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Changing attitudes in an inter-connected world“

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Abstract

This paper deals with English as a lingua franca (ELF) in the European context and language attitudes towards ELF, focusing in particular on the perceptions of European students of their own use of English and the English used by others. The theoretical part, which serves as the basis for the empirical investigation of this study, concentrates on issues concerning the conceptualization of ELF, language spread and change, and the situation of English in Europe. The discussion seeks to include all those contributions which help to formulate a clear picture of ELF in the European context. Additionally, concepts like standard language ideology as well as traditional notions of speech community and bilingualism are critically addressed and adapted to the concept of ELF. Furthermore, previous attitude studies concerning ELF are introduced and discussed, in order to establish a clear context for the empirical investigation. The empirical part comprises the analysis of data based on a quantitative questionnaire survey completed by 250 European students. The questionnaire was designed to explore the participants' perceptions of five topic areas: 1) self-perceptions of being users or learners of English, 2) perceptions of linguistic imperialism, 3) pronunciation, 4) grammar and 5) idiomatic language use. In the analysis and interpretation of the data, interrelations between frequencies of use, self-perceptions and attitude indications are drawn, probable characteristics of confident ELF users are examined and relations between ELF practices experienced and attitudes displayed are established. The findings raise questions about linguistic insecurity and about the relevance of ELF in counteracting standard language ideology. Although this small-scale study cannot claim to present representative findings, it nevertheless offers interesting insights. The complex attitude indications of European students support the assumption that many factors influence the participants' attitudes towards ELF in a multifaceted way. The empirical data reveals, for example, the fact that it is not legitimate to equate frequency of language use, self-perceptions as being users or learners and attitudes concerning native speaker norms. In conclusion, one can clearly claim that the concept of ELF, and especially attitudes towards ELF, provide many rewarding and potentially challenging possibilities for further research, which should, ideally, incorporate methodological triangulation and elaborate research designs to yield reliable findings.

1. Introduction

When looking at the linguistic landscape of Europe¹, it becomes clear that language is always more than the abstract code consisting of grammatical rules and vocabulary items. For its speakers, every language also encompasses highly complex cultural, social, political and personal components, not to mention economic features as well. Thus, language should not be regarded as a neutral tool for transporting one's ideas (cf. Ahrens 2002: 12-13). It is not surprising, then, that scholarly debate is highly controversial and complex whenever languages are the topic of discussions. Even more so, when people's attitudes are the locus of interest.

In the course of this paper, some of the issues raised in discussions about the use of English will be addressed, although it is not considered as the goal of this paper to present a complete picture of all controversies and theories which are important when thinking about English used for inter-cultural exchange. Rather, the discussion presented in this paper seeks to include all those contributions and argumentations that help to formulate a clear picture of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in the European context. The specific research interest of this paper can be concisely stated with the following research question: How do European students perceive their use of English and English used by others particularly concerning their attitudes towards native speaker models? As can be seen by the research question, this study will pay special attention to issues of language attitudes, and in particular opinions of European students. To achieve a coherent discussion of language attitudes towards ELF in Europe, it is not enough to focus on previous attitude research and to connect these findings with my own empirical investigation. As has been argued before, language attitudes are a highly complex and delicate topic, which needs to be placed in a theoretical framework designed to explain the specific contexts. To achieve this endeavor, this paper will firstly discuss the concept of ELF and emerging features of ELF communication more closely. In this context, crucial issues like language spread and change, as well as linguistic imperialism will be critically discussed and adapted to the context of ELF. Although these matters may not seem directly relevant for defining and conceptualizing ELF at first glance, one cannot ignore these issues in any discussion of English in Europe. In the modern, inter-connected world, English

¹ In this paper, the term Europe can be understood as synonymous with the term European Union and its abbreviation EU. Of course, I am aware of the very different meanings of these words, but for reasons of convenience, these terms will be used interchangeably to refer to all nations of the political entity of the European Union.

language spread can be seen as a delicate topic triggering controversial debates. Additionally, English used for inter-cultural exchange is naturally linked to its global spread, and thus, also touches upon linguistic imperialistic arguments. As a next step, traditional concepts relevant for ELF research will be critically investigated, before specifically dealing with English in the European context, the role of English in various contexts like science and the media, and some important matters of the EU's language policy. Lastly, this paper will discuss ELF attitudes with a special focus on Europe including reflections on previous attitude studies as well as a discussion of empirical findings elicited through an online questionnaire survey, which has been conducted for this study.

According to David Crystal (cf. 2003: 67-69), English has approximately 329 million speakers who have learned English as a first language (L1) worldwide. This number might seem impressive at first glance, but a rather basic question arises, namely: Who can be defined as a speaker of English? In this context, Crystal refers to native speakers of the language. This native speaker orientation, however, does not seem to sufficiently reflect reality in an inter-connected world. As Crystal points out, if one, for example, includes English pidgins and creoles, numbers will rise up to 400 million speakers in the early 2000s. As a next step, one might also wish to include speakers of English as a second language, which would add another 430 million speakers, and then speakers of English as a foreign language, who's number is estimated around 750 million individuals. Combining different sources and calculations, Crystal argues that 1.500 million people are able to communicate in English. Braj Kachru (cf. 1992: 356-357), who challenges the traditional concept of native speaker orientation, claims that English has two billion speakers worldwide. Although numbers vary depending on different calculation models, one fact seems to be assured: Non-native speakers now outnumber native speakers. Following this conceptual shift, one should not speak of 'English' but 'Englishes' whenever language spread and the international use of English are concerned.

Unfortunately, this conceptual shift, which seems crucial for the conceptualization of ELF, is a highly complex and difficult endeavor because 'standard language ideology' (cf. for example Milroy 2001) is prominent in people's minds. This concept is built on the "ideologically charged notion of linguistic correctness" (Ferguson 2009: 125) and leads many people to condemn their own language use as incorrect since it does not conform to their perception of a correct standard variety (cf. Ferguson 2009: 132).

Additionally, a language is closely tied to traditional notions of distinctive speech communities possessing this means of communication. Also Seidlhofer (cf. 2005: 159-163) stresses the need for closely examining authoritative views in descriptive and applied linguistics, because 'nativeness' or Standard English criteria are elusive, and thus, these traditional concepts need to be challenged. For this reason, a whole section of this paper will deal with questioning traditional concepts like speech community and standard language ideology.

Following Seidlhofer's (cf. 2003: 11-13) argumentation, there are four different ways of considering English as an international language (EIL), namely functionally, conceptually, linguistically and pedagogically. Functionally, the global role of English has been widely accepted as an econocultural fact. Academic discussions about the spread of English on the meta-level have centered on linguistic imperialistic views in the late 80s and early 90s. Recent studies, however, have shifted the focus onto more functional realistic considerations and more pragmatic views about the international use of the English language. In English language teaching (ELT), the concept of EIL has not entered the curricula yet. Teachers still focus on teaching with reference to native speaker standards and language competence in native speaker varieties with a considerable focus on Anglo-American cultural contexts. Conceptually, one can still see a need to open up more space for ELF, although ELF research has gained considerable momentum over the last decade.

The need for a codification and description of ELF can be compared to Ayo Bamgbose's point about the importance of codification for the acceptance of language use. He argues for the importance of codification and acceptance for establishing innovations as viable variants instead of viewing the differing features as learner errors. One can agree that the codification of non-native forms of English presents the only way for these variants to become acceptable as a point of reference and use (Bamgbose 1998: 3-5). Of course, Bamgbose's point relates to nativized varieties of English, or in Kachru's (1992) terms, to Outer Circle Englishes. Yet, it is relevant to ELF research as well, since the need for conceptual work is directly comparable. The growing awareness of ELF users' own identity as legitimate speakers and not exonormatively oriented learners suggests that nativization processes similar to processes in Outer Circle Englishes will get more important in contexts where English does not serve a specific sociocultural role (cf. Seidlhofer 2005: 164). What seems to be highly essential for a wider acceptance of ELF use is its description, which needs to be grounded on

empirical research. Without this description and its subsequent codification, innovative linguistic forms will still be regarded as learner errors or code deficiencies, and not as ELF use designed and exploited to successfully meet intercultural communicative needs (cf. Hülmbauer, Böhringer & Seidlhofer 2008: 29-30).

Although the case for codification can hardly be criticized, Gibson Ferguson (cf. 2009: 128-129) addresses some possible disadvantages of the process of codification. First of all, he claims that ELF should be regarded as a fluid and open communicative practice, which is still emerging. Codification could restrict this fluidity and openness, and additionally, lead to

...short-circuit processes of stabilisation and sedimentation, putting in place an artificial construct that does not engage the loyalty of users. (Ferguson 2009: 129)

As a second potential disadvantage, Ferguson (cf. 2009: 129-130) deals with the possibility that ELF codification would construct a set of rules and norms which bear the same “potential to exclude” (Ferguson 2009: 129) as standard English models. Thirdly, one could question if codification in itself led to acceptance among English users. And lastly, the codification of ELF could encourage critics to make short-sighted comparisons between native English models and ELF, wrongly regarding ELF as a reduced form of English as a native language (ENL).

Despite these reservations, one could claim that ELF research could ultimately lead to the establishment of reasonable, useful and achievable learning goals. This endeavor is worth the effort for at least two reasons. People may feel more appreciated and comfortable when perceiving ELF as their learning target. Another reason for establishing achievable and suitable ELF standards is efficiency. Generally speaking, it would be most successful and efficient if speakers and learners concentrated on core elements which are relatively easy to learn and crucial for communication in an international setting. However, the establishment of a uniformed international standard should not be regarded as the ultimate goal of ELF research. Instead, one should rather try to investigate ELF use as it occurs in international discourse communities (cf. Mauranen 2003: 517-518). It seems to be essential to consider the pedagogic implications of ELF research. Nevertheless, this paper is not designed to formulate any solutions for ELT. Rather, this research project should be understood as mainly dealing with conceptual issues and ELF users’ perceptions and attitudes in order to contribute to the growing field of ELF investigations. Through this specific focus, the study tries to help slowly closing the already mentioned ‘conceptual gap’.

Although ELF research seems to be popular when looking at the growing number of conferences and research projects, basic misconceptions and contradictions seem to linger on. As pointed out, English in an inter-connected, modern world means predominantly ELF and yet, the models for language use are still assumed to belong to English native speakers. Multiculturalism and pluricentrism are highly valued but still, language proficiency and ideals are closely tied to Standard English (cf. Seidlhofer 2005: 170). Only through actively reflecting on these discrepancies does it seem to be possible to counter prejudice and to support equal rights for all language users. Following this line of thought, this study should be understood as an endeavor to take a close look at ELF, those linguistic theories which seem to be crucial for a better understanding of this complex issue, its use in the European context and people's attitudes concerning intercultural communication in English.

2. English as a Lingua Franca

2.1. Towards defining ELF

When striving towards a definition of ELF, various slightly differing explications can be found. Thus, this section aims at establishing a common set of basic principles to understand the concept of ELF. In order to achieve this goal, it seems helpful to first of all look at general ideas of lingua franca communication and then move on to discuss prominent definitions in ELF research.

The term lingua franca was first used to refer to a contact language, which can be defined as a pidgin for trade purposes, in the Mediterranean area dating back to the 15th century. From this, the term was later on used to refer to instances where speakers of different mother tongues tried to establish a common means of communication (cf. Meierkord & Knapp 2002: 9). However, when speaking about ELF, the traditional approach towards lingua franca communication needs to be adapted to the modern context of this phenomenon, since the international spread of English has gained considerable momentum over the last decades. Additionally, ELF needs to be distinguished from pidgins and other contact languages because the interlocutors have usually been taught English, mostly as a foreign language, at a formal level. In other words, the communication partners share a more or less similar educational background regarding language competence and contact, although considerable variation in teaching targets and practices can be observed (cf. Mauranen 2003: 514-515).

Similarly, James (cf. 2005: 133-135, 139-140) claims that ELF cannot be compared to other contact languages based on English or English-based pidgins. However, as will be discussed in the context of ELF features in this paper more closely, some emerging characteristics share similarities with nativized and local varieties of English. Still, it seems essential to draw conceptual boundaries between English-based contact languages, highly specialized English-based jargons like Airspeak, a very reduced variety of international English functioning to enable effective communication in international air traffic (cf. Meierkord & Knapp 2002: 14), and ELF, since these different realizations of internationally used Englishes have highly diverse political, socio-cultural and linguistic bases. Although it cannot be denied that important and interesting insights might be gained through drawing connections between historical incidences of lingua franca communication and the present situation of English used for example in South Africa or as a world language (cf. Meierkord 2006: 16-19), these connections do not seem highly relevant for the research focus of this study. In Europe,

English has not been imposed by colonizers, and even the cultural, economic and political influence of the USA can hardly be compared to a history of colonization. In the EU, speakers commonly make their first contact with English via foreign language learning in school.

One of the most straight-forward differences between various ELF definitions is the question if native speakers of English can be present in ELF conversations or if they need to be excluded. In the current paper, ELF does not exclusively refer to interactions among non-native speakers of English. Although this restriction may seem productive and necessary for empirical investigations of ELF features, it could be argued that disregarding native speakers would not reflect the linguistic reality of ELF use, for example in international business meetings or conferences, where chances are high that some native speakers of English will be present. However, when looking at traditional definitions of the term *lingua franca* as discussed before, it is understandable that some scholars define ELF communication as exclusively occurring between speakers who do not share the same mother tongue and for whom English is not the first language either.

What seems to be common to most definitions referring to the specific use of English as a *lingua franca* is the functional focus. For example Seidlhofer and her colleagues (2008) argue that ELF should be defined functionally by its use for intercultural communication and communication between speakers of different mother tongues, and not by its formal aspects usually restricted to native speaker norms. This functional approach can also be seen as a crucial aspect of the distinction between ELF and English as a foreign language (EFL). In ELF communication, the functional aspect as a means to communicate with, mostly, other non-native speakers of English is highlighted, whereas EFL aims at meeting native speaker norms and gives prominence to native speaker cultural aspects. Hence, it is possible for one single person to be an ELF user at one moment and an EFL user at another. The decision simply lies in the functional purpose (cf. Hülmbauer, Böhringer & Seidlhofer 2008: 27-28).

Breiteneder (cf. 2005: 8) offers a concise outline of the most crucial factors distinguishing ELF from EFL. Specifically focusing on the European situation, she states that attention should be paid to the different motivations for using English. For EFL users, the motivation for using English is based on integrative reasons, since they wish to identify with the culture and values of English native speakers. Thus, native speaker norms occupy a central place if English is studied as a foreign language. In contrast, ELF users tend to focus on effective communication with speakers of other

linguistic backgrounds. Hence, the central norms should mainly be determined by mutual intelligibility.

Following Alessia Cogo's and Martin Dewey's (cf. 2006: 63-64) theoretical framework, ELF speakers could be defined as:

- competent speakers of English
- L2-users in their own right
- independent speakers
- using legitimate variation in English, not a deficient form of English as a native language (ENL)

Thus, one needs to consider that ELF should not be regarded as learner language. Eventually, speakers cease to be only learners and come to be independent language users who manage to communicate successfully with their interlocutors (cf. Mauranen 2006: 147). ELF users appropriate their language according to their needs, which hints at the possibility of using language creatively to achieve communicative success and disregards adherence to native speaker norms. This notion can be directly compared to what Widdowson claims to be 'real' language competence, namely being able to exploit a language system to express one's own meanings and ideas. He argues as follows:

Real proficiency is when you are able to take possession of the language, turn it to your advantage, and make it real for you. This is what mastery means. So in a way, proficiency only comes with nonconformity, when you can take the initiative and strike out on your own. (Widdowson 2003: 42)

This idea of language competence seems to be highly fruitful for the concept of ELF because it transfers the locus of real mastery of a language onto mastery in use, rather than adherence to native speaker norms and ENL rules. Widdowson's argumentative framework will be discussed more extensively in the context of language spread and change, which will be addressed in this paper when trying to conceptualize ELF more deeply.

Criticism of restricted notions of ELF seems to have gained momentum in recent linguistic studies. Conservative notions of ELF are criticized for not reflecting the language situation and the cultural, sociopolitical and economic factors that play a part in the formation of ELF realistically. Christiane Meierkord (cf. 2002: 110, 129) questions narrow definitions of lingua franca concepts, which describe its status as auxiliary languages, as culture-neutral and as designed for specific purposes only. It can be argued that culture should never be neglected when human communication is

investigated, since also ELF speakers have a cultural background, although they will not share the same upbringing. Recent linguistic discussions (see for example Meierkord 2002, Seidlhofer/Pözl 2006) by ELF experts treat cultural factors, just like an individual speaker's competence, as factors influencing performance.

Lingua francas are traditionally not closely tied to the construction of identity, for example when considering highly specialized varieties like Airspeak. However, ELF, as it is understood and investigated in the present paper, should not be conceptually tied to these varieties of English. Airspeak has been specifically engineered to secure international air traffic communication and this reduced function results in a limited lexicon virtually incapable of serving any other functions. Although one can easily argue that English and its international spread is also tied to serving specific functions like international trade or academic exchange, it seems to be obvious enough that artificially constructed means of communication like Airspeak do not have much in common with the phenomenon of ELF addressed in this research.

Still, the influences of the mother tongue and culture on the actual utterances produced by ELF speakers should not be overstated. In her empirical research, Meierkord (cf. 2002: 117) found that communication features which could be claimed to be influenced by cultural norms and conventions do not necessarily reflect the communication rules of the speaker's L1. For example pausing behavior could not be related to the cultural background of the various speakers and likewise, turn-length and overlapping speech did not reflect the communicative norms in the interlocutor's L1. At first glance, these findings might seem to present striking insights supporting restricted notions of ELF. However, when considering theories established by Seidlhofer and Pözl (2006) concerning the 'habitat factor' in ELF settings, one could reveal highly plausible answers to the investigated phenomena.

Seidlhofer and Pözl (cf. 2006: 151-152, 172-173) suggest that the 'habitat factor', which describes the local context of communicative interactions, has a considerable influence on ELF conversations. Although speakers in ELF settings may come from very diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and can therefore not turn to uniform norms, one can suggest that speakers are nevertheless able to achieve communicative success. In ELF, all interlocutors have to balance accommodation, negotiation, as well as retaining their own identities. It can be hypothesized that cultural backgrounds are more overtly marked in ELF conversations when speakers find themselves in their own 'habitat'. In other words, when speakers are in their own cultural environment, they will

display features marking their cultural background more expressively. In contrast, ELF speakers who interact in alien cultural surroundings will probably try to accommodate and reduce cultural displays.

