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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

Welcome to another issue of our VIEWS on English language – this time with a strong pragmatic slant.

The first question asked is a polite but provocative one by Ardith Meier. “Has politeness outlived its usefulness?”, she wonders and in so doing takes us back not only to 1987 and Brown & Levinson, but also to 1992 and the beginning of VIEWS. In the very first issue of VIEWS Ardith Meier already took a critical look at Brown & Levinson’s theory and some of its repercussions in subsequent work. Now, 12 years later, she takes up the topic

again and it is not simply a ‘trip down memory lane’. On the contrary. Her VIEWS on the matter are very much directed towards the future development of this field. Her article not only suggests doing away with the term ‘politeness’ but calls into question the concept itself. Instead, she proposes to move towards an interactional and ethnomethodological approach, one which takes into account underlying cultural values and the perceptions of contextual variables.

The second question, raised in Christiane Dalton-Puffer’s article, relates to a particular type of language classroom: CLIL or content and language integrated learning: “How much do CLIL classrooms actually contribute to the learning of academic language functions?” On the face of it, the answer to this question may seem obvious. By their very nature, CLIL classrooms are academic environments and as such constitute the natural habitat for learning how to perform academic language skills in the foreign language – or so one would have thought... Christiane Dalton-Puffer picks out two very specific academic language functions, defining and hypothesizing, and investigates to what extent they are learned and practised in Austrian CLIL classrooms. The results are surprising – to say the least – and shed new light on this form of instruction. But read for yourselves.

“*That* or no *that*?” – that is the question asked by Gunther Kaltenböck in the third contribution. More specifically, he explores the use, or rather non-use, of the *that*-complementizer in extraposed subject clauses. While the repercussions of this choice are clearly less dramatic than those in the literary classic alluded to in the title, Gunther Kaltenböck demonstrates that the decision is still not a random one. Far from it. As shown in the article, the choice between *that* and zero is not a free one but is constrained by various conditioning factors, ranging from semantic, syntactic to functional and even pragmatic – which brings us back to the main theme of this issue. But enough of *that*.

We hope (that) you find this a stimulating read for your summer break and if you feel (that) some of the above questions (and indeed the proposed answers) give rise to even more questions (perhaps even with answers), then why not send us a short response? (...to finish with yet another question).

THE EDITORS

ERRATA in VIEWS 12/2

Usually, authors' email addresses for correspondence are very useful and you, our dear VIEWS readers, have seen them as a footnote on the first page of a number of VIEWS articles. Very rarely these useful footnotes may prove hazardous to the editor, especially when the printer swallows a line. Even worse, if it is two lines. This is exactly what happened not once but twice in VIEWS 12/2. We apologize. Please find the complete paragraphs below, the missing lines put in boxes. NB: the webversion has always been correct.

THE EDITORS

ERRATUM 1

Ulrike Pölzl: "Signalling cultural indentity [...]", p. 3/4

On the 21st century map of the world English is undeniably the language dominating communication across nations and cultures. Yet it is not the English of the inner circle (Kachru 1986), which has gone 'international'. Native or inner circle English is a primary language of identification for its various native speakers, be they A(merican), B(ritish), C(anadian) or others. They consequently feel a strong cultural affiliation to their language. Not all users of English, however, feel like members of the 'ABC' community. World wide speakers of different linguacultural backgrounds use English as a lingua franca (ELF) to communicate interculturally across and within borders. Hence, the English used globally is sometimes even called a variety in its own right (Knapp & Meierkord 2002). This new variety is a means of communica

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tion only, which is appropriated by its users and differs from native English (cf. Seidlhofer 2002a; 2002b). I will refer to the 'community' using ELF as either 'lingua franca speakers', which seems preferable to non-native speakers since it does not imply deficiency but variety, or 'ELF users', a term proposed by Seidlhofer (lecture 2004) to shift the focus from 'learners of English' (again implying deficiencies) to 'users of English' (implying independence from native English). When speaking English, lingua franca speakers create

what Meierkord (2002) terms a ‘linguistic masala’ in displaying their individual culture or group membership (be it a temporary or their original one), both being distinct from that of ‘ABC’ English speakers. It would indeed seem out of place if ELF users tried to pretend to be English and to belong to a particular ‘national’ English speaking culture when they obviously do not.

ERRATUM 2:

Ute Smit: “ELF as Medium of Learning [...]”, p. 40/41

1. Introduction: purpose and aims of the project

More and more educational programs use English as medium of learning, either alone or together with another language. In this regard, Austria follows the world-wide trend, which in itself is a reflection of the global move towards English as the generally shared language of communication. Besides various models of English-medium secondary education as, for instance, the presently so popular ‘Englisch als Arbeitssprache’ (= content and language integrated learning; cf. Dalton-Puffer 2002), English has recently been chosen as me

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dium of learning in more and more tertiary programs in Austria (Stegu and Seidlhofer 2003). In a growing number of them, the participants, lecturers and students, make use of English as a lingua franca (ELF), i.e. they speak various first languages (L1s), come together in a non-EL1 environment, and use English as their only shared medium of communication (Meierkord and Knapp 2002). One such program is the object and site of research of the present project. It is a two-year intensive program in hotel management, organised by and situated at a Viennese hotel school. It caters for the international market in terms of student intake and ensuing working possibilities. For anonymity’s sake, I will in the following simply refer to this educational program as HMP (hotel management program).

Has 'politeness' outlived its usefulness?

*Ardith J. Meier, University of Northern Iowa**

1. Introduction¹

The publication of Brown and Levinson's theory of linguistic politeness over two decades ago (1978, 1987) attracted a great deal of attention by both those conducting empirical studies and those questioning its value, especially for aforesaid empirical studies and their applications to foreign and second language pedagogy. The present author was among those (see e.g. Meier 1995a, 1997). I thought I had said all I had to say on the topic as I moved on to new territory, namely, issues of intercultural communicative competence. This new territory, however, was actually not so new, as its core, that is, culture, also constitutes the core of that which has been investigated under the rubric of 'politeness'. As Ehlich (1992: 75) asserted, "'politeness' is not a given, but is related to a standard that lies outside it". This standard, I would submit, is largely informed by cultural values. Different cultures of politeness, or put differently, different perceptions of appropriacy across cultures, gave rise to my initial and developing uneasiness with Brown and Levinson's theory and also forms the basis of the thesis of this article.

Despite repeated and convincing criticism of Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness, their model and its concepts continue to be invoked to one extent or another in studies in applied linguistics, especially those investigating cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatic aspects of linguistic behavior such as speech acts. Because of this, I am moved to take a final and more direct stance, perhaps somewhat provocative, in regard to 'politeness' and linguistic investigations. I will suggest that investigations into so-called politeness phenomena might be better served by leaving the confines of Brown and Levinson's theory, doing away with the term 'politeness' as a

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¹ This is a revised and expanded version of a plenary address given March 2004 at the EDICE International Colloquium on Discourse Politeness, San José, Costa Rica.

theoretical construct, re-articulating the object or goal of the research endeavor, and thereby coming to terms with a somewhat messier, but more realistic world than Brown and Levinson's theory presents us with.² I will further argue that the research goal will point to an interactional and ethnographic approach that draws, for its explanatory basis, upon cultural orientations and dimensions as presented in intercultural literature.

The notion of culture is complex, and can be viewed from different vantage points. It thus requires clarification if an argument is to be made for the use of cultural concepts in studies of linguistic behavior. An important and useful distinction that has been made in defining 'culture' is between little 'c' or subjective culture and big 'C' or objective culture (see e.g. Bennett 1998). In Bennett's words,

[s]ubjective culture refers to the psychological features that define a group of people -- their everyday thinking and behavior -- rather than to the institutions they have created. (Bennett 1998: 3)

Institutions and other cultural artifacts are what constitute objective, or big 'C' culture. Clyne's definition of culture encompasses both subjective and objective culture, while giving priority to the subjective:

Patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting, acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values. (Clyne 1994: 2)

Subjective culture (i.e., underlying cultural values and beliefs) is the aspect of culture pertinent to the present discussion. An important 'safety feature' is contained within Brislin and Yoshida's definition of subjective culture: "Culture consists of concepts, values, and assumptions about life that guide behavior and that are widely shared by people" (Brislin & Yoshida 1991: 18). The 'safety' lies in the choice of the word 'guide', which importantly signifies a non-deterministic relationship between culture and behavior (in this case, the object of interest is linguistic behavior).³ Furthermore, I would argue for

² Although theory is, in itself, essentialist, a problem arises when the theoretical concepts and categories are operationalized and applied to a reality whose complexity they cannot adequately account for or that they distort. When too broad generalizations are made based on these concepts and categories without an awareness or acknowledgment of their limitations, research loses its validity.

³ Note that Brislin and Yoshida's definition, as well as those cited before it, provide a broad conceptualization of culture, one that is not limited to nation-states or to particular ethnic groups.

an inherent flexibility in cultural concepts, values and assumptions; namely, they should not be viewed as static sets of ideas held by all persons within a particular group. Culturally informed communicative behavior is realized as interaction and negotiation (i.e. over multiple turns as interlocutors respond to each other), not just a negotiation of ideas or meaning, but also of face and identity (cf. Block 2002). The concept of face leads us to politeness à la Brown and Levinson, who co-opted Goffman's (1967) notion of face-work, viewing the latter as an attempt to balance a person's negative face wants (to be unimpeded) and positive face wants (to be appreciated or approved of), both of which are purportedly universal. Should either of these face wants be threatened (by an inherently face threatening act), two types of politeness strategies, negative or positive, can be enlisted to mitigate the threat, thereby satisfying the other's face want(s). Indirectness, for example, is viewed as a negative politeness strategy that would mitigate a request, which constitutes a threat to the Hearer's negative face. Brown and Levinson's notion of face is thus individualistic and is concerned chiefly with the face of alter. As indicated above, Brown and Levinson's theory of linguistic politeness has subsequently been applied, albeit not always consistently, in pragmatic studies, especially those investigating speech acts, and has met with critique and concomitant suggestions for adjustment. The next section will provide a brief summary of some of the critique and suggestions for modification.

2. Critique of Brown and Levinson

A survey of the literature on politeness can only lead to increased perplexity about what politeness actually entails. It seems, however, that no matter where one arrives with politeness, one must begin with Brown and Levinson.⁴ Their theory is the "deictic center", as LoCastro (2003: 128) aptly puts it, of any discussion of verbal politeness. Several politeness scholars (e.g. Fraser 1990, Watts et al. 1992) have pointed out, however, that Brown and Levinson do not ever actually define politeness. This is but only one of many aspects of the theory that have engendered critique over the past two decades. Because

⁴ An obligatory reference to Goffman (e.g. 1967) also seems to accompany any mention of Brown and Levinson as the latter ascribe the beginnings of their theory to Goffman's concept of face, which is characterized as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [sic] by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman 1967: 5). Goffman's face is thus socially created and interpersonal, whereas Brown and Levinson's face is intrapersonal (Werkhofer 1992).

of extensive coverage of the challenges to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory in the literature, neither a lengthy explication nor a comprehensive critique will be presented here. Instead a brief overview of some of the issues that have caused discomfort will suffice (many of these are discussed in more detail in Meier 1995a, 1995b, and elsewhere).

One of the major criticisms of Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness involves their claims of universality. One such claim is that of an inverse relationship between politeness and directness (i.e., to be more direct is to be less polite). Examples of languages whose use has been identified as challenging this include the following:

Chinese (Lee-Wong 1994, Yu 1999)
 French (Held 1989)
 Israeli Sabra (Katriel 1986)
 Japanese (Takahashi & Beebe 1993)
 Polish (Wierzbicka 1985)
 Spanish (Mir 1993)
 Wolof (Irvine 1978, cited in Hymes 1986)

The universal applicability of Brown and Levinson's notion of face (i.e. focusing on the face of the individual) and what constitutes face wants have also been questioned for the following speech communities, which do not adhere to Brown and Levinson's more individualistic orientation:

Chinese (Gu 1990, Mao 1994)
 Hindi (Chakravarty 1999)
 Igbo (Nwoye 1992)
 Japanese (Matsumoto 1988)
 Spanish (Murillo 2000)
 Zulu (de Kadt 1998)

Additionally, Tracy (1990) criticizes Brown and Levinson's theory, in general, for presenting an inadequate picture of the complexity of identity issues involved in face.⁵

What constitutes face threats has also been a basis for questioning the adequacy of Brown and Levinson's theory for the following speech communities:

⁵ Such complexity, according to Tracy, involves "identity claims", significantly influenced by the situational context, that may include a desire to be simultaneously seen as dependent or intimidating as well as trustworthy and reasonable, for example.

Chinese (Gu 1990)
Japanese (Matsumoto 1988, 1989)
Samoan (Duranti 1992)
Spanish (Hernández-Flores 1999)

Wilson (1992) further notes that a particular level of directness is less face threatening in one culture than in another and that Brown and Levinson's theory does not predict when a directive will in fact be face-threatening and when it will not, or whether it will threaten negative or positive face.

A more general problem lies in possible conceptual differences across languages and cultures. Yu (1999), for example, points out that what is linguistically perceived to be direct or indirect is different among speakers, citing Chinese and English speakers as a case in point. Sifianou (1992), Ide et al. (1992), and Hua, Wei and Yuan (2000) demonstrate that the concept of 'politeness' differs between Greek and English, Japanese and English, and Chinese and English, respectively. Wierzbicka (1991) additionally points out potential problems in cross-cultural interpretation of labels, such as "intimacy", associated with politeness, and notes an overall anglo-centricity in politeness studies.⁶ Fitch (1994) notes that "dominance", another factor related to choice of politeness strategies, likely differs in meaning depending on whether one is in an egalitarian or a hierarchical society.

Another problematic aspect, which is less a matter of universals and more a matter of the theoretical constructs themselves, involves Brown and Levinson's strategies of politeness and the identification of a strategy as positive or negative. Baxter (1984), Ide (1989), and Meier (1995a) represent those who have questioned the representational validity of these strategies. It has been pointed out that a particular linguistic behavior (e.g. deference) can be both a positive and negative strategy, and that certain speech acts (e.g. advice, requests) can be construed as both threats and positive politeness strategies, resulting in a framework that has little power (Meier 1995b).

