics. Exemplary genre analyses of 10 English-speaking student introductions, 10 native student conclusions, and 10 research article conclusions were conducted. These points of reference were chosen in order to establish as clearly as possible which issues seem to be related to the status of non-native students as learners of specific genres or to their status as language learners.

In order to establish the status of individual genre constituents as more or less successful examples, two lecturers were asked to be judges and to comment on a selection of introductions and conclusions with regard to their appropriacy. These expert judges were two members of staff familiar with the requirements and teaching practice of the introductory seminar in linguistics, for which the student papers were produced. Reference is made to this information throughout this paper as expert information constitutes a vital step in genre analysis, and especially in genre contributions of students, the decision on the acceptability of their papers or specific constituents and moves within these papers needs to be taken into account in establishing a genre structure which finds acceptance from the gate-keepers of the relevant academic institutions.

The question of defining a discourse community that 'owns' student academic genres, inherently linked to the question of defining appropriacy, is rather complex given the structure of academia itself. Thus, similarly to university itself, students are peripheral members in that they are clearly part of academia, but their contributions are constantly being evaluated by their teachers who are more expert members of the discourse community. The

6 The students attended the Universities of Edinburgh, Georgetown, and Surrey (Roehampton).

methodology employed here takes account of both of these levels by first describing student papers and then taking the information on appropriacy of expert judges into account. However, there is clearly a focus on **current** 'best' practice and not on **potential** future 'best' practice.

Supplementary data was collected on the students' background, their learning experience, and the particular communicative objectives they had in mind for the sections "introduction" and "conclusion" of their papers.

3.1. Findings: introductions

The genre analysis[7] of all non-native student texts established the following structure of three core moves in student introductions:

- leading into the topic
- stating purpose
- previewing contents

These moves are realised by the majority of writers and thus will be considered core moves. A decision on the status of a move as core or optional was formed firstly on the basis of frequency, so that moves which occur in more than 50% of all papers are considered core moves, with those that occur at a frequency of over 90% considered obligatory. Also, information from the expert judges, who regarded these moves as core features of a student paper introduction, was taken into account.

Apart from these core moves, there are two fully optional moves, established as such through both frequencies of occurrence (below 30%) and information from expert judges. One was realised by the very small number of only eight student authors, but still cannot be subsumed under any of the other moves. This is the optional move

- giving extra editorial information

Furthermore, there was one move which was only realised by one student author, and is thus clearly atypical, and not part of the default genre structure. The move is:

7 Although we are dealing here with genre constituents, to make the text more fluent, the term 'genre analysis' is also used for the 'genre analysis of genre constituents'.

- acknowledging gratitude

The following table shows the numbers and percentages of realisations for each move within the student introductions:

MOVE	**TOTAL N=56**[8]	**Total (of 100%)**
Leading into the topic	39	69.6
Stating purpose	53	94.6
Previewing contents	43	76.8
Acknowledgements	1	1.8
Extra editorial information	8	14.8

Table 1: Frequency of realisations of moves in student paper introductions

Both frequencies and information gathered from expert informants of the discourse community established that the **stating purpose** move[9] is the only one to be considered fully obligatory. Judges also specified that an introduction which does not contain this move will be considered atypical to the extent of being classified as 'not really an introduction'. With regard to the other two moves, expert informants considered **leading into the topic** slightly less important than **previewing contents**, which corresponds to the percentages of realisations of these moves. Generally, introductions where either was missing were still classified as suitable examples of student introductions by the expert judges.

The analysis of non-native student paper introductions confirmed the above genre structure, with the exception of the optional moves. Thus we can consider the genre structure as governed by the status of student writers as genre learners and not as language learners. The three move structure described above can be considered the student genre structure both through quantitative analysis of two learner groups and through confirmation by expert informants.

A comparison with the CARS model for expert introductions established by Swales (cf. section 2) shows that we are dealing with a separate genre constituent. The set of communicative purposes is different in that the purpose of self-promotion is absent in student writing. Clearly, however, there are also some similarities within that set, i.e. the fact that both expert and student

8 One of the truncated papers did not contain an introduction, and one entire paper was submitted without an introduction.

9 For the sake of conciseness, names for individual moves are shortened within the text, i.e. 'stating purpose move' instead of 'move of stating purpose'.

introductions serve to familiarise and prepare the reader for the content of the remainder of the paper. This 'family' resemblance points to the presence of both of these genre constituents in one genre-colony, i.e. that of academic introductions (cf. section 2).

3.2. Findings: conclusions

The picture that emerges for student paper conclusions is rather more complex. The analysis of all student conclusions yielded the following structure of four moves, which, based on their frequency, can possibly be considered 'core' moves.

- providing a summary statement or review
- qualifying and evaluating the paper
- providing a personal reflection
- providing a wider outlook/embedding the paper

The first two moves are clearly in the range of frequency to be considered 'core', while the latter two moves are in the peripheral range of 30% - 50% of occurrence, which means that their status as 'core' or 'optional' cannot be decided by frequency alone and has to be refined according to information from members of the discourse community.

Additionally, there were three moves which were clearly optional regarding their frequencies of occurrence, namely

- providing new information
- appeal to reader
- acknowledging gratitude

Regarding the frequency of realisations, only the first move, i.e. providing a summary statement or review, can be regarded as fully obligatory. The status of the reflection and the outlook move with regard to their being core moves or not is difficult as they were realised in 32.7% of all papers, and are thus quantitatively in the range where the status of moves as either 'core' or 'optional' can only be decided by obtaining further information from members of the discourse community involved.

Following this information, the **reflection** move was regarded as non acceptable in this genre. In this move, students either give their personal opinion on the research or the research process, or reflect on their personal growth and learning experience. The fact that it did occur comparatively

frequently might be considered evidence that students see the need for voicing their thoughts and feelings on their own learning process or on the task they had to fulfil, i.e. writing a student paper. An example of the **reflection** move with a focus on the student author's experience of doing research is the following.

> (1) Finally, I wanted to make a personal statement as the author of this seminar paper: the process of my research has taught me a wide range of things I already knew. This information was inside my brain, but only the investigations worked as a means to make it visible.

Interestingly, this move does follow a communicative purpose that does not seem to be removed from the overall purpose of providing some sense of closure, but by its focus on a personalisation of the process of researching and writing a paper it does not follow the conventions established of this genre. A possible reason for the occurrence of the **reflection** move is students' desire to adapt to the (real or imagined) requirements of their prospective markers. As most of the **reflection** moves occurred in the papers of students attending one lecturer who encouraged reflection on problems and learning processes in the oral presentations, a misguided transfer from one genre to another can be tentatively assumed. What is problematic for students is that even if one particular lecturer might accept a certain variation on the genre, most others will not. Indeed, there is evidence of students producing precisely this **reflection** move in more advanced papers where they are definitely not accepted.

The **outlook** move was considered an appropriate part of the genre structure and serves to show possible further research or applications of the research presented, a link to other areas/disciplines or a need for further action.

Of the clearly optional moves, the one **presenting new information** was considered inappropriate by expert judges, as the conclusion should ideally not present completely new material but only (slightly) expand on arguments already present in the main body of the paper. The **acknowledging gratitude** and the **appeal** moves were also considered somewhat problematic, but did not constitute such a major problem for the expert judges in that conclusions containing these moves were not deemed entirely inadequate. Through the **appeal** move, student authors express their hope of having aroused the interest of their reader, increased their understanding or, more generally and learner-specific, of having achieved the aim of writing a successful paper. An example of an **appeal** move is the following:

(2) I think I still succeeded in demonstrating the multiple factors one must take into account when studying second language learners' attitudes and learning behaviour.

To give an impression of the overall distribution of the moves within all student paper conclusions, the following table shows the frequency of occurrence of individual moves.

MOVE	**Total**[10] **(N=55)**	**% Total**
Summary statement/review	53	96.4%
Qualify/Evaluate	32	58.2%
Reflection	18	32.7%
Outlook/Embedding	18	32.7%
New Information	13	23.6%
Appeal	9	16.4%
Acknowledgements	2	3.6%

Table 2: Frequency of realisations of moves in Austrian student paper conclusions

In order to establish to what extent we can speak of a student genre constituent of conclusions that applies to various groups of learners as opposed to specifically language learners, a comparative analysis of the genre structure of corresponding native speaker student texts was conducted. For this purpose, 10 native speaker student texts were analysed. In general, it can be said that these genre constituent texts reveal great similarities to the genre structure described above for non-native student writers. The following table gives an overview of the moves realised in the native student genre texts.

Moves	**Total (N=10)**	**Total %**
Summary statement/review	10	100%
Qualify and evaluate paper/results	5	50%
Providing wider outlook/embedding paper	4	40%
New information	1	10%
Appeal to reader	0	0%
Acknowledgements	0	0%
Providing a personal reflection/here: stating opinion	1	10%

Table 3: Frequency of moves in native student conclusions

10 The number does not correspond to the number of introductions, due to the existence of truncated papers and due to the fact that three student papers did not contain a conclusion.

We find that also in native student texts the only fully obligatory move is the **summary statement/review** move, with other moves observed including **providing a wider outlook/embedding the paper**, **qualifying and evaluating the paper** and **providing a personal reflection**. There is only tentative evidence of a move of **providing new information**.

As the **reflection** move is seen as problematic within the genre structure of non-native student conclusions, I analysed all native student conclusions with regard to the presence of this particular move. I found that the strategy of reflecting on personal growth and development is absent in the native student texts. Therefore, it seems that these realisations are here best re-classified under a move of **stating opinion**. This is an important consideration, given the fact that it was especially the realisations of reflecting on personal growth and development that were deemed most inappropriate for a student paper conclusion by the markers.

The reasons why reflection plays a less important role in native compared to non-native student conclusions can only be speculated upon. Several possibilities arise; firstly, the projects undertaken by the English-speaking students in order to write their papers were generally shorter, and in fact frequently only library research was required. This might have resulted in students' feeling that there had been less personal investment of a learning process and thus less need for reflection. The papers where students realised the **stating opinion** move were generally concerned with topics students appeared to feel quite strongly about. Finally, given the wider range in length of the native student papers, which included some rather short essays, one might argue that the paucity of space discouraged reflection by forcing students to focus only on the most important aspects of a conclusion, i.e. to provide a summary or conclusion. In sum, the **reflection** move as realised in the non-native student papers is apparently not a feature of the general genre structure of student conclusions. There are, however, indications that the expression of a personal opinion, especially in emotionally charged topic areas, is a more generally present feature of student papers.