At this point, reference should be made to some critical remarks directed to the investigation of ELF. Phillipson (cf. 2001: 188) openly criticizes ELF terminology when arguing that the term *lingua franca* is loaded with cultural baggage and open to many interpretations. Additionally, he is opposed to recent ELF research because he argues that interpretations of findings are misleading when treating ELF as a culture neutral tool serving its users and all their interests equally well. According to his line of argumentation, English can never be used for symmetrical communication between speakers of different mother tongues, especially if native speakers are involved, and thus should not be conceptualized as a *lingua franca* (cf. Phillipson 2008: 250, 262-263). One could argue that although Phillipson's argumentation may bear some relevant insights, it is nevertheless based on theoretical misconceptions of most ELF research. Recent linguistic investigations of ELF cannot be seen as aiming at creating a culturally neutral language. This is highlighted by the discussion concerning the role of culture in ELF research before. It could be argued that no language use, be it a *lingua franca* or any other natural language, can ever be strictly symmetrical. Besides, it could be seen as highly debatable if disconnecting a language from its speakers and their cultural and personal backgrounds is possible at all, and then, as a theoretical next step, in any way desirable.

Apart from such misconceptions, the confusing terminology becomes obvious when looking at scholarly debates about the international use of English, be it among non-native speakers exclusively or not. There are many terms used within this debate, among them ELF, English as an International Language (EIL), Global English, its plural form Global Englishes, International English, World English and many more. In recent research, however, the term ELF seems to be commonly used by scholars in applied linguistics, ELT, of course ELF researchers, but also by scholars who are not primarily engaging themselves with ELF. The growing preference for the term can be seen as based on the fact that it gives power to the non-native users who provide innovation and change and it emphasizes the role of speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds, underlining the fact that innovative language use, L1 transfer and deviations from native speaker norms are natural changes. One of the advantages of ELF terminology is that ELF does not imply a standardized version of Global English.

A unified variety of English for international and inter-cultural communication seems rather unlikely and it could well be argued that supporting endeavors for such formulations should be perceived critically (cf. Jenkins 2007: 2-4, 17-18).

2.2. Conceptualizing English as a lingua franca

In order to take the conceptualization of ELF further, one needs to take a closer look at some important linguistic theories and concepts connected to the notion of ELF. One of these issues is language spread, because a discussion of various aspects and mechanisms at play can be argued to be highly relevant when trying to conceptualize English used for inter-cultural exchange. Before discussing the spread of English, a closer investigation of possible models for English used for international communication will be discussed, since these issues can be argued to influence ELF research up until the present time.

One of the more widely known concepts of internationally used English is David Crystal's 'World Standard Spoken English'. With this concept, Crystal (cf. 1997: 136-138) tries to envision a possible development of English in an expanding world. Although he discusses the possibility of changes due to the spread of English among non-native speakers, World Standard Spoken English still focuses on native speaker norms. Diverging second language (L2) features are, according to Crystal, likely to occur, but the prevalence of native speaker models cannot be overlooked. According to this model, English for international communication should be characterized by careful pronunciation and adherence to native speaker standards in order to secure intelligibility.

Another concept that seems relevant for the conceptualization of ELF is Ogden and Richards' 'Basic English' (cf. Ogden 1932). The abbreviation BASIC stands for 'British American Scientific International Commercial'. Generally speaking, Basic is designed to enable international communication and presents itself as a system consisting of those linguistic items bearing the semantic essence of the English language. Although Basic is thus a rather limited concept, Seidlhofer (2002b: 295) takes it to be a "highly significant [...] stimulus for thought" in ELF research. By focusing on the essential part of the language, Ogden (1932) proposes a core vocabulary of only 850 words, which are claimed to be sufficient for most purposes of international communication, namely general talk in trade and science. Of course, it has to be noted that these general purposes are rather limited and are not sufficiently suited for creative

language use. In like manner, critical remarks have refuted the claim that Basic really consists of only 850 core vocabulary items (cf. Seidlhofer 2002b: 277-295). In spite of its shortcomings, the concept of Basic English touches some areas of language spread and change, as well as standard language ideology, which are highly relevant for ELF research. These issues, as for example the acceptance of a communicative tool in its own right or independence from native speaker norms and culture, will be discussed in detail later in this paper. For now, it should be noted that Basic might be considered an important trigger for innovative thoughts questioning traditional concepts of English language spread.

Turning to issues of English language spread, one clearly has to take Widdowson's arguments into consideration. He claims that one perceives a language as consisting of those linguistic items that have been conventionally encoded. However, according to Widdowson's (cf. 2003: 47-49) theories, it is not this conventionalized language code which is being distributed in a straightforward manner, but rather a 'virtual language' that spreads. This expression is used to describe the imminent possibilities of a language to make meaning, but these possibilities need not be conventionally encoded and thus officially recognized. When discussing the notion of virtual language in connection with language spread, it is relevant to note the difference between the distribution of ENL, which requires conformity to native speaker norms, and the spread of the virtual language, which implies adaptation. Seidlhofer (cf. 2002a: 125-129) refers to this essential difference as 'adoption' in contrast to 'adaptation'. Supporters of an adoption view fear that language changes would distort English, which is regarded as native speaker English only. Opposed to this view, one could place adaptation, which gives linguistic rights to all users of English, who are perceived as active agents of language spread.

Theories about language spread and linguistic description are vital points for the theoretical framework leading to the emancipation of ELF. There can be no doubt that English is a living language which is spreading on a global scale. These factors lead to the inevitable conclusion that language change will take place. Since English is used globally, variation will also take place on a global scale rather than exclusively within native speaker communities. It can be argued that language spread itself should not be regarded as a linear distribution, but, as Widdowson conceptualizes, as the virtual language being spread and in this process "variously actualized" (Seidlhofer 2002a: 130) and adapted to local as well as international needs (cf. Seidlhofer 2002a: 129-130).

When following this line of thought, one can hardly find any arguments supporting the conspiracy theories of linguistic imperialism. The virtual language could be seen as a rather neutral set of possibilities to express thoughts and ideas, and these possibilities are then exploited and adapted by those who come to use the language in the process of language spread.

In contrast, the claims by the proponents of linguistic imperialism are quite different, but nevertheless, they cannot be ignored when striving towards a coherent discussion of ELF. The global spread of English, which is definitely a prominent issue when analyzing English used for inter-cultural exchange, seems to be inevitably tied to linguistic imperialism when looking at scholarly debate. One of the most prominent supporters of linguistic imperialism clearly is Phillipson. He argues that the elimination of linguistic diversity has been an explicit goal of many states, which try to gain power through spreading their official language. According to Phillipson (cf. 2008: 250-257), the use of English in certain domains, for example in science, would marginalize and substitute other languages, leading to a decrease of power of the respective native speakers. He also claims that the privileged role of English in politics and commerce is strengthened through international organizations, such as, for example, the European Union (cf. Phillipson 2001: 187). Clearly, linguistic imperialism addresses many important issues in the context of colonization and it could be argued that attempts have always been made to exploit a language in order to exercise political, socio-cultural and economic power. However, when considering Widdowson's and Seidlhofer's arguments about English being spread as the virtual language, linguistic imperialism does not seem to be well suited for the context of ELF, nor for the recent spread of English. Widdowson (cf. 2003: 45-47) argues that language spread itself can be understood in two essentially different ways. On the one hand, something can spread due to some inherent features of the subject that spreads. On the other hand, something can be spread by agents. It is this second understanding of language spread which strengthens theories about linguistic imperialism. Hence, one could argue that Phillipson's arguments are well suited to echo postcolonial debates about English. However, language spread is inevitably connected to language change, and thus, language seems to be a highly unreliable tool for the imposition of control due to its inert variability. This is confirmed by recent studies which hint to the fact that linguistic imperialistic fears are hardly legitimate in the context of ELF (cf. Breiteneder 2005: 63). In his review, Davies (cf. 1996: 488) criticizes linguistic imperialism by claiming that it is marked by a culture of guilt and of romantic despair. After reading Phillipson's

accounts, this criticism can by no means be dismissed. In like manner, Ferguson (cf. 2006: 114-119) criticizes linguistic imperialism for overestimating language policy as an instrument to directly change language behavior and exaggerating the “causal power of discourse” (Ferguson 2006: 119), and consequently disregarding people’s ability of critical reflection.

In the European context, some interesting, opposed stances can be found in recent linguistic research. On the one hand, scholars favoring an imperialistic view of language spread fear cultural hegemony or even claim that English in Europe has been intentionally implanted by the USA (cf. Phillipson 2008: 256-257), or Great Britain (cf. Phillipson 2001: 191). On the other hand, scholars sharing a more positive understanding of English use strengthen concepts of language competence as soft power. Rose (cf. 2008: 469-471), for example, argues that European countries gain soft power through the use of ELF because they can subsequently understand native speaker countries but not vice versa. Thus, Rose’s argumentation can be seen as directly opposed to Phillipson’s claims about the empowerment of native English speakers through the growing use of English. Supporting Phillipson’s negative view, Berchem (2002: 26) claims that native speakers always have advantages because non-native speakers will never be able to master “all the fine nuances” of another language. Conversely, arguments have been raised about intercultural competences and strategies, which are argued to be a disadvantage for native speakers due to their over-reliance on English as their mother tongue (cf. Hülmbauer, Böhringer & Seidlhofer 2008: 27). Ammon (cf. 2002: 217-221) could be seen as combining some arguments from both sides when he calls for equality between all speakers of English and the linguistic emancipation of non-native speakers. At the same time, he addresses some concerns about the threat to German as an academic language. Indeed, there is the danger of linguistic difficulties for German scientists and considerable disadvantages could arise if German is not continuously actualized as an academic language. Yet, as Ammon correctly points out, the use of ELF could be seen as a chance for the German academic community to present itself internationally. I would suggest that arguments raised by, for example, Berchem or Phillipson, are legitimate for English used as a foreign language, but not for ELF itself. Of course, economic factors tied for example to extensive scholarship in and on English or to the growing business of globalized language examinations, which Phillipson (2001: 191) refers to as “professional imperialism”, cannot be overlooked. However, the negative aspects discriminating non-native speakers in the frequent use of English for academic, political and economic

exchange are not entirely supported when looking at theories about English used as a lingua franca. Briefly forecasting my own empirical findings, attitudes displayed by European students also point to the fact that suppression through English is not a prominent fear among young Europeans.

Another important argument in Widdowson's (cf. 2003: 40-41) theories is the claim that English spread internationally for specific purposes. For this reason, the different international communities which use the English language as a means of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic communication adopt the standard variety and develop their own conventions to suit their purposes. Widdowson claims that although it seems indeed helpful to have a standard core available for reference in order to maintain common codes, there is no need for native speakers to preserve these standards, or to function as authorities over the standardized variety to prescribe its linguistic features. As a result of the international spread of English and its use for specific purposes and by specialized communities, the English vocabulary used has been adapted to serve various institutionalized discourses. On the whole, the changed features display the inherent dynamism of the English language, which is the reason why the language can be used internationally.

In spite of this very logical argumentative outline, negative attitudes towards adaptations made by users of ELF seem to prevail. ELF variants are commonly less highly regarded than professional registers used by communities defined by shared professional interests, as for example lawyers, although they are virtually unintelligible because of the highly specialized vocabulary fashioned to serve very specific contexts (cf. Widdowson 2003: 41). ELF use, or international uses of English which are not defined through professional and institutional contexts, are claimed to be 'infelicities' or 'abnormalities', but the highly specialized language use of, for example physicists, is regarded as 'high standard', as specialized standard English. When reflecting on these inherent double standards, there seem to be no logical or unloaded arguments supporting the prevailing attitudes, which could be referred to as part of a standard language ideology. In this paper, this issue will be taken up again when questioning traditional concepts supporting exclusive standard language orientation. I think that negative attitudes towards adaptations by ELF users and the dominance of a strict adherence to native speaker norms – even when communicating between non-native speakers – is a highly important issue for ELF research. Only by reflecting on and investigating these attitudes does it seem to be possible to strengthen acceptance for the

concept of ELF. For this reason, the empirical investigation of this study focuses on inquiring attitudes of European students connected to their perception of native speaker models.

When trying to conceptualize ELF, one should also incorporate some arguments concerning World English and EIL made by Janina Brutt-Griffler in her studies. An essential issue of the discussion of ELF concerns the already discussed claim that English spread for specific purposes only. Brutt-Griffler (cf. 1998: 382-383, 386-387) points out that one should not disintegrate EIL in regarding only the different reasons for which people learn English all over the world, because each and every language could easily be defined as “an aggregate for specific purposes.” (Brutt-Griffler 1998: 383) According to her theoretical framework, a world language emerges through ‘macroacquisition’, which describes second language acquisition by whole populations rather than individual endeavors. Hence, language learners and users should be regarded as actively contributing to the spread of English as well as its change, and thus need to be invested with authority and agency. In her theories, Brutt-Griffler (cf. 2002: 138-139) identifies two different types of macroacquisition. The first form, labeled ‘Type A macroacquisition’, takes place in a multilingual setting. The language acquired in this context then serves as a unifying means of communication. ‘Type B macroacquisition’, on the other side, takes place in monolingual settings. In this second form, speakers already share a mother tongue. In Europe, ELF can thus be identified as an occurrence of Type A macroacquisition English.

Moreover, Brutt-Griffler (cf. 2002: 110) identifies four different features of the development of the global spread of English:

1. econocultural functions
2. the transcendence of the role of an elite lingua franca
3. the stabilization of bilingualism
4. language change through processes of world language convergence and world language divergence

Accordingly, English is perceived as spreading due to political and economical developments in the past decades. Moreover, more and more people now learn to use English for intercultural communication on a social level as well. Thus, one cannot regard English as an elite language anymore, nor does the acquisition of English language competence threaten other mother tongues (cf. Seidlhofer 2003: 9).

What seems to emerge from discussing implications of English language spread and the connected language change is the highly diverse nature of professional as well as laypeople's discussion of these complex issues. Many arguments criticizing ELF and its use could be seen as being based on prejudice, standard language ideology and fears concerning the pollution of native English norms. However, when looking for example at Seidlhofer's (cf. 2004: 229; 2003: 11) argumentation, these fears are not supported. Seidlhofer claims that it is exactly the distinction between ELF and ENL which protects native varieties and defines ELF as an additional means of communication, not as replacing ENL. Similarly, ELF does not exclude Inner or Outer Circle speakers. Speakers who are using English as a native language or a nativized version of English would just need to adopt their language features when communicating inter-culturally with ELF speakers, which has no effect on their intra-national use of English (cf. Jenkins 2007: 11-13). It appears to be only natural if ELF users have problems of finding their own place and legitimacy as competent language users. Linguistic insecurity and adherence to native speaker norms could be hypothesized to be a common reaction to the controversial nature of recent discussions. Before further discussing attitudes of ELF users towards their own use of English and English used by others, it is vital to take a closer look at some emerging features of ELF communication, which are based on recent ELF research.

2.3. Emerging features of ELF communication

Although this paper does not aim at exploring features of ELF at all linguistic levels, it is nevertheless important to briefly discuss the most striking and significant findings which can be found in empirical ELF research. Many recent investigations into ELF communication seem to focus on phonology, pragmatics, lexico-grammatical features and discourse analysis. Among the most prominent projects, one could name Seidlhofer's groundbreaking VOICE project (Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English) (cf. e.g. Seidlhofer 2003, 2006), the ELFA (English as a Lingua Franca in Academic settings) corpus, which has been established at Tampere University in Finland and includes spoken academic English recorded in international degree programs and other university activities (cf. Mauranen 2003: 519), and Jenkins' (cf. for example 2007) studies concerning pronunciation features of ELF, as well as attitudes towards non-native speaker pronunciation and people's acceptance of models for ELT. Other studies worth mentioning are for example Alessia Cogo's and Martin Dewey's (2006) investigation of lexico-grammatical features of ELF, as well as work by Alan

Firth (1996) and Christiane Meierkord (2000, 2006), just to name a few studies in the expanding field of ELF research.

Through her empirical research connected to the establishment of the VOICE corpus, Seidlhofer (cf. 2006: 50, see also e.g. 2003) managed to formulate some initial hypotheses about features of ELF communication, which have subsequently been investigated by Cogo and Dewey (cf. 2006: 75-76). Summarizing the findings, the following features, which are claimed to characterize ELF use, could be listed:

- use of 3rd person singular zero, as in *you look very sad* and *he look very sad*
- shift in the use of articles (among other patterns this involves preference for zero articles where L1 articles use is largely idiomatic, and preference for definite articles to attach extra importance to a referent in a stretch of discourse), as in *our countries have signed agreement about this*
- invariant question tags as in *you're very busy today, isn't it?* (and use of other similar universal forms, such as *this* for *this* and *these*)
- treating 'who' and 'which' as interchangeable relative pronouns, as in *the picture who* or *a person which*
- shift of patterns of preposition use, for example *we have to study about*
- preference for bare and/or full infinitive over the use of gerunds, as in *I look forward to see you tomorrow*
- extension to the collocational field of words with high semantic generality, for example *take an operation*
- increased explicitness, for example *how long time* instead of *how long*
- exploited redundancy, such as ellipsis of objects/complements of transitive verbs as in *I wanted to go with, you can borrow*

Generally, most of these features can be regarded as regularization processes ruling out some grammatical particularities of ENL. According to research, mutual accommodation as well as communication strategies are much more important for successful ELF communication than, for example, idiomaticity in native English or grammatically 'correct' constructions (cf. Seidlhofer 2006: 50). These initial findings bear many similarities with innovations already established in Outer Circle varieties of English. By now, the status and legitimacy of indigenized varieties of English have been accepted by the majority of scholars as well as by laypeople. However, the same is not true for the status and the description of ELF use yet. Finding unloaded arguments criticizing the legitimacy of ELF innovations proves to be impossible, since it could be

argued that there is no objective reason for dismissing ELF legitimacy, especially when considering the similarities to variations in established Outer Circle Englishes (cf. Jenkins 2007: 14-17).

Jenkins (cf. 2007: 20-21) points to the fact that language contact is often misunderstood when dealing with ELF variation and innovation. Innovative linguistic features used by non-native speakers are often downplayed as learner errors or simple L1 transfer, regardless of their inherent regularity and systematic occurrences. Just like Outer Circle Englishes did not simply emerge through the transference of mother tongues with native speaker English varieties used by colonizers, ELF innovations cannot simply be disregarded as learners' failing competence in the code.