In short, Brown and Levinson's theory presents significant problems, thereby offering a dubious basis for empirical work (especially that with a cross-cultural or intercultural focus). Indeed Brown and Levinson themselves, in the introduction to their 1987 edition, offer a self-critique, acknowledging

⁶ I would additionally argue that Brown and Levinson's theory and its concepts are also ill-suited for anglo cultures. For example, identifying face threatening acts, the face want being threatened, or politeness strategy type also present difficulties in the case of anglo cultures.

problems with their theory and conclude that their categories are not necessarily suitable for quantitative research.⁷ However, it should be noted that Brown and Levinson's work importantly placed significant concerns on the map, and generated a large amount of subsequent discussion and research. One result of their theory is attempts to address its perceived weaknesses. These attempts include examinations of the relationship between politeness and deference, formality, indirectness, appropriateness, and unmarked behavior. The following illustrates a sampling of attempts to clarify the concept of politeness and the different ways it might be construed:

- Non-Appropriacy-Based Approach (Arndt & Janney 1985)
- Volition vs. Wakimae (Hill et al. 1986)
- Polite vs. Non-Polite vs. Rude (Lakoff 1989)
- Plus-Valued Politeness vs. Zero Polite (Ide 1989)
- Extensively Polite vs. Polite (Blum-Kulka 1990, 1992)
- Social Politeness vs. Interpersonal Politeness (Janney & Arndt 1992)
- Going Beyond Regularities vs. Socially Developed Regularities (Ehlich 1992)
- First Order Politeness vs. Second Order Politeness (Watts, Ide & Ehlich 1992)
- Polite vs. Politic (Watts 1992)
- Normative Politeness vs. Strategic Politeness (Lee-Wong 2000)
- Anticipated Politeness vs. Inferred Politeness (Haugh 2003)

The concept of politeness has also yielded studies on impoliteness or rudeness and contexts in which such behavior is proposed to be the expected or the norm (see e.g. Blas-Arroyo 2003; Culpeper 1996; Kienpointner 1997), further complicating the definition of 'politeness' and its alleged antithesis.

Clearly, 'politeness' carries a great deal of baggage, some involving a 'scientific' meaning, others an 'on-the street' meaning. The distinction between the two is often blurred and neither, of itself, is unambiguous. We seem to feel we know what politeness is, but devising a model or theory thereof has been less than satisfactory, and hence, when applying the politeness concepts to empirical research, the concept often becomes increasingly murky as different researchers differ in their interpretation and employment of Brown and Levinson's concepts (Meier 1998). Brown and Levinson, by providing a comprehensive theory, have provided concepts that researchers have seemingly felt must be accepted or modified. As demonstrated above, attempts to improve upon Brown and Levinson's theory generally still employ the term 'politeness'; nevertheless, no agreed upon concept of politeness has

⁷ Despite their introductory self-critique, the content of the second edition remains essentially the same as the first edition.

evolved, and empirical studies of speech acts, for example, persist in appealing to negative and positive politeness strategies and equating indirectness with politeness. 'Politeness' is, in short, a very problematic term to define and without such a definition, it is difficult to adequately operationalize 'politeness' and its related concepts in linguistic investigations. It may well be that 'politeness' has outlived its usefulness. Pragmatics and applied linguistics might be better off to move ahead, leaving behind the parameters Brown and Levinson set, albeit richer and wiser for them. Research might be better pursued without 'politeness'. The next section will examine how this might be done.

3. Moving beyond 'politeness'

3.1 Goal

In considering an approach to investigating linguistic phenomena, it must be ascertained what exactly the phenomena are that one is approaching. In other words, the first and fundamental issue to be addressed must be that of the goal and scope of that which has come to be investigated under the rubric of 'politeness'. Generally, speech act studies, which are the venue of much reference to politeness, have not expressed their goal as that of examining the mitigation of face threatening acts (FTAs), but rather have sought patterns of linguistic behavior in the light of different social and contextual variables, whether intraculturally or interculturally (see e.g. studies of compliment responses, address forms, showing appreciation). In doing so, however, they have turned to Brown and Levinson for their theoretical framework and constructs, despite their problematic application to empirical studies, which has generally not been acknowledged or taken into account. While face itself may well be a construct that warrants consideration in such studies, some have argued that attendance to face is not necessarily contingent upon the occurrence of an FTA that requires mitigation (e.g., Arundale, 1999; Hernández-Flores, 1999). Ide (1989) too, a decade earlier, in her definition of politeness, likewise moved away from limiting politeness to the redressing of a particular face threat. Such stances thereby distance themselves from speech act theory, underlying Brown and Levinson's theory, which was concerned with individual acts rather than negotiated discourse (cf. Hayashi 1996).

In sum, I submit that the research objective regarding those linguistic phenomena heretofore subsumed under "politeness phenomena" should be to identify, describe, and explain patterns of effective linguistic communication

in situational discourse contexts. The explanation, at its deepest level, resides in culture.

3.2. Discarding 'Politeness'

The next pertinent question is whether it is necessary or even helpful to call upon notions of politeness at all to investigate patterns of effective communication. There may well be a loss of simplicity, but I would claim that Brown and Levinson's theory and concepts provided a false sense of simplicity, so to speak, especially in their application to empirical research involving speech acts (see e.g. Meier 1998 on apologies). In other words, the theory is inadequate for the complexity of the reality it designed to account for. As noted by Hymes (1986: 49), universal frameworks, while appealing, may very well be empirically inadequate.

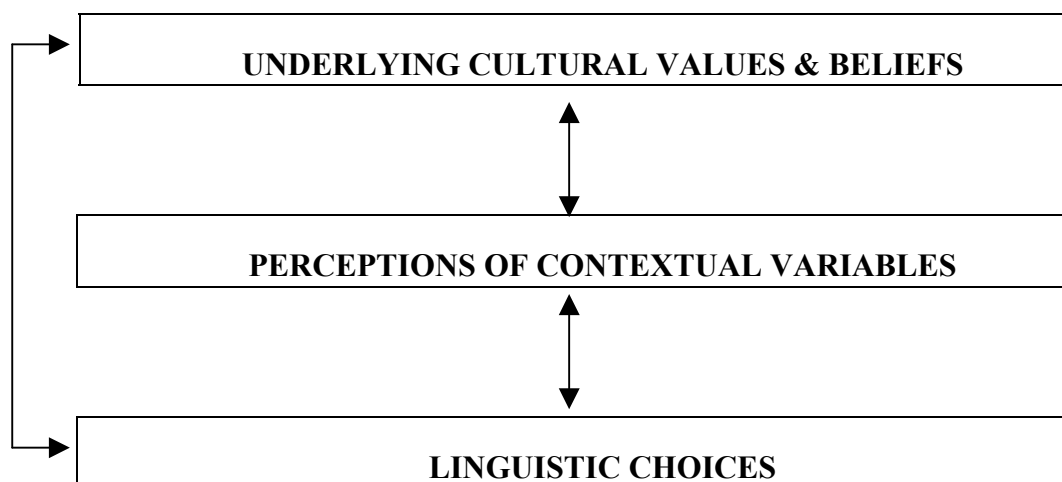
If we discard politeness à la Brown and Levinson, do we lose sight of universals (e.g. regarding face wants or the function of indirectness)? I would argue that we do not, and in any case, what Brown and Levinson claimed was universal has repeatedly been called into question (see above). What is universal is a need or desire to conform to the expectations of particular reference groups and engage in a negotiation of meaning and identity therein. Leech captures this in his pronouncement that "Unless you are polite to your neighbour [...] you will no longer be able to borrow his mower" (Leech 1983: 82). What lies at the core of 'polite' here is behavior that fulfils others' expectations of contextual appropriateness. Using language that is perceived as being either over- or under-deferential, for example, might alienate one's neighbor; not apologizing at the right time or in the right way may alienate one's neighbor; using words perceived as taboo may alienate one's neighbor; not using these words may also alienate one's neighbor. The value or meaning given to particular linguistic behavior and the contextual variables is socially determined, an offspring of underlying cultural values and beliefs.

Any interaction entails linguistic choices, and particular choices may be perceived as either more or less appropriate, and thus are more or less effective. Making such choices involves a consideration of 'self' and 'other' (i.e. an interplay of each other's face or image, and identity) even when mitigating a threat to face is not an issue. If we can agree that we rarely achieve complete understanding with one another or enjoy a state of relational equilibrium, any communication can be viewed as requiring negotiation, some more, some less. This negotiation presumes both a speaker and a hearer and their respective identities and attendant perceptions of rights and

obligations. One of an individual's many identities may be more or less prominent in a particular interaction, and following Tracy (1990), cultural factors (as well as situation and personality) inform this identity management.

While Brown and Levinson focused almost solely on the Hearer's face, my own work on apologies, for example, in an over-reaction to this, drew on models of apology in social psychology, and focused on the Speaker's face. It is, however, essential to give equal coverage to both, which again points to interaction and negotiation. Expectations about how this interaction and negotiation (e.g., topic nomination, turn-taking, clarification requests) should proceed to produce effective communication are also culturally informed.

Finally, we might ask if giving up 'politeness' causes us to relinquish profound insights into speech behavior. I would argue that it does not, for I believe that, given the relationship between underlying cultural values and beliefs and linguistic choices, deeper insights are found elsewhere, namely in an approach that calls upon underlying cultural values and beliefs to explain the patterns that have been identified. The following diagram illustrates the dynamic relationship between underlying cultural values and beliefs, perceptions of contextual variables, and linguistic choices.



Underlying cultural values and beliefs inform perceptions of contextual variables. For example, different perceptions of power, formality, individual rights, age, and gender may well lead to different linguistic choices (e.g., use of address forms, turn-taking procedures, the manner in which one shows appreciation or what one shows verbal appreciation for). These choices will also be affected by the domain in which they occur, be it legal, educational, religious, or work. The particular choices made further support the underlying cultural values and beliefs that informed them.

In the process of interacting with another, one may recognize that a particular linguistic choice was not effective. This requires a re-examination of perceptions of contextual variables, considering alternative perceptions, and trying them out in a process of negotiation. Such a process is likely to be more frequent in intercultural communication, especially those cases involving the use of a lingua franca. A realization that different choices may be effective and appropriate at different times is a mark of the flexibility and sensitivity of the successful communicator. Should one experience cross-cultural contact that is intense enough and should one have sufficiently flexible ego boundaries (cf. Guiora et al. 1972), one's underlying values and beliefs might conceivably undergo either a temporary or long-term shift, depending on the individual's need to be multicultural. However, all interlocutors are, to one extent or another, multicultural. As Thorne (2000: 235) points out, "practices of use in communicative activity, have effects on the thinking and speaking that is done there". The arrows pointing both ways reflect this flexibility and the lack of a rigid, deterministic relationship between culture, context, and linguistic choices.⁸ However, the underlying cultural values and beliefs remain the deeper level, the underlying structure of the triumvirate.

In sum, the quest is to ascertain not only who says what to whom, when, and where, but also why. The 'why', I submit, resides in underlying cultural values and beliefs as they are situationally enacted. This represents an explanatory approach that I have previously advocated (Meier, 1999), one which places language within its broader social and cultural context, and thus, calls for an ethnographic or emic approach, seeking the meaning assigned by the speaker-hearer rather than asserting that directness, indirectness, politeness, or impoliteness are somehow fixed and isolated linguistic concepts or forms.

3.3. Value Dimensions and Orientations

What heuristic aids are available if explanation is sought in culture, that is, small 'c' subjective culture? I would like to suggest some in the form of

⁸ We are reminded here of sociocultural theory, drawing on Bakhtin and Vygotsky, for whom, as Kramsch (2000: 139) explains, "we do not just use language in context; we shape the very context that shapes us". She then goes on to cite Holquist (1990: 63): "Each time we talk, we literally enact values in our speech through the process of scripting our place and that of our listener in a culturally specific social scenario".

proposed cultural orientations or dimensions. Hofstede (1980), for example, in surveying over a hundred thousand IBM workers in forty countries, identified four value dimensions that distinguish different cultures: individualism vs. collectivism, small power distance vs. large power distance, weak uncertainty avoidance vs. strong uncertainty avoidance, and masculine vs. feminine. Hall (1976) speaks of low context vs. high context cultures and monochronic vs. polychronic time cultures. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1960) orientations are also a source for analyzing cultural patterns: character of human nature (evil, good and evil, good), relationship of human kind to nature (subject to, in harmony with, master of), orientation to time (past, present, future), value placed on activity (being, being in becoming, doing), social relationships (authoritarian, group oriented, individualistic).

While it goes beyond the scope of this article to provide detailed explanations of all of the above, I will nevertheless briefly describe Hofstede's and Hall's dimensions as generally depicted in the literature. The major distinction between individualism and collectivism appears to roughly correlate with Hofstede's other dimensions as well as those of Hall's and Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's.⁹

Individualism and collectivism involve the way one views oneself in relationship to others. Collectivistic tendencies are marked by a greater concern for an in-group than for oneself as an autonomous actor; group goals take precedence. Relationships that are more individualistic exhibit a looser connection than do those of a more collectivistic nature, and individual needs and rights are given priority.¹⁰ High context cultures are those in which information proceeds from shared life experience and very little information must be explicitly articulated; in low-context communication explicit articulation of information is necessary. Monochronic time is marked by a linear view of time, ascribing greater value to punctuality and scheduling than does a polychronic perspective, in which relationships and interactions override schedules and appointments. High power distance is characterized by a more distinct status difference between groups, that is, a more unequal distribution of power, than is low power distance. Uncertainty avoidance

⁹ Readers unfamiliar with value dimensions and orientations are referred to the following for an overview: Brislin (1993), Hofstede (1999), Samovar and Porter (2001), and Triandis (1995).

¹⁰ Triandis (1995) further distinguishes between horizontal individualism (e.g., Sweden), vertical individualism (e.g., middle- and upper-class North America), horizontal collectivism and vertical collectivism.

pertains to the degree of concern with unpredictability. Lastly, masculinity refers to assertiveness and competitiveness, femininity to cooperation and sensitivity to others' feelings.

Individualism seems to correlate with low-context interaction, weak uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, low power distance, and monochronic time, doing rather than being, and mastering nature, whereas collectivism has been found to correlate with high context interaction, strong uncertainty avoidance, femininity, high power distance, polychronic time, being rather than doing, being in harmony with nature.