Notable in their absence are also the moves of **acknowledgement** and of **appeal.** The former optional move occurred only very rarely in the non-native student genre-texts and thus its absence can easily be considered an effect of sample size. Sample size as well as length of student paper conclusions might also have had an effect regarding the absence of the **appeal** move. One might also speculate, however, whether the fact that Austrian students write fewer student papers throughout their degree courses, which are therefore also given greater importance within the curriculum, might make students feel even more obliged to ensure the good-will of their markers.

In summary, establishing a clear genre structure for the conclusions of student papers proves a little more difficult than for student paper introductions. This makes it necessary to highlight one aspect of the methodology employed in extended genre analysis (Bhatia 1993: 22-36, Hüttner 2005: 94-113 passim), namely the role taken by expert informants from the discourse community in question. With regard to student contributions, the question of genre ownership is, of course, a rather complex one; on the one hand, we can consider the students who produce the texts as the most obvious genre owners, however, their contributions are clearly and directly evaluated by their markers, whose ideas of good practice define what constitutes an acceptable and appropriate contribution. Thus, the methodology employed in the definition of genre structures decided on the move structure through a combination of quantitative measures of frequency of occurrence and qualitative measures of acceptability ratings of the expert judges.

Although several moves were in mixed frequency ranges, which could support their status as core, optional or unacceptable moves, the information from expert judges showed that especially the moves **presenting new information** and **providing a personal reflection** were deemed unacceptable, and therefore cannot be part of a model of 'best practice' of student writing.

If we consider the resulting possible genre structure of student genre conclusions, we can come up with the following three-move model:

- providing a summary statement or review
- qualifying and evaluating the paper
- providing a wider outlook/embedding the paper

If we compare this to the structure of expert conclusions presented earlier (cf. chapter 2), we can see clear differences in the structure presented, with the only partial overlap to be found in the move of **statement of results**.

As has been mentioned earlier (cf. section 2), research on the concluding sections of academic papers focused on research articles of various disciplines; in order to provide a more direct comparison to the student papers discussed here and to allow for the possibility of disciplinary variation, a mini-analysis of some conclusions of articles on linguistics was conducted. (Hüttner 2005: 231ff) This yielded somewhat different information from the model given above. The results indicate the following genre structure:

- summary of results
- review paper
- wider outlook/embedding the paper
- qualify and evaluate paper/research

There are some noticeable differences to the student genre structure; first of all, we find an obligatory move of **summarising results**. The move of reviewing parts of the paper occurred only additionally to the summarising of results, and no instances of a review of the entire paper were encountered. This shows that for expert research articles, it is obligatory to state clearly what the main findings or the main conclusions are that can be drawn from the article. The **review** move only served at times to remind readers of some background or original research question or aim, and could not stand on its own, even in those conclusions where it occurred.

There is tentative evidence that the evaluative move has a specifically expert format in combining both a presentation of the limitations of the paper with an immediate follow-on of a positive evaluation of the results achieved. An example of this would be the following:

> (3) While generalisation is clearly not possible, I believe that there are reasons for arguing that the significance is greater than mere numbers would suggest. The most important of these reasons is that such schools are widely regarded as models for township and rural (African) schools to emulate (Chick 2002: 476).

By pointing out the limitations of the study undertaken, the author can limit the criticism on not having done more, or different research. Also, by immediately emphasising how, even with these acknowledged limitations, the results are still valid and important, the main purpose of establishing and defending the position of the writer's research is achieved. Clearly, this embedding of the paper within a research tradition and most importantly, emphasising the contribution made to research or to the possible applications of this research, reflects an expert communicative purpose.

With regard to the move of **outlook/embedding the paper** we have to note that, while students very generally point towards the need for further research, experts are more precise about what this further research should look like. Arguably, this is an attempt to secure their own research, as one can expect that frequently further research, which is presented as necessary, constitutes actually the research programme of the author. Thus, it can be linked to the CARS model of introductions in the sense that the emphasis tends to be not on the need in general of more research in that area, or the vague possibility of applications of the research described, but implying that the further research programme of the author of the paper is necessary. This

can be seen as laying the foundation for future papers by establishing in the reader the idea of a specific research gap, which can, of course, be filled by the follow-on research or projects of the author. In that sense, the expert conclusions can also be seen as genre constituents whose underlying communicative purpose is also to defend the research space occupied by the research article and to lay the ground for future creations of research space in the following publications of the authors.

We can see, thus, that there are decided differences between expert and student conclusions, despite their common purpose of providing some closure to a longer piece of writing. The reasons for this seem quite obvious; learners at most will wish to indicate to their readers and markers that they acknowledge the necessary limitations in the treatment of their given topics. As they have no research programme they have no need to give a clear indication of how the limitations of their papers can be overcome in future research. Also, unlike their expert counterparts, they are more rarely able to successfully mix their acknowledgement of limitations with a more generally positive evaluation and validation of their own results. Other noticeable differences to the student genre include a complete lack of the 'optional' and partly inappropriate moves of **reflection, acknowledging gratitude, appeal to reader** and **providing new information,** which were observed in the student genre constituent.

To summarise, we can see that both student genre constituents, i.e. student paper introductions and conclusions, show genre structures that are distinct from their expert counterparts. This confirms the hypothesis that the student genre constituents are distinct genre constituents. There are, however, also some levels of overlap indicating the presence of both expert and student genre constituents in a genre (constituent) colony.

4. Implications for teaching

Having established a distinct genre (constituent) structure for student introductions and conclusions, we have to consider the implications of this for current teaching practice in this area. We can find strong arguments for reconsidering the use of the expert research article genre structures as teaching models also for students in their initial phases of academic studies. Given the findings reported here, I argue that it is these student genre structures which should be used as models for teaching for a number of reasons: firstly, these genre structures correspond to the actual communicative purposes student writers have at this stage in their careers, which are unlike the communicative purpose that inform the related expert genres or genre

constituents. Using expert models in situations where the communicative purposes are not realistic will make student writers less able to see a correspondence between communicative purpose, genre structure and textualization. Such a mismatch might also make student writers copy models without being able to relate them to their reality – to which, indeed, they do not relate – and thus make them insecure as writers, or even disempowered copiers. Conversely, showing student writers how generic structures correspond and further **their** communicative purposes in an adequate and acceptable way will turn them into **authors** and away from being **copiers**.

Especially within many academic contexts, we need to take account of the fact that very few students will become expert members of the academic discourse community. In fact, we might argue that our students are extremely unlikely to ever be producers of the expert academic genres, and will remain **recipients** of academic expert genres, and **producers** of student genres or other professional genres. However, as the ability of fulfilling the requirements of student academic writing is essential within academic curricula, university teachers are also called upon to support students in achieving these aims. Setting realistic interim objectives, such as using student genre structures as targets for student papers, addresses this situation and acknowledges also that the most difficult step for a student writer is to first understand the workings of genre structures and the relationship between purpose and text. It is this relationship that we need to make our students understand. (cf. Smit & Hüttner 2006)

One area where teaching within a genre approach is most fruitful is the area of awareness raising. Thus, students would ideally become aware of the differences in structure and communicative purpose in the academic texts they read or produce and through this also become more cautious about transferring structure and text patterns indiscriminately from one genre to another. Teaching academic writing following a genre-centred approach would also have the advantage that students, of whom most will not enter an academic career, will be equipped with a transferable skill. Being able to analyse unfamiliar genres is a bonus for future teachers, who might find themselves in ESP teaching environments, where their own pupils might need to learn to produce genres which are unknown to the teachers.

On a more abstract level, we also need to explicitly consider the ‘objectives’, i.e. “the pedagogic intentions of a particular course of study to be achieved within the period of that course and [..] measurable […] at the end of the course”, and ‘aims’, i.e. “purposes to which learning will be put **after** the end of the course” in EAP. (Widdowson 1983: 6-7) With regard to the discussion of student academic writing, these need to be made transparent,

both for lecturers and students. Thus, objectives should be specified for the interim stages in the process of students becoming proficient student academic writers and this involves a decision on the appropriate genre structures to use as models. Arguably even more important is the clarification of the aim of learning to write academic papers. In my view, this aim has to focus on transferable skills, such as the ability on the students' part to understand the workings of genres **in general** and the capacity of transferring communicative purpose into text, while paying attention to the level of appropriacy. Among aims of learning to write academic papers one might also consider encouraging in students the ability of analysing unfamiliar genres and making them accessible to themselves and, in the case of teacher trainees, learning how to use genre knowledge in their own future teaching practice. (Smit this volume; Smit & Hüttner 2006)

Clearly, more research into the structures of student academic genres is required before final decisions on the appropriate objectives for individual courses can be taken, and a higher level of reflection on the part of the teachers of these genres might in time also change the structure of the genres in question. However, also the evidence presented here points us towards exploring this path further in the hope of giving university students 'advanced literacy skills' of the sort they might successfully transfer to the tasks awaiting them in their 'real worlds'.

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Non-understanding in English as a lingua franca: examples from a business context

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1. Introduction

Let's start with what is obvious: People converse in English every day, all over the world, and they do so successfully. They meet, they negotiate, they do business together. They talk on the telephone and stay in touch via email. They read and write reports, files and contracts. They publish scientific papers and participate in international conferences. In the 21st century, we find ourselves in a world of globalization in which language and communication play a role more central in economic, political and cultural life than ever before (Graddol 1997: 3). And at the core of this development stands English. But which English?

When we are talking about English in its function as a global language, we have to ask ourselves who the speakers of this international English are, and we find that it is no longer the 'Inner Circle' (Kachru 1992: 356), i.e. the native speakers, who are in the majority. The 'Outer Circle', i.e. those who speak English as a second language, and the 'Expanding Circle', i.e. those who speak it as a foreign language, are taking over (ibid.). Even today, there may be more people who speak English as a foreign language than the sum of those who speak it as a first or second language (Graddol 1997: 13). Estimates go up to one billion of speakers of English as a foreign language (Crystal 2003: 61) and the global demand for English is still increasing. As is commonly proposed (e.g. Seidlhofer 2001: 141), the majority of English interactions take place between non-native speakers to whom the language functions as a 'lingua franca', "an additionally acquired language system that serves as a means of communication between speakers of different first languages" (op. cit.: 146). English in this sense has acquired an "unparalleled status as a language spoken by more non-native speakers than native

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speakers" (House 2002: 246), a fact one can hardly overestimate as it makes clear that this current global role of English is unique in the history of languages.