Searching for underlying characteristics of ELF communication, Meierkord (cf. 2006: 10) names self-regulation, simplification and leveling. Additionally, an overwhelming majority of ELF research stresses the co-operative character of ELF, which is implied by the frequent observation of features like collaborative overlaps and joint construction of turns (cf. Meierkord 2000: 2; see also Pözl&Seidlhofer 2006, Jenkins 2006). Similarly, accommodation and the let-it-pass principle, which describes an interlocutor's choice not to signal misunderstanding on the assumption that it is "*interactionally irrelevant*" (Firth 1996: 243, italics in original), are very prominent themes in ELF research.

Effective and successful intercultural communication relies on the speakers' sufficient knowledge of the language code as well as shared notions about communication schemata. In the case of ELF, however, speakers cannot rely on shared schemata. Therefore, it is often claimed that ELF communication is characterized by careful negotiation of meaning concerning the linguistic code as well as cultural factors which might influence communication (cf. Pözl/Seidlhofer 2006: 153-154). ELF users come from very diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and thus, interlocutors frequently orientate their language use towards the competence of their conversation partners via negotiation (cf. Mauraanen 2006: 126).

The following list by Pözl and Seidlhofer (2006: 152-153) summarizes frequently hypothesized pragmatic features of ELF:

- Misunderstandings are not frequent and if they occur at all, they are mostly overcome by topic changes, overt negotiation or communicative strategies like rephrasing and repetition.

- ELF communication could be described as consensus-oriented, co-operative and supportive.
- L1-norms do not interfere frequently. Rather, expectations of norms seem to be suspended.

Christiane Meierkord (2000: 8) states the following pragmatic features of face-to-face ELF interaction:

- opening and closing phrases are not linked though illocutions, but through pauses
- preference for safe topics
- individual topics are kept short and dealt with superficially
- frequent and long pauses within and in-between turns
- simultaneous speech
- considerable use of routine politeness formulae, back-channels and other gambits

Meierkord's (cf. 2000: 8-10) conception of ELF clearly focuses on learner interaction, since she regards participants in ELF conversations as using an interlanguage. This theoretical perception can be seen as clashing with other theories about ELF communication claiming that ELF cannot be regarded as learner interaction. Although Meierkord stresses communicative strategies as compensating learner deficits in English language competence, her findings nevertheless bear some interesting insights into the nature of ELF communication as user interaction. She argues, for instance, that ELF speakers show a preference for safe topics in informal interactions for two reasons. Firstly, participants might feel incapable of dealing with more complex issues like philosophy because they are aware of their status as language learners. Secondly, participants might feel insecure about the acceptability of topics. They avoid topics which may be taboos, or the acceptability of certain topics needs to be negotiated between participants. When keeping the conceptualization of ELF in this paper in mind, Meierkord's claims do not seem to be highly valid for ELF communication as user interaction. Still, her arguments about the choice of safe topics in informal conversation, especially her arguments about insecurity concerning taboos, seem to be relevant enough to deserve some reflection. Although I would not claim ELF discourse to be an interlanguage, I believe that it is possible to gain some relevant insights from investigating learner corpora (cf. Seidlhofer 2003: 19), which bears many similarities with Meierkord's mode of investigation. She claims that ELF users establish an inter-

culture reflecting not only their cultural background, but also their interlanguage stages and adaptation to their interlocutors (cf. Meierkord 2000: 2).

This specific perception of ELF interaction is comparable to Firth's (cf. 1996: 239-243) investigations. He stresses occurrences of 'infelicities' in the language code, which bears some ideological problems because these claims imply that ELF communication is by nature dysfunctional and characterized by anomalies. And yet, although his word choice seems quite harsh, Firth's discussion should not be totally rejected. When closely reading his remarks about ELF use, sharp criticism seems to be leveled. Firth argues that he does not wish to make any evaluative judgments when discussing aspects of ELF communication. Besides, he seems to be aware of the problematic issue of native speaker orientation and focuses on the accomplishment of communicative success. He concludes that ELF interaction is indeed 'normal' and 'ordinary' since communicative goals are achieved through interactional and linguistic work. An interesting feature discussed in Firth's investigations is the let-it-pass principle, which he understands as positively contributing to communicative success rather than interlocutors' lack of attention. Firth assumes that participants will not overtly mark disruptive conversation items and often not immediately signal problems with utterances on the assumption that these problems will either be solved during conversation or become redundant.

As mentioned earlier, the co-operative character of ELF communication is another essential topic in recent linguistic research. Indeed, accommodation can be regarded as one of the most crucial features enabling communicative success in ELF interactions. Accommodation strategies can be employed to signal identity or integrity. For example through the repetition of non-conventional grammatical utterances of interlocutors, speakers are able to show alignment (cf. Cogo/Dewey 2006: 69-72).

According to Anna Mauranen (cf. 2006: 123, 135-137), the prevention of misunderstandings can also be depicted as an important feature of ELF discourse. She suggests that all ELF users employ a number of clarification and repair strategies to strengthen and to achieve mutual intelligibility as well as the intended communicative goals. Confirmation checks were usually observed as minimal checks, but they can also be found in more explicit ways, for example requests for clarification formulated as distinct questions. Mauranen suggests that ELF users are very competent in using minimal linguistic devices, since her data features a large number of minimal checks. Investigating the capacity for accommodation and co-operative strategies employed by ELF users could be hypothesized to bear interesting insights into specific processes

enabling communicative success. These processes seem to be based on collaboration and a common tendency to reduce communicative effort, consequently leading to simplification processes (cf. Hülmbauer, Böhringer & Seidlhofer 2008: 32).

In like manner, pronunciation features appear to be mostly determined by mutual intelligibility (cf. Jenkins 2006: 50). Jenkins postulates a Lingua Franca Core, which only includes those pronunciation features that seem to be crucial for mutual understanding in international settings. What clearly deserves specific attention is the fact that Jenkin's core excludes some pronunciation features which are generally claimed to be particularly characteristic for the English language code, such as th-pronunciation as dental fricatives, or the light l – dark l distinction. However, she also identifies certain phonological features that are decisive for successful intercultural communication, since variants in these features lead to misunderstandings and failed intelligibility. Among these features, one can name, for example, the contrast between long and short vowel sounds, or aspiration of word-initial consonants like /p/, /t/, and /k/ (cf. Jenkins 2001: 136-160). Pronunciation will be dealt with more closely when dealing with Jenkins' (2007) most recent research concerning attitudes towards ELF. These findings will then also be connected to my own empirical findings of what European students think about native speaker pronunciation norms.

3. Questioning traditional concepts

The discussion of the conceptualization of ELF as well as the reflection upon some of the most intriguing features of ELF communication leads me to the assumption that the concept of ELF calls some traditional claims of linguistic theory into question. For instance in the discussion of language spread and change, some interesting findings and controversial issues have been investigated, which bear crucial implications for linguistic research. This section will deal with those implications of ELF research which seem to be most interesting when regarding their impact on some traditional linguistic concepts in connection with the specific research focus of this study.

How crucial it is to critically reflect on traditional concepts can be displayed concisely by citing Seidlhofer's (2009: 40) following argument: "Forcing findings into preconceived categories is always likely to obstruct an understanding of new phenomena." Similarly, Mauranen (2009: 3) explicitly states the urgent need for ELF research to question traditional concepts when she argues: "Looking into new contexts calls for new ways of seeing context and situated language use."

3.1. Standard Language Ideology

One of the most important issues of the conceptualization of ELF seems to be the notion of ELF users being active language users in their own right, who do not need to adhere to native speaker norms but change the virtual language to suit their specific communicative needs. These issues have severe implications for theories in, for example, ELT focusing on an approximation to native speaker norms and for scholars supporting what can be called 'standard language ideology'. I perceive this issue as highly relevant when investigating ELF attitudes in Europe. Hence, my questionnaire survey also included statements designed to elicit whether European students perceive themselves as users or learners of English. My supposition is that a successful reflection on standard language ideology and ELF would enable ELF speakers to perceive themselves as independent users, not learners. For a discussion of the findings, a critical reflection seems necessary to facilitate a deeper understanding of this issue.

The role of the native speaker in the international spread of English has changed drastically, especially regarding ELF. Traditional concepts view standard language, which consists of native speaker norms and can be seen as "socially sanctioned for institutional use" (Widdowson 2003: 37), as the only means of successful communication. An essential point in the criticism of standard language ideology is the

dual character of every language or variety. Every single language is both a means of communication and at the same time a means of expressing membership of a community, social identity, conventions, values, and many more elements that make up a culture (cf. Widdowson 2003: 39). Moreover, the term 'standard' is also ambiguous since it has several semantic qualities and interpretations. Standard can, for example, be used to refer to a high ideal, referring to generally accepted norms, but also mean that something is regularly used and thus nothing special. These conflicting and ambiguous interpretations of 'standard' are also reflected in the different interpretations of Standard English. Regarding linguistic and functional features, there is no generally accepted definition of Standard English available in scholarly debate. Yet, traditional concepts of ELT generate a strong consensus among professionals about the usefulness of teaching Standard English to English language learners (cf. Gnutzmann 2005: 107-108). Standard language ideology could be hypothesized to lead to linguistic insecurity of non-native speakers. If there were no way to question this traditional concept, which is done by the conceptualization of ELF, Phillipson's arguments about linguistic imperialism would clearly find support.

Most definitions of Standard English focus on grammatical features and, for instance, the modern British definition totally excludes implications of accent and pronunciation (cf. Gnutzmann 2005: 111). Standard English is essentially represented in its written form since it is mainly designed for institutional purposes. Thus, the spoken version is not that crucial, however, standardized spelling conventions seem to be an essential part of the notion of Standard English. Oddly enough, exactly those areas of the language which seem most redundant for successful communication, namely grammar and spelling, could be argued to bear high significance because they carry social identity with them (cf. Widdowson 2003: 37-39).

Widdowson (cf. 1997: 143-145) argues that there is no need for a strict observation of the standard language because the international use of English will remain internationally intelligible on its own, since its users employ it to communicate internationally. Thus, the very purpose of international English is successful communication, which, in turn, secures its mutual intelligibility. In like manner, Seidlhofer (cf. 2005: 164) points to the central role of mutual accommodation in ELF communication, which demonstrates that ELF users naturally co-operate and strive for international intelligibility. Obviously, expert communities will develop a highly specialized code, leading to a loss of mutual understanding. However, this fact should

not be used to promote strict adherence to the standard code, because every specialized use of a language, be it by native speakers, users of a common lingua franca, or speakers of English as a foreign language, requests specialized expertise. Widdowson argues that the reason why many people decide to learn English at school, at university, or in other language training courses is to communicate internationally with other members of their professional community. He claims that English language teaching should be orientated towards secondary international communities and their use of English, rather than exclusively linked to a native context.

In contrast, Gnutzmann (cf. 2005: 115-117) claims that detaching international ELT from Standard English and its associated cultures would be problematic for linguistic, pedagogical and political reasons. Furthermore, he advocates an orientation towards RP in Europe. Although his arguments seem rather persuasive, he does not give any reasons for his beliefs or explanations concerning the political and linguistic consequences that he claims to be problematic. Gnutzmann's argumentation could be regarded as problematic since it does not appear to be transparent. Additionally, when following his argumentative framework, there seems to be a contradiction between the advocated approximation to RP or BBC English in Europe, and the economic and political power of the USA, which would make General American a more suitable goal for learners of English. However, Gnutzmann gives pedagogic explanations for reference to a model in ELT. Firstly, open norms would unsettle learners because they are in need of orientation. Secondly, the homogeneity of a model would make language acquisition easier. In spite of the plausibility of these claims, there seems to be no possible logical link between these pedagogic considerations and an adherence to particularly British native speaker norms. As leveling closing words, however, Gnutzmann argues that teaching models need to be tolerant of errors and yet, ELF does not account for any possible teaching goals from his point of view.

However valuable and logical arguments about the inherent mechanisms of mutual accommodation and co-operation in ELF may be, considerations of desirable learning goals have not entered school curricula so far, which could be attributed, according to Seidlhofer (cf. 2003: 19, 21), to the widespread influence of research conducted in ENL contexts and the absence of sufficient descriptive investigations into EIL. Language competence is still assessed exclusively with reference to native speaker norms. In other words, users of English are evaluated according to their success in orientating their language use towards native English norms and their competence in understanding

native speaker utterances in spoken and written form. As an example of this prevalence of native speaker orientation, one could name the self-assessment grid of the European Language Portfolio. ELF research should be seen as positively contributing to a reassessment of the role of the native speaker, but does not advocate new norms for EFL teaching. Rather, incorporating ELF research could lead to an increased communicative awareness and a better understanding of mechanisms that are important for intercultural exchange. A very frequent misunderstanding of ELF research is the claim that ELF patronizes learners of English in an ‘everything goes’-fashion because it allows for ‘incorrect’ forms. This point should not be disregarded, since it could be claimed that this criticism frequently derives from economic interests. Institutions like examining boards are highly interested in promoting native speaker norms and their prestige, simply out of their economic interests. However, ELF researchers do not wish to promote the teaching of ELF only, nor do they wish to prescribe which variety should be promoted as learners’ goals. Rather, learners of English should be able to decide for themselves which specific variety of English they want to concentrate on, be it a native English variety like US-American English or RP, or ELF. Hence, ELF increases the models available, rather than diminishing learner goals. If learners are aware of the many different uses of English worldwide and the different varieties available to them, they could make informed choices and concentrate on those specific models which suit their purposes, whatever these might be (cf. Jenkins 2007: 21-22).

In addition to the positive implications already mentioned, it should also be considered that standard language ideology and the imposition of native speaker models onto students of English can be psychologically demanding for non-native speakers of English (cf. Spichtinger 2000: 71). Non-native speakers will never, regardless of how high their level of competence might be, turn into native speakers. Thus, becoming part of the native speaker community can be difficult if one is not born into it, since ENL bears cultural and social features typical of its community of speakers. When providing models that focus on intelligibility and communicative success, one could achieve more desirable learning goals, namely supplying speakers with those language skills needed to find their own way of using a language in their own terms and for their own means. ELF could lead the way for non-native speakers to become aware of the communicative needs of intercultural conversations. Hence, users of ELF are more than just language learners repeating ready-to-use and prescribed items of a foreign language, as standard language ideology implies. In ELF, speakers become active users with their own means of expressing themselves. It needs to be stated that this line of thought is based on my

rather subjective assumptions concerning the conceptualization of ELF and the possibilities for its users. Since these arguments are personal suppositions, the empirical research of this study investigates how far European students actually perceive themselves as users of English. Presenting the empirical findings at this point would be an incoherent anticipation. All I wish to present in this context is that the participants' statements hint at the fact that my personal assumptions are too optimistic for the current European situation, but, at the same time, do not seem entirely unrealistic.

Although the considerable impact of language use on language change is widely recognized by scholars in linguistics, the general tenor still seems to be fairly negative when ELF norms and uses are concerned, both by native and non-native speakers. This seems rather peculiar, considering the vast amount of publications dealing with the international spread of English. Similarly, it seems to be commonly recognized that many non-native speakers nowadays use English on a nearly everyday basis, and that this use is at least as common as native speaker – native speaker interaction when looking at English used in an inter-connected modern world. Jenkins (cf. 2007: 7-8) addresses the issue that some scholars are still very skeptic about the notion of ELF. In particular, she criticizes Trudgill for ignoring accommodation and language contact, which is crucial for ELF interactions, and for claiming that native speakers have the sole right to shape the language, since historically, the language resides in them. As can be illustrated by the prevailing negative attitudes towards ELF, actively questioning standard language ideology seems to be vital for raising awareness and acceptance for the legitimacy of non-native speaker uses of English in an international setting. As a concluding remark, it should be noted that nativeness criteria seem highly redundant when discussing ELF. Their only functional role seems to be a socio-psychologically motivated one, creating a distinction between native speaker communities and non-native users of English, and thus marginalizing ELF users as outsiders. Communicatively, this distinction does not play any role for intelligibility (cf. Seidlhofer 2005: 166-167).

3.2. Traditional notions of speech community and bilingualism

In the light of ELF, Kachru's (cf. 1992: 356) model displaying language spread in three concentric circles should be reconsidered because the centrality of the native speakers can be questioned. In Kachru's model, the expanding circle, which encompasses all users of the English language for whom English is neither the first language, nor an

official language in their home country, is argued to be norm-dependent. This claim is clearly open for questions when investigating ELF uses, since its speakers commonly exploit the English language for their needs and shape it to express their very own reality (cf. Hülmbauer, Böhringer & Seidlhofer 2008: 27-28).

Widdowson (cf. 2003: 51-52) argues that language variety should be defined along two dimensions, namely the dimension of time and the dimension of space. In the dimension of time, language change is considered as happening across different periods, whereas the dimension of space perceives variation across different regions. Furthermore, he claims that dialects of English are commonly thought of as variations in forms of speaking that are closely linked to the standard core of the English language and dependent on a common development. However, when considering this argumentation in the line of the international spread of English, one should rather speak of different virtual languages as a result of language change through international language use, since a code that declares independence can no longer be regarded as a dialect. Additionally, the changes in the virtual language due to its global spread cannot be compared to the gradual development of different dialects through language use in different but related social communities. With these arguments, Widdowson likewise calls Kachru's model into question when considering ELF communication. Global registers cannot exclusively be perceived as belonging to the Expanding Circle, since Outer Circle speakers also employ them as a matter of economic and sociopolitical exchange. As Widdowson (2003: 55) states:

It is in these uses of the language as a lingua franca that the dynamism of international spread is to be found, and as users of these varieties all speakers of English, whether as a first, second or foreign language are in the same Expanding Circle.

ELF users cannot be described within the conventional sociolinguistic framework of 'speech community' because they belong to diverse primary socio-cultural and linguistic communities. In addition, ELF should not be conceptualized as a stable and clearly separated object of study. Resulting from this conceptual shift, theories about 'communities of practice' by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet seem to be more relevant and applicable to ELF. The conventional definition of a speech community as consisting of members from the same lingua-cultural background cannot capture the interconnected reality of the modern world anymore (cf. Hülmbauer, Böhringer & Seidlhofer 2008: 28). Etienne Wenger (cf. 2008: 72-85) develops theories about communities of practice further and defines them as characterized by three dimensions,

namely mutual engagement, a joint enterprise and a shared repertoire. Hence, communities of practice are creating their language variety and the speech community is not, as in traditional theories, characterized by the language variety (cf. Hülmbauer, Böhringer & Seidlhofer 2008: 28). This point clearly supports the claim that nativeness criteria could be regarded as redundant in the light of ELF because speakers from diverse cultural backgrounds co-operatively create their own means of successful exchange.