A caveat is in order at this point, namely, that one must avoid viewing these value dimensions or orientations as absolute polar categories; they rather represent a continuum. Neither are they to be viewed as rigid labels for a group of people. As Triandis (1995: 27) asserts, "...no society is 'purely' individualistic or collectivist. The cultural pattern is situation specific"; for example, one may be individualistic in the work domain, but collectivistic in one's religious domain. These dimensions or orientations thus need to be viewed as tendencies for comparison within a situational context. As such, these tendencies can provide a useful device in addressing the 'why' of who says what to whom, when and where.

An example that represents at least a first step of what I am proposing comes from the author's study of cross-cultural apologies (Meier, 1996), which included twelve closed role play situations, one of which involved the informants knowingly parking in an employee designated spot at a sports store. The differing results in terms of apology behavior exhibited by the two speech communities in the study (US Americans and Austrians) could be traced to different views of control over one's circumstances and the value placed on equality under the law (i.e. the Austrian excuses reflected a feeling of having a much greater lack of control over the situation than did those of the US American informants, whereas the latter lied significantly more, denying having knowingly broken the 'law'). Seeking an explanation in such value orientations may well explain other linguistic behavior as well, and may provide deeper insight into the differential behavior than an attempt to convert the linguistic behavior into categories of negative or positive politeness strategies.

Further examples of studies that are in line with such an approach include Barnlund and Araki (1985), Blum-Kulka and Scheffer (1993), Dahl (1995), Fitch (1994), Garcia (1996), Kim and Wilson (1994), Marquéz-Reiter (2002), Moore (1995), Nelson, El Bakary and Al Batal (1996), Takahashi and Beebe (1993). Marquéz-Reiter, for example, investigated differences between

peninsular Spanish and Uruguayan Spanish regarding conventional indirect requests, finding that differences in perceptions of tentativeness rather than indirectness levels explained why Latin Americans may regard Spaniards as "quite direct and rather abrupt" (Marqu ez-Reiter 2002: 136). She further invoked Hofstede's dimensions of power distance and uncertainty avoidance to explain the negative correlation found between social distance and indirectness. Barnlund and Araki (1985) drew upon notions of individualism and collectivism, asserting that their US American informants complimented more than their Japanese informants because the US tendency to be more individualistic made elevating an individual's status less threatening than it did in a more collectivistic society such as Japan, which places more value on the group. Blum-Kulka and Sheffer (1993) attributed the relatively greater opportunity for equal participation in a family setting by US Americans compared to Israelis to differing values placed on the individual and equal opportunity. Dahl (1995) explained differences in Malagasy and Western excuses (e.g. a Malagasy not providing an excuse for coming late, whereas a Westerner would) on the basis of the Malagasy tendency to have a much less monochronic perception of time than Westerners. Takahashi and Beebe (1993) explained why their US American informants downplayed or covered up status differences in the speech act of correction and the Japanese did not on the basis of a difference in orientation to power distance. Kim and Wilson (1994) attributed different effectiveness judgments of requests by Koreans and US Americans to be consistent with concomitant differences in tendencies for collectivism and individualism (e.g. the Koreans showed a preference for requests that involved attention to relational aspects) and for high- versus low-context orientations (e.g. the US Americans found clearer request strategies to be more effective than the Koreans did).

Studies which look to cultural factors underlying linguistic behavior such as those cited above are, unfortunately, in the minority (Meier, 1999). While many studies of speech acts have yielded valuable descriptions, the majority do not provide a deeper understanding of the "why" of that behavior, and those that do often tend to be those conducted and published outside the field of applied linguistics (Meier, 1999).

4. Conclusion

In short, culture with a small 'c' informs linguistic expectations, interpretations, and choices. Thus, any attempts to investigate and explain patterns of effective contextualized communicative interaction must include

cultural analysis. This is especially true when the concern is intercultural communication. A plea goes out to those investigating that which has until now fallen under the rubric of 'politeness phenomena' to more judiciously consider the goal of their research, the limitations of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, and above all, the possibilities that cultural studies and their concepts might offer for explaining patterns of communication found in various settings and cultures.

What I have been arguing for in this article can also be found in others' publications, albeit with less directness and focus, and with seemingly little impact. Almost two decades ago, Wierzbicka (1985: 145) noted that linguistic differences are due to "aspects of culture much deeper than mere norms of politeness". One decade ago, Fitch (1994: 205) similarly ascribed to culture a central role in compliance-gaining: "expectations of effectiveness and appropriateness are fundamentally cultural. [...] cultural understandings are what channel enactment of personality types and gender, distinguish one compliance-gaining situation from another, and establish parameters for resistance to compliance-gaining attempts". More recently, Suszcynska (1999: 1064), in seeking an explanation for differences in apology behavior in English, Polish, and Hungarian, concludes that politeness theory falls short since the differences "stem less from universal norms of politeness but more from culture-specific values and attitudes". It is time to heed the voices that have been raised over the past years, and consider whether 'politeness' indeed has outlived its usefulness. I urge those pursuing speech act studies to move forward and investigate speech acts as they are embedded in interaction, negotiation and culture.

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Academic language functions in content and language integrated classrooms (CLIL): defining and hypothesizing

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1. Introduction

The fact that communicating in the classroom requires linguistic abilities which are different from those necessary in many other contexts of face-to-face interaction is widely recognized in the study of bilingual education. It has been most influentially conceptualized by Cummins as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Despite a continuing discussion on how the two competencies can be characterized in detail, the distinction as such is well-established in the study of bilingual education (e.g. Baker 1993) and has led to the realization that second language students may need special training in CALP even though they are fluent communicators in their L2, if they are expected to successfully participate in education.

With regard to content-and-language integrated learning or immersion programmes such considerations have, to my knowledge, played a very minor role. In the European context at least, rationales concerning such programmes tend to stay on a rather general level, mostly underlining the fact that CLIL provides opportunities for learning through acquisition rather than through explicit teaching. The *CLIL Compendium*,¹¹ for instance, mentions the following three points in the “Language Dimension” of CLIL:

- Improve overall target language competence
- Develop oral communication skills
- Deepen awareness of both mother tongue and target language

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¹¹ The *CLIL Compendium* website (one of the products of an EU-project bringing together experts from several countries) formulates underlying principles, guidelines for best practice and directions for future development. www.clilcompendium.com (accessed 30 June 2004).

It is strongly emphasized that the content subject represents an authentic communicative situation in which naturalistic learning can take place and this “naturalness” is considered “one of the major platforms of CLIL’s importance and success in relation to both language and other subject learning” (see footnote 1). CLIL classrooms are thus widely seen as a kind of language bath that encourages naturalistic language learning and enhances the development of communicative competence in very general terms. A principled discussion of a) how very general learning goals such as those quoted above can be specified and b) what the language bath actually contains that would work towards their achievement still needs to be led. I believe that for this purpose the discussion about CLIL will need to be linked more than it has been to date to the discourses on language acquisition, educational linguistics and English for Specific Purposes.

In this article I want to argue that the dimension of academic language skills needs to be added to the discussion on CLIL. What is needed, therefore, is a close examination of the academic/educational character of the CLIL language bath and a positive characterization of CLIL classrooms as environments where academic language proficiency is required. This paper wants to contribute to such a discussion by investigating the potential of CLIL classrooms as learning environments for the acquisition of academic language functions in English. On the surface of it, this might seem a moot question: since CLIL classrooms are academic environments it is necessarily the case that 'academic language' will be used and will be available for students as input as well as required as their output. Beyond this very general level, however, there is much room for investigation to what extent CLIL classrooms are environments where CALP related skills can be experienced and used. The purpose of this paper is thus to look in more detail at aspects of language which are characteristic of professional and academic uses but which are infrequent or totally absent from everyday informal interaction. This means that the CLIL classroom would be the first and foremost acquisitional environment where such language functions can be learned and practised. The overarching question thus is: do CLIL classrooms use their chance of being habitats where academic English can be learned efficiently?

Naturally a single article cannot do full justice to such a broad, complex and under-researched area and I have therefore decided to focus on two typical academic language functions: defining and hypothesizing. Defining was chosen because it is relatively well-documented in the research literature and also well-circumscribed as a linguistic event. Hypothesizing was selected because, together with predicting, it is always mentioned among the core

academic language functions and because the relatively complex grammar which goes hand in hand with it seems to be an interesting exercise ground from the point of view of second language learning.

This article is structured as follows: Section two will give a short introduction to the notion of Academic Language Functions and will present operationalisations or working models of the two notions on which this paper focuses. This is followed by a short description of the empirical study in combination with a concise formulation of the actual empirical research questions. Section four then presents the findings from the data, with section five discussing their implications for the overall goal of the study as well as for the more general conception of CLIL in the Austrian/European context.

2. Academic language functions

Academic language functions can best be understood as a special case among the general communicative functions of language. Communicative functions themselves are commonly considered to be tied to social and interactive situations and to form an integral part of the functioning of language as a social tool. An important root of this strand of thinking are Hymes's writings on the ethnography of communication (e.g. Hymes 1972). With regard to how they arise it can be said that communicative functions are the answer to recurrent situative demands. Communicative demands which recur in similar situations cause language users to create default patterns for dealing with them. Such established realizations then provide linguistic and structural patterns for coping with standard situations and in their totality make up much of the web of day-to-day face-to-face interaction. It has, therefore, become generally accepted that gaining control over categories of communicative functions is crucial to the development of communicative competence in any language, no matter whether first, second or third. In foreign language pedagogy the functional-notional approach has taken up this basic idea with its emphasis on everyday communicative functions like greeting, expressing dis/agreement, accepting an offer/invitation, apologizing and many others (see Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983). In contrast to everyday interaction, educational contexts are characterized by a common purpose of "learning new knowledge and skills" and this fosters a particular set of language functions. These are not necessarily mutually exclusive with everyday communicative functions but they are different in part or they occur with different frequencies in academic contexts.

Exactly what these functions are and how many of them exist is rather difficult to determine as this area has not been subjected to a great deal of systematic study, certainly not from a linguistic point of view.¹² The functions in Table 1 can therefore only be seen as a starting point: neither does Table 1 represent a closed inventory nor do the items in it represent clearly delineated categories. The following list is an amalgamation from various similar listings in the literature on academic language functions in English (O'Malley & Chamot 1987, Snow, Met and Genesee 1989, Kidd 1996, Krechel 1999):

Table 1. Academic language functions

Analyzing
 Classifying
 Comparing
 Defining
 Describing
 Drawing conclusions
 Evaluating & assessing
 Explaining
 Hypothesizing
 Informing
 Narrating
 Persuading
 Predicting
 Requesting/giving information etc.

It should perhaps be pointed out that the distribution of these functions is by no means categorical. Some of them can be found also in non-academic contexts. 'Narrating' and 'Informing' would be examples of that. Likewise, one can find typical everyday communicative functions like apologies or greetings also in educational encounters. But it is a matter of frequency, distribution and also centrality to the purpose of the encounter to which extent they can be regarded as typical or even constitutive of a particular situation of language use. It is thus fair to say that the speech functions listed in table 1 occur with a higher degree of frequency and in this configuration only in academic and educational contexts.

Looking at the list of academic language functions it becomes clear very quickly that they do not all operate on the same level in the sense that some

¹² There is a research tradition in educational linguistics which would be relevant here. It is based on Halliday's systemic functional theory of language and has dealt with the development of textual genres in education from secondary to tertiary level. (e.g. Halliday and Martin 1993, Flowerdew 2002, also Bhatia 2002)

are tied fairly closely to certain syntactic and lexical patterns whereas others are not. Because of this, a distinction into microfunctions and macrofunctions was proposed by Kidd (1996). Microfunctions represent language tasks with comparatively narrow purposes, which cover limited stretches of discourse (a couple of sentences) and are recognizable by distinctive sentence patterns and/or discourse markers. Examples of such microfunctions would be *classifying* “x is a y”, *comparing* “whereas, while, similar to, xer than”, or *expressing relationships* “as a function of, if x then y”. Macrofunctions, on the other hand, cover longer stretches of discourse, are “amenable to linguistic analysis and description mainly on the rhetorical rather than on the syntactic level (1996, 291)”, and are therefore not unequivocally related to specific lexicogrammatical features. It would, for instance, be difficult to say through which linguistic form the function of *persuading* is realized. Other such macrofunctions would be: justifying, solving problems, evaluating, reporting, describing, or narrating.

Especially for the macrofunctions it is necessary to combine rhetorical, cognitive and grammatical levels of analysis. For “narration” for instance this involves the scene-complication-solution schema as well as time adverbials and past tense. In my view this multi-level analysis indicates that the notion of genre or rather, microgenre, is a likely conceptual frame under which the study of academic language functions can be profitably conducted. In the following I will present my own working models for the two academic speech functions which are the focus of this paper: defining and hypothesizing.

2.1 A working model of 'Defining'

Definitions are maybe the best-described mini-genre or macrofunction of all, possibly for two reasons: They have repeatedly played a role as tools in the study of cognitive development (e.g. Snow 1987), where close analysis of definition as a type was necessary for test construction and evaluation. And secondly, definitions have shown to be highly relevant for professional academic writing, which itself has given rise to a rich strand of empirical research as well as didactic material (e.g. Swales 1990, Swales and Feak 1994, 33-55).

Synthesizing from these two strands of research one can state that definitions have the following typical features: there is a Definiendum (X) which is linked to a superordinate term (T) by means of a copula construction (‘X is a T’) and this is then followed by a number of features specifying this particular member X of the class. Formally, the specifying features are

realized through relative clauses, adjectives or reduced relatives. Schematically this could be represented as follows:

Illustration 1. Definition Schema

Content	superordinate term + specifying features
Form	X is a T that is/has/does/did

X is a T having characteristics c1, c2, c3

- a. *A brake is a device that is capable of slowing the motion of a mechanism.*
- b. *A piccolo is a small flute that is pitched an octave higher than a standard flute.*
- c. *A moon is a natural satellite orbiting around a planet.*

(examples from Swales and Feak 1994, 40-41)

The schema has two parts. On the content-level we have some kind of superordinate term denoting a category, plus a number of specifying features which can be descriptive, comparative, functional, historical or any combination of these. On the linguistic level there is the copula construction plus relative constructions (full or reduced; cf. examples above). Knowing how to make a definition thus involves two kinds of knowledge: formal-linguistic and extralinguistic. Only if the two are combined is the schema fully realized. On a functional-pragmatic level the definition thus consists of a decision on category membership plus giving information in the shape of the specifying features. Research has shown that young children can perform both activities: they can categorize and they can give information. What they appear to find difficult is to combine the two in formally and communicatively adequate definitions. Snow (1987) has shown that it is at about age nine that children become capable of making the combination and producing fully-fledged definitions.