To a certain extent, this global state of affairs has led to a shift in perspective in linguistic research: The 'ownership of English' and the native speakers' custody of the language have been called into question (e.g. Widdowson 1994); the central role of English non-native speakers as active agents of language change has been recognized (e.g. Brutt-Griffler 2002); and the need for large-scale research and a thorough description of 'English as a lingua franca' (ELF) has been stressed (e.g. Seidlhofer 2001, 2004). Initial studies relying on ELF data[1] confirm the assumption that "[e]xperienced users of English as a foreign language may acquire communicative skills which are different from those of native speakers" (Graddol 1997: 13). Yet, research in this field is only beginning to emerge and there are still vast areas of ELF discourse which are waiting to be explored.

The present paper intends to make a small contribution to this "gradually accumulating body of work" (Seidlhofer 2005a: 340) by addressing some aspects with regard to the indication, negotiation and resolution of non-understandings in English as a lingua franca. Since this contribution is based on an MA thesis[2], it will only represent a selective portion of the rather broad area of miscommunication and related phenomena. It will focus on a small number of very local non-understandings and, in a close and in-depth analysis of ELF data, it will show how these non-understandings are indicated and reacted to, interactionally managed, jointly negotiated and ultimately resolved rather skillfully by the ELF speakers. It is hoped that this analysis will exemplify how the systematic analysis of a phenomenon like non-understanding may not only offer insights into the communicative strategies ELF speakers have at their disposal, but may also yield interesting observations relating to other levels of linguistic analysis such as pronunciation and lexicogrammar.

1 E.g. Firth 1996; Jenkins 2000; Kordon 2003; Lesznyák 2004; Meierkord 1996, 2002.

2 This contribution is based on my MA thesis *"I know what you mean" – 'miscommunication' in English as a lingua franca: the case of business meetings*, which was written at the English Department of the University of Vienna under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Barbara Seidlhofer.

2. ‘Understanding’ and ‘non-understanding’

Setting out to investigate any phenomenon in the broad area of communicative problems, one enters a terminological battlefield so to speak, where various theoretical approaches implicitly or explicitly inform researchers’ perspectives and where the same term may be used for rather diverse phenomena, whereas a variety of terms may actually refer to more or less the same thing (cf. Tzanne 1999: 33). While the limited space of an article does not allow for an overview of this vast array of terminology, it seems nevertheless essential to be explicit about what the terms ‘understanding’ and ‘non-understanding’ denote in the context of this paper.

Following a position such as that of Roberts (1996: 17), understanding in this paper is not considered a passive ability, but is seen as an interactive and jointly constructed process which is dynamic and cooperative and which all participants of a conversation continuously engage in. Consequently, speakers and listeners are seen to work together on constructing mutual understanding and to share the conversational responsibility to arrive at a sufficient degree of understanding. This is a proposition which might appear rather self-evident, but often it is not adopted in the discussion of communicative problems, as Linell (1995: 180) astutely notes:

> The speaker is assigned the status of interpretive authority when it comes to the meaning of his/her own utterances. But this holds most unambiguously for reference, not necessarily for descriptive (or other) aspects of meaning. In other words, the speaker knows what the intended referents are, but s/he may be mistaken in her/his choice of words for describing them. Thus, when A says something and B does not share or come to share A’s understanding of the matter, we are not always justified in saying simply that B misunderstands (Linell 1995: 180-1).

While this position holds true for any type of interaction, it particularly pertains to ELF interactions, whose collaborative and cooperative nature have been stressed by several researchers (e.g. Firth 1996; Kordon 2003; Meierkord 1996, 2002; Seidlhofer 2001).

Arising from this concept of understanding then, it is already quite obvious that there can be no complete or utterly correct understanding, but rather that the result of the process of constructing shared and mutual understanding will always be partial and fragmentary (cf. Linell 1995: 184). As a consequence, one might regard understanding and non-understanding as the two extreme ends of a continuum along which various degrees of shared understanding or non-understanding can be achieved. Following Bremer (1996: 40), we can therefore define non-understanding as a point in a conversation “when the listener realises that s/he cannot make sense of (part

of) an utterance". Yet, mirroring the concept of understanding, in most cases a non-understanding will not be absolute. Rather, non-understanding is a "graded phenomenon" (ibid.), which may vary from a total lack of understanding to more or less complete understanding (cf. Allwood & Abelar 1984: 29).

3. My theoretical approach for the analysis of non-understanding

It is obvious that sequences in which participants deal with understanding problems, i.e. in which non-understandings surface and are negotiated, vary in length and salience (Linell 1995: 190). It is logical to assume that the length of negotiation mostly corresponds to the gravity and depth of the understanding problem, so that shorter sequences may be more easily traced back to a causal core by the participants as well as the analyst, while longer negotiations may lack such a focal cause. Yet, this correspondence of length and gravity is not absolute. In any case, the analyst is an outside observer who is not a part of the interaction. Therefore,

> the analyst is faced with the difficulty of stating with even a fair degree of certainty what a speaker 'meant' by some utterance or specifying precisely what the communicative effect of the utterance was for the listener (McGregor 1985: 3).

Consequently, one needs certain observable indicators which might point towards the existence of a non-understanding in the conversation. In the following, I will consider briefly what procedures participants have at their disposal in order to indicate a non-understanding and how meaning is then sequentially negotiated among participants. I will further point out how I combined these two theoretical models for the purpose of my analysis in order to first locate non-understandings in my data and to systematically analyze them subsequently.

3.1. Procedures for indicating non-understanding

When a non-understanding occurs, at least one interactant notices that there is a lack of shared understanding. Essentially, this interactant then has two immediate choices: s/he can indicate the non-understanding and possibly

initiate a negotiation of meaning or s/he can avoid indication[3] and adopt a 'let it pass' behavior as described by Firth (1996: 243-245). In the literature, e.g. on 'repair' in traditional Conversation Analysis (cf. Schegloff 2000; Wong 2000), one often encounters a view according to which a participant who avoids (direct) indication is alleged to be insincere, as s/he is seen to conceal something and thereby to deceive his or her co-participants. I want to note at the outset that this view is not shared in this paper. The attitude assumed in the current research is not a judgmental one that regards (direct) indication as good and non-indication as unfavorable – particularly so since the term 'indication' in this paper, as will become apparent immediately, is not understood as direct or explicit indication, while in many other studies it is.

In order to locate those points in a conversation at which a non-understanding occurs, it seems feasible to begin one's analysis with a well defined model of procedures which non-native speakers (henceforth NNSs) have been shown to deploy in order to indicate problems of understanding. Categorizations of indicating procedures like the ones presented by Varonis and Gass (1985: 76-77) and Wong (2000: 248) entail a major drawback, because they are mostly limited to direct and explicit indicating procedures. Such schemes are necessarily incomplete, since they do not cover the whole range of procedures which participants have at their disposal.

A comprehensive and systematic model of procedures for indicating non-understanding from a NNS perspective is presented by Vasseur, Broeder and Roberts (1996: 73-90)[4], who set up a "continuum of procedures" (op. cit.: 76) which covers the whole spectrum of more or less commitment (i.e. directness and explicitness) and focusing (i.e. specificity). One end of this continuum of indication is occupied by 'signals' which are "direct and consciously produced" (op. cit.: 75) in order to indicate a non-understanding and to initiate a negotiation sequence. Yet – and this is the biggest asset of this model – the continuum is not restricted to these direct and explicit 'signals', but also includes indirect and inexplicit 'symptoms' at the other end, as is illustrated in Figure 1.

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3 Cf. Vasseur, Broeder and Roberts (1996: 69) and Varonis and Gass (1985: 74).

4 The data that Vasseur, Broeder and Roberts (1996) and Bremer et al. (1996) use involves so-called majority and minority speakers, i.e. NSs and NNSs, and is not ELF data. As the focus is on the minority speakers throughout most of the analysis, however, the procedures for indicating non-understanding are seen from a NNS perspective and, it seems, equally relevant for ELF data. What also has to be noted is that most of the minority speakers in their data are adult immigrants most of whom may not have had foreign language training at school.

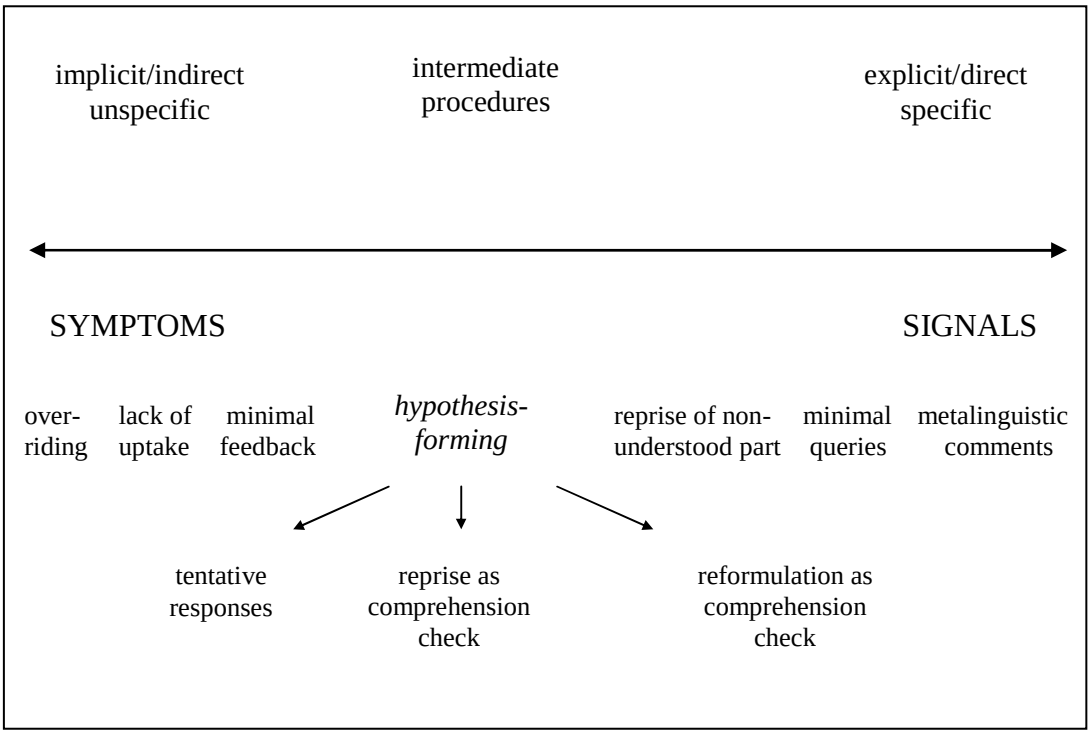

Figure 1[5]: Model of the main procedures for indicating non-understanding

What is essential to these 'symptoms' is that they are defined as "behaviours which are not necessarily meant to signal non-understanding but which are interpreted as revealing non-understanding" (op. cit.: 75) as they may lead the other participants – as well as the analyst – to suspect that an understanding problem is lingering under the surface. They correspond closely to the behaviors identified by Firth (1996: 243-245) as instantiations of the 'let it pass' principle and certainly require more interpretative work from the co-participants than explicit or intermediate procedures (cf. Vasseur, Broeder & Roberts 1996: 77).