Other traditional linguistic concepts which need to be reconsidered when investigating ELF are ‘bilingualism’ and ‘diglossia’. In short, linguists investigate which language in the case of bilingualism, or which varieties of the same language in the case of diglossia, are usually used to fulfill high or low functions, as, for example, school instruction and family interaction. When regarding English in Europe, it becomes clear that the language can fulfill both high and low functions. In this context, James (cf. 2000: 28-29) argues that if one considers English on the micro-level as individual bilingualism, ELF – as code and as function – would go beyond the traditional concepts and qualify for a (multi)lingual and (poly)glossic status.

ELF also combines aspects of societal and individual bilingualism and blurs boundaries between “achieved” bilingualism, which refers to institutionally learned language competence, and “ascribed” bilingualism (James 2000: 31), which defines naturally acquired knowledge, for example through migration. Since virtually all European ELF speakers were instructed in EFL in school, one should certainly keep in mind that their use of English is built onto formally acquired knowledge of the language. However, ascribed bilingualism can be observed whenever Europeans of different linguistic backgrounds successfully solve the communicative demands of inter-cultural exchange. Hence, naturally occurring ELF interactions combine linguistic abilities of both, achieved and ascribed, dimensions of bilingualism (cf. James 2000: 31-32). At this point, reference should be made to Berns’, de Bot’s and Hasebrink’s (cf. 2007: 10) argumentation about the role of formal English language instruction for ELF speakers in Europe. They argue that formal aspects are not relevant for the concept of ELF use anymore because speakers adhere to their own standards, which are functionally oriented. However, I wish to raise concern in this context, since formal instruction and traditional ELT models still play an essential role in Europe and most users of ELF have been instructed in EFL in school. Surely, this claim holds true for the participants of this paper’s empirical investigation. James’ arguments could now be seen as closing a

theoretical gap between Berns' et al.'s arguments and my concerns via connecting the two concepts of achieved and ascribed bilingualism, which have traditionally been placed in opposition to each other.

My research question "How do European students perceive their use of English and English used by others particularly concerning their attitudes towards native speaker models?" is closely connected to this theoretical reflection. It can be argued that it is indeed essential to reflect upon how one perceives the theoretical context of one's research. Thus, questioning the discussed concepts forms the basis for my theoretical considerations. In turn, this has a strong impact on how the empirical findings are then interpreted and connected to linguistic theory. With making these considerations explicit, I wish to enable readers to reflect upon my discussions and interpretations.

4. English as a European lingua franca

4.1. Introduction

The European Union is a political entity of countries with a very diverse linguistic environment. To conduct political, economic or cultural affairs, the gradual establishment of a common public space seems to be a worthwhile endeavor. Communication between people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds requires a common means of communication, which would be a lingua franca. The determination which specific language is chosen to serve as a lingua franca has certainly more to do with political power than with linguistic reasoning. What needs to be kept in mind, however, is the crucial fact that a lingua franca is always intended to supplement the linguistic landscape rather than supplant individual languages (cf. Rose 2008: 452, 456).

Cenoz and Jessner (cf. 2000: viiii) argue that it has been the combination of Britain's colonial power in the 19th and early 20th centuries and US-America's dominance in political affairs and other international matters from the 20th century onwards, which helped English to become the world's most important language for communication across linguistic and national boundaries. Hence, Europeans learn and use English for manifold purposes. Slightly differing, Hoffman (cf. 2000: 7) argues that English only entered mainland Europe after the Second World War. Hilgendorf (cf. 2007: 132-134) even goes so far as to claim that there has been considerable interpersonal contact in English from around 800 A.D. onwards in the German speaking regions of Europe through the growing domain of trade. After the Civil War in England from 1642 to 1648, British innovations in the domains of politics, technology and literature led to an increasing importance of English. Thereafter, British achievements in the industrial age ameliorated English language contact further in the 19th century. American English can be claimed to have entered the stage in Europe after World War II, due to its developing plans for Europe as well as its growing importance as a global economic player.

What can be argued with certainty is the fact that English fulfills manifold functions for its European users. Thus, any distinct native variety, be it British, General American or any other variety cannot be regarded as the sole model for language norms and targets any longer (cf. Cenoz/Jessner 2000: viii-ix). English as an international language dominates the fields of technology and science, as well as diplomacy and other international relations like business and commerce. In the EU, English is the medium for almost all official communication with the biggest organizations at the highest level,

for example the United Nations. Equally important, English is used on a daily basis for interpersonal communication, for example between workers of a multinational company. In like manner, the important role of English in business and commerce also affects journalism and advertisements, which use the English language to play with its international connotations (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 19).

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Most research on the use of English in Europe has focused on institutionalized settings like the European parliament, or specialized contexts like technology, business transactions or academic purposes. However, due to increasing European integration, James (cf. 2000: 22-24) argues that personal exchange between Europeans who do not share the same mother tongue is frequently occurring across the European countries.

In Europe, the question of English as a lingua franca cannot be sufficiently answered on a linguistic level only, since cultural, social, political and economic dimensions cannot be ignored. The establishment of a common language for political exchange in the institutions of the EU seems to be a highly efficient ultimate goal when considering the vast number of different national languages involved. However, this study should not be misunderstood as promoting the abolition of linguistic diversity by promoting the use of ELF as the common European means of exchange. Of course, a mother tongue carries a lot of one's cultural individuality in it and it is important to preserve the different identities. But using ELF efficiently does not imply that linguistic diversity is endangered or that languages other than English will gradually disappear. Rather, ELF as a common communicative tool in Europe would contribute to collaboration among all EU member states without threatening diverse linguistic backgrounds. Just like the European Union is thought to be a political union consisting of different and diverse nations, ELF can be widely used without diminishing linguistic diversity. Preserving distinct cultures and linguistic backgrounds for various purposes does not imply the impossibility of sharing important "secondary loyalties" (Lever 2002: 111; see also Erling 2007: 126-128) in a European dimension. One could claim that an emerging European identity would not have negative influences on various national identities because every human being could be viewed as an aggregate of numerous identities. Thus, adding a European one would not diminish, for example, an Austrian national identity, just like adding additional experiences will never erase memories.

The need for a European public sphere, or a "European public space", as it is called by Rose (2008: 451), cannot possibly be disregarded. Nevertheless, it seems that many endeavors to create pan-European media formats were doomed to failure due to the

linguistic diversity of its member states and people's preferences for media formats in their respective local and national languages. However, when looking at public spheres in the context of communities of practice, a more positive picture can be drawn. Throughout Europe, specialized communities like academic communities or NGOs, which could be defined through common thematic interests, interact with each other via English. Within these specialized communities of practice, English functions as the common lingua franca. Similarly, the Internet provides a platform especially for young Europeans, who use ELF for inter-cultural exchange with specific target groups across Europe. Moreover, English serves as a lingua franca for interpersonal contacts, for example when going on vacation or migrating into a different cultural environment (cf. Rose 2008: 459-460). Although many Europeans think that knowing English is of great importance for their career chances and their personal contacts, Berns, de Bot and Hasebrink (cf. 2007: 117-118) do not think that the growing presence of English in the European context can be used to underline theories of Anglo-American cultural hegemony or linguistic imperialism. Rather, they support ideas of multiple identities and of English offering additional contact and communication possibilities, which means that the English language serves different functions than local languages and exists side by side.

Obviously, language diversity without any common language can cause severe communication problems within a political entity like the EU, since communicative exchange must succeed across linguistic boundaries. Although, officially, every national language needs to be recognized according to the European language policy, English could be argued to have special status. As "the one recognized *lingua franca*" (Ahrens 2002: 13, italics in original), English can ease inter-cultural communication. However, this special status of the English language also leads scholars as well as laypeople to express concerns and fears.

Phillipson (cf. 2008: 260) claims that English as the European lingua franca is built on biased presuppositions. He criticizes ELF scholars for regarding English as a culture-neutral tool, an argument that has already been discussed and refuted in the context of linguistic imperialism and language spread. Moreover, he argues that the European youth culture is shaped by US-American consumerism, as well as business practices. Obviously, the strong influence of US-American culture cannot be denied. The wide access to and the distribution of US-American popular culture through film, music, television and other communication technologies cannot be disregarded in modern

society, especially when looking at young Europeans. The use of modern technology can be argued to support Anglo-American influence (cf. Berns/deBot/Hasebrink 2007: 3). Still, it seems to be an easy way out to condemn this influence as cultural hegemony that has been actively imposed upon Europe by the government and industry of the USA. Phillipson's last 'biased presupposition', in which he argues that ELF scholars strive towards making Europe monolingual, could be regarded as a wrong presupposition on his side, since the endeavor to conceptualize ELF is certainly not to create a monolingual EU. Phillipson's misconception concerning this essential point clearly deserves special attention and needs to be kept in mind whenever reflecting on his line of thought.

When discussing the question whether English in Europe could be defined as a new variety or register, highly diverse opinions and heated debates seem to be the only answer as for now. In this paper, important issues for considering this complex problem have already been raised by discussing traditional notions of speech community. At this point, it seems essential to discuss some specific professional opinions while keeping in mind the most important points of the already mentioned discussion of issues connected to notions of speech community. James (cf. 2000: 33-35) considers ELF as a specific variety of English, and furthermore, argues that ELF in Europe fulfills all the characteristic features which usually define specific registers of a language. As a practical reason for this decision, James claims that ELF in Europe can only be consistently investigated when its use by non-native speakers is not considered as an "aberrant or defective (dia)lect of English" (James 2000: 34). ELF is considered as linguistically not specifically different from other registers or varieties of English in the world. However, he argues that the absence of idiomatic language use and figurative speech defines ELF as different from other existent uses of English. Additional support for his claims about ELF being a particular register in Europe could, according to James, be drawn from Widdowson's considerations concerning the spread of the 'virtual' language and his arguments about English being spread as English for specific purposes.

In sharp contrast, Mollin (cf. 2007: 176) argues that English use in Europe does not fulfill the criteria for becoming a new variety. The most important arguments she makes concern the claim that English is neither the language of media and literature across Europe, nor does it occupy enough areas in interpersonal communication. What could be defined as 'enough' is left to considerable speculation in this context. In like manner,

Gnutzmann (cf. 2005: 112-115) claims that one cannot assign variety status to the international spread of English. He builds his claims on the Prague School's account of linguistic, functional and attitudinal properties of a standard language. Summarizing the most important points of his discussion, inter-cultural uses of English are described as reduction and simplification strategies marking specific uses of the language, but not specific formal-linguistic models. Gnutzmann argues that international uses of English do not fulfill specific functions within a speech community. Equally important, he claims that particular attitudes, namely language loyalty, pride and awareness of the norm, are not observable. However, as has repeatedly been argued in this paper before, traditional concepts of speech community and standard language do not pay sufficient attention to the dynamic processes of the international spread and use of English. Thus, it seems to be highly questionable why arguing about variety status in conventional terms should produce any insights to ELF or connected linguistic debates. Additionally, it could be argued that every single variety needs to start out from some small variation. If ELF is then perceived as a flexible compound of "communicative practices" (Ferguson 2009: 129), debates about its variety or register status lose much of their basis (cf. Ferguson 2009: 123, 129).

I can support Breiteneder's (cf. 2005: 13) remarks that ELF in Europe is different from native English. Following her argumentation, this conclusion seems to be highly logical. Breiteneder argues that the form of ELF can be assumed to differ from ENL since English is mainly used by speakers of other European languages for inter-cultural exchange. These claims are mainly based on theories of macroacquisition by Brutt-Griffler (2002) and theories of language spread and change for example by Widdowson (2003), which have already been discussed in the section dealing with the conceptualization of ELF. From reflection on these ideas, Breiteneder's assumption seems to be legitimate.

4.2. The situation of English in Europe

For the specific research focus of this study, it is necessary to discuss the sociolinguistic context of English in Europe because use patterns, contact possibilities and language teaching practices have important implications for language attitudes. Additionally, various social, cultural, political, economic and linguistic circumstances influence people's perceptions of their own use of English as well as English used by others to a great extent. Furthermore, one cannot discuss ELF attitudes by European students

without reflecting on these complex issues, which should be achieved in this section dealing with the situation and roles of the English language in Europe. Since a detailed account of English in Europe would definitely exceed the scope of this paper, this section tries to accomplish a concise overview of the most important aspects of English use in Europe.

Europe is linguistically diverse in many aspects. In addition to the manifold official languages of the EU-countries, there are many other, smaller linguistic communities using their distinct languages or language varieties. Patterns of immigration have changed the linguistic landscape of Europe because immigrants from Asian and Arabic countries, among many more, also add their mother tongues to the linguistic repertoire of EU-citizens. This linguistic diversity of the European Union puts English into a special position, since many EU-citizens can only communicate with each other via the help of English as their common *lingua franca* (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 15-17).

Native English can mostly be found in Great Britain and Ireland. English as an official language can be found on the British Isles and other territories like Gibraltar or Malta. The Republic of Ireland should also be considered in this respect because only few Irish nationals exclusively use Irish Gaelic for communication. Apart from former British overseas territories, where English is still an official language, multilingualism and the use of English can be found in most other European countries, where English is not the official language. In most parts of the European Union, English has not been imposed through colonization. According to Kachru's (cf. 1992: 356) model of language spread, speakers belonging to all the three circles can be found in Europe. Speakers of the Expanding Circle are growing rapidly. Typically, they are people belonging to international communities, working for official multinational organizations like the European institutions, or are employed by international companies. In many political institutions like the UN, NATO or other organizations which have sites in various member states, it is not unusual that English functions as the common *lingua franca* (cf. Hoffman 2000: 3-6).

English use in Europe reflects the extent to which English is both a native language for some Europeans as well as a foreign and additional language for others. The role of English in Europe is very special because almost three times as many people have competence in English as a foreign language than speak it as their native language (cf. Rose 2008: 461). Thus, English is the most popular foreign language in the EU.

Additionally, English can be contrasted with other popular foreign languages in Europe like French, German or Spanish, since those languages are mainly learned as foreign languages, whereas English is no longer learned for interaction with its native speakers in a majority of cases. Following this line of thought, one can infer that users of ELF will play a significant role in the future of English in Europe (cf. Breiteneder 2005: 6, 9).

These arguments are supported when looking at findings presented in the Special Eurobarometer about language use in Europe. In terms of foreign languages spoken across the EU, 38% of the citizens state that they have enough competence in English to conduct a conversation, followed by German and French, each with 14%. These patterns are even more striking when looking at foreign language competence in Austria, where 58% have considerable English knowledge, whereas only 10% know French well enough to have a conversation (cf. European Commission 2006: 12-13). In a highly interesting study, Labrie and Quell (cf. 1997: 4-7, 22-25) investigate the distinct probabilities that a particular language will be used when nationals with two different linguistic backgrounds communicate. Although the probabilities can only account for theoretical calculations based on figures concerning mother tongues and foreign language knowledge, they still offer some interesting insights underlining the special status of English in the EU. Generally, the study shows that English is the first option in 25 out of 29 calculated contact scenarios with all probed nationals between the age of 15 to 24 years. In contrast, other popular foreign languages like French and German seem to be restricted to communication with the respective native speakers. Due to the fact that this study uses statistical data from the Special Eurobarometer survey conducted in 1994, one could infer that the calculated probabilities are even higher today, since language competence in English is increasing rapidly.

English is also perceived as the most useful language to know for personal development and career, apart from one's mother tongue, by 68% of all Europeans, followed by French (25%) and German (22%). The only countries covered in the survey that do not rate English to be the most useful language to know are the UK, Ireland and Luxembourg. In those three countries, French is the first choice to gain foreign language skills. Again, when looking at the specific findings for Austria, the prevalence of English is even stronger than the total numbers for Europe suggest. 72% of all Austrian citizens state that English is the most useful foreign language, followed by

French with 16% and Italian and Spanish featuring with 9% and 8% respectively (cf. European Commission 2006: 30-32).

Berchem (cf. 2002: 27) mentions idealistic or cultural as well as utilitarian reasons for foreign language acquisition. He claims that the boundaries between these different types of motivation are fluid when, for example, new family members who speak different mother tongues join a family through marriage. Overall, foreign languages are not learned to widen one's personal horizon or to learn about other cultures anymore, but people learn those languages which will grant them material advantages. Many people in Europe learn EFL for instrumental reasons, namely to gain advantages like higher career chances. The development of ELF in Europe can be seen as reflecting a process of popular choice, even though factors like the geographic situation and school curricula should not be disregarded when dealing with reasons for learning a foreign language (cf. Rose 2008: 460). This instrumental motivation is supported by findings of research conducted by Berns and her colleagues. At the same time, integrative motivation has growing importance for young people in Europe, especially in connection with General American. People state that they want to learn English because they want to symbolize their identity and affiliation, their group membership and solidarity (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 10). Similar motivation patterns have been observed in the Eurobarometer. Asked about their reasons for learning languages, 35% of the Europeans state traveling abroad and 32% indicate use at work. Personal satisfaction and possibilities to work in another country are ranked third, each with 27% (cf. European Commission 2006: 35). Concerning reasons for young people to learn foreign languages, an overwhelming majority, namely 73% of all European citizens, state that young people should learn foreign languages to improve their job opportunities. The next prominent reason is the global distribution of a language with 38% and 30% state that young Europeans would feel more comfortable when going on holidays to a region where the language is spoken. In fourth place, a rather idealistic reason features with 28%, namely "[t]o be multilingual" (European Commission 2006: 44).

Although ELF is not explicitly mentioned in the Special Eurobarometer, some findings bear interesting implications for the role of ELF in Europe. In this research, a foreign language is understood to be "any language other than the respondent's mother tongue" (European Commission 2006: 5). English prevalence can be found throughout different language issues and is most common in terms of use on an everyday basis as well (cf.

European Commission 2006: 16), which could be an indicator of its emerging lingua franca function. Another interesting finding is the demographic profile of a multilingual Europe, since strong similarities across different topic areas are displayed. Generally speaking, a European is most likely to have good foreign language skills if they are young, well-educated or still students, and if they have a migrant background. These Europeans are instrumentally motivated to learn foreign languages because they use them for professional reasons (cf. European Commission 2006: 63).