2.2 Operationalizing 'Hypothesizing and predicting'

It is perhaps necessary to state as a proviso that in this context I am not concerned with expert scientific notions of *hypotheses* vs. *predictions* made on the basis of a *theory* but with a more general, perhaps semi-expert notion of this activity. What exactly is involved in the activity of *hypothesizing* is less well understood than is the case with *defining* and it is necessary to resort

to dictionary definitions of the term. The following definition is taken from the Merriam-Webster on-line dictionary.¹³

hypothesis

- 1a. an assumption or concession made for the sake of argument
- 1b. an interpretation of a practical situation or condition taken as the ground for action
2. a tentative assumption made in order to draw out and test its logical or empirical consequences

In non-technical terms, then, a hypothesis is an assumption or prediction about what something will be like if certain conditions are met. In a sense then, hypothesizing involves two steps. It is an activity which incorporates facts and conditions of the here and now (or as they are reported to have held in the past) (“an interpretation of a practical situation or condition”). In a second step the 'facts' are projected into the space of possibility, effect, or simply future time in general. 'Hypothesizing' is talking about that which is not the case now, talking about that which could be, or that which could have been in the past but with a link to perceived factual reality. Hypothesizing thus is a prime example of 'talking about that which is not in the here and now'.

Since the grammars of natural languages have developed various ways of doing just that 'hypothesizing' can be operationalized by checking for grammaticalized or lexicalized expressions. The paragraphs which follow show that in terms of linguistic structure and expression hypothesizing is a potentially linguistically much richer activity than defining.

On the grammatical level mood and modal verbs are of prime importance for the accomplishment of 'hypothesizing', together with lexical items or phrases expressing mood and modality: *probably*, *perhaps*, *possibly*, *possibility* and the conjunction *if*. Further on the lexical level, there is a number of near synonymous lexical verbs which all characterize a situation as one where 'non-facts' are being talked about:

¹³ <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=hypothesis> (accessed 22 January 2004)

Table 2. Lexical verbs introducing hypothesizing episodes (open list)

assume
guess
hypothesize
imagine
predict
propose
speculate
suggest
suppose

An important aspect of these verbs in use is that they tend to appear in typical syntactic frames which they partly share. Because of this formulaic character, other, less specific verbs like *think*, *say* or *happen* can also acquire the pragmatic meaning of ‘talking about that which could be’ if it is used in the appropriate frame (*let’s think about this for a moment*). For examples of such phrases see Table 3.

Table 3. Phrases introducing hypothesizing episodes

let’s think/say/assume/imagine
(so) what would happen (if)
what will happen if
what happens if
can you predict
what would your prediction be?
what would you propose
what would you do if
anyone wanna take a guess?

Since these inventories are based on dictionaries and introspection, they were checked against the *Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English* (MICASE; currently 1,8 million words January 2004). A brief quantitative survey showed that there seems to be a small number of items which, due to their high frequency of occurrence, might be regarded as a kind of marker signalling to participants in the interaction that what follows is an instance of “talking about what is not/what might be or might have been” or “hypothesizing”. In the MICASE corpus these ‘markers’ are *assume/assuming that* and *let’s say*. The verb *hypothesize*, on the other hand, is of minor importance, occurring only six times in 1,8 million words of university-level spoken interaction.

3. Empirical study and research questions

The data underlying this study are CLIL lessons recorded in secondary schools in Austria in the academic years 2001/2002 and 2002/2003. 43 lessons were recorded and represent a corpus of ca 260,000 words of spoken classroom interaction. All schools are part of the public education system and had implemented CLIL to different degrees ranging from individual subjects to offering up to 70% of the subjects through the medium of English. Ten different teachers participated in the study, one of them being a native speaker of American English. In two lessons there is also a teaching assistant present, who is also American. In a further three there is an Australian teaching assistant. The other teachers are native speakers of Austrian German, as are most of the students. Seven of the ten teachers are qualified to teach EFL (plus some other subject) at secondary level. The remaining three are also qualified secondary school teachers but do not hold a formal EFL qualification. The following school subjects are represented in this study: Geography, History and Social studies, Biology, Physics, Music, Accounting, Business Studies, Tourism Management, International Marketing.

The lessons were audio recorded on digital tape by the researcher who also took extensive fieldnotes, including copies of the teaching materials used. Occasionally mini-disc recorders were additionally employed to capture group-work situations. The tapes were later transcribed loosely following conversation analytic conventions without attempting to achieve fully detailed transcriptions.

For the purposes of this study, the lesson transcripts were read and coded for occurrences of „defining“ and „hypothesizing“. The decision on what constitutes an instance of defining or hypothesizing was taken on the basis of semantic and contextual criteria and the data-analysis is therefore mainly qualitative. Formal criteria, such as the occurrence of certain lexical items, were later used in the analysis but were only of secondary importance for the purpose of identification and categorization of the academic speech functions investigated.

The overarching interest of this study is of course to examine in how far CLIL lessons can be considered to be rich environments for the learning of academic speech functions. With regard to the two academic speech functions which I chose to focus on, this leads to the following research questions:

1. How much evidence is there in the data of the speech functions investigated ?
2. What do the realisations look like linguistically and interactionally?

3. Is there any meta-talk concerning them?

I will now present the empirical findings concerning these three questions. In the discussion section I will take up the issue of what this means for the richness of the language environment which CLIL lessons represent.

4. Findings - Classroom practices

4.1 Definitions in the CLIL classrooms

Considering the fact that teaching subject-specific concepts and their respective meaning extension is a central aspect of content teaching, definitions are a surprisingly infrequent phenomenon in the data. In 17 out of 43 lessons (40 %) no instances of defining could be identified at all. Under these circumstances it may be unsurprising that the lexemes *definition* or *define* do not occur at all in the entire data corpus. And since the genre is not even named, it is equally unsurprising that there is no meta-talk about it. The written materials used during the lessons did not contain any definitions and as no writing tasks are set in these lessons, written definitions can also be discounted.

I consider this quantitative aspect of my findings (42 definitions in 26 lessons, 17 lessons without any) significant particularly because most of the lessons are dominated by Triadic Dialogue (Initiation-Response-Feedback) that covers new or revises old content and this would seem a type of classroom activity which is not averse to the explication of concepts and the occurrence of oral definitions.

With regard to the form of the 42 definitions which do occur, it can be said that only a handful are exemplars of the full form of this mini-genre as sketched in the Definition Schema (chapter 2.1). Basically, these are all uttered by teachers, only one exemplar is provided by a student.

Formally canonical definitions in 43 CLIL lessons

(1) T: a kidney isah an internal organ ..(S: mhm) ah .. that purifies the liquids inside you, ..
a dog is a dog

(2) T: what are witnesses?

Sm1: witwe, oder? //widow, innit?//

T: **witnesses are people** who can say aahm ... **who can say i've seen it, i can swear that**

Sm1: aah

Sm2: zeugen //witnesses//

T: this is the truth

- (3) T: what is **a tomb**. (Ss...) **it is a temple to the dead** its a very big grabmal its a its **not just a tiny little bit of earth** where theres the dead body in there, its its a big one okay a tomb is a big grabstätte grabmal whatever you translate it
- (4) T: i got no idea. i know what a straw is aha that is something you use for drinking from a glass or a bottle but ...
- (5) T: yes thats right a high involvement decision is a decision where a lot of money or a lot of time is necessary to just say yes or no
- (6) Sf: a structured question is a (xx) question and er there is a limited number of possibilities to end

Variation on the canonical form concern the presence or absence of either the categorisation or the specifier elements or the fact that definitions may be co-constructed, the latter being a very common strategy in the data (see below). The handful of stand-alone student-generated definitions were produced in a situation where answers to written exam questions are being revised during class time (extracts 7-9)

- (7) Sf: er **a high involvement decision is for example if** you buy a car you will look for a lot of different different offering offers and you wont buy the very first one
- T: yes thats right a high involvement decision is a decision where a lot of money or a lot of time is necessary to just say yes or no
- (8) T: what is an unstructured question
Cynthia: erm there is an unlimited (smaller) of possibilities to answer
- (9) T: martin what is a consumer market
Martin: yeah **the consumer market is where the consumer or the market makes the price** and there are many many places where you can buy the special products so they there is a big konkurrenz

In these extracts the wording chosen by students seems to work on the assumption that the superordinate term is available to the listeners from the context or co-text so that they give only the specifying information. The retrievability is usually given, but note that in (7) the teacher does reformulate the definition according to the requirements of the canonical form. But this is the only case in the data and the elliptic form sanctioned by the situated meanings derivable from the ongoing discourse is the 'normal' case, as it may indeed be in spoken interaction.

A slightly more frequent phenomenon are definitions which are co-constructed by several speakers. This fits in well with the fact that Triadic Dialogue (Initiation-Response-Feedback) is the most common form of interaction in these classrooms. Here is an extract which contains two negotiated definitions. The first definition runs from line 1-6, the second from 15-19 (extract 10).

(10) physics

1 T: **what is a hydraulic jack?** ...none of you looked up the keywords ...before ...or learned them.

((10 turns concerned with whether the word was on a word-list or not))...

2 T: no ...okay if you look at the picture ...**what can this thing be for?**

3 Sm1: **a maschine** ((in German pronunciation))

4 T: ja **it's a small machine** ... i don't want to have the translation. theres a?

5 Sf1: to lift heavy things.

6 T: **to lift heavy things** ...so what would you call it?

7 Sm: to lift the car

8 T: to lift the car for example

9 Sf1: ein wagenheber //a jack//

10 T: ein wagenheber yes for example ...ja

11 T1: (?) a jack ja!

12 Sm: hey kann man das probieren?

13 T: aha yes if you have (XXX) you can try it out ...okay a hydraulic jack can be used to lift a heavy vehicle. ah what does the jack do? anabell, could you read it please?

14 Sf2: a hydraulic jack can be used to lift a heavy vehicle. the jack changes a small force into a much bigger one. it is therefore called a force multiplier.

15 T: what's the multiplier? ...anja!

16 Sf3: ein vermehrer!

17 T: yes, how could you explain it in english?

18 Sf3: ahm a thing that ahm make something stronger oder or more.

19 T: or bigger. so this thing is used ah if you only have small force if you exert a small force to change that force into a much bigger one. ja?

The teacher provides the trigger for the copula phrase in turn 1, which is answered by a student in turn 3 (but in German) and this is then confirmed by the teacher in turn 4 *ja it's a small machine*. Already in turn 2, however, the teacher had directed the students towards a functional specification of the definiendum *what can this thing be for?*, which also receives an appropriate student response: *to lift heavy things*. But now the teacher does not apply the same strategy as in turn 4, namely give a full official version of the whole definition. Instead she asks for a translation, something which she had quasi postponed earlier by saying *i don't want to have the translation*. Once the translation has been provided the sequence is considered complete by the interactants and they move on. The

definition sequence thus contains all the canonical elements (the copula with the superordinate term plus a specification) but they are nowhere brought together in a coherent form which could be something like *it's a small machine which is used to lift heavy things*. This is remarkable because it is quite customary for teachers to reformulate the outcome of short stretches of Triadic Dialogue (by way of recasts). The second definition in this sequence also contains both canonical elements and a translation but in different sequential order. Note that the dummy superordinate *thing* (turn18) is not replaced by the teacher with a more specific word like *device*.

What is noticeable in this extract is the close relationship between the activities of defining and providing information on unknown lexical items. In the above extract translation has to be postponed in order to create a space for defining (turn 4: i don't want to have the translation), or an "explanation" in English is explicitly demanded after a translation has already been provided (turn 17: yes, how could you explain it in english?) .

The shared space/overlaps between defining, paraphrasing and translating is also demonstrated by teachers' responses to student request for clarification on unknown vocabulary items. One of the standard reactions of teachers to the question what is X? is to provide a synonym and on numerous occasions this is actually a superordinate of X. One might thus say that such turns look like incomplete definitions. All the following are teacher turns:

(11) Teacher reactions to student question what is X?

- a deity is a god
- an ape is a monkey
- empties is a second word for returnable containers
- a proconsul is a governor in the provinces
- a French galley which is a ship

Note that 4 out of the 5 full definitions given in (1-5) arise from the same sort of situation but that merely providing a superordinate term is more frequent than the full-fledged definitions. A question arising in this context is whether an unknown word or term has better chances of being treated to a full definition if it is an important curricular concept or not. The relatively small number of cases provided by the present data does not allow anything but speculation on this.

When teachers are asked for information on unknown words, then, they regularly provide a synonym, definition or explanation while an immediate translation into German seems to be dispreferred by them (but does occur also). The opposite is the case when students are asked the meaning of an

unknown word no matter whether by a teacher or a peer. Students nearly always react with a translation of the unknown term (12-16).

- (12) 1 T: what is a libretto
2 Natalie: ja d drehbuch oder so (xx) so nehm ich an
- (13) 1 T: what is a sniper?
2 S: scharfschütze
3 S: scharfschütze
4 T: scharfschütze.
5 Thomas: a sniper? (XXX) snipers eh, ha
6 T: so, very dangerous, the snipers.
- (14) 1 T: what is a civil war?
2 S: mhm
3 S: ja, .. bürgerkrieg
- (15) 1 T: what is a peace treaty?
2 Wolfgang: ein friedensvertrag
3 S: friedensvertrag
4 T: friedensvertrag.
- (16) 1 Sf: was heißt commemorate,
2 T: er to er=
3 Sm: =erinnerung rufen=
4 T: =to remember something a celebration to remember something

Extract (16) shows the preferred strategies of teachers and students in immediate sequence. Since teachers also provide translations, in sum, translation is a strategy frequently employed in CLIL classrooms to clarify the meaning of unknown terms. In this connection I would like to raise the question whether this resource is not maybe overestimated in its capacity to create full understanding. Offering an L1 label may create a recognition effect but how is one to tell whether the students have a rich semantic representation of the relevant word in their L1? In his study of CLIL science teaching Bonnet (2004) shows that such situations arise regularly in his groupwork data and that lexical gaps in the L2 frequently ‘mask’ conceptual gaps which exist irrespective of the language used. In reading transcripts of whole-class interaction one repeatedly gets the feeling that labels are being used only as if everybody knew exactly what they mean while it is nowhere visible that everybody does in fact know what they mean, or what distinguishes one from another. The design of the present study does not allow to make further claims in this respect, a longitudinal study of one class in one subject would be necessary for that. But the scarcity in the present data of rich definitions of concepts presented in a coherent form leaves room for doubt that translation

equivalents create understanding, and, incidentally, doubt also for the kind of understanding created in many L1 subject classrooms.