In the middle of the continuum, one finds the intermediate indicating procedures which are mainly based on 'hypothesis-forming' (op. cit.: 82). Such hypotheses can surface in various forms and usually put the co-participants on the track of a non-understanding. Again, Vasseur, Broeder and Roberts (1996: 82-85) list three main types in which such intermediate procedures normally occur: a) tentative responses, b) reprise as comprehension check, and c) reformulation as comprehension check. While a tentative response is still a rather implicit procedure, the procedures of reprise as comprehension check and reformulation as comprehension check are

5 This figure is an adapted and enlarged version of Vasseur, Broeder & Roberts's (1996: 77) continuum.

clearly more interactionally visible. A reprise of an isolated form with interrogative prosody signals willingness to participate in clarification and functions as a clear comprehension check (op. cit.: 83-84). An even more complex procedure than reprise is reformulation, which constitutes a "re-elaboration of the other's discourse (or part of it)" (op. cit.: 84). In reformulating what another participant has said, a speaker tries to ensure that understanding is shared among the speakers.

On the right-hand side of the continuum, Vasseur, Broeder and Roberts (1996: 85-89) list three main direct and explicit procedures for indicating non-understanding, namely a) reprise of the beginning or part of a non-understood utterance, b) minimal queries, and c) metalinguistic questions and comments. As far as negotiating and resolving local non-understanding is concerned, Vasseur, Broeder and Roberts (1996: 88) consider these explicit procedures to be more effective, a proposition that the findings of my MA thesis do not really support, since intermediate indicating procedures are found to be most frequent in my data. This discrepancy may very well be due to the fact that Vasseur, Broeder and Roberts analyzed NNS-NS interactions, in which explicit requests for clarification by so-called minority speakers are still viewed most favorably by the native speakers (NSs), while the situation in my ELF data is a different and clearly more egalitarian one, where all participants are expecting to work towards achieving mutual understanding. However, Vasseur, Broeder and Roberts also note that it is not necessarily a wide repertoire of explicit procedures which ensures the most fruitful management of understanding, but rather "the most flexible, adaptive and effective use of the signalling procedures in an emerging context" (op. cit.: 89). Such a flexible use of direct, intermediate and implicit procedures allows participants to "find a balance between continuing the interaction and frequently halting it for clarification" (ibid.). Successful interactional management of non-understanding consequently means maintaining relative smoothness, cooperation and normality in a conversation, while at the same time ensuring a sufficient amount of shared understanding. A close examination of the way participants manage occurring instances of non-understanding is certainly one way of finding out how successful an interaction – and maybe particularly an ELF interaction – is.

3.2. The negotiation of meaning

Since any instance of non-understanding only becomes visible if it is followed by some type of indicator, this grid of indicating procedures seems to be a

valuable starting point for locating sequences in which a non-understanding becomes the focus of interaction and is negotiated among participants. While, as Seidlhofer (2002: 19) notes, the reciprocal engagement in negotiating meaning is certainly a typical feature of all spoken interaction, it has been found that such negotiations are particularly frequent in NNS-NNS, i.e. ELF, interactions (cf. Meeuwis 1994: 395; Varonis & Gass 1985: 71). In this respect, Varonis and Gass (1985) use the term "negotiation of meaning" and they propose a model which is extremely functional, since its structure rests on only four basic components. Therefore, this model can be flexibly adapted to the analysis of negotiated non-understandings.

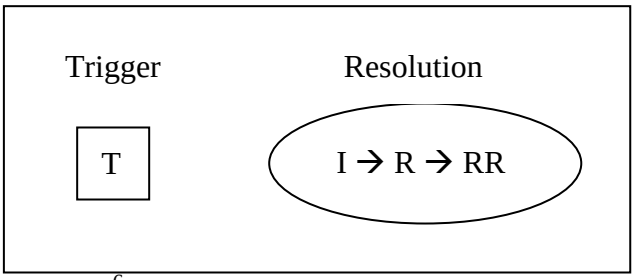

Figure 2[6]: Model for the negotiation of meaning

The model is divided into two main parts termed 'trigger' and 'resolution'. The 'trigger' (T) is defined as "that utterance or part of an utterance on the part of the speaker which results in some indication of non-understanding on the part of the hearer" (Varonis & Gass 1985: 74). Consequently, the 'trigger' only can be located via the first part of the 'resolution', the 'indicator' (I). Yet, the negotiation clearly does not end at this point. The 'indicator' will be followed by a 'response' (R) and by a 'reaction to the response' (RR) (ibid.).

Employing this model for comparing NS-NS, NS-NNS and NNS-NNS interactions, Varonis and Gass (1985: 83) find that in their data NNS-NNS discourse involves more of such 'non-understanding routines' than the other two types of discourse. The conclusion the authors draw from this observation, however, is that

> the more involved non-native speakers are in a dyad, the more time interlocutors will spend moving down, or in other words, in the negotiation of meaning, rather than moving forward, in other words, in the progression of the discourse (Varonis & Gass 1985: 83).

Varonis and Gass therefore seem to be of the opinion that negotiation of meaning is a somewhat unfavorable part of conversation as it is seen to halt the progress of a conversation in any instance. It appears that, in this rather one-sided view, which limits the nature of interaction to having purely a

6 Figure taken from Varonis & Gass (1985: 74).

transactional function, the possibility of these negotiation sequences contributing something positive to an ongoing interaction, e.g. on an interpersonal level, is ruled out. From a holistic ELF perspective which takes into account the interpersonal dimension of interaction, however, it is very well imaginable that successful negotiation of meaning may indeed contribute something positive to an interaction, e.g. to the emergence of rapport (cf. e.g. Kordon 2003).

3.3. Combining the models: creating an analytical tool for the analysis of non-understanding

In my analysis, the two models presented above served as points of departure for locating and analyzing occurring non-understandings in my ELF data in a systematic way. As a first step, Vasseur, Broeder and Roberts's continuum of indicating procedures (cf. 3.1.) provided me with a useful spectrum of linguistic signals and symptoms, which are likely to be found in the spoken language data at points where a non-understanding exists between – in my case ELF – participants. Although, as has been pointed out above, these indicating procedures have different degrees of explicitness and consequently may be more or less visible, they nevertheless constitute observable – as opposed to unobservable (e.g. mental) – features in the interaction. Consequently, I scanned my data for occurrences of these indicating procedures in order to pinpoint instances in the interaction where a non-understanding may have occurred. This scanning process was done primarily on the basis of transcripts, but recourse was taken to audio-recordings when this seemed relevant. Furthermore, this scanning process was of course enriched by the fact that, as the analyst-observer, I had been present during the interactions myself and had taken field notes.

As a second step, after locating the non-understandings in my data, I tried to map out the developmental sequence of each non-understanding in the interaction. For this purpose, I relied on Varonis and Gass's model of the negotiation of meaning (cf. 3.2.). While their approach is somewhat restricted due to the exclusion of the interpersonal dimension of interactions, its strength lies in its applicability in empirical research, because it allows a systematic structural analysis of how a non-understanding is triggered, indicated, negotiated and resolved. It is purely in this systematic structural sense that I am using Varonis and Gass's model. Mapping out the boundaries of each negotiated non-understanding, it should be noted that such negotiation

sequences can be quite short, but may also take up more extensive stretches of discourse. In these longer instances, the negotiation of meaning may have a recursive function and develop to become a longer negotiation loop (cf. Gass & Varonis 1991: 128)[7] which usually involves multiple indicators, responses and reactions.

In a third step, the located and delimited sequences of interaction were then analyzed in detail with regard to their particular observable characteristics. Among the central questions guiding the analysis of each non-understanding were: (a) what particular indicating procedure is being used, (b) what sequential development does the indicator entail in the particular co-text and context of the interaction at this point, (c) how do the participants react to each other interactionally, (d) how does the employed indicating procedure correspond to the preceding trigger utterance, (e) at which point is the non-understanding resolved. Only by means of considering these questions with regard to each instance of non-understanding did it then become possible to make informed propositions as to what each non-understanding could have been caused by.

4. Managing non-understanding in an ELF business context

The extracts analyzed in this paper come from the data collected and transcribed for my MA thesis. This data consists of two business meetings among speakers with different mother tongues who used English as a lingua franca. One meeting was recorded at the branch office of an international forwarding agency in Luxembourg and involves native speakers of German (Germany) and a native speaker of Dutch. The second meeting was recorded at a food company in Austria and involves three native speakers of Austrian German and two native speakers of Korean. Both meetings had an overall length of more than three hours each, but in both cases only the first portion of the meeting was selected. Altogether three hours of the data were transcribed and subsequently served as the basis for analysis in my thesis.

The whole body of ELF data examined in my MA thesis revealed primarily three main types of miscommunication in ELF: local non-

7 For a comprehensive model of NNS miscommunication see Gass and Varonis (1991: 127-129), for an adaptation of this model see Pitzl (2004: 44-46).

understanding, strategic miscommunication, and global misunderstanding[8]. The vast majority of these miscommunication phenomena were instances of first category, i.e. non-understandings, which is why they were chosen as the focus of this paper. Yet, the three instances of possibly strategic miscommunication (cf. Pitzl 2004: 114-121) and the rather persistent instance of a global misunderstanding caused by sustained misframing (cf. op. cit.: 121-127), which the analysis in my thesis revealed, clearly indicate that there are several types of miscommunication observable in ELF interactions. Besides the three main types, I could also observe an instance of local misunderstanding (op. cit.: 108-111) and two instances where negotiation of meaning was self-initiated in order to prevent miscommunication (op. cit.: 111-114).