The findings of a study by Erling (cf. 2007: 112-120) support these claims. In her project, Erling compiled a sociolinguistic profile of students at the Freie Universität Berlin. The students' contact with English is significantly higher than the average findings of the Eurobarometer indicate. This is not surprising, since Erling's participants all studied at the English department. Although their subject of study can certainly be argued to influence their private lives as well, the expanding contact with English outside of university still bears important insights. Tendencies which can slowly be seen to emerge when comparing Eurobarometer studies across years can be clearly traced in the behavior patterns of Erling's participants. Moreover, statements by her students show that English plays an important role for success at university outside of the English department as well. An overwhelming majority, namely 92% of the participants, state that they use English for intercultural communication at least once a year while they are traveling abroad. This high mobility, access to the media in English and the perceived importance of English as a means for inter-cultural communication even in Germany shows that English plays a prominent role in the students' lives. Nevertheless, these findings should not be used to claim that students neglect other languages. On the contrary, Erling's participants view English language competence as normal in Europe, and thus, they strive to acquire additional foreign language skills for better opportunities.

Of course, the Special Eurobarometer covers many more language related issues than discussed in the paper at hand. Figures were reduced to those specific topic areas that seem most important to build the theoretical basis for discussing attitudes towards ELF in Europe. Since attitudes are never a straightforward matter, any discussion has to be embedded in a more detailed reflection on the linguistic background. For this reason, discussing the most important findings of the Eurobarometer seems to be vital. What needs to be kept in mind whenever multilingualism or linguistic diversity are concerned is the fact that each individual language fulfills specific functions. English seems to be

out of serious competitors when it comes to the function of a global lingua franca. But for this function to be served sufficiently, it needs to be realized and accepted that ELF needs to be adapted to the European context if it should successfully function as a lingua franca and, accordingly, conceptually separated from English as a native language (cf. Seidlhofer 2002a: 236).

4.2.1. The role of English in business and commerce

As has already been shown by the prevalence of instrumental reasons for learning English, the role of ELF in business and commerce cannot be denied. Thus, it does not seem surprising when Hilgendorf (2007: 136) claims that “English functions as the primary language for international business dealings.” Job descriptions in newspapers hint to the fact that English language competence is of great importance for higher positions in more and more European companies. Knowledge of English is a common qualification for employment in industry as well as service sectors. In this context, it seems essential for a balanced discussion of English in Europe to also consider negative remarks about its significant role in business relations. Spichtinger (cf. 2000: 42), for example, points out that people who have risen from low qualification levels as well as older employees will be confronted with problematic barriers if they want to apply for higher positions.

English is used in many international companies with their headquarters in different European cities, either because there is an official language policy enforced, or because some of the communication partners do not share the same native language. Advertisers all over Europe exploit English to address bigger audiences, since it is regarded as common knowledge that most of the educated people, as well as young people, can be reached in English. Additionally, it is argued that English phrases can be exploited to convey modernity, progress and lifestyle (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 20-21).

4.2.2. The role of English in education

90% of all school children in Europe learn English before any other foreign language. Although instrumental reasons for English language teaching (ELT) gain importance, the orientation of language competence still focuses on British, or US-American native speaker norms. In school curricula across Europe, English also gains importance as the medium of instruction, as many different attempts to implement Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) lessons show (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 23-27). In this context, it will be helpful to remember some of the major points that have been

made about ELT in this paper before. Mainly, this study has focused on discussing implications of ELF for ELT and the traditional concepts employed in schools so far. Summarizing the most important points, one certainly needs to consider the theory-practice divide, which can be observed in various studies focusing on schools all over Europe. It has been argued that theoretically, teachers perceive the usefulness of teaching English in a way which concentrates on communicative success. However, practically, standard language ideology and the strict observance of native speaker norms still dominate the European evaluation systems. Another important issue is the sometimes problematically close link between English language training and native speaker communities and cultural values. As the last crucial issue of this summary, it is certainly important to state again that ELF should not be misunderstood as promoting other goals for EFL teaching. Rather, it seems to be desirable if learners were able to decide for themselves which English variety they want to acquire. But only by explicitly dealing with the international spread and use of English in classes will students be able to make informed choices built on rational arguments instead of blindly following traditional doctrines.

Hoffman (cf. 2000: 13-14) claims that English is different from any other foreign language for European school children because of the presence of English in their environment, which will be discussed more closely in the context of English in the media. Through these appearances, English enjoys obvious advantages because the media presence provides support for learning and using the language. When reflecting upon Hoffman's arguments, it needs to be stated as well that she seems to perceive English use by non-native speakers exclusively from the EFL perspective and does not consider ELF possibilities. The only option for Hoffman (cf. 2000: 19) to be fluent in English seems to be sounding like a native speaker. This criticism should not be understood as criticizing Hoffman's entire contribution to Cenoz' and Jessner's (2000) book, since she discusses various functions and implications of English use in Europe, and rightly points out that speakers do not need to be assimilated by Anglo-Saxon culture in order to be proficient in English (cf. Hoffman 2000: 20). Still, the impression lingers on that to be highly proficient in English is understood in native speaker terms and the possibilities and implications of ELF are not considered sufficiently.

4.2.3. The role of English in science and higher education

Academic fields are highly internationalized, and thus, an international means of communication among the members of the different academic disciplines is of great

importance. In addition to interaction with foreign colleagues, the nature of publishing also strengthens the role of English, since the biggest international publications are issued in English. During the 20th century, English has considerably risen as the international language of science, until it reached a share of over 90 percent of all natural-science publications in the 1990s. In comparison, no other language's share is above two percent (cf. Ammon 2002: 217). According to Berns and her colleagues, also the most influential academic databases mainly consist of texts written in English. Research of the linguistic situation in academic fields has shown that not all fields are affected and influenced by English to the same extent. Physics, chemistry and some parts of medicine are highly Anglophone sciences, whereas economics, psychology and linguistics, as well as most parts of medicine, are only influenced by Anglophone practices. Law, pedagogy, theology, and similar fields, in contrast, are mostly affected by national routines or multilingual influences (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 22-23).

In higher education, English plays an increasing role due to augmented student mobility and exchange. Universities are interested in attracting foreign students for their degree programs as well as possible further research. Thus, the community of students becomes linguistically more diverse, which strengthens the role of English as a means of interpersonal interaction. The Bologna Declaration of 2001, which aims at increasing the international competitiveness of European educational institutions, had a high impact on the European institutions of higher education. Bachelor's and master's degree programs are increasingly offered in English, although the Declaration also stresses the need to achieve its goal in the framework of linguistic diversity of the European member states (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 28-29).

In postgraduate university courses, students and staff members have to be able to at least understand English, although it can be argued that many scholars are highly efficient and competent English users. This language knowledge may result from publication routines already mentioned, which favor essays conducted in English, as well as the general trend to take over technical expressions from English (cf. Hoffman 2000: 9-10). This claim is one of the reasons why Ammon (cf. 2002: 219-221) sees German threatened as an academic language even in Germany. He bases this assumption on the growing number of programs which are conducted in English at German universities. Although Ammon does not question the need for young scientists to be prepared to take part in the international academic community, he argues that there

should always be the possibility to take the same courses in German. If German is not continuously actualized as an academic language, for example through the introduction of German academic terms instead of simply adopting English terminology, linguistic difficulties for German scientists will increase and the perceived distance of the academic society from the non-academic society will grow. However, Ammon does not suggest that German academics should not use ELF for international exchange with fellow experts. Rather, he argues that German academics should use German on the national level and advocates fair international exchange, which essentially means that English needs to be adapted for global communication. Non-native speakers should not be discriminated for their status as users of this international language and an exclusive focus on native norms is argued to be counterproductive.

As another critical remark about the increasing use of English in the sciences, reference should be made to the often expressed fear that extensive English use would widen the gap between scientists and the common public. Laypeople would find it even harder to follow arguments if the scholars were no longer able to talk about their respective subjects in their mother tongues (cf. Spichtinger 2000: 44).

4.2.4. The role of English in the media

When regarding the media use of Europeans, it is hard to make broad assumptions or generalizations, since media landscapes are highly diverse in different European countries, for example dubbing routines of TV programs or movies differ considerably. Additionally, even among people living in the same country, significant differences concerning media use can be found (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 89-90).

Thus, European countries provide highly diverse and differing opportunities for contact with English via the media. TV by far represents the media with the highest use regarding number of users, as well as amount of time that is spent on it (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 34-35). The presence of TV formats and movies that were originally produced in English cannot be denied. Especially the dominance of US-American movies is a generally accepted fact, since, for example, they made up approximately 90% of German box office takings in 1998 (cf. Phillipson 2003: 72). However, the actual contact with the English language varies between the different European nations depending on dubbing routines. In Austria, for instance, all movies featuring in ordinary cinemas are dubbed in German. Of course, certain cinemas present the original versions of foreign movies, but these could be regarded as the exception

rather than the practice. In like manner, radio broadcasts are available in English, as well as international press published in English throughout Europe. When for example regarding international newspapers which are read in English in countries where English is not one of the official languages, the papers usually aim at specific target groups, like *The Wall Street Journal* (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 89-91).

At the same time, new media technologies like the Internet enter all media user styles. The Internet can be regarded as the fastest growing communication tool of the internationalized world and bears extensive opportunities for English language contact and use. The dominance of English in the World Wide Web has been declining since other countries increasingly enter the expanding market (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 34). Still, English can be perceived as an important lingua franca for global exchange via this communicative tool. When revisiting Rose's (cf. 2008: 462-466) argumentation about the importance of a European public space, one can easily assume the high potential of the Internet in this respect and even more so when connecting modern communication technology with the possibilities of ELF as a common means of exchange. Factors influencing Internet user patterns in Europe are age, education and the gross domestic product of the home country. Similar to the sociolinguistic profile of the typical multilingual European, also Internet users are more likely to be young, well-educated or still students. Additionally, a good economic situation positively influences Internet use.

Generally, music could be claimed to be the medium with the highest English presence when taking findings about the media use of European teenagers into account. Basically, young people prefer to consume media products in their native languages, except for music and highly specialized formats accessed through the Internet (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 113).

4.3. EU-language policy

When looking at ELF in Europe and its use as a European lingua franca, the official EU policy should not be disregarded, since authority plays an important part in forming attitudes towards a language variety, although the EU only gives advice and cannot oblige its member states to adapt any language laws. The discussion of EU-language policy in this study does not aim at providing a detailed account of specific measurements taken by the European Commission. Rather, basic considerations guiding

language-related measures and debates should be discussed to provide a more coherent knowledge of the context in which ELF occurs in Europe.

18 years ago, Coulmas (1991) saw the topic of languages as one of the most difficult areas which needed to be discussed in the European Union. Today, this situation has hardly changed, although the European Commission has by now declared its official language policy favoring multilingualism and supporting language teaching and learning. Thus, the European Union can be regarded as a political entity with a very explicit language policy that specifies the status and use of its member states' languages (cf. Hoffman 2000: 11). According to the European Commission, multilingualism contributes to the key European values of democracy, equality, transparency and competitiveness. The three core elements of its multilingualism policy include the encouragement of language learning, the promotion of a healthy multilingual economy and equal opportunities for all citizens to have access to legislation, procedures and information in their own languages (cf. European Commission 2006: 3). When considering this last point, it is highly interesting that 55% of EU citizens state in a Eurobarometer survey that they would agree if the European institutions adopted one single language to communicate with them, which would reduce translation efforts and expenses drastically. Only 40% tend to disagree on this issue. Specifically looking at students, it appears as if this social group is more prone to support the target of one foreign language than their counterparts. In Austria, only 48% of the population agreed on this issue. Unfortunately, it is not applicable in the Eurobarometer survey how many people disagreed or were undecided on this question in Austria (cf. European Commission 2006: 53-54).

Any discussion of the diversified linguistic landscape of the European Union has to include the problematic dichotomy between the high cultural value of the multitude of Europe's national languages and problems that arise from multilingualism for the EU as a political entity. From a socio-cultural perspective, language issues in Europe seem to be closely tied to national ideologies. As Coulmas (1991: 17) puts it, "the Community's cultural and linguistic identity lies in its diversity", and this multi-faceted picture is worth being preserved. However, economic aspects cannot be ignored in any sound discussion of the EU's language policy, since language teaching and other connected branches are a considerable economic factor. Additionally, the expenses for the organizational and bureaucratic efforts of multilingualism cannot be overlooked. Although European officials refer to the cultural value of languages, it could be seen as

naive to ignore economic factors entangled in discussions about the EU language policy. As an example supporting this claim, academic exchange could be named as an important economic factor connected with the necessity to open up access to a bigger market, which is undeniably linked to the necessity of using English for publications.

When aiming at a professional discussion of language policies in Europe, it seems to be essential to overcome the ideological weight of linguistic issues in Europe, which is grounded in linguistic nationalism and the close ideological connection between language and nation. In this context, Coulmas (cf. 1991: 21) argues that language should be regarded as a communicative tool, rather than a national myth, and furthermore that the equation of language, identity and nation needs to be overcome. ELF could bear great chances for this endeavor, because it is a means of communication which grants equal rights to all its speakers without denying their cultural identity. Furthermore, a growing awareness of non-native speaker rights and acceptance of ELF as a model for inter-cultural exchange counteracts the close ideological link between languages and national speech communities. However, ELF cannot and should not be viewed as a purely neutral means of communication, as has been pointed out in this paper before. Yet, it is important to explicitly state that ELF is not dependent on native speaker cultural contexts either (cf. Breiteneder 2005: 7).

When following Vlaeminck's (2002) line of argumentation, it becomes clear that she does not support the idea of a European lingua franca as a sufficient tool for communication among EU-citizens. As an official of the European Commission since 1985, she can be seen as a competent expert when it comes to European language policy. Since 1992, she has been working on the Lingua program and was head of the Language Policy Unit in the Directorate General Education and Culture (cf. Ahrens 2002: 450). Vlaeminck (cf. 2002: 35-37) supports intensive language training to make communication across linguistic borders possible, rather than a common lingua franca. She argues that using English as a lingua franca cannot sufficiently transport people's identity or cultural values, which leads her to conclude that European citizens need to learn two or even more foreign languages. Although Vlaeminck's appeals for foreign language learning are certainly fruitful for European integration and collaboration, her argumentation concerning ELF bears severe misconceptions. In claiming that ELF is not sufficient for deeper inter-cultural exchange, Vlaeminck mistreats ELF speakers as culture-deprived and simply communicating neutral statements missing any identity.

Vlaeminck's arguments reflect statements by the European Language Policy Division. In the course of a conference in November 2002, some initial statements about English language issues have been offered at the beginning of the discussion. One of the statements given in the initial phase of the conference holds that English language teaching should remain diversified because European citizens should interact in their own mother tongues, rather than through English as a lingua franca. Seidhofer (cf. 2003: 10) argues that these assumptions could be seen as reflecting widely held preoccupations with the theme of English language spread and English as an international language. In 2007, the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe underlined its language education policy as protecting multilingualism and cultural diversity. In a leaflet for its *Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe*, the guidelines are summarized as follows:

The Council of Europe has taken the position that the maintenance of linguistic diversity should be pursued, because, as well as promoting social cohesion, mobility, intercomprehension and economic development, it is important to maintain the cultural diversity of Europe for which linguistic diversity provides the vital conditions. (Council of Europe. Language Policy Division 2007)

Despite the explicit theoretical guidelines, the practical application does not seem to be straightforward and clearly defined. In the daily routines of the EU institutions, it is hardly ever observable that an equal treatment of all official languages occurs or is even theoretically possible. As Dollerup (cf. 1996: 32) points out, the European Commission subscribes to a rather practical approach when claiming that pragmatic solutions need to be found for meetings. Spichtinger (2000: 47) criticizes this pragmatic stance by claiming that it leads to a "legal vacuum". Still, one has to admit that this pragmatic approach seems to be designed to balance the desire for more efficiency and the desire to preserve Europe's multilingual policy (cf. Spichtinger 2000: 48).

Opinions on language policy could be seen as a continuum ranging from radical supporters of governmental measurement to equally radical antagonists of language laws. Rose and Phillipson can be used to exemplify these opposed stances. Whereas Phillipson (2001, 2008) advocates active language policies to protect linguistic diversity, Rose (2008) claims that no language laws should be imposed on people and that the natural tendencies and the individual choices made by people when learning and using foreign languages should not be restricted. When connecting Widdowson's (2003) arguments about the spread of the virtual language with Rose's claims concerning the need for a European public space, it could be argued that, for example,

the Internet can form a public sphere contributing to the standardization of a European ELF. According to the inherent logic of language spread for international communication, there is no need for active regulation of ELF use in Europe. As far as language attitudes are concerned, the only important thing for scholars to be done seems to be codification in order to raise awareness and acceptance. Yet, many critical voices arguing against the spread of English share a common concern about the threat of popular languages marginalizing regional ones. Phillipson even goes so far as to compare English language spread – which he sees as actively promoted by its speakers – in Europe with national socialist movements, since he claims: “The British mission in promoting English is not without similarities to a Herrenfolk ideal” (Phillipson/Skutnabb-Kangas 1997: 36). This statement seems highly extreme and lacks any academic grounding. As has been argued in this paper before, linguistic imperialistic stances need to be critically questioned, although they should not be dismissed right away, as any other theory in scholarly debate. Yet, when language policy is concerned, statements by linguistic imperialists do not seem to reflect the European reality because they overestimate the power of language laws and the degree of direct influence on the population and their choices (cf. Ferguson 2006: 114, 134-135).

As has been pointed out, English occupies a rather special place in Europe due to various factors concerning, for example, use patterns and the extent of language knowledge. Recent research (for example Seidlhofer 2003) suggests that English should not be regarded as a threat to established national languages. Findings hint to the fact that English as an international language will be constituted alongside other existing local languages due to its special status and restricted role as a means for inter-cultural communication. Additionally, the demand for English language teaching and people’s motivation to gain competence in English will remain strong (cf. Seidlhofer 2003: 11). Yet, critical voices condemning ELF as a common lingua franca need to be considered to draw a more coherent picture. Phillipson (1997, 2008) claims that the increasing use of English is in conflict with the multilingual policy of the EU. He claims that in external communication, for example in negotiations with other governmental organizations around the globe, the EU has become monolingual using English only. Again, reducing this issue to US-American cultural hegemony seems to be an easy way out. Scholars like Hoffman (cf. 2000: 18-19), for example, argue that the spread of English in Europe has not been actively planned or controlled by national governments. What has to be kept in mind is the fact that language spread cannot easily, or even

possibly, be controlled by language laws imposed by official institutions. Besides, it does not seem very transparent why English use for external or even internal intercultural communication should be exclusively seen in a negative light. Of course, Phillipson's argumentation about the prominent role of English in European school curricula cannot be denied, and one could also agree with his claim that English is important for career chances and higher education in Europe (cf. Phillipson/Skutnabb-Kangas 1997: 35). However, it is highly difficult to perceive his argumentation as based on logical reasoning.