4.2 Hypothesizing in the CLIL classrooms

Given that the array of subjects represented in the CLIL corpus includes chemistry, physics, biology, geography, business studies, marketing and history, it seemed reasonable to expect positive evidence with regard to the academic speech function of hypothesizing. However, the brief answer to the question of how much hypothesizing goes on during the lessons investigated is: not very much. Fewer than 43 instances of hypothesizing were identified in the transcripts so that arithmetically, there is less than one instance of hypothesizing per lesson. In real terms this means that there are numerous lessons where possibilities, probabilities, predictions or consequences are not talked about at all, so that facts (past and present) are the main focus of the proceedings. In those lessons where “talking about what is not/what might be or might have been” does occur, a good part of the hypothesizing sequences is very short, one reason for this being that students appear highly reluctant to verbally engage in this activity. Consider the following example where the teacher attempts to personalise the dilemma of a female film character in order to encourage the student (female) to engage in “hypothesizing”.

(17)

- 1 T: I mean, try to **imagine** that: your boyfriend says “I love you so much but I can’t come out tonight. I don’t want to enter such a stable relationship because I have a son”. But just pretending he has a son because he doesn’t want to be too close to you – **how would you** feel about that? **What would** you think about him? Annie, would you love him, still the same, if he did that to you?
- 2 Sf: Um, um, I don’t know. I think, um that he, um look for change his life. He think that, um...
- 3 T: He has no satisfied life, he is not satisfied with his life.

It is evident that the student avoids giving a personalized answer but prefers to steer the talk back to expressing an opinion about the main character of the film. In this particular instance one might of course speculate that the student simply does not want to disclose any personal thoughts or feelings, but the structure of events is analogous also in cases where no privacy threat can be construed. On the contrary, the strategy of personalizing the issue is sometimes employed by teachers who try to encourage hypothesizing which is otherwise rather difficult to instigate (see below).

What does hypothesizing look like?

An important question in view of the low incidence of 'hypothesizing' is how well established it is as a distinct speech event, and how recognizable concrete sequences are to participants as instances of 'hypothesizing'. It was mentioned above that the verb *hypothesize* itself occurs only six times in native-speakers' university-level spoken interaction so that it is no surprise that the word never occurs once in the 260,000 word corpus of secondary school speech underlying this study. Among other things, this tells us that the verb *hypothesize* does not seem to be a popular stylistic choice in spoken genres among native speakers of English, and that the non-native CLIL teachers in this study share this intuition.

With regard to those marker phrases which are used, the data show a preference for the phrase *let's say* (7 occurrences by 2 speakers)) and for the verb *imagine* (11 occurrences in two syntactic frames: *let's imagine*, *try to imagine*). *Let's say* mirrors the MICASE data while with *imagine* we might be observing cross-linguistic influence of German *vorstellen* (*stellen wir uns vor*). Interestingly the equally usual German *annehmen* (*nehmen wir an*) does not seem to have this wash-over effect, even though this would result in the idiomatic *assume* (*let's assume*; cf. results of MICASE check). The two expressions mentioned cover about half of the instances of hypothesizing in the CLIL data. The remainder are mostly introduced by some variation of what would you do if.

The next question is what happens after these 'signal phrases'. Based on extract (17) I already argued that students frequently respond with avoidance. Alternatively they may also resort to minimal responses as illustrated in extract (18). Note that here, as in extract (17) the teacher uses personalisation in order to encourage hypothesizing: in line 3 she encourages students to put themselves into the place of a recently hatched baby-crocodile.

(18) biology

- 1 T: and what do you think they want immediately after hatching?
- 2 Michi: aso ...the mother aso
- 3 T: the mother isn't there ...what do you think they do? max ...mh? ...**what would you do if you** just came out of the egg?
- 4 S: schreien ...cry
- 5 S: hungry
- 6 T: **you would probably be hungry** and that's the same for young reptiles so they run around and?

Note that the complex morphosyntactic forms connected with hypothesizing (modals, conditional) are present in the teacher's language but that the student's responses are minimalistic. Two explanations for this come to mind: either the students are avoiding the use of complex linguistic forms such as the conditional, or maybe the IRF structure itself is not conducive to moving into extended hypothesizing. Most probably, the two factors contribute simultaneously.

The argument of form avoidance holds more strongly at the lower level whereas at the upper secondary level one may observe steps towards partial compliance. cf. extract (19).

(19) business studies

- 1 T: **if you had**.. two million of euro ... you could either put it on the bank ...
- 2 S: dann wär ich scho lang (nimmer xxx)
(*in that case I would have left long ago*)
- 3 T: **could you do** anything else with your money?
- 4 Daniel: yes, i can buy shares.
- 5 Sm: invest it
- 6 T: you ccan invest it, you could buy shares, ya
- 7 Mario: you can buy a new house and a (xxx)
- 8 S: immobilien (xxx)
- 9 Daniel: or .. i i can became a silent partner.
- 10 T: i can become
- 11 Daniel: become, yes, i'm terribly sorry
- 12 T: you could become a silent partner. okay.

Note that here also, the invitation to hypothesize is personalised: „if **you** had“. One of the students actually decides to take this at face-value and says that with 2 million Euros in her pocket she would certainly not be sitting in this classroom any more, thereby producing the appropriate grammatical form, but in German (line2). The content-oriented-hypothesizing is less forthcoming and use of the conditional *could* is avoided in the various students responses. Note that in her correction in line 10 the teacher decides to correct the form of the infinitive *become* but not the *can/could* opposition.

From the 43 CLIL lessons examined very few examples can be brought forward to illustrate instances where students make longer contributions once the hypothesizing space has been opened by the teacher. (20-22) shall serve as examples.

(20) business studies

- 1 T: so he can't he can't he can't serve food on these lovely plates **and let's say** he has to serve it on .. plastic dishes. ... so h-
- 2 Ss ((laughs))
- 3 S. and so he (XX) hotel (??)
- 4 Sm1: and it doesn't look good because it's a very famous hotel **and so äh he will lose** some guests and .. some customers .. no, some guests .. and so **and so he does äh he does have** äh ... schaden (lacht)
- 5 S: damage
- 6 Sm1: damage ... and loss.

(21) marketing

- 1 T: and what do you think in a is the level of profit wieviel wird man in der einführungsphase da verdienen
- 2 Sf1: right **if** it's a new product and there is the low price policy (xx) dann spricht man die mehrheit an a big share market and then **you will make** high price (xx) **and if** its a high price **then** the (innovators) and the early majori early adopters **will buy** it

(22) business studies

- 1 T: aahm .. how did how did the other people watching the presentation **how would you describe that phone call? ... especially**
- 2-4 ((3 turns on other business))
- 5 S7: **i would maybe** .. i would maybe not tell them the possible consequences äähm ...**i'd probably not** tell them the possible consequences at the first call.

Note that these are all examples from social science classes and not from physics or biology. One is tempted to speculate if there is something inherent in social science teaching that is a little more conducive to hypothesizing than in natural science lessons. It might be that the social science concept of the “case” takes pressure off students to get their hypothesizing 'right' and reduces the danger of face-loss. Even if a student's version of a particular “case” is rejected because his premises are not acceptable, this does not show up the student's ignorance of some “universal law” as in physics for instance, since human behaviour always allows for variation. Even so, as we have seen, students are reluctant to enter into this kind of mental game.

Part of the game, however, also lies with the teacher and how s/he establishes, encourages or discourages “talking about that which is not” in her/his conduct of the lesson. In other words, how much hypothesizing happens in a lesson also depends on the style of the teacher – and, I will argue, possibly on the educational culture s/he belongs to. In the CLIL corpus, the most frequent and the longest sequences of hypothesizing come from those sequences during several business studies lessons which were led by an

American teaching assistant (T2). Extract (23) below represents the longest hypothesizing sequence in the entire dataset.

(23) business studies

1 T2: okay. **lelet's assume** everything's all right though. i mean you know we have another example .. after that but .. why wha- a- assuming he hasn't even inspected the goods, he hasn't even opened the boxes, **why would** the buyer refuse to accept delivery?

2 S: ... zu spät?

3 T2: **he may think** it's too late, he may think it was aa .. a fixed delivery date .. when

4 S: he saw a more beautiful ..

5 T2: he what?

6 S: dishes. ... he saw more beautiful dishes in another .. (XX)

7 T2 aha there's a good point.

8 T1: mhm

9 T2: **he might have seen** some dishes that he liked better, and now he just .. he doesn't want to have to buy these dishes. .. (XX)

10 S: ahm because he thinks ahm the goods have äh didn't ... were not delivered according to the contract.

11 T2: okay. this is the basic point. he thinks the contract has not been fulfilled. this is usually what's going to happen. yes?

12 S: the goods are wrong or damaged.

13 T2: okay. he might-

14 S: he didn't order the goods.

15 T2: **he may think** that the ggoods are wrong or damaged, **he may say** he didn't order the goods at all.

16 S: hm (drawing in breath) a liar!

17 T2: a liar exactly. .. horrible people. so. ... in this case then what what can Augarten do with the goods or do to the buyer

18 S: ahmm .. put it on storage?

19 T2: okay, store the goods, cause .. these goods have already come all the way from Austria, all the way over to America .. to send them back is going to cost a lot of money. so he can find .. a warehouse somewhere in Chicago and put the goods there. and who has to pay for this?

20 S: ahmm ... the buyer

21T2: right. he can make the buyer pay for this storage. .. and then .. **assuming** .. yes?

22 S: thee seller sends a reminder to the buyer for .. delaying accepting goods.

23 T2: okay, so he sends him a reminder in what what does he do? what what does he have to state in this reminder?

24 T2: ... what what would .. **what would most people do?**

25 S5?: nothing

26 S: pay it back (??)

27 T2: nothing. .. okay. **you would do nothing.**

28 S: depends on the amount

- 29 T2: depends on the amount, that's one good point. **if it's** .. you know a few groschen, **you're not gonna .. worry** about it
- 30 S5: annd on the rrelationship
- 31 T2: ... the relationship. can you expand on that a little bit? what what do mean by by/the relationship
- 32 S5: aah the relation between the buyer and the seller.
- 33 T2: okay?
- 34 S5: if it's good hee w- he wwould say him that it's the false .. price
- 35 T2: okay. **so if he wants** to have a good relationship with the seller **he'll probably** tell him that .. well, that the price is .. incorrect. it's a good point. .. it's very important. .. keeping a good relationship with your .. business partners. okay. .. any questions on that?

Apart from featuring one of the few student-uttered conditional clauses in the whole corpus (l.34) and its length, the example also contains many of the phenomena which I have mentioned as typical of hypothesizing in the CLIL classrooms at the outset of my: there is a marker phrase (let's assume; l.1), there are minimal student responses (e.g. l.25) and avoidance of complex grammar (e.g. ll.4-6), the latter are both met with teacher expansions (ll.27; 9).

Finally, just as defining, hypothesizing is not explicitly talked about during these CLIL lessons. Neither in terms of its formal characteristics nor in terms of being a desirable or useful behaviour in the classroom. There is only one episode where something like this might be said to occur. Significantly, I believe, it does not concern subject content as such, but an exam situation which may arise in the future.

(24)

- 1 T: there is something ah which i would like to shshow you especially ththose people who ah who are going to .. ah to do the final examination, the oral examination. so it- this is especially for you.
- 2 S: (XXX)
- 3 T: what we did now - i ask(ed?) you what your impression of this picture is .. and you told me and you interpreted it, **but if you try to imagine the situation at the Matura**, if you do the same thing, this might be quite ah quite stressful and quite difficult for you to do that.
- 4 S: can i go to the toilet?
- 5 T: yes, of course. so the simpler version would be if you ffollow ah the guidelines below: simply starting out with .. describing the picture, using these .. phrases, and once you have described the picture and you t- you have talked about the obvious, .. then you could start interpreting it.

In order to prepare her students for this important exam the teacher explicitly plays through a **possible** chain of events. Similar interactive effort

is spent nowhere else in the data on setting up a situation where “talking about what is not/what might be or might have been” is the outcome desired by the teacher.

5. Discussion & Conclusions

The purpose of this paper has been to examine two typical academic language functions (defining and hypothesizing) in the context of Austrian CLIL classrooms in order to find out how they are embodied in the classroom discourse and to consider the implications of these findings for pedagogical practice.

The main findings are as follows:

- Definitions are rare events in Austrian CLIL classrooms.
- Quasi-canonical professional or academic definitions are extremely scarce.
- The frequency of occurrence of hypothesizing episodes is equally low.
- Arithmetically there is less than one such episode per lesson, which means that in real terms there are numerous CLIL lessons (40%) where no hypothesizing or predicting is engaged in at all.
- While avoidance of difficult linguistic forms on part of the students may be part of the explanation in the case of hypothesizing this can hardly hold of defining, where linguistic form is very simple.

It must be conceded that definitions can be communicatively perfectly adequate without being formally canonical. Most likely the kind and structuring of the specifying features provided is more crucial to the effectiveness of a definition than the presence or absence of the copula expression, for instance. Snow (1987) cites examples of definitions from young children which show none of the formal characteristics of fully developed definitions but are still communicatively adequate. Nevertheless, it is remarkable just how few exemplars of such an important academic and professional micro-genre are present in the CLIL data. It was found that hypothesizing episodes have a less clearly circumscribed structural format than definitions but can be identified instead by lexical phrases which seem to serve as discourse signals signifying the start of a hypothesizing episode: the preferred structures are *let's say* and the verb *imagine* (try to imagine, let's imagine).