Now, the twelve instances of negotiated non-understandings which I analyzed in my thesis (op. cit.: 73-108) can be considered to be similar as much as they can be considered diverse: While all of these non-understandings exhibit the same basic sequential characteristics that Varonis and Gass (1985) propose in their model, they vary greatly in length, ranging from short three-line sequences to complex negotiation cycles which take up about one minute in the conversation[9]. As diverse as their lengths are the potential causes that these non-understandings have. Regardless of length or causality, however, all non-understandings are resolved. Furthermore, all negotiation sequences support observations made by e.g. Meierkord (1996) and Firth (1996), who mention a high degree of cooperation as a typical characteristic of ELF interactions.

For the purpose of this paper, three short instances of negotiated non-understandings have been selected and will be presented and analyzed with regard to their structure, the indicating procedures employed and their potential causes. The first example of an extremely local negotiation of meaning involves only three of the four components proposed by Varonis and Gass (1985: 73):

8 In contrast to a non-understanding, which at least one participant is aware of, the term misunderstanding refers to an understanding problem which no participant is aware of at the time it occurs (Pitzl 2004: 31).

9 The longest non-understanding sequence I found in my data stretches over 70 lines in the transcript and involves 5 indicators (cf. Pitzl 2004: 98-108). Due to the limitations of space and the rather extensive nature of the suggested analysis, however, only short sequences have been chosen for analysis in this paper.

Extract 1[10]

S1(m), S2(m)=Korean; S4(m)=German (Austria)

12	S1: we produced about three hundred of that (1)	T
13	S4: of those? (2)	I
14	S2: <soft> yeah </soft>	R

Structurally speaking, extract 1 consists of a 'trigger' utterance in line 12, which is followed by an indicating procedure in line 13 and a response in line 14. We are therefore looking at the most basic skeleton structure in which meaning can be negotiated.

Relying on Vasseur, Broeder and Robert's (1996) model of indicating procedures (cf. 3.1.), the utterance *of those?* constitutes an intermediate indicating procedure. S4 checks whether he has understood S1 correctly by taking up and reformulating the last two words of S1's utterance: *of that* (line 12) becomes *of those* (line 13) and is accompanied by rising intonation in order to signal the need for feedback. Once S4's reformulation is confirmed in line 14 – noticeably it is S2, and not S1, who picks up and reacts to the indicator – the non-understanding appears to be resolved and the conversation proceeds. On the structural level, one can therefore call this a rather straightforward negotiation of meaning sequence in which the non-understanding is immediately indicated and instantly resolved. On a more interpretative level, however, this short sequence offers highly interesting aspects, especially as far as its potential causes are concerned.

Although it is always difficult and hardly ever entirely possible to locate the causes of an understanding problem, a close analysis of the sequential and structural characteristics considering the immediate content as well as the context of the non-understanding may in some instances yield promising results. If we consider the properties of the indicator (line 13), it seems fairly obvious that the trigger resides in S1's preceding utterance (line 12), in its last portion to be precise, namely the last two words *of that*. If one contrasts the syntactic, semantic and phonological properties of the trigger *of that* with the properties of the indicator *of those*, there appear to be two levels at which S1's *of that* could have become problematic for S4, namely the level of grammar and that of pronunciation.

10 All extracts conform to the VOICE Transcription Conventions [2.0], which are available at http://www.univie.ac.at/voice.

Starting with the first of these two areas, one can argue that S4's employment of the deictic pronoun *those*, which stands in contrast to S1's pronoun *that*, suggests a syntactic ambiguity as the cause of the non-understanding. Considering the preceding talk and the surrounding context of the situation, however, this interpretation is not completely convincing:

Extract 1 (extended)

S1(m), S2(m)=Korean; S4(m), S5(f)=German (Austria)

1	S1: and we er: developed (1) (to) (.) store fit er size rack. er	
2	which er (.) i er: showed the	
3	S4: mhm	
4	S1: pictures on page twenty-eight (1) and also we called it wire	
5	rack (2) so that was a bi- er: that was our er <spel> a </spel>	
6	and <spel> p </spel> er (1)	
7	S2: <soft> seventeen </soft>	
8	S1: page seventeen?	
9	S2: <soft> mhm </soft>	
10	S1: oh yeah pa- sorry page seventeen	
11	S5: mhm (.)	
12	S1: we produced about three hundred of that (1)	*T*
13	S4: of those? (2)	*I*
14	S2: <soft> yeah </soft>	*R*

When S1 talks about the rack in line 1 and in lines 4 and 5, he uses a singular form in both cases. It is therefore not surprising that he later, in line 12, also uses the singular pronoun *that*. One could argue that – looking solely at the participant's verbal behavior – the referent, namely *wire rack* (line 4-5), is rather removed from the pronoun *that* in line 12 and that this could have caused ambiguity. Yet, as becomes obvious when looking at the conversation in lines 4 to 10, there are pictures of the rack in the presentation material that all participants – also S4 – have in front of them. So when everyone turns to *page seventeen* to look at the picture, there is a non-linguistic referent for S1's

that, which makes it seem unlikely that – with the picture in front of him – S4 found S1's *that* ambiguous because of its syntactic quality.

Having been present at the respective meeting and having transcribed the audio recordings, it seems much more plausible in fact that S1's *of that* triggered a non-understanding on the part of S4 because of the way it was pronounced, namely not as two full words but as the reduced form [vðæt˺]. While the rather quickly pronounced weak form is certainly not incorrect measured by L1 standards of English, it may nevertheless be rather difficult to decipher for the NNS interlocutor. In order to get a sense of how intelligible or unintelligible the pronunciation [vðæt˺] is for ELF users, it makes sense to draw on the sole in-depth study of ELF pronunciation currently available, namely Jennifer Jenkins and in particular her Lingua Franca Core (cf. Jenkins 2000: 134-162; 2002: 96-98). This enables us to relate S1's pronunciation to the features Jenkins lists as core and non-core features for English pronunciation in an international context.

There are two main aspects of S1's pronunciation that need to be considered in this respect, namely the dropping of the initial [ə] in *of* and the production of an inaudibly released [t˺] instead of a fully pronounced voiceless [t]. Regarding the first feature, even though Jenkins makes no explicit comments as far as deletion of vowels is concerned, she notes that weak forms themselves "may actually hinder intelligibility in EIL" (Jenkins 2000: 147). Therefore, it is quite possible to imagine that S1's omission of the initial [ə], which reduces the weak form [əv] to a mere [v], might impair intelligibility in this Korean-Austrian ELF business context, even though it would be an acceptable pronunciation feature in an L1 situation.

The second distinctive phonological feature in S1's pronunciation of *of that* is the form of the word-final [t], which is not audibly released by S1 and becomes a [t˺]. Now, this feature bears a rather complex relation to the Lingua Franca Core (LFC). On the one hand, "the LFC [generally] follows RP in its use of the consonant /t/" (Jenkins 2000: 140). This is the case because the General American (GA) usage of e.g. the flap [ɾ] in word-middle position is phonetically closer to a voiced [d] than to a voiceless [t] and has the potential to cause confusion in an ELF situation (ibid.). Consequently, the LFC follows the use of British [t]. Yet, in setting up this rule, Jenkins nevertheless allows "the potential for elision when /t/ occurs word-finally" (ibid.), a feature which is very similar to S1's non-released [t˺] in *of that*. According to Jenkins, the elision of word-final /t/ "is a very common feature of English phonology and was not found to reduce intelligibility […] in the ILT data" (op. cit.: 142). This, the present case indicates, cannot be taken over unrestrictedly in ELF contexts, in which it has the potential to endanger intelligibility. While the

dropping of the initial [ə] and the non-released [t˺] do not lead to complete unintelligibility or utter confusion in the example analyzed, they nevertheless trigger a local non-understanding and prompt S4 to employ an indicating procedure. Providing the appropriate reformulation *of those?*, S4 simultaneously indicates the existence of this non-understanding and contributes to its clarification, so that a short affirmative answer suffices to resolve the understanding problem.

Similar to the preceding extract, the next example also exhibits a tripartite negotiation of meaning structure and is linked to pronunciation in its potential causes:

Extract 2

S1(m), S2(m)=Korean; S4(m)=German (Austria)

1	S4: <L1de> na ja {well} </L1de> if (.) if i m- may erm (.)	
2	make a comment there	
3	S2: mhm (1)	
4	S4: the (.) impulse channel (.) erm	*T*
5	S1: impulse chann<1>el? </1>	*I*
6	S4: <1> the </1> impulse channel or the <spel> c v s </spel>	
7	er channel (.) is very much er (.) LICENSE driven. (.)	*R*
8	meaning (1) it it's (.) in the impulse channel (1) the LICENSE	
9	is very important. (.)	

Although the trigger turn in line 4 is short anyway, S1's indicating procedure in line 5 leaves no doubt about the fact that it is precisely the term *impulse channel* which triggers the non-understanding. As in the first example, the indicating procedure which is employed for this purpose can be characterized as intermediate. Vasseur, Broeder and Roberts (1996: 83) refer to it as reprise, an indicator of non-understanding which "covers a whole range of procedures which consists of taking up the other's words" (ibid.). In this instance, the reprise involves the repetition of the term *impulse channel* with rising intonation, which signals the need for further clarification. However, what is noticeable is that, within this reprise, S1 alters the pronunciation of the word *impulse*. While S4 in the trigger utterance refers to the [ˈɪmpuls] *channel*, S1 in his reprise asks about the [ˈɪmpʌls] *channel*, which suggests that the cause

for the occurrence of the non-understanding might reside in pronunciation again.