5. Attitudes towards ELF with a special focus on Europe

5.1. Introduction

Attitudes are a highly controversial and delicate issue in linguistic research, among other things because of their “latent nature” (Garrett, Coupland & Williams 2003: 2) and the fact that they cannot be elicited directly but only through investigating people’s behavior. It seems as if the distinct nature of language attitudes cannot be pinned down exactly, and it is not the aim of this study to enter the scholarly debate on a more general level. However, it is vital to discuss the underlying assumptions about the nature of attitudes, which make up the basis for the following outline of attitudes towards ELF in Europe. First and foremost, language attitudes should not be regarded as invariant entities but as a conglomerate of various cognitive and emotive factors. As Garrett (2007: 116) points out, attitudes cannot be easily defined since they are psychological constructs, but they can generally be understood as “a disposition to react favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects”, and moreover that “[a]ttitudes are generally seen as learned through human socialization”.

Furthermore, they are non-neutral by definition (cf. Weber 1992: 117), and, according to the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*,

[a]ttitudes may be thought of as opinions, beliefs, ways of responding, with respect to some set of problems. (Johnson 1998: 14)

From reflecting on attitude research, it can be inferred that attitudes are social phenomena which cannot be understood without regarding the specific context of their elicitation as well (cf. Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck & Smit 1997: 118). In contrast to Johnson’s (1998) definition of attitudes above, Jenkins (cf. 2007: 106) claims that it is important to distinguish between people’s attitudes and people’s beliefs. Attitudes mostly operate without being consciously accessible, whereas beliefs define more overt and conscious concerns.

To build a basis for the discussion of attitudes towards ELF in Europe as well as my empirical investigation, the previous discussion of the situation of English in the EU tried to establish a sufficient picture of the social and linguistic context in which the survey participants are found. Before extensively entering the discussion of my own empirical investigation and its findings, it is necessary to reflect on previous attitude research concentrating on English used in international contexts. A critical review of studies so far seems vital because the methodology and underlying assumptions of my questionnaire survey have been influenced by previous research findings. Thus, making

these dependencies explicit through drawing some connections between studies so far and my personal considerations should make this paper as transparent as possible. The following review of studies concerning attitudes towards ELF, or more generally speaking, English used in international contexts, does therefore not only focus on relevant findings and their possible implications. Moreover, methodological issues and theoretical presuppositions will be dealt with. Additionally, some findings of previous studies will be used to discuss my own findings more deeply and to find possible explanations for certain answer patterns in chapter 6.

5.2. Attitudes towards ELF – A critical review of previous studies

Attitudes towards English used as a global language could be summarized as belonging to two opposed groups. On the one hand, many people are in favor of establishing a commonly used global language because of the many advantages such an endeavor would bring for global co-operation and exchange. On the other hand, many people fear the use of English as a world language because it is assumed that national identity and culture would be endangered and eradicated (cf. Hüllen 2002: 113).

As could be seen in the discussion of opinions elicited by the European Commission in section 4.2., Europeans generally seem to have positive attitudes towards foreign languages. Additionally, they especially favor English as a school subject. However, the general interest of Europeans in learning foreign languages does not directly imply positive attitudes towards the presence of English in everyday life. Although Europeans generally appreciate English language competence for various, mainly instrumental, reasons, studies have shown that many people have concerns about the expanding role of English in all areas of their lives (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 39-40).

Recent research (cf. Jenkins 2009: 67-70) shows that the connection between attitudes towards specific linguistic varieties and their entitled intelligibility is very important when investigating attitudes towards ELF. Other important implications concern the link between language attitudes, variation and power. In ELF, the powerful group is effectively the minority, namely native speakers. This group is also the more prestigious group and the majority of speakers perceive attitudes towards native varieties of English more positively. These findings point to the social basis of language attitudes and the close connection between power and identity, especially where accents are concerned (cf. Jenkins 2007: 67-70). Thus, it does not seem surprising that most previous research on ELF attitudes tends to focus on pronunciation features as defining components of

people's perceptions of English varieties (cf. Jenkins 2007: 93). This focus makes a direct comparison to my empirical research difficult, since my investigation generally deals with all linguistic levels to gain an overview of students' perceptions of their own use of English for inter-cultural exchange.

Another interesting issue is the close relationship between language attitudes, motivation, and 2nd language acquisition as implied by findings from social psychology. Thus, it seems logical that many empirical studies try to establish interrelations between language proficiency and attitudes. However, assessing levels of proficiency, or even categorizing distinct proficiency levels, is a very delicate and highly controversial issue. In their investigation of English and the European youth, Berns and her colleagues (cf. Berns, de Bot & Hasebrink 2007: 47) decided to include language proficiency as a variable. In their research, English proficiency is mainly based on self-assessment in the four main areas of language competence, namely reading, writing, listening and speaking, each on a four-point scale. Of course, the limitations of self-assessments need to be kept in mind when inquiring into language proficiency. However, participants' self-perceptions of their language competence seem to be closely tied to their attitudes towards a specific language or the use of a specific language, which is the overall research interest of my study. As discussed before, the controversial nature of proficiency assessment and the many disadvantages of self-assessment grids led me to exclude language proficiency as a factor from my empirical research. Regardless of these reservations, some findings by Berns et al. seem vital for a deeper insight into language attitudes among young Europeans.

In their empirical research, Berns, de Bot and Hasebrink (cf. 2007: 65-67) investigate four main sets of variables, namely contact with English, socio-economic and educational factors of the family background, attitudes towards English and language proficiency. Since their interpretations have to rely on empirical data which was collected through a survey questionnaire, the direction of the causal relations between single factors cannot be simply inferred. Thus, they decided on first organizing different sets of data variables according to hypotheses and then testing these theoretical relationship models through a LISREL analysis, which makes it possible to test, as well as establish, relationship patterns between variable sets. In their study, the participating young people generally assess their English language proficiency around or even higher than 3 on a four-point scale with (1) being 'bad' and (4) representing the highest rank,

meaning 'very good'. Overall, the participants estimate their proficiency to be higher for listening and reading than for speaking and writing.

Some of the most interesting findings concern relationships between language attitudes, proficiency and contact. Regarding proficiency, Berns, de Bot and Hasebrink (cf. 2007: 79-85) prove that those participants who rate their English proficiency as good also display more positive language attitudes. When it comes to language contact, using English on vacations does not prove to have any impact on attitudes. However, the LISREL analysis implies that contact through personal networks, music and TV positively affects the perceived likeability of the English language.

Another recent attitude study that needs to be discussed is Mollin's (2006, 2007) project. The essential question guiding her investigation is whether 'Euro-English' can be said to constitute an evolving variety of English in the EU. Mollin (cf. 2006: 1-3) based her empirical research, which is designed as an exclusively descriptive study, on Kachru's (cf. 1992: 356) model of English language spread, which distinguishes between three different circles which classify English language users worldwide. Following Kachru's theoretical framework, Mollin looks at Euro-English from three different angles, namely through a macrolinguistic investigation of functions of English in Europe, a corpus linguistic study of language features and a questionnaire survey investigating speaker's attitudes. Her questionnaire survey includes approximately 400 participants from 31 European countries and poses questions on attitudes towards English generally, towards Euro-English and towards certain linguistic features that are supposed to characterize ELF in Europe. It is exactly this questionnaire study which seems to be most interesting for the specific research focus of my own investigation.

The acceptability section of Mollin's (cf. 2006: 166-167) questionnaire includes questions concerning the usefulness of ELF, if English is a threat to other languages and the relative importance of English and the participants' mother tongues. Participants had to indicate their agreement on a five-point scale. When keeping in mind the definition of attitudes outlined at the beginning of this chapter, it could be argued that a five-point scale raises considerable methodological and theoretical issues for eliciting language attitudes. As has been argued before, attitudes should, by definition, be regarded as non-neutral. Thus, a neutral answer, which is possible on Mollin's five-point scale, could be challenging for interpreting data when perceiving attitudes as inherently non-neutral. Mollin (cf. 2007: 181-182) uses the results of her acceptability survey to prove that there is no distinct Euro-English variety or use of ELF existent in the EU, because her

findings show that non-native varieties are not accepted as correct nor regarded as options for learner orientation. In addition to various theoretical and methodological issues of her study, which will be critically discussed below, an acceptability survey cannot be used to prove the absence of a European English lingua franca, but simply shows that the standard varieties of ENL seem to be the only options for speaking 'proper' English and the only desirable goals for language learners for now. Thus, this survey could be perceived as exemplifying the urgent need for descriptions of ELF rather than claiming that non-native varieties are not accepted by the majority of speakers. Mollin infers that European speakers are not orienting their learning goals towards a European ELF variety because there is no need for such a new variety. However, one could clearly argue that the represented acceptability survey cannot be used to arrive at this direct consequence, since the argument that there is no other goal for language learning available for European speakers so far is at least as legitimate as Mollin's claims.

Mollin (cf. 2006: 158-159) argues that speakers' attitudes towards a supposed variety form a vital part in its institutionalization process and its status assessment. Unless speakers accept their own variety, recognize its variety status, and thus its difference from native speaker norms, one should, according to Mollin, not speak of an independent variety. Attitudes are used to make assumptions about whether speakers model their language use according to native speaker norms, or according to their own rules. Mollin investigates if speakers recognize their own variety and if they have positive or negative attitudes towards it. She argues that if English is learned to communicate with native speakers, it is a sign for striving for the standard variety. If English is learned to communicate with other non-native speakers, the acceptance of an ELF variety is more likely. According to Mollin, there could be several reasons why European speakers do not recognize their own use of English as a distinct and viable code. Among other things, she names insecurity, intimidation by ENL norms and linguistic nationalism, which can be conceptually tied to issues of standard language ideology already discussed in section 3.1.

When critically reflecting on Mollin's study, there are some theoretical as well as methodological issues that clearly deserve closer attention. As Seidlhofer (cf. 2009: 43-47) points out, Mollin's research could be criticized as narrowly investigating ELF from an inflexible formal approach. Since Mollin tries to assess the variety status of English use in Europe, she undertakes formal investigations of ELF features and compares them

to other varieties of English. However, due to her reliance on traditional concepts, which categorize speakers either as native speakers, second or nativized language speakers or foreign language speakers, Mollin reduces the scope of her findings considerably. If ELF speakers in Europe do not belong to the ENL community, nor to a nativized language community, the only remaining option would be foreign language speakers. Consequently, they would forever remain language learners, which is incompatible with basic issues of ELF conceptualization. Naturally, one would expect that Mollin's formal investigations lead her to conclude that Euro-English cannot be described within this traditional framework. Unfortunately, the inadequate concepts are not modified but reinforced, leading Mollin to disregard sociolinguistic issues crucial for any ELF research. In like manner, phenomena connected to language variation and change are totally neglected in her discussion of formal language features.

Mollin's investigation seems to be designed to prove that Euro-English should not be labeled a variety. For this sake, she disregards important theoretical considerations and the implications they would have on the methodological setup of her empirical research. Mollin's corpus mainly consists of collections of formal speech events, which is problematic for an examination of formal factors of ELF and the frequency of their occurrence. The discussion of ELF features is often loaded with terms such as 'frequent learner errors', like, for example, an omission of the 3rd person singular marking of verbs. Thus, one could hypothesize that speakers will try to reduce them in speech events that are formal and pre-designed, rehearsed and thoroughly structured, as in Mollin's (cf. 2006: 92-97) corpus. As many acceptability studies (for example Adolphs 2005, Jenkins 2007) have shown, non-native users are often very critical about these features. However, these negative attitudes can by no means be used to prove that ELF should not be accepted. The findings only show an underlying theory-practice divide and the linguistic insecurity of non-native speakers. Speakers' attitudes often reflect inconsistencies between what they think is important due to their formal instruction in EFL, and what they actually, naturally and very successfully do.

Jenkins' (2007) book is the most thorough investigation of attitudes towards ELF to date. It is not surprising that, considering Jenkins' groundbreaking work on her lingua franca core concerning pronunciation features in ELF, also her more recent book mainly focuses on ELF pronunciation. As Jenkins (cf. 2007: xi-xii) points out, the changes reflected in ELF use are very natural changes mirroring the identities of its speakers, who are the majority of English users worldwide. However, people's attitudes towards

ELF are far from accepting it as a natural development and attitudes towards English language learning have not changed at all. People still think about English language training exclusively in terms of acquiring native speaker features, although the majority of learners will use English overwhelmingly with other non-native speakers of English from different linguistic backgrounds. In order to inquire into attitudes, Jenkins conducted a large-scale questionnaire survey, which was distributed among English language teachers and some education undergraduate students belonging to the Expanding Circle (cf. Jenkins 2007: 154-155).

According to Jenkins (cf. 2007: 99, 104-106), most previous attitude studies point to a theory-practice divide among English language teachers. Theoretically, they are aware of ELF and its appropriateness and intelligibility, but practically, ELF models are hardly considered in ELT. Studies of learners' attitudes of ELF can be claimed to be consistent with the overall findings of teachers' attitudes. Generally speaking, the theory-practice divide seems to result in some of the reservations against ELF norms and use. On an overall level, most findings support the claim that students of English need to be prepared for the international use of English and the growing importance of intercultural exchange. In this context, it is essential that students have opportunities to reflect upon theories of ELF and the international spread of English, as well as opportunities to come into contact with different varieties of English. Based on her research, Jenkins defines two major reasons for the rejection of ELF, namely the traditional attachment to native speaker models and the traditional prejudices against non-native varieties of English (cf. Jenkins 2007: 147-148).

Broadly speaking, the most impressive findings of Jenkins' (cf. 2007: 156-161) questionnaire research are the similarities concerning attitudes favoring native speaker varieties of English and disapproving non-native speaker accents. When looking at the ranking task, in which the participants had to establish a hierarchy of English accents in terms of their perceived quality, native speaker varieties, namely RP and GA, are overall ranked highest. Some participants did not go beyond the first two or three ranks, which leads to the impression that the participants do not believe that any other accents than the native English varieties of RP and GA could be perceived as bearing any inherent qualities. The native/non-native divide is furthermore strengthened by the vast gap between the two highest ranked varieties and all the following accents. Summarizing the responses of the ranking task, it could be claimed that although English is now widely used internationally for communication among exclusively non-

native speakers, the conceptions about different varieties have hardly shifted. There is still a close orientation and attachment to native speaker norms. However, some participants refused to rank accents or critically commented on the task, which implies that there is a growing awareness about the task to judge accents according to their quality. Supporting this growing language awareness, Jenkins' findings also display a growing trend among some of her participants to recognize one's own non-native variety as legitimate, since some of the participants ranked their own group among the top-five accents. Despite this underlying trend, which is nevertheless only visible in some rare responses, there seems to be what Jenkins (2007: 161) calls "linguistic insecurity" deeply embedded in most participants' minds.

In her rating task, Jenkins (cf. 2007: 162-166) asked the participants to rate English accents on a six-point scale according to four dimensions, namely correctness, acceptability for international communication, pleasantness, and the participants' familiarity with the specific accent. The findings show striking similarities with the ranking task because the highest rated accents are again native speaker varieties, namely UK English, US English and Australian English, respectively. Hence, one could assume that the perceived quality of native speaker Englishes is not only tied to the supposed correctness, but also to pleasantness and acceptability for international communication. The fact that numerous participants were willing to rate English accents although they were not very familiar with them bears some interesting implications. One could argue that there are some general assumptions about non-native varieties underlying the responses, which lead participants to believe that they can make judgments although they are, strictly speaking, not familiar with the object of their judgments.

These findings support the hypothesis that beliefs about the locus of correct English have not shifted yet, and standard language ideology continues to affect people's beliefs and attitudes. Jenkins (cf. 2007: 186-188) argues that her findings can be explained in terms of the 'social connotation hypothesis' theorized by Trudgill and Giles (1978), which states that opinions about language varieties are not based on linguistic features of the varieties concerned but on social connotations linked to the speech community. Although it seems that Jenkins' findings generally support traditional beliefs and perspectives, some interesting new trends are observable. These trends could signal emerging ELF perspectives. Although linguistic insecurity seems to be a crucial aspect of the perceptions of non-native speakers of English, Jenkins' participants also display a growing confidence in their own use of English and their own accents. Inspired by

Jenkins' extensive research, my own empirical investigation also includes pronunciation issues, which will be discussed in detail in section 6.3.3.

Turning away from exclusive pronunciation attitude studies, another interesting project is Adolphs' (2005) research. Although she generally concentrates on exchange students from predominantly Asian countries, her findings suggest a close connection to Jenkins' (2007) interpretations. Adolphs (cf. 2005: 119-121) argues that attitudes are often based on undefined notions about native speaker models, which are closely linked to foreign language teaching and the teaching materials used. Her research takes a closer look at the way students' perceptions of native speaker models change after they have been exposed to native speaker settings for a longer period of time. Her findings are based on qualitative interview sessions designed to explore participants' beliefs, motivations and attitudes towards native speaker models.

Some of the most interesting findings of Adolphs' (cf. 2005: 122-130) research concern the thought processes and attitude changes that take place while her participants took part in an exchange program at the University in Nottingham. From her interview sessions, Adolphs infers that most of her participants link native-like pronunciation features, idiomatic language use and creative uses of the language to high language competence. A native speaker, no matter how vague this concept might be, seems to be the ideal model for most students. However, during their prolonged visit in a native speaker environment, some students changed their attitudes towards native speaker models quite considerably and they became more critical of the usefulness of such models. Some students stated that although they were keen on acquiring a native speaker accent through the exchange program, they are now more motivated to use a neutral accent, since local pronunciation features do not seem to be well suited for international communication. Additionally, some participants even state that they do not feel the need to strive towards native speaker models anymore, as long as they can communicate without problems. Summarizing these findings, one could perceive strong parallels to Jenkins' (2007) interpretations of standard language ideology and the social connotation hypothesis. Adolphs' participants had rather uniform aspirations towards native speaker models before they were exposed to native speaker communities. Their stay in Great Britain led them to become more aware of the native speaker concept and their learning goals became more strategic with regard to the needs of international communication.