In sum, at least where these two academic language functions are concerned the CLIL classrooms studied cannot be said to represent an environment that is conducive to the learning of academic language skills of this kind.

What might be brought forward to explain this situation? It might of course be the case that the students' cognitive development has not reached the stage where they can be expected to master such relatively complex tasks. As mentioned above, experimental studies (Snow 1987) have, however, shown that defining is mastered at about age nine while all participating students are at least eleven years old (age range 11-18). No comparable research results were available regarding hypothesizing but even if one assumes that this activity requires higher cognitive development than defining, it is highly unlikely that this stage should be reached only in the late teens. Also, the hypothesizing episodes that do occur in the data were equally distributed over the lower and upper secondary levels. Nevertheless it must be conceded that transferring cognitive skills which have been mastered in principle to an actual classroom situation might not be as self-evident and automatic as is commonly assumed (cf. Hüttner and Rieder 2003).

Another obvious reason might of course be that the scarcity of defining and hypothesizing episodes in the CLIL data is a product of gaps in L2 competence. With regard to defining this is hard to believe since the actual linguistic structures involved are rather basic. The expression of probability is a more intricate linguistic task and we saw that student turns during hypothesizing episodes consistently avoid the use of the conditional right up until the last grades. Much more regularly than with definitions, teachers offer recasts of hypothesizing turns, the recasts usually focussing on a modal conditional that is missing from the student's turn. Since this is a feedback type typical of grammatical errors, this suggests that teachers might indeed be construing students' reluctance to hypothesize as a grammar problem. This view would tie in with the fact that neither of the two academic language functions is ever talked about explicitly in the data-corpus. They are not referred to or labelled, and given this it is natural that they are also not talked about in terms of their purpose, structure or linguistic realisation.

A further factor which discourages the more extensive use of the micro-genres under investigation is the structure of the talk in the CLIL lessons analysed. With few exceptions, the dominant mode of interaction is Triadic Dialogue with its chains of Initiation-Response-Feedback. In terms of communicative function these cycles are characterized by a continuous stream of information-seeking and information-giving moves. I have been able to show elsewhere (Dalton-Puffer 2004) that among these moves those seeking and/or giving facts by far outnumber those seeking/giving reasons, beliefs and opinions. Since even the exchange of beliefs or opinions is rare in the data it

is only logical that hypothesizing should not turn out to be a preferred activity.

All this leaves an open question with regard to the teachers' degree of awareness in this respect: the teachers' own language use reflects the fact that they have mastered these micro-genres: they produce expert definitions and hypotheses but I assume that few of them are consciously aware of the existence of these as identifiable and describable academic language skills and functions. There is no evidence in the data of their having declarative knowledge about them. As a consequence, they do not take any steps to raise the students' awareness with regard to the realisation of defining and hypothesizing. The implications of this are clear: if teachers' awareness can be raised, they can include in their planning tasks which actively develop these language and thinking skills in their students.

The findings of this study have implications not only for CLIL as a language oriented enterprise but also for content-subject teaching. It is widely accepted that cognitive skills, once acquired, transfer easily from one language to another. The low incidence of defining and “talking about what is not/what might be or might have been” in the students' contributions to classroom talk, then, raises doubts as to their familiarity with these functions and it would be a worth-while endeavour to research L1 classrooms in this respect.¹⁴ But these are questions which need to be discussed in the context of the specific subject pedagogies as well as in the context of the local pedagogic and didactic culture and they are therefore not the subject of this study. I do think, however, that starting at the language level would be an important key for educationalists for getting a handle on the level of subject specific and general academic thinking skills embodied in activities like hypothesizing.

Of course this article is not concerned with discussing ways in which science is, can or should be taught and in how far school teaching can or should transport the ideologies of scientific disciplines. But we need to be interested in the matter in so far as certain ways of teaching entail certain ways of language use and not others, because it means that certain ways of language use can be experienced, practised, and learned in the classroom and others cannot.

With regard to the development in CLIL students of an overall academic language proficiency, it needs to be mentioned again that the present study is of course based on spoken language only. This is crucial in so far as academic

¹⁴ For a highly interesting and profound book-length treatment on science teaching in English speaking countries see Lemke 1990.

language skills have a strong literate (reading/writing) component. Theoretically it could thus happen that we did not find much evidence of a certain function in the spoken discourse but that it might be well represented in the reading/writing which takes place. For the CLIL classrooms studied, however, this reservation is not very potent since the written materials used during the actual lessons were available to me and did not contain instances of the functions investigated. Writing other than note-taking practically never happens.

In conclusion, it can be said that with regard to the research interest pursued in this study, namely in how far CLIL classrooms constitute rich environments for learning how to perform academic language functions in the foreign language, the results are sobering. Because the teachers exhibit full command of the genre-schemas and possess procedural knowledge of them, the students' input does contain some instances of definitions and hypothesizing in the teachers' language. The students themselves, however, are never guided, let alone pressured into producing the two micro-genres at all, neither implicitly nor explicitly. The conclusion I suggest should be drawn from this is that we need to first sharpen our understanding of these skills and functions, and to subsequently raise teachers' awareness about academic language skills (relevant research in this direction as well as information about it is the applied linguist's debt to be discharged at the practitioner's doorstep) so that they may then devise ways in which students can be guided towards actively using these important thinking and learning skills. I am convinced that some explicit instruction can go a long way and provide insights which years of exposure may never give.

For the continuing evolution of CLIL in Austria and other European countries it will be inevitable to develop a more explicit formulation of the actual language learning goals in this educational approach. Ultimately, explicit language curricula alongside the existing content subject ones will have to be developed and academic language skills will be a central component of such curricula.

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That or no that? – that is the question: on subordinator suppression in extraposed subject clauses

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0. Prologue

The question of choice between two constructional variants is a crucial one in grammatical analysis: why does a speaker choose one grammatical option rather than another? This question becomes even more interesting when there is no apparent difference in meaning between them, as is typically claimed for *that*-clauses and zero *that*-clauses (e.g. Biber *et al.* 1999: 680).

That-clauses allowing omission of the *that*-complementizer (subordinator) may of course occur in various different constructions, with the *that*-clause assuming a variety of different syntactic functions, some of which are illustrated in (1):

- (1) a. She thought (*that*) *John was in London* (direct object)
 b. The problem is (*that*) *the weather is not very good* (subject complement)
 c. I'm glad (*that*) *I found you again* (adjectival complement)
 d. Your criticism, (*that*) *other factors have not been taken into consideration*, is fully justified (apposition)
 e. It's on Monday (*that*) *they leave* ('relative clause' of *it*-cleft)
 f. It's obvious (*that*) *she did it* (extraposed subject)

The present study investigates the choice between omission and retention of *that* in only one syntactic type, viz. extraposed subject clauses as in example (1f), with the aim of identifying possible conditioning factors for the use of zero *that*-clauses. The database for the investigation is provided by the British component of the *International Corpus of English* (ICE-GB), a one-million-word corpus of contemporary British English, including both spoken and

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written texts (cf. e.g. Nelson *et al.* 2002). This corpus yields a total of 731 instances of subject *that*-clause extraposition, of which the overwhelming majority, viz. 655 instances (89.6%), take the complementizer; only 76 instances (10.4%) have asyndeton. These figures already clearly indicate that zero *that*-clauses represent the statistically marked variant (cf. Givón's 1995 criteria of markedness) and as such require particular attention in the analysis. In fact, the overwhelming predominance of *that*-connectives even begs the question why *that* omission is used at all.

Previous studies of the *that*/zero alternation have almost exclusively concentrated on object *that*-clauses (only Ellinger 1933: 100, McDavid 1964, and Bolinger 1972 include brief remarks on extraposition) taking into account mainly American English and written texts. A notable exception in this respect is Bryant (1962: 209), who reports several studies, including an analysis of a taped interview. She observes that the complementizer occurs most often in formal written texts, zero *that* most often in informal spoken texts, with relatively formal speech falling in-between.

McDavid (1964: 113), using a corpus of modern (American) non-fiction, notes that "the conditions under which *that* may be omitted seem partly stylistic and partly grammatical", with omission being more common in informal writing: of the 41 examples of subject extraposition only 6 had an omitted *that*.

The influence of stylistic factors on the choice between the two variants has also been emphasised by Storms (1966: 262-265), who points out that *that* omission introduces "an element of subjectivity or emotiveness" (*op.cit.*: 256), while an object clause with *that* tends "to be less personal, less familiar, less warm, less friendly, less emotive. It is objective, factual, formal, official, sometime tending to hostility" (*op.cit.*: 262). Thus, Storms seems to imply an informal, spoken use for zero, as he sees the amount of subjectivity as "responsible for the distinction between colloquial, spoken English and so-called formal, written or elevated speech" (*op.cit.*: 262).

Whereas most studies attempt to explain the omission/retention of *that* by pointing at register and discourse factors (see also below), Bolinger (1972) detects a genuine semantic contrast between the two types. He argues that the complementizer *that*, which has developed out of a demonstrative, has retained some of its original deictic or anaphoric meaning (*op.cit.*: 10) and as such tends to be selected in contexts where it points back to some previously mentioned or known state-of-affairs. Zero, on the other hand, is more likely to be preferred in other contexts.

A detailed list of conditioning factors has been established by Elsness (1984), who explored the use of 671 object *that*-clauses in four text types of the Brown corpus, i.e. American writing published in 1961. He identifies the following factors as favouring the choice of zero *that*: (i) informality of style, (ii) lack of structural complexity of the subject in the object clause (i.e. realisation as pronoun), (iii) no deviation from the common weight distributional pattern of light-heavy (in either the matrix or the object clause). Most importantly, Elsness points out that (iv) zero marks a closer link between the matrix and the object clause, which he deduces from his observation that zero is more frequent with object clauses whose pronominal subject is coreferential with the subject of the matrix clause, with definite (anaphoric) object clause subjects, and when the subject of the matrix clause or the subject of the object clause is a 1st or 2nd person pronoun.

More recently, Thompson and Mulac (1991) have studied the conditioning factors of the use of *that* in spoken English. Using a 240,000 word corpus of conversation among American college students (yielding a total of 1,287 instances of object *that*-clause), they found that zero *that* occurred most frequently with the matrix predicates *think* and *guess* in the 1st or 2nd person singular and with a pronominal subject in the object clause. On the other hand, the use of *that* is linked to the occurrence of an auxiliary verb, an indirect object, or an adverbial in the matrix clause, and a full NP (rather than pronominal) subject in the object clause. As a unified explanation for these seemingly disparate factors they suggest that certain combinations of main clause subjects and verbs (such as *I think*) “are being reanalyzed as unitary epistemic phrases. As this happens, the distinction between ‘main’ and ‘complement’ clause is being eroded ... with the omission of *that* a strong concomitant” (*op.cit.*: 249).

Finally, two diachronic studies trace the historical development of *that* and zero complementizers. Based on data from the *Helsinki Corpus*, Rissanen (1991) examines the use of *that* and zero as object clause links in Late Middle and Early Modern English and reports a steady increase of *that* omission from 14 percent (in the period 1350-1420) to 70 percent (in the period 1640-1710) after the matrix verbs *say*, *tell*, *know*, *think*. As factors favouring the choice of zero he identifies a pronominal subject in the object clause, the lack of intervening elements between matrix and object clause, and occurrence in spoken texts (*op.cit.*: 286). Finegan and Biber (1995) investigate the development of zero and *that* in three registers of British English between 1650 and 1990 using data from the *ARCHER Corpus*. They show that the trend – reported by Rissanen – towards an increased preference of zero in

Late Middle and Early Modern English is reversed in the text types sermons, medical articles and, eventually, also letters. Their findings also confirm the conditioning factors for the use of *that* and zero identified by previous studies.

Apart from occasional references to extraposed subject clauses, all previous studies have focussed on the analysis of object *that*-clauses. The factors identified for the choice of zero *that* therefore have to be reviewed for applicability in the present investigation. In the following I briefly summarise the main factors established by these studies with a view to identifying those that are of immediate relevance for our purpose. The factors quoted as favouring zero complementizer in object clauses are thus:

- (a) Spoken language, informal style.
- (b) Absence of intervening elements between matrix and complement clause, making explicit boundary marking (disambiguation) with *that* unnecessary.
- (c) Matrix predicates are high-frequency lexemes (e.g. *think*, *guess*).
- (d) Matrix clause subjects are *I* or *you*.
- (e) Absence of extra elements in the matrix clause (viz. auxiliaries, indirect objects, adverbials) which reduce the ability of the matrix clause to function as an epistemic phrase by adding additional semantic content (cf. Thompson and Mulac 1991: 246).
- (f) Appropriate light-heavy weight distribution pattern in matrix and complement clause.
- (g) Pronominal subject of the complement clause, coreferential with the matrix clause subject.
- (h) Anaphoric relationship or givenness of the complement clause.

Of these potential factors, (d) is clearly not applicable as extraposed subject clauses, by definition, only occur with a main clause subject in the 3rd person, viz. anticipatory *it*. Factor (e) only applies in case of an epistemic interpretation of the matrix clause and is therefore not immediately relevant here as the matrix clause of extraposed subjects allows for a much wider range of speaker comment, i.e. not restricted to epistemic modality (cf. e.g. Gómez-González 1997: 102, Herriman 2000: 584-586). As for factor (f), a

light-heavy distribution of the matrix clause is ensured by the pronominal subject anticipatory *it*; while in the complement clause it is taken care of by factor (g) (pronominal subject) and factor (b) (absence of adverbials at clause boundary). Factor (g), finally, is only partly applicable with ‘coreferentiality’ being excluded by anticipatory *it* in the main clause. All other factors, however, must be taken as potential influences on the choice of zero or *that* and will be investigated in turn in what follows below: section 2 examines the distribution of extraposed *that*-clauses in different spoken and written text types. Section 3 addresses the question of intervening adverbials between matrix and complement clause. Section 4 looks at the syntactic category of the complement clause subject. Section 5 homes in on the semantic and syntactic categories of the matrix predicate and section 6, finally, investigates the information status of the complement clause. The conclusion in section 7 sums up the relevant findings and suggests a unified interpretation.