In establishing the LFC, Jenkins (2000: 159) suggests that, while vowel length is essential for intelligibility and consequently has to be maintained, L2 regional qualities in vowels are permissible if they are used consistently and as long as the quality of the vowel [ɜː] is preserved. As a result, vowel quality, "for example the difference between /bʌs/ and /bʊs/" (Jenkins 2002: 98), is not included in her list of core features, but is regarded as a non-core feature. In that respect, S4's first uttering of the word *impulse* with a non-standard vowel quality of the /u/-sound might have caused a slight irritation, i.e. a non-understanding on a very minor scale, on the side of S1. In this case, S1's reprise functions as a 'comprehension check'[11] and constitutes an intermediate indicating procedure. When S4 repeats the triggering element in line 6, he responds to S1's comprehension check and the altered, more standard [ʌ]-pronunciation that it features by slightly adapting his pronunciation of the term *impulse*. He moves from a completely closed and back [u] in the trigger (line 4) to a little more open and central [ʊ] and says [ˈɪmpʊls] (line 6). So although S4 does not imitate S1's [ʌ]-pronunciation, he seems to accommodate to the other speaker to some degree. Since this accommodated [ʊ]-pronunciation is not immediately challenged by S1, S4 proceeds in his turn and retrains this pronunciation of [ˈɪmpʊls] (line 8). S1 obviously accepts this non-standard vowel quality, as S4 – like Jenkins (2000: 159) postulates – now uses this non-standard vowel quality consistently.

There is, however, also an alternative interpretation as to what might have caused the non-understanding at this particular point in the interaction and this interpretation relates to the semantic meaning of the term *impulse channel*. It is possible to imagine that S1's reprise in line 5 is in fact not meant as a comprehension check, to which a repetition of the term in question or an affirmative response such as 'yeah' would be an appropriate resolution, but that the reprise is meant to request explicit clarification of the meaning of the term *impulse channel*. In this case, the reprise would be located more towards the explicit end of the continuum of indicating procedures (cf. Vasseur, Broeder & Roberts 1996: 85-87) and the non-understanding would arise because of S1's being uncertain what S4 exactly means when he uses the term *impulse channel*. What is remarkable is that, from the point of view of the analyst, this interpretation holds equally well as the one relating to pronunciation because of the way S4 responds in lines 6 to 7. His response

11 In the sense of Vasseur, Broeder and Roberts (1996: 83).

does not only feature a repetition of the term *impulse channel* with adapted pronunciation, which has been analyzed already, but it also includes a paraphrase of the term, namely *or the c v s er channel* (lines 6-7). As the term *CVS*, which is an acronym for 'convenience store', has been used very frequently in the portion of the meeting preceding this extract, the use of this alternative term would certainly have cleared up any semantic non-understanding that might have existed as to what *impulse channel* refers to.

What is observable, even in such a short stretch of conversation, is that proficient ELF speakers seem to engage actively and also very effectively in the negotiation of meaning. It seems that the two possible interpretations that have been outlined quite elaborately above also presented themselves to S4 and that he decided – obviously within the split seconds that one has available for making such decisions in the real-time processing of an interaction – to account for both possibilities in his response. Since S4 opts for this combined strategy, rather than for either repetition or explanation only, the non-understanding is cleared up immediately and S4 is able to continue the thought he started in line 4. It would seem that such a proceeding points to a rather skilled interactional management of non-understanding.

A comparable skill in effectively responding to an indicator of non-understanding can be observed in the following extract, which exhibits all of the four basic components of the negotiation of meaning proposed by Varonis and Gass (1985: 73-74):

Extract 3

S2(m)=Dutch; S3(m)=German (Germany)

1	S2: this is more or less the well (.) the level of rates which is	
2	at the moment (1) <7> even (if) </7>	
3	S3: <7> are you </7> serving some some more destinations	
4	e:r in the middle east?	*T=Qu.*
5	S2: again?	*I*
6	S3: do you have some more destinations in the middle east? or	
7	it's purely dubai?	*R*
8	S2: YES. i PROMISE(D) you actually i've sorry	*RR=Ans.*

Taken from the business meeting recorded in Luxembourg, this extract can, in terms of its structure, be regarded as a classic example Varonis and Gass's

understanding of the negotiation of meaning: the trigger utterance (lines 3-4) is followed by an indicator (line 5), which is succeeded by a response (lines 6-7) and a reaction to the response (line 8). What is particularly noticeable about this example is the fact that the trigger utterance is actually a question, i.e. that the non-understanding happens – or comes to the surface – because one interlocutor poses a question to another; a characteristic that could be observed in several examples in my MA thesis[12]. For the analyst, it is quite clear that the non-understanding is resolved as soon as the question is answered (line 8: *YES*). In order for the answer to be provided, however, a short stretch of negotiation is needed.

The indicating procedure S2 uses is very direct and explicit and is a minimal query on the continuum of indicating procedures (cf. Vasseur, Broeder & Roberts 1996: 88). As is characteristic of such minimal queries, S2's *again?* openly requests clarification and is very easy to identify as an indicator for the other participants. At the same time, this explicitness is not accompanied by specificity about the precise cause of the non-understanding: S2's *again?* does not narrow down the causal portion of the trigger in any way. Consequently, such a procedure is generally associated with some sort of 'general understanding problem' (ibid.) which is related to the trigger utterance as a whole.

It is this general interpretation that S3 primarily follows, when he utters his response in lines 6 to 7. As a first step, he basically repeats his initial question of lines 3 to 4. However, he does so with a slight reformulation at the beginning. While the semantic core of his question, *some more destinations in the middle east*, remains intact, S3 changes the verb construction from *are you serving* to a more simple *do you have*, a change that appears rather straightforward but is nevertheless noticeable in two respects. Firstly, it has to be noted that S3 uses another verb in his response: 'serve' is substituted by 'have'. Even though both verbs rank among the most common 1,000 words in spoken English according to the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (4th edition), 'have' is clearly much more general and extendable in its meaning. Therefore, this use of *have* constitutes an adaptation on the part of S3 which supports one of the lexicogrammatical tendencies emerging in ELF, namely a "heavy reliance on certain verbs of high semantic generality, such as *do, have, make, put, take*" (Seidlhofer 2005c: 68, emphasis in original)[13]. Secondly, it should be noted that, in addition to the use of another

12 Cf. Pitzl (2004) examples 18, 19, 20, 22, 24 and 25.

13 Cf. also the list of lexicogrammatical tendencies in ELF included in the recent OALD, 7th edition (Seidlhofer 2005b).

verb, S3 also changes the aspect of the verb construction from a present continuous form in the trigger (line 3) to a simple present tense form in his response (line 6). While I am not aware of any empirical findings with regard to the use of the progressive aspect in ELF speech, it has been pointed out by Smit (2005) that the tense system in ELF in general is likely to be rather different from the tense system in so-called standard English. Again, it seems that the present example supports such a hypothesis.

By formulating the first part of his response (line 6) the way he does, S3 mainly seems to act on the assumption that S2 has simply not heard the question properly and therefore he repeats and simplifies it a little. With this strategy, S3 follows the interpretation which points towards a general non-understanding of the whole utterance as the cause of the understanding problem. With regard to this interpretation, the overlap which occurs at the end of line 2 and the beginning of line 3 needs to be considered. In line 2, S2 makes a one-second pause and consequently a 'transition relevance place' occurs at which, however, both S2 and S3 start speaking simultaneously. As a result, there is not only a 'noise', which inhibits S2's perception, but also diminished attention, because it is S2 himself who is speaking. Since it is the beginning of the question whose perception is impaired in this way, this is likely to affect the rest of the utterance and to trigger the sort of general non-understanding which has been described.

Yet, there is a second possible interpretation, considering the fact that S3 does not fall silent after his reformulated question, but rather adds another short supplementary question *or it's purely dubai?*. This accounts for the possibility that S3 – and possibly also S2 – might have perceived the question as too imprecise in parts. By adding this small piece of information (*or it's purely dubai?*), S3 complements the comparative expression *some more* he has used in both the trigger utterance and the response and illustrates that by *some more* he means 'some more destinations other than Dubai'. Again, it is this skillful interactional management which makes both interpretations plausible from the point of view of the analyst. Similarly, it is the adequate use of indicating procedures by these ELF speakers and their competent reactions to those, which makes the occurrence of a non-understanding completely undisruptive in the progression of the interaction.

5. Conclusion and outlook

It is hoped that the sample analysis of non-understandings in ELF business interactions presented in this paper exemplifies the rich explanatory potential

which the systematic in-depth analysis of such sequences may have with regard to various aspects of ELF speech.

On a structural level, the non-understandings were examined with regard to two central features: the procedures participants employed to indicate non-understanding and the sequential development of each negotiation of meaning. From the point of view of pragmatics, the analysis of these structural characteristics reveals that the ELF speakers in my data exhibit a high degree of interactional and pragmatic competence. As the theoretical point of departure in this paper was that non-understanding will form part of any kind of conversation and cannot be avoided, one of the central questions for pragmatics then is: How do ELF speakers react to such non-understandings once they – inevitably – occur? With regard to the ELF data examined here, one can only conclude: most adequately and most competently. When a non-understanding arises, the speakers signal their need for negotiating meaning in a way that does not disrupt the ongoing interaction, but which at the same time enables their co-participants to produce adept responses and reactions. Similarly, the speakers who respond show skill in providing just enough, and the relevant kind of, information, which in turn does not halt or distract the interaction but nevertheless suffices to resolve the existent non-understanding.

On a more interpretative level, it was shown that non-understandings in ELF interactions may also provide interesting material for research about levels of language other than pragmatics, such as pronunciation and lexicogrammar. By merging the closely examined structural and sequential characteristics of a non-understanding with the conversational content, it is often – but not always – possible to locate some of the features in the talk which could have triggered the non-understanding. Although what these particular features are will vary from instance to instance, it has been shown that in some cases these potential causes may in fact be closely linked to already existent findings or gradually emerging tendencies about ELF. In this sense, besides being a legitimate topic of pragmatics in itself, the analysis of non-understandings also offers a great potential for complementing findings and providing valuable insights about ELF at various other levels of linguistic analysis.

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Applied genre analysis in pre-service ESP-teacher education – a report on a recently developed applied linguistics course

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The so fittingly labelled 'ESP' approach to genre analysis (e.g. Swales 1990; Bhatia 1993 & 2004) has not only proven itself as very useful in analysing the characteristic features of specific genres, but also in familiarising oneself with previously unknown genres, especially when undertaken in combination with the analysis of exemplar and reference corpora (Tribble 2001). It is for this reason that this applied ESP approach features prominently in the applied linguistics course, 'Approaching ESP Texts', which is part of a recently developed pre-service ESP teacher-education program at the English Department of Vienna University, Austria. While the practicalities of the teaching situation have made some modifications to the applied ESP approach necessary, student evaluations of the course confirm that, as originally assumed, this approach is of great value to future teachers of English for specific purposes.