The findings of an older research project undertaken in 1995 by Dalton-Puffer,

Kaltenboeck and Smit (cf. 1997: 117-126) at the English department of the University of Vienna can be directly compared to Adolphs' findings regarding changing attitudes through a prolonged visit in a native speaker environment. Dalton-Puffer et al.'s participants were asked to rate the acceptability of different English varieties using a modified matched guise technique, namely the verbal guise method. Two Austrian speakers, one American and two British speakers were recorded while reading the same text. Both, readers and listeners thought that the investigation was conducted to cast a speaker for an audio book. The 132 participants, who were all students of English at the University of Vienna, were predominantly German native speakers between the age of 19 and 22 years. The students had to assign attributes to the different speakers, reflecting status and solidarity values. The findings show consistent attitude patterns in favor of the native varieties. Those students who did not have extensive contact with English in a native speaker environment preferred the RP variety, which comes closest to the spoken variety used for audio tapes in ELT classes in Austria. The participants who had stayed in native speaker countries themselves revealed more individualized and situation-specific attitudes. When looking at the findings concerning the negative attitudes of Austrian students towards their own variety, namely Austrian English, it could be inferred that these critical stances are counterproductive for establishing acceptance of non-native speaker uses. Moreover, these stereotypes could lead to linguistic insecurity because Austrian students strive towards the native speaker models, which they will hardly ever reach. However, Jenkins' (2007) research, which was conducted about 10 years later, suggests that the increased global spread and use of English has led non-native speakers to be more aware of their English use and at the same time to be more tolerant, as can be illustrated by pronunciation findings of my empirical research as well, which will be discussed in section 6.3.3, and even to show signs of group solidarity. Although the most positive group solidarity patterns can be found among Jenkins' Asian participants, this trend might also be observable in Europe. It could be argued that the increasing number of ELF research and the subsequent raising of awareness support this trend.

Another recent study concentrating on students' attitudes towards native speaker models is Elizabeth Erling's (2007) research. This study focusing on students at the Freie Universität Berlin has already been mentioned in connection with the Eurobarometer's findings about Europeans and their language use in section 4.2. Erling's (cf. 2007: 111-113) data is based on a questionnaire survey and subsequent qualitative interviews, as well as data collected from student essays. Again, Erling's findings can be directly

compared to Jenkins' (2007) considerations about the dominant affiliations of native speaker models and her interpretations regarding new trends in favor of ELF perspectives. In Erling's (cf. 2007: 122-128) research, 54% of the students state that they feel connected to the US-American model, 13% claim to have strong affiliation for Great Britain, and a considerable number, namely 34%, claim that they are not particularly interested in either of these models. Although Erling's calculation adds up to 101%, her study seems to be thorough nevertheless. To be fair, her discussion does not make it clear if these numbers can be directly compared to add up to 100% of her participants, or if the figures only represent students' statements in differing contexts. In any case, Erling's research bears relevant implications for the context of ELF. Erling's participants support Jenkins' hypothesized trends, since many of them do not exclusively link English to a particular native speaker community, but regard it as a means to communicate internationally. Students perceive English as a chance to participate in global communities, for academic purposes, professional exchange and leisure activities. Thus, the implications of these findings seem to be fairly optimistic regarding the endeavor of raising awareness and acceptance for the concept of ELF.

The discussion of previous attitude studies should give a concise overview of relevant research touching upon issues of language attitudes and connect different data interpretations with each other. By comparing and contrasting ELF studies, one can see that not only empirical methodologies sometimes differ considerably. More importantly, the differing ways of arriving at conclusions from data elicited deserve close attention. Especially when looking at Mollin's (2006, 2007) research and contrasting it to, for example, Jenkins' (2007) study, it can be illustrated that not only can different types of data lead to different interpretations, but also different theoretical assumptions can be highly influential. Whereas Mollin infers that the absence of 'sufficiently' systematic and distinct linguistic features in her corpus proves that a European variety of ELF does not exist, Jenkins assumes, summarized very briefly, from single speakers' claims of loyalty that ELF awareness is growing and will eventually combat linguistic insecurity. Of course, the interpreted data is highly diverse, and yet, these two studies illustrate how cautious one needs to be whenever reflecting on linguistic research, since not only the empirical data itself influences findings, but also, and maybe even more so, the theoretical assumptions and underlying paradigms. Mollin's use of traditional concepts and her refusal to adapt her theoretical basis to ELF naturally lead to conclusions that do not support ELF. In contrast, Jenkins uses a theoretical framework which is flexible enough to investigate the complex concept of

ELF. These examples show that empirical findings and the interpretations offered should never be accepted without thoroughly reflecting on the methodologies used and the theoretical assumptions underlying an empirical investigation.

When trying to connect findings of previous attitude studies with my own empirical investigation, problems arise due to the fact that vast parts of the questionnaire survey cannot be directly compared to any of the studies discussed. Previous studies do not seem to be very good models for my research focus, either because they look at different aspects or the questions investigated will not be suitable for my research. For example Jenkins (2007) overall focuses on attitudes concerning pronunciation, models for ELT and people's acceptance of these models. Berns and her colleagues (2007) look at the connection between the media use and English proficiency and attitudes towards different varieties of English, focusing on young Europeans. Replicating Mollin's acceptability study (2006, 2007) would not lead to any conclusions of people's attitudes and her methods of inquiring into language attitudes could be criticized for the questionnaire design. Most other studies concentrate on the acceptability of ELF models for language training, which is also not suitable for my research focus. The discussion of previous attitude studies should lead to a deeper understanding of the status of ELF attitude research and focused on the most striking findings. The following table gives a concise overview of the studies discussed in this section. It summarizes the main features, including participant information, methodology, research focus and the most interesting findings, which makes a direct comparison between them possible. Although none of these studies was used as a direct model for my own questionnaire survey, an overview of the relevant studies touching upon issues of attitudes towards ELF is still important. As has been repeatedly argued before, the theoretical basis and presuppositions guiding an empirical research need to be considered whenever reflecting on empirical findings and their interpretations. The studies discussed can be seen as the research context of my questionnaire survey. Their introduction as well as my reflections should be understood as an endeavor to make my personal considerations and reasoning transparent and accessible. A detailed outline of the empirical investigation conducted in the course of this study as well as data analysis and interpretation will follow in the next session.

	Participants	Methods	Research focus	Most important insights	Year
Berns, de Bot, Hasebrink	young Europeans	questionnaire survey, LISREL analysis	contact with English, family background, attitudes towards ELF, language proficiency	good self-assessments and language contact through personal networks, music and TV have positive effects on language attitudes;	2007
Mollin	Europeans from 31 different countries	macrolinguistic study of functions of English in Europe, corpus linguistic study of features of English in Europe, questionnaire survey investigating speakers' attitudes	whether 'Euro-English' can be used to refer to an evolving variety of English in the EU	non-native varieties are not accepted as correct or as options for learner orientation; acceptability survey used to prove the absence of a European ELF variety;	2006, 2007
Jenkins	language professionals belonging to the Expanding Circle; not exclusively European	large-scale questionnaire survey	attitudes towards pronunciation features in ELF	theory-practice divide results in reservations against ELF norms and use; traditional attachment to native speaker models; traditional prejudices against non-native varieties; growing awareness and recognition of non-native accents; emerging ELF perspectives; linguistic insecurity;	2007
Adolphs	Asian exchange students in Nottingham	qualitative interview sessions	participants' beliefs, motivations and attitudes towards native speaker models	pronunciation features, idiomatic and creative language use closely tied to the perception of language competence; prolonged visit in a native speaker environment changed perception of usefulness of native speaker models, learning goals became more strategic;	2005
Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenböck, Smit	students of English at the University of Vienna	verbal guise method	acceptability of different English pronunciation varieties	students without extensive contact with English in a native speaker environment prefer RP; students who have stayed in native speaker countries show individualized and situation-specific attitudes;	1997
Erling	students at the Freie Universität Berlin	questionnaire survey, subsequent qualitative interviews, data collected from students essays	attitudes towards native speaker models	students do not exclusively link English to a particular native community; English is regarded as a means to communicate internationally;	2007

Table 1: Previous studies of attitudes towards ELF: Overview

6. Attitudes towards ELF by European students: A questionnaire survey

6.1. Research outline and methodology

The questionnaire study carried out for this study explores European students' attitudes towards their use of English and English used by others. Specifically, the questionnaire was designed to elicit how the participants perceive the importance of native speaker norms for communication in English. With this empirical investigation, I wish to inquire into attitudes towards native speaker norms and perceptions of ELF on a broader level, without reducing the research focus to a specific linguistic feature or specific situations of language use and contact. As has been seen in the discussion of attitude studies concerning ELF so far, most of these investigations focus on very specific questions and contexts. Of course, these specifications are all legitimate and enable the researchers to arrive at valuable findings. However, I think that language attitudes cannot be pinned down to one specific linguistic level like, for example, pronunciation. Speakers' attitudes towards native speaker norms seem to have direct implications for the concept of ELF and its broader acceptance in the European context. Moreover, I was particularly interested to find out in how far the theoretically discussed implications of ELF research would correspond with students' perceptions. I anticipated that the findings of this questionnaire survey would cast further light on emerging attitudes towards ELF in Europe and maybe give some insights into changing perceptions of English used for inter-cultural communication.

The decision to investigate exclusively students' attitudes is based on various reasons. First of all, it is undoubtedly beyond the scope of this study to gain statistically representative data from all Europeans, which would be the ultimate goal when discussing English as a European lingua franca. Thus, I decided to limit my empirical research to a specific population, namely students. Of course, also this limitation is not enough to arrive at representative findings, however, by narrowing the scope of an investigation, the data elicited can be used to make more specific assumptions about the respective research focus. Choosing students has various advantages. Firstly, students are a social group with relatively high mobility. Likewise, it can be assumed that there is a high probability of inter-cultural contacts at university and thereafter in social life as well, due to the increasing importance of academic exchange, which has already been mentioned when discussing the role of English in science and higher education in

section 4.2.3. These assumptions lead to the conclusion students are likely to have contact with ELF, and therefore constitute an appropriate target group.

Another consideration leading to my choice of participants is the hypothesis that current changes would be reflected in the minds of young people more easily. Following this claim, eliciting responses from young people could be promising for an outlook into the future of ELF in Europe. In this paper, many findings have already been discussed which indicate that European students could be seen as knowing and using foreign languages more than the average citizen. The discussion of the role of English in higher education and findings of the Eurobarometer support this claim. Last but not least, a rather practical consideration also led me to focus on European students. I expected that access to student participants outside Austria would be easier compared to other social groups because of student networks, other social networks and electronic communication possibilities available through the Internet, which are regularly used by most students.

The methods used to conduct the questionnaire survey are based on quantitative methods for questionnaires in social sciences². The questionnaires were designed and distributed exclusively in English, in order to avoid translation interferences. As for the mode of distribution, I chose to undertake an online survey, which means that I sent out the electronic link to my survey either via e-mail, or via social networks, namely studiVZ and facebook. StudiVZ is the biggest online network for students in the German speaking regions of Europe, with approximately six million registered users (cf. <http://www.studivz.net/l/press>). Facebook defines itself as “a social utility that helps people to communicate more effectively with their friends, family and coworkers” (<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?factsheet>). It is open to everyone and currently has over 350 million active users worldwide. Additionally, many linguistic staff members at the English department in Vienna kindly agreed to send out my link to their students, including Erasmus students studying at the University of Vienna.

The questionnaire (see Appendix for a blank questionnaire sheet) mainly consists of closed category questions. The first part of the survey asks students to give some general statistical information, namely their nationality, age, sex, mother tongue(s) and whether they are students or not. This last question was included in the questionnaire because I had no possibility to limit access to my online survey to students alone. Thus,

² Most of the methodological considerations have been based on the following sources: Bell 1993, Dörnyei 2003 and 2007, Kromrey 2002.

this question made it possible to eliminate all questionnaire sheets which were not filled out by students. At the end of my survey period, which lasted from June 23rd to July 10th 2009, 278 questionnaires had been filled out, of which 250 were used for further analyses. Since this empirical investigation is designed to look at European students only, 28 questionnaires were omitted from the database, either because the participants had other than European nationalities, were no students or did not answer one or both of these questions.

The second part of the questionnaire elicits the frequency of English use, both active and passive. The participants indicate their English use on a closed time scale consisting of four categories, namely “more than 4 times per week”, “3-4 times per week”, “1-2 times per week” and “less than once a week”. The last part of the questionnaire then asks the participants to indicate their agreement to various statements on a four-point scale, ranging from “I agree strongly” to “I disagree strongly”. The participants were asked to indicate their agreement on scales because this enables the researcher to score and summarize answer patterns concisely (cf. Bell 2007: 139-140). This methodological decision is based on the assumption that Likert scales (cf. for example Likert 1932: 11-20; 42-43), which I used for my questionnaire design, are suitable for discovering the strength of attitudes and beliefs. In this context, it seems relevant to point out that some reference books advocate the use of five or seven-point scales, which would give participants the opportunity to answer in a neutral way. When designing a questionnaire, one is forced to make a choice concerning the number of categories featuring on the questionnaire sheets. Including a neutral answer option does not seem to provide any relevant insights for this specific research, since it is questionable if something like a neutral language attitude exists (cf. Weber 1992: 117). Therefore, an even number of categories, namely a four-point Likert scale which does not include a neutral option, was used for this study.

The various statements included in the questionnaire belong to five specific topic areas. These topic areas were chosen because the theoretical discussion of ELF in Europe indicates a high relevance of these issues for the conceptualization of ELF and speakers’ attitudes towards norms of English. The following list provides an overview of these topic areas and the respective statements featuring in the questionnaire:

1. Do students perceive themselves as users or learners of English?
 - I consider myself mostly as a learner of English.
 - I consider myself mostly as a user of English.

2. Attitudes connected to perceptions of linguistic imperialism
 - The promotion of English usage devalues my mother tongue.
 - My mother tongue will not lose prestige through an increasing use of English.

3. Attitudes connected to pronunciation
 - I don't need to sound like a native speaker to be taken seriously.
 - When somebody speaks English with a non-native speaker accent, I cannot take their arguments seriously.

4. Attitudes connected to grammar
 - When I use English, I don't worry about grammar as long as other people understand what I mean.
 - When somebody speaks English with me, I think it's important that they get their grammar right.

5. Attitudes connected to idiomatic language use in native speaker terms
 - I don't think it is important to use native speaker idioms/sayings...
 - ... in a public debate.
 - ... in private conversation.
 - Using many native speaker characteristics like idioms/sayings is important when making a statement...
 - ... in a public debate.
 - ... in private conversation.

As can be seen, responses to each specific topic area were elicited through two separate statements. This makes it possible to examine whether the reported attitudes towards a statement correspond with the answer patterns of the second statement belonging to the same topic category, or differently speaking whether responses were consistent. On the questionnaire, all statements were arranged randomly, in order to avoid any conscious influence exerted through ordering the questions.

Additionally, the following two statements were included:

- I make much effort to use English like a native speaker.
- My English teachers thought that it is important to observe native speaker models as close as possible.

The first additional statement functions as a general check-back on students' attitudes regarding pronunciation, grammar and idiomatic language use, since it could be hypothesized that if students claim that these categories are important, they will most likely agree on this sentence as well. The second additional statement was included in order to make it possible to draw interrelations between the language models the participants had to adhere to during their formal English instruction and the attitudes they now share regarding their English language use.

This specific design of my questionnaire was chosen after carefully weighing several possible contents and formats concerning their usefulness and importance for dealing with my research focus. Additionally, a pilot study was undertaken among fellow diploma students at the English department in Vienna. The pilot phase enabled me to collect very helpful comments from my peers as well as to check the technical setup and the online data storage system itself. Thereafter, I designed the final version of my questionnaire. I incorporated those items which enabled me to draw some interesting correlations between attitudes towards ELF, language use and issues concerning attitudes towards native speaker norms, which are hypothesized to play an essential role in the understanding and acceptance of ELF.

Prior to data analysis, a number of hypotheses were generated that would guide my interpretation process. Additionally, certain independent variables included in the questionnaires are used to make interrelations and comparisons between different participants possible, as for example the frequency of English language use. Table 2 provides a summary of all relevant participant groupings and the corresponding independent variables. For the sake of brevity, the specific labels of the groupings will henceforth be used to refer to the participants described by the independent variables displayed in the table below. Following this table, a list is included which gives an overview of relevant hypotheses guiding data analysis, ordered by topic area.

Participant group	Independent variable
Female	Sex = female (N = 194)
Male	Sex = male (N = 55)
Frequent users	Participants who indicate 'more than 4 times per week' on the question "How often to you use English yourself (writing and/or speaking)?" (N = 138)
Infrequent users	Participants who indicate 'less than once a week' on the question above. (N = 21)
Traditional ELT model	Participants who indicate agreement on the statement "My English teachers thought that it is important to observe native speaker models as close as possible". (N = 160)
Modern ELT model	Participants who indicate disagreement on the statement above. (N = 89)
Users	Participants who indicate agreement on the statement "I consider myself mostly as a user of English" and, additionally, indicate disagreement on the statement "I consider myself mostly as a learner of English". (N = 45)
Learners	Participants who indicate disagreement on the user statement and, additionally, agreement on the learner statement. (N = 37)
Austrian students	Nationality = Austria (N = 197)
non-Austrian students	Nationality = any other European country (N = 51)

Table 2: Participant groupings

The guiding hypotheses, ordered by topic areas, read as follows:

1. Perceptions as users or learners of English:
 - European students perceive themselves mostly as users of English because the majority has experience in inter-cultural exchange and the use of English for conversation with other European students who do not speak the same mother tongue. Those students who perceive themselves as users could be defined as confident users of ELF, whereas those students who perceive themselves as learners could be defined as using English predominately as a foreign language.
 - Frequent users will mostly define themselves as users, whereas infrequent users will define themselves as learners of English.
2. Linguistic imperialism

- Answer patterns of the two statements will not differ significantly and linguistic imperialistic fears are not common among European students.
- Frequent users will show less concern with linguistic imperialistic statements than infrequent users because they are more likely to be confident ELF users, and thus more confident with their own status and do not perceive foreign languages as a threat to their mother tongues.