1. *Act I*: Text types

The distribution of *that* and zero *that* clauses across the different text categories in ICE-GB is given in Table 1 below. To facilitate comparison of the different text types (which are unequal in size), the counts have been normalised per 10,000 words.¹⁵

¹⁵ The spoken and the written text category are equal in size, each containing 250 texts. This differs slightly from the text classification in ICE-GB itself, which follows the delivery mode and groups 50 texts of scripted speech (S2B, ‘written to be spoken’) with the spoken texts. In terms of production, however, this category differs from other orally delivered texts in that it is not produced ‘online’, as it were, but with a degree of premeditation and planning typical of written texts. Following the arrangement of other corpora (e.g. the Survey of English Usage Corpus) ‘scripted speech’ is therefore grouped here with the written text category.

Table 1. Frequency of *that*- and zero *that*-clauses according to ICE-GB text categories

Text category	No. of texts	+ <i>that</i>		– <i>that</i>		TOTAL	
		n	10,000 words	n	10,000 words	n	10,000 words
Private dialogue S1A	(100)	28	1.4	16	0.8	44	2.2
Public dialogue S1B	(80)	135	8.4	10	0.6	145	9.1
Unscripted monologue S2A	(70)	104	7.4	7	0.5	111	7.9
SPOKEN	(250)	267	5.3	33	0.7	300	6.0
Scripted monologue S2B	(50)	69	6.9	17	1.7	86	8.6
Non-professional writing W1A	(20)	44	11.0	2	0.5	46	11.5
Correspondence W1B	(30)	39	6.5	3	0.5	42	7.0
Academic writing W2A	(40)	95	11.9	1	0.1	96	12.0
Non-academic writing W2B	(40)	60	7.5	2	0.3	62	7.8
Reportage W2C	(20)	19	4.8	10	2.5	29	7.3
Instructional writing W2D	(20)	18	4.5	0	0	18	4.5
Persuasive writing W2E	(10)	30	15.0	3	1.5	33	16.5
Creative writing W2F	(20)	14	3.5	5	1.3	19	4.8
WRITTEN	(250)	388	7.8	43	0.9	431	8.6
TOTAL	(500)	655	6.6	76	0.8	731	7.3

As already indicated in section 1, the corpus yields 655 instances of *that*-complementizer (89.6%; 6.6 instances per 10,000 words) as opposed to only 76 instances of zero (10.4%; 0.8 per 10,000 words). Interestingly, this overall distribution pattern is largely the same for both modes: spoken texts show a ratio of 89% *that* vs. 11% zero (5.3 vs. 0.7 instances per 10,000 words) and written texts 90% *that* vs. 10% zero (7.8 vs. 0.9 instances per 10,000 words). This can be taken as indication that omission or retention of *that* is fairly independent of mode, an assumption that is also confirmed by tests of statistical significance: $\chi^2 = 0.351 < \text{crit. (1, 0.05)}$.

What does seem to have an influence, however, is the text type. In the spoken texts we can notice that the frequency of *that*-complementizers is unusually low in Private dialogue, with as little as 1.4 occurrences per 10,000 words (as opposed to 8.4 occurrences in Public dialogue). This small figure has to be seen in the light of an overall low number of *that*-clauses in this text category, but it also marks the use of a *that* complementizer as a feature less compatible with informal spoken texts. By comparison, the use of zero is, in absolute terms, relatively unaffected by the formality/informality of a spoken text. In the written mode four text types stand out: on the one hand, Reportage and Scripted monologue with unusually high figures of zero linkage, on the other hand Instructional and Academic writing with unusually low figures. To examine whether these fluctuations in the use of zero are at the expense of the

that complementizers, Table 2 gives the relative frequencies of each variant for better comparison.

Table 2. Relative frequency of *that*-clauses and zero *that*-clauses according to text categories

	+ <i>that</i>	– <i>that</i>	TOTAL
Private dialogue S1A	63.6%	36.4%	100%
Public dialogue S1B	93.1%	6.9%	100%
Unscripted monologue S2A	93.7%	6.3%	100%
SPOKEN	89.0%	11.0%	100%
Scripted monologue S2B	80.2%	19.8%	100%
Non-professional writing W1A	95.7%	4.3%	100%
Correspondence W1B	92.9%	7.1%	100%
Academic writing W2A	99.0%	1.0%	100%
Non-academic writing W2B	96.8%	3.2%	100%
Reportage W2C	65.5%	34.5%	100%
Instructional writing W2D	100%	0%	100%
Persuasive writing W2E	90.9%	9.1%	100%
Creative writing W2F	73.7%	26.3%	100%
WRITTEN	90.0%	10.0%	100%
TOTAL	89.6%	10.4%	100%

From this direct comparison of zero and *that* complementizer we can see that Public dialogue and Unscripted monologue conform to the general pattern found in the written mode (roughly 93% with *that*, 7% without), while Private dialogue stands out with a ratio of 63.6% *that* vs. 36.4% zero – a much more balanced proportion.¹⁶ The considerable increase of zero connectives in Private dialogue, no doubt, is attributable to the lack of formality in this text type in comparison to the more formal style of Public speech. As discussed in section 1, formality of style has variously been identified as a major factor promoting the use of a *that* complementizer. Bryant's (1962: 209) assertion, however, that *that* appears most frequently in formal writing, zero most frequently in informal speech, with relatively formal speech falling in-between is not entirely borne out by extraposed subject clauses: while there is a clear difference between Private dialogue and written texts, formal speech does not take an intermediate position but behaves exactly like formal writing.

¹⁶ The preference for 'zero' in private dialogue (compared to public dialogue) has also tested as statistically highly significant: $\chi^2 = 12.47 > \text{crit. (1, 0.001)}$.

In the written texts, too, there is considerable variation in the distribution of *that* and zero. The lowest proportions of zero can be found in Instructional writing (0%), Academic writing (1%), Non-academic writing (i.e. popular non-fiction) (3.2%), and Non-professional writing (i.e. student essays and exam scripts) (4.3%), all of which are well below the written average of 10 percent. The figures for Instructional writing have to be taken with some caution though, owing to the small overall number of extraposed *that*-clauses in this category.¹⁷ On the whole, however, the low occurrence of zero in these four text types seems to confirm formality as decisive factor and, more specifically, the wide-spread claim that zero connectives are particularly rare in scientific writings (cf. e.g. Ellinger 1933: 107, Storms 1966: 264, Elsness 1984: 520-521, Greenbaum *et al.* 1996: 84) even more so as the overall frequency of *that*-clauses in absolute terms (see Table 1) is unusually high in Academic writing and Non-professional writing (i.e. student essays). With the text category Correspondence, on the other hand, the formality criterion does not seem to apply at first glance: despite the generally acknowledged informality of letters (cf. Finegan and Biber 1995: 247, Greenbaum *et al.* 1996: 84) the count of *that* connectives is relatively high. It is necessary, however, to differentiate between the two subcategories social and business letters, with the latter being more formal in style. The results for *that* and asyndeton are accordingly: business letters yield exclusively *that* connectives, while social letters, on the other hand, contain 75 percent *that*-clauses and 25 percent zero *that*-clauses.

At the other end of the written scale, the text types with the highest ratio of zero connectives are Reportage (34.5%), Creative writing (26.3%) and Scripted monologue (19.8%). While in Creative writing (i.e. novels and stories) the unusually high percentage of asyndeton can be attributed to the frequent use of direct speech in this category,¹⁸ and hence to the factor of (in)formality, the situation is less clear with the other two categories. The style of Scripted monologue, i.e. broadcast news and (broadcast) talks, as well

¹⁷ The small number of *that*-clauses (with and without complementizer) in this category is not really surprising. As a text type which focuses mainly on the performance of physical actions and processes, it is more likely to attract infinitival complement clauses rather than finite complements, which tend more towards the expression of facts (cf. Mair 1990: 25, Collins 1994: 18).

¹⁸ Cf. also Tannen's (1980: 214) assertion that written fiction, as opposed to other categories of written language, uses strategies that are typically associated with the spoken mode: "it builds upon the immediacy function of spoken language – 'imageability' and 'involvement'".

as Reportage, i.e. news reports, can hardly be classified as informal. Scripted monologue, of course, is close in style to the spoken mode, but clearly the more formal end of it, which shows as low a proportion of zero connectives as – on average – written texts. The reason for the high percentage of zero complementizers in these two text categories must therefore be sought elsewhere.

2. *Act II*: Intervening adverbials

Adverbials occurring at the clause boundary between matrix and complement clause may be an important factor for retaining a *that* complementizer because of their potential to obscure the boundary between the two clauses if interpretable as (semantically) belonging to either. A *that* complementizer clearly marks the boundary between the two constituents and as such can have an important disambiguation function.

An analysis of the 76 zero *that*-clauses in the corpus shows that there is only a single instance with an adverbial PP at clause boundary, given in (2) below, which is, however, unmistakably identifiable as part of the complement clause in semantic terms.

- (2) It seems to me *in financial terms* you could have had a hard up father (S1A-075-83)

This seems to suggest that absence of intervening material between matrix and complement clause is indeed an important prerequisite for *that* omission. Also, there is no indication that the function of explicit boundary marking is taken over by other means, i.e. in spoken language by the use of fillers, hesitation noises or pauses. There is only a single instance of an intervening filler, given in (3).

- (3) It is strange *you know* so many people just don't bother to shop anywhere else for those (S1A-017-329)

However, since the overwhelming majority of *that*-clauses is also free from intervening adverbials, this cannot be taken as a decisive factor for omission of *that*.

3. *Act III*: Syntactic category of the complement clause subject

It has already been pointed out above that coreferentiality of the subject of the complement clause with that of the main clause (as found by Elsness 1984 with zero *that*) is in our case excluded by the use of anticipatory *it* as

(dummy) subject of the matrix clause. Consequently, the use of a pronominal subject in the complement clause to establish a close semantic link with the matrix clause is not an issue here. However, the number of pronominal subjects (as opposed to fully-fledged NPs) may be indicative of yet another factor put forward by Elsness (1984) as favouring *that* omission, which is that of a balanced, i.e. not ‘nose-heavy’, weight distribution in the complement clause (possible adverbials in pre-subject position have already been excluded in section 3). Thus one would expect a high proportion of pronominal subjects in zero *that* complements, as illustrated in (4).

- (4) It’s a shame *he’s* not going to be back here (S1A-042-32)

The corpus data, however, show that this is not the case: with 43 instances of pronominal subjects (as opposed to 32 instances of full NPs and 1 clausal subject) they account for only a slight majority (57%) and cannot be taken as a decisive factor for the selection of zero *that*.¹⁹ A lengthy complement clause subject does not automatically preclude *that* omission, as is illustrated by the following example with a clausal subject.

- (5) It is admitted *what one observer has called an economic experiment which lasted for four generations after the Revolution* is slowly and painfully given up (S2B-039-13)

4. *Act IV*: Matrix predicate

As a further possible conditioning factor for the choice between *that* and zero connective let us now examine the matrix predicate governing the complement clause. With regard to its syntactic category the corpus yields the following results (Table 3).

¹⁹ Of the 32 NPs all but three are definite, implying givenness of the subject (cf. Elsness 1984: 530-531). Neither this nor the predominance of pronominal subjects are, however, in any way surprising as givenness and light weight are prototypically associated with subject (topic) position.

Table 3. Matrix predicates governing *that*-clauses and zero *that*-clauses

		VP	ADJP	NP	PP	TOTAL
SPOKEN (250 texts)	+ <i>that</i>	86.2% (112)	93.0% (107)	85.7% (42)	100% (6)	89.0% (267)
	- <i>that</i>	13.8% (18)	7.0% (8)	14.3% (7)	0	11.0% (33)
WRITTEN (250 texts)	+ <i>that</i>	85.0% (181)	95.5% (170)	90.6% (29)	100% (8)	90.0% (388)
	- <i>that</i>	15.0% (32)	4.5% (8)	9.4% (3)	0	10.0% (43)
TOTAL (500 texts)	+ <i>that</i>	85.4% (293)	94.5% (277)	87.7% (71)	100% (14)	89.6% (655)
	- <i>that</i>	14.6% (50)	5.5% (16)	16.3% (10)	0	10.4% (76)

If we compare *that*- and zero *that*-clauses with regard to their choice of matrix predicate, we notice relatively high proportions of VPs and NPs with zero *that*-clauses (14.6% and 16.3% respectively), and low proportions of ADJPs and PPs (5.5% and 0% respectively). While the high percentage of VPs is relatively stable in both the spoken and the written mode, the percentage of NPs is considerably lower in the written texts (9.4%). In absolute terms the number of NP predicates is of course very low and therefore has to be taken with caution.

With a total of 50 instances (out of 76) it is, however, the class of VPs that accounts for the clear majority of the predicates governing zero *that* clauses (viz. 65.8%) and as such requires a more detailed analysis. In Table 4 the category of VP is divided into transitive and intransitive subclasses.

Table 4. Verbal predicates of *that*-clauses and zero *that*-clauses according to transitivity

		intransitive		transitive		TOTAL
SPOKEN (250 texts)	+ <i>that</i>	60	80.0%	52	94.5%	112
	- <i>that</i>	15	20.0%	3	5.5%	18
WRITTEN (250 texts)	+ <i>that</i>	60	83.3%	121	85.8%	181
	- <i>that</i>	12	16.7%	20	14.2%	32
TOTAL (500 texts)	+ <i>that</i>	120	81.6%	173	84.4%	293
	- <i>that</i>	27	18.4%	23	15.6%	50

We can see that with zero connectives the ratio of intransitive predicates is slightly higher than with transitive ones. However, a comparison of intransitive predicates occurring with *that* and zero *that* clauses (cf. Table 5)

reveals that there are no striking differences between the two lexical sets: all lexical items used with zero are also used with *that* connectives, even in the same order of frequency. With intransitive predicates the choice of lexical item can therefore be excluded as a conditioning factor for zero linkage.