1. Introduction

This paper describes the newly designed applied linguistics course in a recently developed pre-service ESP teacher-education program at the English Department of Vienna University, Austria. The focus here is thus on the considerations that went into the design of the course, the practicalities of teaching it and first evaluations of its strengths and weaknesses.[1] The aim of this course is to enable students to familiarise themselves with previously unknown text-types with the help of genre analysis as well as the analysis of customised exemplar corpora (Tribble 2001).[2] Before going into detail, I will first explain the rationale of the course and the pre-service ESP teacher-

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1 For a discussion of genre analysis, which is the main theoretical concept on which the course design rests, cf. the references included in this article and especially Hüttner (2005).

2 We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the British Council Vienna that made two weekend seminars possible during which the curriculum of the program was designed in large parts. Special thanks to Christopher Tribble, who acted as moderator and catalyst at both seminars.

education program by briefly outlining the situational setting as it pertains to the education of upper secondary teachers in Austria.

1.1. Situational setting

The Austrian school system at upper-secondary level (year 9 onwards) has a characteristic which seems to be fairly unique in Europe (and elsewhere), namely a highly diversified range of schools offering a combination of general academic education as well as vocational education. This means that these schools do both: they prepare pupils for specific fields of expertise (e.g. technical fields, IT, tourism) and, at the same time, give them the necessary academic basis to later-on attend university of, theoretically at least, any specification. As this entails an increased workload for the learners, these schools take a year longer, i.e. five instead of the usual four, and require more contact hours than purely academically oriented upper secondary schools. And yet, the vocationally-oriented ones seem to be doing a good job – they are high in demand and grow in number, but still have to turn away quite a lot of applicants. It almost goes without saying that all of these schools, whatever line of specialisation they follow, offer English as obligatory foreign language, but that these English classes are meant to offer language education in ESP, of the relevant sort.[3]

This particularity of the Austrian school system is very relevant to an English Department offering language teacher education. In the past, our department's sole concern used to be with the teaching of general English, but the recently increasing relevance of vocationally-oriented secondary schools has opened up more and more job opportunities for our graduates as ESP teachers. As for most of our students the only ESP they are familiar with is EAP (English for Academic Purposes), they feel extremely ill-prepared to teach English for, for instance, electrical engineering or IT, or even, much less 'exotic', English for business economics. Therefore, the English Department at Vienna University has recently introduced the afore-mentioned pre-service teacher education program, called the 'Teaching English for Specific Purposes (TESP) Module'.

[3] Cf. http://www.berufsbildendeschulen.at/de/dlcollection.asp for an overview of various curricula.

1.2. The TESP-Module

This pre-service module covers four one-semester courses of approximately 28 contact lessons each (cf. also CerTESP 2005). Two of these courses introduce students to various areas of ESP (e.g. business, law, medicine, IT, engineering), one is concerned with teaching methodology and the one that offers the applied linguistic approach described in more detail below is 'Approaching ESP Texts', which is sequentially the second one of the module. As the module's aim is not only to introduce the students to some forms of ESP, but also to raise their awareness of their future role as professional language teachers and mediators, the design of the module rests on the two principles 'mediation between theory and practice', i.e. familiarising students with relevant theories, their evaluation and application, and 'professionalisation', i.e. developing the knowledge and competence expected from a professional ESP practitioner (cf. Mehlmauer, Kaltenböck, Smit 2003; Widdowson 1983 & 2003).

For the course in question here, these principles surface in its aim, which is to "enable students to work with and analyse ESP texts within an applied linguistics framework (using genre and discourse analysis and drawing on corpus resources) in order to prepare the students to mediate these insights to language and teaching practice" (CerTESP, course 2 2005: 1). In other words, this course aims to equip the students with the knowledge and skills necessary, firstly, to approach and familiarise themselves relatively quickly with previously unknown genres, secondly, to interpret and apply this knowledge to teaching situations and, by doing so, finally to develop their own professional (self) image as language experts.

'Approaching ESP Texts' is roughly divided into three parts (for the more detailed syllabus cf. the website). The first part gives a general introduction to ESP texts – what characterises them in comparison with EGP (English for General Purposes) texts – and to EAP (English for Academic Purposes) texts as a type of ESP already well-known to the students. The students are then introduced to genre analysis, whose practical value comes to the fore in a case study evaluating a familiar ESP genre (letters of application) and its treatment in Austrian school books. Next to genre analysis, this exercise also necessitates the use of computerised corpora. As corpus analysis is a new, and often fear-inducing, approach for most of our students, the second part of the course is reserved for them to familiarise themselves with this reference and research tool. The last part of the course is then dedicated to the students' own research projects. The students are first required to choose a specific genre and to decide on a potential learner group and setting in which this genre

could be taught. They then compile their own exemplar corpora and analyse the sample texts in view of that teaching situation. Finally, the students present their main findings, problems and comments on the project work to the whole group and write it all up in relatively informal reports. Overall, the course is thus designed with the aim to combine critical assessment of the relevant theoretical approaches with practical application by gaining hands-on experience.

In the remainder of this paper I will describe this operationalised methodology towards familiarising oneself with unknown genres, called 'applied genre analysis', and will then discuss its relevance in pre-service ESP-teacher education as perceived by students as well as myself as their teacher.

2. Applied genre analysis

2.1. Applying genre analysis to language teaching

The approach to genre analysis adopted here is the 'ESP approach', as originally described and formulated by John Swales (1990) and lastingly extended by Vijay Bhatia (1993, 2002, 2004). It is tailor-made for generally written, very specific text-types and firmly placed within a pedagogical framework (for a detailed discussion of this approach cf. Hüttner 2005). As both aspects are also at the heart of teaching ESP in the Austrian school context, the approach comes as close as this is possible to a perfect fit to the objective of the teacher education course in question.[4]

In this approach, a genre is defined as

> a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre [, which ...] shapes the schematic structure of the discourse [...]. Communicative purpose [...] operates to keep the scope of a genre [...] narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience. (Swales 1990:58)

The two central concepts in this highly comprehensive definition, 'communicative purpose' and 'discourse community', reflect the strength of

4 Another prominent approach to genre analysis that needs to be mentioned here is the 'Sydney School'. While it has also been widely used in teaching contexts, the focus has been on the socialization process into schooling in general (cf. e.g. Christie 2002), thus making the approach less applicable to the teaching of ESP at upper secondary and tertiary levels.

this approach, but, at the same time, hint at its weaknesses (cf. Hüttner 2005). 'Communicative purpose' is clearly a promising starting point for describing a genre, and yet, it is not clear whether it refers to the analyst's understanding of the communicative function of the genre or the discourse community's view of the genre's communicative purpose. A consequence of this vagueness is that the approach as it stands now (cf. Bhatia 2004) does not support precise distinctions and overlaps between related genres, although this would be a highly desirable aim, particularly for teaching purposes. As 'discourse community' represents a group of people owning specific genres, it is clearly a fitting concept for analysing those genres. What is in practice not always so easy, however, is to first identify and then find members of such discourse communities willing to give advice on the communicative purposes, schematic structure and linguistic realisations of a particular genre.

Despite these caveats, the ESP approach has its decisive strengths, such as the step-by-step analytical procedure described and illustrated in Bhatia (1993). While it goes beyond the scope of this paper to describe these steps in detail, it is important to stress that a genre analysis is intended to be undertaken on two levels – the situational one relating to the discourse community and their evaluation of the purpose and structure of the genre, and the linguistic one focussing on the surface features as well as the genre-structuring elements, called 'moves', which describe the subject matters integral to a genre and their functions within it. With regard to letters of application, for instance, relevant moves are 'Establishing credentials# or 'Soliciting response.' (Bhatia 1993: 62). Another strength of the ESP approach is its immediate applicability in pedagogical settings, which Tribble (2001) pays tribute to in suggesting an adapted version of it for teaching writing. In combination with corpus analysis, the relatively laborious procedure of undertaking the linguistic analysis of the genre is stream-lined and thus rendered manageable for language learners and also, as I will show later, for aspiring language teachers.

As summarised in Table 1, the idea is to collect an exemplar corpus of texts that exemplify the genre in question. These texts should be 'cleaned' of non-verbal elements and enriched by simple coding for formal units and also for genre-structuring elements, called moves. This means that, while the former step – coding for paragraphs, sentences and such – is relatively straight-forward, the latter is more complex as it relies on a preceding interpretative analysis of the communicative purposes of the genre-texts and their parts. With the exemplar corpus thus prepared, the linguistic analysis can then be undertaken with the help of a concordancing program that simplifies the analytical steps of preparing the raw data, but, as Tribble (2001) points

out, does not ‘do it all’; on the contrary, the lists produced by the software can only become meaningful when analysed and interpreted by the researchers themselves.

Table 1. Compiling and analysing a genre-specific corpus (cf. Tribble 2001)

(step 1)	compile own exemplar corpus by collecting relevant texts prepare texts by adding codes for textual organisation (‘moves’) and formal units (e.g. heading, sentence, paragraph)
(step 2)	compare exemplar corpus with a large reference corpus (e.g. BNC Sampler); for analysis of lexico-grammatical elements use a concordancing program, such as Oxford WordSmith Tools[5] (WordList for content and function words; Concord for collocations; KeyWords for genre-specific vocabulary and expressions)
(step 3)	for analysis of textualisation elements use coding for formal units (e.g. theme-rheme position)
(step 4)	for analysis of genre-structuring elements use coding for textual organisation

While our students’ interests as future teachers of ESP will be broader than “teaching writing”, Tribble’s approach to undertaking the linguistic analysis of a genre has turned out to be particularly helpful for our purposes, because (a) written text-types or genres are pervasive in ESP teaching (even if pupils do not need to produce all of them themselves), (b) they are less known to our students than many oral ones they will need to teach, (c) this approach is highly operationalised, and (d) it is relatively easy to follow, which is crucial if one keeps in mind that most of our students are novices when it comes to working with computer corpora and concordancing programs.

2.2. ‘Approaching ESP texts’

‘Approaching ESP Texts’ does not only introduce students to the ESP approach, but, as mentioned above, also requires them to do a more extended research project, for which they analyse genres in view of hypothetical teaching situations. Because of the course’s aim to mediate between theory and practice, i.e. between analysing and teaching a genre, it is therefore highly

5 Oxford WordSmith Tools is a lexical analysis software, fully documented and accessible in the net (cf. http://www.lexically.net/wordsmith/version4/). The three most important sub-programs are: WordList, which gives alphabetical or frequency lists of all the words or word-clusters in a text or texts; Concord, which gives concordances (i.e. words or phrases in context); and KeyWords, which gives the key words in a text or texts, based on statistical comparisons between texts or text collections.

relevant for the course that the linguistic analysis of the genre is connected with situational considerations related to the teaching scenario. While I have not enforced a particular procedure of how the students should handle their research projects and, consequently, some variation could be observed, it is possible to give a general description of the steps the students have taken in working on their projects. These steps will be outlined here (in relation to Tribble's approach summarised in Table 1), and presented in more detail in the following section with the help of the sample analysis of one student's research project.

On the whole, the students first find and describe a genre in relation to a respective teaching situation, such as CVs for a learner group at "Handelsakademie" (Secondary College for Business Administration), or real estate advertisements for an in-service language course in a real-estate company. Once they have decided on their genres, the students then generally follow the analytical procedure suggested by Tribble (see Table 1): they compile their own exemplar corpora, analyse them with the help of the BNC Sampler as reference corpus and WordSmith Tools as analytical software, and, finally, interpret their findings as they relate to the envisaged teaching situation. Due to the fact that so much course time is spent on gaining the necessary concordancing skills, however, the students cannot follow Tribble's suggestion to code the corpora linguistically and structurally (see Table 1, step 1). The resulting lack of codes has implications for the analytical procedure as well (see Table 1, steps 3 and 4), as computerised tools cannot be used for analysing the textualisation and structural elements of the sample texts. So, instead of using the computerised tools exclusively, the students combine it with pen-and-paper analysis where necessary: they use the printed texts of the respective exemplar corpus to identify the various obligatory and optional moves (see Table 1, step 4). While the same could be done for the analysis of textualisations (see Table 1, step 3), only a few students have done that so far, because most of them have found it problematic to keep the analysis of 'text patterns' or 'textualisations' clearly distinct from the lexico-grammatical analysis (step 2). Instead, they have retained overlapping analyses by pointing to interesting language patterns (extracted by computerised tools) and interpreting their meaning and function in relation to the moves (established by a pen-and-paper procedure).

While my interpretation of this matter cannot be more than speculation, I could imagine that the students' motivation for undertaking genre analysis in the first place might play a role here. After all, the aim of the exercise is not to simply describe genres, but to prepare their characteristic aspects for teaching. This means that the students should – and do – , right from the start, place

their main focus on identifying and interpreting patterns that are characteristic of the genre in question, rather than describing textual features in their own right. The starting point is thus a clearly discursive one, which is reflected in the fact that most students start with the move analysis (see Table 1, step 4) and turn only then to the other linguistic aspects. The resulting sequence of analytical and interpretative steps taken by the students in their attempt to approach specific ESP genres is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Genre-analytical steps followed in pre-service ESP teacher education

(A)	describe genre to be taught (communicative purpose(s) and likely discourse community) describe teaching situation (and group of learners) compile exemplar corpus
(B)	describe moves (based on the actual texts)
(C)	for lexico-grammatical analysis: use WordSmith Tools for exemplar corpus (cp. Table 1, step 2)
(D)	combine (B) and (C) to describe text patterns or textualisations
(E)	relate findings to teaching situation

3. Examples of students' genre analyses

The first problem students encounter is to find appropriate ESP texts that, firstly, belong to a genre that can be taught and, secondly, are available to them. These hurdles can be taken by, firstly, widening the scope to also include adult teaching, in which some students have already been involved, and, secondly, by resorting to the internet as source of texts. While both points do not reflect insurmountable problems, they illustrate the practical restrictions on the choice of genre to be analysed. Of the 40 students who have taken the course so far, only one student managed to get permission to use texts of a confidential kind (a placement agency's written EVALUATIONS OF JOB APPLICANTS). Another student had the creative idea to elicit business letters (RESPONSE LETTERS TO A HOTEL ENQUIRY), and all the others turned to the internet for their text collections of, for instance, COURSE DESCRIPTIONS AT UNIVERSITIES, REAL ESTATE ADVERTISMENTS, LEGAL SEMINAR ANNOUNCEMENTS, LETTERS TO SHAREHOLDERS or COMPANY PROFILES.

As the purpose here is not to cover the variety of genres dealt with, but to illustrate what the five analytical and interpretative steps can lead to in an actual genre analysis, I will, in the following, focus on one study only, namely the internet-based genre analysis mentioned last, COMPANY PROFILES (see Table 3 for the research results).

Table 3. Summative presentation of the analysis of the genre COMPANY PROFILES (cf. Jexenflicker 2003) according to the five analytical steps given in Table 2.

(A)	communicative purposes & discourse community	"A company profile is basically a communication vehicle through which the company presents itself to potential customers, investors or the public in general, i.e. anyone who for some reason or other is interested in what the company does." (Jexenflicker 2003, 1)
	teaching situation	'Business Consultancy' students (part-time) need to "present their company in a one-page document (e.g. for a company presentation or as part of a 'presentation folder' handed over to customers)". (ibid)
	exemplar corpus	50 'free-standing' web profiles of 1-2 pages each
(B)	move structure obligatory moves are printed in bold (others are optional)	Beginning: (a) **Defining the object of the company:** goods and services supplied (b) Giving an overview of the company history (past and present) (c) **Defining the aims of the company:** company vision, mission or strategy Middle: (d) **Establishing credentials:** convincing the customer that the company is a competent and reliable partner (e) Providing details on particular products / individual markets (f) Organisational aspects (e.g. subsidiaries, parent company, mergers) End: (g) Addressing the reader directly (h) Inviting the reader to contact the company
(C)	lexico-grammar	• use of personal pronouns (esp. *we*) reflects communicative purpose of presenting oneself • lack of negation (*no* or *not*) reflecting the affirmative nature of these texts; negation is possible when negating negatively connoted actions or in *not only* constructions • low rate of *was*: reflects on tenses used: mainly present perfect and very little past tense etc.
(D)	textualisations	purpose of move (a): the company states its object, i.e. the provision of particular goods and services; typical verbalisations: superlative or self-promoting adjective + nominalised action verb (*provider, manufacturer, generator, supplier*) purpose of move (c): the company sets out its visions, aims and strategic goals; typical verbalisations: action verbs (*aim, strive, tailor, customise*); *customer* as modifier etc.
(E)	pedagogical implications	outline of how this genre could be taught

This research project was conducted by a relatively senior student with a considerable degree of teaching experience, mainly in business-oriented "Fachhochschulen" (vocationally oriented, tertiary colleges). While this

means that she cannot be taken as an average student, her project report is very valuable because, due to its detailed and insightful analysis, it shows up more clearly than other reports the potential, but also the weaknesses of the genre analysis approach described above. Concerning the latter, this project report illustrates the limits of this kind of genre analysis when applying it to a potential teaching situation: Besides the afore-mentioned difficulty of distinguishing between the lexico-grammatical and textualisation analyses, there is also the problem of the fairly restrictive understanding of 'genre', the definition of which, if applied strictly, would actually exclude text-types such as the one in question here because it lacks the specific discourse community required by the definition. And yet, as shown here, COMPANY PROFILES allow themselves to be analysed as a 'genre'; it thus seems desirable to adapt the understanding of 'genre' accordingly.

At the same time, though, the results exemplified in Table 3 under (B), (C), and (D) give a good idea of the insights that can be gained into a genre on the basis of a few sample texts, especially for teaching purposes. The move structure thus laid out cuts the general communicative purpose (under A) into palatable chunks and can, at the same time, be used as the back bone to a yet unwritten company profile. In trying to verbalise these moves, an aspiring writer will then find support in the lexico-grammatical and textualisation features identified here, which are so particularly valuable because they offer very practical help in formulating texts, but, seeing that they are much more flexible than a list of prefabricated phrases and clauses, refrain from being restrictive. They allow the writer the freedom of creativity, while offering guidelines towards textual appropriacy.

4. Conclusions

After the first two trial runs of the course 'Approaching ESP Texts', as well as the other courses of the TESP-Module, we asked the students for their ideas and evaluations of our approach because, after all, the proof of the pudding lies in the eating. And while, as always, tastes differ, most of the students who attended 'Approaching ESP Texts' were convinced at the end of the course that this approach would be practically useful and really help them in teaching situations, as becomes apparent in these evaluations:

> ... the course has been very exciting and has given me loads of new insights ...
>
> ... the course is a very important part of the module. It has offered me theoretical insights [i.e. how to deal with ESP texts] which I could already use for the other courses of the module ...

> … I've learnt to analyse and approach ESP texts and use my knowledge in a teaching context …
>
> … genre analysis is a highly useful approach to texts. It will be very helpful for foreign language teaching in general …

That the last comment is not only directed to future events, but a reflection of past experience becomes clear in the email evaluation Silvia Jexenflicker sent after she had used the genre analytical insights gained through her research analysis for teaching COMPANY PROFILES to her part-time students.

> I evaluate this approach as particularly useful for my teaching (Business English). [...] I have taught the chapter on "Company profiles" this semester – the results (i.e. the company profiles compiled by the students) were generally good. (email communication, 10 June 2004)

Despite all this enthusiasm, the students have also voiced their concerns with the approach which allows the analysis of only certain text types. At the same time, they commented on the time-consuming procedure which made them wonder in how far this could actually be employed in one's preparation for individual teaching units. Finally, many students seem to have appreciated the idea of becoming and acting as language experts, but have also commented rather self-critically on the fact that this expertise would require more linguistic (meta)knowledge than they felt they had at the moment.

These evaluations from the students' side – positive as well as negative ones – mirror my own perceptions quite well. The ESP approach to genre analysis is very helpful in raising awareness about texts and providing students with a handy tool with which they can approach genres themselves. The step by step analyses as offered by Swales or Bhatia, but also by Tribble are clearly helpful, but most likely too time-consuming to be used in real teaching settings, in which a teacher is trying to gain more understanding of a genre she or he has to teach in a day or two; it's therefore necessary to streamline the procedure and connect it with 'intuition'. Similarly, creating one's own task-oriented corpus is a very important, but also a very time-consuming undertaking. It is therefore something that students need to learn about and try out during their training period so that it will be easier for them to use later on when circumstances, such as inadequate or irrelevant teaching materials, make teacher-driven genre analysis really necessary.

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