Table 5. Intransitive verbal matrix predicates governing extraposed *that*- and zero *that*-clauses

<i>That</i> -clause		Zero <i>that</i> -clause	
frequency	predicate	frequency	predicate
49	<i>seem</i>	16	<i>seem</i>
20	<i>be</i> ²⁰	4	<i>be</i>
18	<i>appear</i>	4	<i>appear</i>
9	<i>follow</i>		
7	<i>turn out</i>	2	<i>turn out</i>
5	<i>occur</i>		
3	<i>happen</i>		
3	<i>emerge</i>	1	<i>emerge</i>
2	<i>transpire</i>		
1	<i>exist, sound, sink in, dawn</i>		
Total: 120		Total: 27	

But what about transitive predicates? Table 6 further divides them into active and passive subtypes.

Table 6. Frequency of transitive matrix predicates governing *that*- and zero *that*-clauses

		active	passive + agent	passive – agent	TOTAL
SPOKEN (250 texts)	+ <i>that</i>	7	2	43 (93.5%)	52
	– <i>that</i>	0	0	3 (6.5%)	3
WRITTEN (250 texts)	+ <i>that</i>	7	3	116 (85.3%)	126
	– <i>that</i>	0	0	20 (14.7%)	20
TOTAL (500 texts)	+ <i>that</i>	14	5	159 (87.4%)	178
	– <i>that</i>	0	0	23 (12.6%)	23

Here we can see that zero *that*-clauses, unlike the other variant, exclusively take passive predicates with an agent, with the relative proportion being

²⁰ E.g. *It may be that only slightly better quality bait will be necessary* (W2D-017-24). Examples such as this, where the matrix clause consists of *it + be* with *be* being modified by a modal, have been classified as marginal cases of *it*-extraposition (for a discussion cf. Kaltenböck 2004: 56-57).

higher in written texts than in spoken. While the lack of zero linkage with passive verbs + agent can be explained by the necessity to mark clearly the clause boundary with *that* after a prepositional *by*-phrase (cf. *It has been agreed by the parties that they want to part* – S2B-019-82), the use of zero with agentless passives is somewhat surprising in the light of the findings of Biber *et al.* (1999: 682-683) for object clauses, who note an exclusive use of *that* (i.e. 100%) with passive main verbs in written texts.

Taking a closer look at the occurrence of these zero *that* clauses governed by agentless passive predicates, we can note a clear preference for this combination in the text types Scripted speech and Reportage, which have been identified in section 2 as containing unusually high proportions of zero linkage: these two text categories account for all except three occurrences of this constructional type. The unusually high frequency of zero *that*-clauses in Scripted monologue and Reportage can therefore be attributed to the use of a special type of matrix predicate. A closer inspection of the semantic category of these agentless passive verbs shows that they all belong to the same lexical field, viz. that of reporting verbs, as illustrated in (6).

- (6) a. *It is claimed* he may have been tricked into carrying the bomb on board (W2C-001-53)
- b. *It is anticipated* a final decision will be made in the New Year (W2C-011-96)
- c. *It was said* there was blood on British coal (W2C-007-96)
- d. *It's now known* they took a rucksack of clothes with them (S2B-009-43)
- e. *It's thought* most Iraqi airfields have now been knocked out (S2B-015-41)
- f. *It's understood* Margaret Thatcher made up her mind (S2B-020-8)

As a special type of evidentials²¹ (e.g. Chafe 1986) the function of these matrix predicates is different from the ordinary matrix clause in extraposed structures: rather than commenting on the state-of-affairs in the extraposed clause, they are message conveying verbs (*verba dicendi*), presenting the content of the complement clause as originating from an undefined external source. While it is not surprising to find a considerable number of message conveying verbs in press news reports (Reportage) and broadcast news/talk (Scripted speech), whose main function is precisely to report rather than evaluate or convey speaker stance, the question remains why these matrix

²¹ The term evidential is used here in its narrowest sense as ‘marker of speaker information source’ and hence distinguished from epistemics.

predicates are especially prone to co-occur with zero *that*-clauses. For an explanation we need to turn to yet another possible conditioning factor for the choice between *that* and zero, viz. the information value of the complement clause.

5. *Act V*: Information value of the complement clause

In contrast to a zero *that*-clause, the complementizer of the *that*-clause not only serves as a conspicuous clause boundary marker, it also makes the subordination more explicit. Subordination, in turn, has been shown (cf. e.g. Mackenzie 1984, Sadock 1984) to correlate with backgrounding of the information conveyed by the subordinate clause. Such downgrading of the information of the complement clause is, however, not particularly compatible with text categories such as broadcast news/talk (Scripted monologue) and press news reports (Reportage), whose very purpose is that of conveying the facts of the complement clause. No doubt, reportability is closely linked to, even contingent on, the newsworthiness of the information.

At the same time, syntactic downgrading of the newsworthy information (i.e. the complement clause) may also have the effect of indirectly foregrounding the reporting verb of the matrix clause, which likewise is not desirable as it places undue emphasis on a reporting phrase which is highly unspecific (cf. agentless passive, impersonal *it*). Clearly what is being asserted here is the complement clause rather than the reporting clause.²² The function of the reporting clause is simply to introduce or ‘stage’ the information expressed by the complement clause. It may also act as a hedging device since it attributes the information of the extraposed clause to some unspecified external source (agentless passives), which reduces speaker responsibility with regard to the actual truth of the statement made by the complement clause. Interestingly, however, rather than weakening the statement, this attribution to an undefined external ‘authority’ may have the effect of strengthening the statement, presenting it like an accepted fact. As such it comes close to a type of hedge referred to by Prince *et al.* (1982) as ‘Attribution Shield’, which weakens the relationship between propositional content and speaker as it “attributes the belief in question to someone other than the speaker, the speaker’s own degree of commitment being only indirectly inferrable” (Prince *et al.* 1982: 89).

²² Cf. Noonan (1985: 86), who makes a similar point with object complements of predicates such as *believe*, *think*, *suppose*, and *regret*.

Omission of *that*, on the other hand, presents the information of the complement clause as more on a par with that of the matrix clause. The distinction between matrix and complement clause is being eroded, as suggested by Thompson and Mulac (1991), and both units are reanalysed as main clauses in a supplementation relation (cf. Huddleston and Pullum 2002: 952), with the ‘reporting clause’ functioning as a parenthetical “stager” (Hannay 1990: 13). Like typical parentheticals the ‘reporting clause’ is not normally restricted to just one position but allows moving around (cf. Ziv 1985: 181-183), as illustrated by the examples in (7) and (8).²³

- (7) The new structures *it was said* wouldn’t themselves conceal policy differences (S2B-013-22)
- (8) The Government’s plans to extend its rent-to-mortgage scheme to council tenants will have an adverse effect on rural areas where housing opportunities are scarce, *it is claimed today* (W2C-015-25)

The stylistic effect of *that* omission in connection with message conveying verbs can be seen as increasing the ‘immediacy’ of a text by turning indirect reported speech into something not unlike direct reported speech, with the complement clause being reanalysed as non-embedded clause, cf. *It was said: “They have no money”*, *It was thought: “They might be sleeping rough”*. This ‘colon’ style, incidentally, also reflects the more fragmented style typical of spoken language (Chafe 1979, 1982).²⁴ Compare (9) and the adapted version in (10).

- (9) It is now known ∅ they took a rucksack of clothes with them But police say ∅ they have no money and it’s thought ∅ they might be sleeping rough (S2B-009-43/44)
- (10) It is now known *that* they took a rucksack of clothes with them But police say *that* they have no money and it’s thought *that* they might be sleeping rough

Omission of *that* with message conveying verbs as an attempt to avoid explicit syntactic downgrading (backgrounding) of the complement clause can also be linked to Bolinger’s (1972: 56-71) view of an implicit anaphoric function of *that*. Thus, it would seem that an implied backward reference is particularly inappropriate with message conveying verbs used for reporting news items, which, by their very nature, are supposed to be ‘new’ to the

²³ Instances such as these have not been counted as *it*-extrapositions.

²⁴ Cf. also Chafe’s (1987: 32) ‘one new concept at a time constraint’ for spoken language

listener/reader. Rather than referring back to information that is already ‘known’, their purpose is precisely to convey information that is new, to inform of ‘news’. In fact, a systematic analysis of the information status of zero *that* complements of message conveying verbs reveals that all invariably convey a state-of-affairs that is ‘new’ to the discourse, i.e. irretrievable from the preceding co(n)text (for a detailed discussion of the taxonomy of information status used cf. Kaltenböck 2004: 158-165). A comparison of the information status of both constructional types, *that*-clause and zero *that*-clause, shows a clear preference of zero *that* complements for the expression of new (irretrievable) states-of-affairs (cf. Table 7).

Table 7. Information status of complements with *that* and zero linkage

	Given (retrievable) information		New (irretrievable) information		TOTAL	
	+ <i>that</i>	98	15.0%	557	85.0%	655
- <i>that</i>	6	7.9%	70	92.1%	76	100%
TOTAL	104		627			

In the rare cases where ‘given’ complements do occur without *that*, corpus evidence shows that there are stylistic reasons for *that* omission, e.g. *It was imperative* ∅ *you had to get back that morning that day* (S1A-028-78), where *that* suppression avoids an accumulation of three *thats* in a row. Conversely, new complements are also often introduced by *that* complementizers, as can be seen from the high number of *that*-clauses conveying irretrievable states-of-affairs. These are particularly interesting cases as here we get a mismatch of information status and mode of presentation: the new information is not only expressed in a subordinate clause with explicit subordinator, but also as the topic (rather than comment) of the construction (cf. Lutz 1981) and often as complement of a factive matrix predicate, which lexically presupposes its complement. This has the rhetorical effect of presenting a new state-of-affairs as if it were known, a strategy particularly useful for persuasive writing. Compare, for instance:

- (11) It’s a pity that LB is the only major corporation I have worked for where this has been a problem (W1B-020-26)

Omission of *that*, on the other hand, has the effect of cancelling the presupposition effect of a factive predicate, presenting the content of the complement clause more as an assertion than a presupposition, as can be seen from the following example.

- (12) It is clear \emptyset the coalition is not in a mood to negotiate over its demands with the main issues expected to be resolved tomorrow (S2B-004-41)

6. Epilogue

The above discussion of various potential conditioning factors has shown that the choice of asyndeton over *that* linkage in extraposed subjects is largely affected by two parameters: formality of text type and a particular reporting style. As already indicated in previous studies of object clauses, formality, or rather lack of it, was confirmed as an important factor for the omission of *that*. Only two text types did not conform to this pattern, showing unusually high ratios of zero: Reportage and Scripted monologue. Interestingly, mode (i.e. spoken vs. written), although closely connected with formality, could not be identified as a decisive factor. Other factors investigated were the categorial status (pronominal vs. fully-fledged NP) of the complement subject and adverbials occurring at the boundary of matrix and subordinate clause, both of which were found not to contribute to the decision to use zero, although absence of intervening adverbials at clause boundary seems to be a prerequisite for *that* omission to be allowed.

To investigate the high proportion of zero linkage in Reportage and Scripted monologue the matrix clause of zero *that*-clauses was subjected to some scrutiny and it was found that in the majority of cases (65.8%) it is verbal, typically realised by a passive reporting verb without agent (of the type *It is said*). Not surprisingly, these reporting verbs frequently occur in the text types Reportage (press news reports) and Scripted monologue (broadcast news/talks), where they account for unusually high percentages of zero *that* complements. The reason for *that* omission in these cases is largely functional in that assertive predicates such as reporting verbs do not seem to square well with the syntactic backgrounding (signalled by the *that* subordinator) of information they are supposed to report and which is typically new. Omission of *that* solves this inherent incompatibility by doing away with the subordinator and hence eroding the hierarchical syntactic difference between matrix and complement clause. This results in reanalysis of the complement clause as a non-embedded constituent in supplementation relation to the reporting frame, which in turn is reinterpreted as a separate parenthetical. Stylistically, this reanalysis of indirect into direct reported speech can be seen as increasing the ‘immediacy’ of the text.

From the above analysis two further speculative points can be derived. First, it provides a possible answer for the question (never asked in the

literature) why it is that lack of formality is such a powerful conditioning factor for *that* omission. It could be argued that informal text (especially private spoken dialogue) is much less hierarchical (hypotactical) in its syntactic structure, leaning more towards linearity (parataxis) (cf. e.g. Brazil 1995) with speaker comment occurring more frequently in parenthetical comment clauses rather than in the form of superordinate matrix clauses (cf. also the more fragmented style of spoken language; Chafe 1979, 1982).

Second, it is possible to account for the high frequency of verbal matrix predicates in connection with *that* omission also in structural terms. The verbal predicates investigated (cf. section 5) comprise two subsets: intransitive verbs typically denoting ‘existence’ or ‘appearance’, such as *it seems / appears / turns out*, and agentless passive reporting verbs, such as *it is claimed / was said / is thought*, which together account for 65.8 percent of all matrix predicates with zero *that*. Interestingly, it is precisely these two classes of verbs that are the only matrix predicates disallowing a non-extrapolated counterpart. Compare, for instance, (13) and the adapted versions of (6) in (14):

(13) *That John went to London *seems*

(14) a. *That he may have been tricked into carrying the bomb on board *is claimed*

b. *That a final decision will be made in the new year *is anticipated*

c. *That there was blood on British coal *was said*

Thus it can be speculated that severing the syntactic link between matrix and subordinate clause with ensuing reanalysis of the former as a parenthetical is an attempt to break up the rigid pattern of an extraposition construction that does not offer the alternative of a non-extrapolated variant to accommodate, for instance, a different information structure or present a different constituent in focus or theme position. Reanalysis as parenthetical, indeed, dramatically increases flexibility of the construction in terms of mobility of the parenthetical; compare for instance: *John, it seems, went to London; John went to London, it seems; He may have been tricked, it is claimed, into carrying the bomb on board; He may have been tricked into carrying the bomb on board, it is claimed*).

To conclude, it seems safe to say that *that* omission in extraposed subject clauses is related to a variety of interacting factors: semantic (assertive predicate, avoidance of lexical presupposition of the subordinate clause), functional (information value of the complement clause), structural (lack of explicit subordinator, unavailability of non-extraposition) and text type (formality). As a unifying explanation it is tempting, albeit at the risk of over-

simplification, to posit the underlying feature of linearity or perhaps more appropriately ‘levelling’ or ‘flattening’ of hierarchical structures as this allows inference of both main factors: (in)formality of text type as well as lack of presupposition/backgrounding of the complement clause together with parenthetical reanalysis of the matrix predicate, as discussed above. And that, it seems, is that.

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