3. Pronunciation

- European students are more tolerant of non-native features in their interlocutors' utterances than with their own speech, since linguistic insecurity influences their attitudes (cf. Jenkins 2007).
- Female participants are more norm-oriented, and will thus display less acceptance of non-native features, both in their own as well as their interlocutors' utterances (cf. Trudgill [1974] 1985).
- Frequent users are more confident with their own English use, and will thus display less concern with their own speech and be more tolerant with their interlocutors than infrequent users.

4. Grammar

- European students are more tolerant of non-native features in their interlocutors' utterances than with their own speech, since linguistic insecurity influences their attitudes (cf. Jenkins 2007).
- Female participants are more norm-oriented, and will thus display less acceptance of non-native features, both in their own as well as their interlocutors' utterances (cf. Trudgill [1974] 1985).
- Frequent users are more confident with their own English use, and will thus display less concern with their own speech and be more tolerant with their interlocutors than infrequent users.

5. Idioms

- Answer patterns of both statements will prove to be correlated. Participants will judge idiomatic language use to be more important in public speeches than in private conversations (cf. Adolphs 2005).
- Frequent users will judge idiomatic language use to be less important than infrequent users, because they are more experienced in inter-cultural exchange

and familiar with problems occurring through idiomatic language use (cf. Seidlhofer 2006).

Additional hypotheses:

- Users will show less support for a native speaker model than learners because they are more likely to be confident users of ELF.
- Female participants will show greater support for a native speaker model because they are more norm-oriented (cf. Trudgill [1974] 1985).
- Frequent users will show less support for a native speaker model because they are more likely to be confident users of ELF.
- The modern ELT model group will show less support for a native speaker model because, through their more open-minded education, they are more confident with their own English use and more likely to perceive themselves as confident users of ELF.

For analyzing the different interrelations, it is necessary to use statistical methods to calculate whether the elicited differences between certain participant groups or supposed interrelations between various statements are not based on mere coincidence. Therefore, interrelations are tested by using chi-square tests. This decision is based on the assumption that the Likert scales used in the online survey produce ordinal data. The answers cannot be placed on a regular scale, because the psychological distance between the answer categories “I agree” and “I disagree” seems to be greater than the distance between, for example, “I strongly agree” and “I agree”. Thus, parametric statistical procedures, which require regular interval data, would not be appropriate (cf. Dörnyei 2007: 207-208). The chi-square test is one of the most commonly used non-parametric procedures in applied linguistics and is employed to indicate whether there are significant relationships between different variables as, for example, sex and displayed attitudes. By using the statistical program SPSS, chi-square analysis can be conducted with high precision. If the significance of the Pearson chi-square value is at the $p < .05$ level, one can assume that the analyzed variables are interrelated and that the interrelation is statistically significant (cf. Dörnyei 2007: 228-229).

Briefly turning to the format of the study itself, I chose to use a quantitative questionnaire style distributed electronically as the most appropriate to collect the kind of empirical data I was seeking. From the practical point of view, an online questionnaire enabled me to reach a large number of participants across a wide

geographical range, and furthermore, the elicited data could be stored electronically in a database for further statistical analysis. One of the main advantages of questionnaires is their efficiency regarding time, effort and financial resources. However promising these advantages might seem, it is nevertheless important to keep the disadvantages of questionnaires in mind when interpreting one's own data. Since questions need to be formulated in an accessible and straightforward way, they are bound to result in relatively superficial answers. This fact has to be kept in mind when analyzing the elicited empirical data. If one wishes to inquire into complex issues like language attitudes more deeply, methodological triangulation with further qualitative methods of empirical investigation would be necessary. Additionally, the quality of the results depends on the effort invested by the respondents. Literacy problems will not be a challenge for my specific participants, because students can be assumed to be sufficiently literate. However, the fact that there is no opportunity to double-check the validity of answers and correct the respondents' mistakes is a disadvantage which cannot be overcome when conducting a questionnaire survey. Even though I administered check-back questions for my empirical research, there is simply no opportunity to correct intentionally or unintentionally 'incorrect' answers (cf. Dörnyei 2003: 9-12).

What always needs to be considered whenever interpreting data about people's attitudes and beliefs is the problem of social desirability. Participants may tend to answer sensitive issues in a way which presents themselves in a good light. This disadvantage cannot be ignored, since the intentions of my research are transparent for most of the students through the heading of my questionnaire sheets, in which I introduced my study and research interest. At this point, I wish to explicitly refer to some issues raised by Dörnyei (cf. 2003: 12-14). In particular, these are

- problems of self-deception,
- acquiescence bias, which describes the human tendency to agree with sentences when they are unsure,
- the halo effect, which describes people's tendency to over-generalize, and
- fatigue effects, which might influence responses towards the end of the questionnaire.

Although a quantitative research like my survey is limited in that it only contains pre-designed categories, questionnaires requesting longer qualitative responses also have severe drawbacks. For example it is hard to find participants who are willing to invest much effort in their responses. Besides, the answers will still tend to be superficial

considering that the participants would not have engaged themselves with the respective topics in depth (cf. Dörnyei 2003: 14).

6.2. Participant profile

As has been stated before, 250 valid questionnaires were collected in the course of the survey period from June 23rd to July 10th 2009. 197 replies come from Austrian students, who thus make up 79% of all participants. When sending out the link to the questionnaire website, I tried to reach as many non-Austrian students as possible, because I wanted to gain data from students all over Europe. To achieve this goal, I asked the Erasmus Student Network to post my link and a short introduction to my project on their facebook site. I also sent out e-mails using my personal Erasmus student distribution list consisting of more than 200 addresses. However, it seems as if my own pleadings were not as efficient as I hoped. The overwhelmingly high percentage of Austrian students can be explained through the fact that many linguistics teachers at the department of English in Vienna were so kind as to ask their students to fill out my online survey. Although the original intention was to collect data from European students in general, the study turned out to mainly elicit data from Austrian students, which needs to be kept in mind when interpreting and reflecting on the findings. Still, the online format made it possible to reach students from outside of Austria as well. The following table provides an overview of the participants' nationalities, displaying absolute numbers as well as the distribution in percent.

Nationality	N	Percentage
Austria	197	78,8
Belgium	4	1,6
Bulgaria	3	1,2
Czech Republic	4	1,6
Finland	2	0,8
France	2	0,8
Germany	10	4
Hungary	2	0,8
Italy	5	2
Lithuania	1	0,4
Netherlands	1	0,4
Poland	6	2,4
Portugal	1	0,4
Romania	2	0,8
Slovenia	6	2,4
Spain	2	0,8
Sweden	2	0,8
Total	250	100

Table 3: Nationalities

In the questionnaire, participants have the possibility to indicate their mother tongue(s) without being restricted by predefined categories. The answers to this open question were then summarized for the participant profile. Thus, for example the specification “Austrian German” is counted as “German” in the following list. An attentive reader will notice immediately that the number of first language(s) is higher than the total number of participants, which is a result of the summary procedure. 14 participants are bilingual and thus have two mother tongues. One of the participants even indicated three different languages as being first languages. When summarizing the open answers, each specific language indication was added to the total number of mentions. Due to the high number of Austrian students, the number of German speakers is very high. (see Appendix for a detailed list of all specific answers.)

First language(s)	N	First language(s)	N
Bosnian	1	Latin ³	2
Bulgarian	3	Lithuanian	1
Catalan	2	Nederlands	1
Creole	2	Norwegian	1
Czech	4	Polish	7
Dutch	2	Portuguese	1
Dzangkha ⁴	1	Romanian	2
English	5	Serbian	1
Finnish	3	Slovakian	1
French	2	Slovenian	4
German	206	Spanish	3
Hungarian	3	Swedish	1
Italian	1	Turkish	1

Table 4: First language(s)

The average age of the participants, calculated from the median of all age specifications, is 23 years. The oldest participant is 65 years old, the youngest participant is 18 years old. Although this range appears to be very wide, 71,6% of all participants are between the age of 19 and 24. When extending this range to all participants between the age of 19 and 26, 83,6% are included. Turning to the following illustrations, one can see that not only nationalities are unevenly represented among my participants. Also sex has a rather unequal distribution.

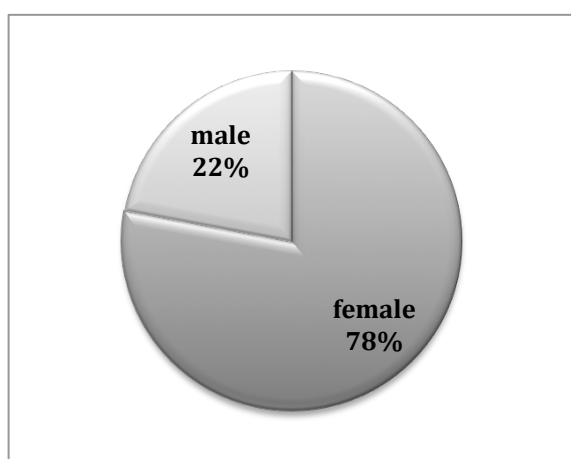


Figure 1: Sex

Sex	Absolute numbers
female	194
male	55
no indication	1

Table 5: Sex

³ This is what the participants actually indicated.

⁴ It could be possible that the participant wanted to indicate 'Dzongkha', which is the official language of Bhutan.

From this first statistical data, one could of course claim that my empirical findings cannot account for the attitude patterns of European students. Still, it needs to be considered as well that the scope and the possibilities of an empirical research for a diploma thesis are very limited, since there are neither time, nor financial resources, nor any co-workers readily available. By explicitly stating the limitations of my empirical data, I wish to make it possible for every reader to reflect on my findings within their restrictions. I do not wish to make any claims about representativeness, but still, I consider 250 completed questionnaires a good starting point to take a closer look at some of the theoretically discussed issues of my research project.

One way to examine the degree to which my empirical findings could be used to gain insights into trends of European students' attitudes is to calculate whether Austrian students, who represent the majority of my participants, display similar attitudes as the other students of my sample group. Thus, chi-square tests have been administered to compare answer patterns of Austrian (N=197) and non-Austrian (N=51) students. With one exception, namely the statement "When I use English, I don't worry about grammar as long as other people understand what I mean", the variable 'Austrian' proves to be insignificant. Regarding this specific statement, Austrian students display a higher share of strong and normal disagreement ($p < .05$, $\chi^2 = 7.915$), which leads to the assumption that the Austrian participants are more norm-oriented and particularly strict about the display of grammar in their own speech. A detailed discussion of attitudes concerning grammar can be found in section 6.3.4. Of course, the fact that chi-square tests do not indicate significant differences between Austrian and non-Austrian participants except for one statement should not be used to neglect the Austrian bias of my sample group. Yet, nationality does not seem to influence attitude patterns.

Another limitation that needs to be explicitly addressed is the fact that my questionnaires do not request any information about the participants' subjects of study. Since it can be assumed that many students who filled out my online survey were those encouraged by linguistics teachers of the English department in Vienna, it is likely that a relatively high percentage of my participants are students of English. This assumption has rather severe implications for my empirical findings because one cannot ignore the possibility that the subject of study, and in this context especially English language studies, influence students' attitudes and perceptions. Thus, whenever reflecting on my empirical data, one needs to keep in mind the possibility that a considerable portion of my students studies English language. This point can also serve as an explanation for

the differences between Austrian and non-Austrian participants discussed above. It could be hypothesized that this bias might strengthen displays of norm orientation, since students of English orientate themselves towards native speaker norms during their courses at the English departments, which could explain the different attitudes concerning grammar. Unfortunately, there is no way of calculating how critical the bias towards English studies among my survey participants really is.

As has been repeatedly claimed before, many studies, as well as the Eurobarometer survey, depict European students as knowing and using English better and more frequently than the average EU-citizen. One could assume that these claims are legitimate when looking at the active and passive English use of my survey participants.

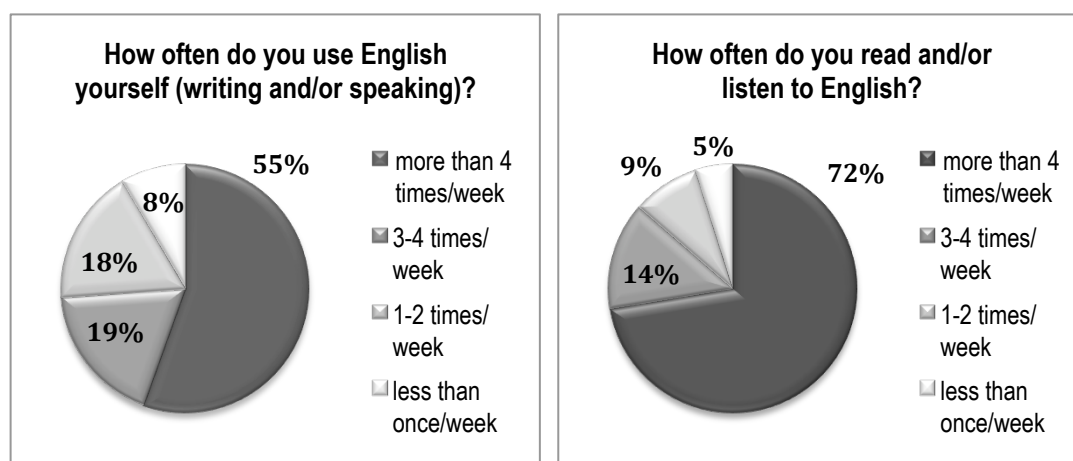


Figure 2: Frequency of English use: All participants

55% of all the students state that they actively use English themselves, either written or spoken, more than four times per week. Regarding passive English use, the numbers are even more meaningful. 72% of the participants claim to listen to or read English more than four times each week. 19% and 14% have contact with English at least three times each week, and another 18% and 9% of the students are regularly exposed to English one to two times a week. Only 8% claim that they use English less than once a week and even fewer students, namely 5%, do not come into contact with English each week.

It can be assumed that all students are proficient in English by the time they enroll in courses at University, since EFL is a school subject in virtually all European curricula (cf. Hoffmann 2000: 13). Taking Austria as an example, English is a prerequisite for enrolling in university, since all regular school curricula preparing students for higher education include EFL classes. Due to the differing curricula across Europe, however, it is not possible to make any statements about the actual language competence of the

participants in general. Additionally, curricula not only differ from country to country, but also different school types have very diverse language teaching practices. Since the questionnaire does not inquire any background information about participants' educational history, English language proficiency cannot be judged. This limitation has been justified by the assumption that ELT practices between different school types and nations are too diverse to make any comparisons, even if the educational background were made transparent. Another means of inquiring into language proficiency would be incorporating self-evaluation tasks in the questionnaire. Although the link between language proficiency and language attitudes is certainly interesting, I decided against using self-evaluation tasks in my empirical research, since the methodological drawbacks and reservations seem to be too severe to arrive at relevant and valid data. This issue was extensively considered when discussing the research by Berns and her colleagues (2007) in section 5.2.

To sum up, responses to the questions concerning the frequency of English use indicate that European students use English more frequently than the average EU-citizen as reported in the Eurobarometer, since 55% of them actively use English, either written or spoken, more than four times per week and 72% of the participants surveyed read or listen to English more than four times each week. Due to the high number of Austrian students, an overwhelming majority indicated a variety of German as their mother tongue. Although the scope of the empirical findings is clearly limited by the fact that the majority of students come from Austria, chi-square analyses indicates that the responses can still be used to make assumptions about trends of European students' attitudes in general. This claim is based on the results of statistical comparisons between answer patterns of Austrian students and students of other European nationalities represented in my survey. The differences prove to be insignificant, with one exception, namely attitudes concerning the active display of grammar in students' own utterances. Another limitation that has to be kept in mind is the possibility that a considerable share of my survey participants studies English at university. This bias can be hypothesized to influence answer patterns, especially attitudes towards native speaker norms because English students may adapt their language use to meet native speaker models due to the requirements of their courses at university. Unfortunately, my questionnaire does not request information on the participants' subject of study, which makes it impossible to calculate whether this likely bias affects empirical findings. Following this illustration of my participants' general characteristics, the responses concerning attitudes towards ELF and native speaker norms will be discussed and analyzed in detail in the next

sections. The findings are ordered by the specific topic areas, which were introduced in the outline of the research methodology in section 6.1.

6.3. Attitudes towards native speaker norms

While filling out the online questionnaire survey, the participants had to indicate their agreement on various statements concerning their attitudes towards native speaker norms, as pointed out in the introduction to my empirical investigation. In this section, I wish to discuss and analyze the findings resulting from their responses concerning the statements belonging to one of the five subcategories featuring on my questionnaires. The following list gives an overview of the distinct sections which make up the discussion of my empirical findings.

- Self-perceptions of being users or learners of English
- Perceptions of linguistic imperialism
- Pronunciation
- Grammar
- Idiomatic language use

In addition to these categories, one question included in the questionnaires elicited students' general attitudes towards an English native speaker model. By analyzing answer patterns concerning the statement "I make much effort to use English like a native speaker" and by drawing various relations between participant groupings and their respective answers, a discussion of likely characteristics of confident users of ELF will be presented in section 6.4.

All of the following sections share the same basic structure. First of all, answer patterns of all participants are graphically displayed and analyzed. Thereafter, various participant groupings, as, for example, frequent and infrequent users, which were introduced in section 6.1, are discussed in detail wherever chi-square analyses indicate statistically relevant differences between the respective answer patterns. If correlation tests reveal significant findings, the noteworthy correlations and their correlation coefficients are displayed in tables and interpreted in detail. Lastly, concluding remarks summarizing the most important findings can be found before data analysis moves on to the next topic area and accordingly to the following subchapter.

6.3.1. Self-perceptions of being users or learners of English

Striving for answers to this specific issue, it was hypothesized that European students perceive themselves mostly as users of English because the majority has experience in inter-cultural exchange and the use of English for communication with other European students who do not speak the same mother tongue. Furthermore, it was assumed that those students who perceive themselves as users could be defined as confident users of ELF, whereas those students who perceive themselves as learners could be defined as using English predominately as a foreign language. Of course, the labels ‘learner’ and ‘user’ are unavoidably open to interpretation, which should be kept in mind when reflecting on these empirical findings. To analyze how European students perceive their status when using English, the following two statements were arranged on the questionnaire sheets:

- I consider myself mostly as a learner of English.
- I consider myself mostly as a user of English.

The pie charts below graphically display the distribution of answers by all participants.

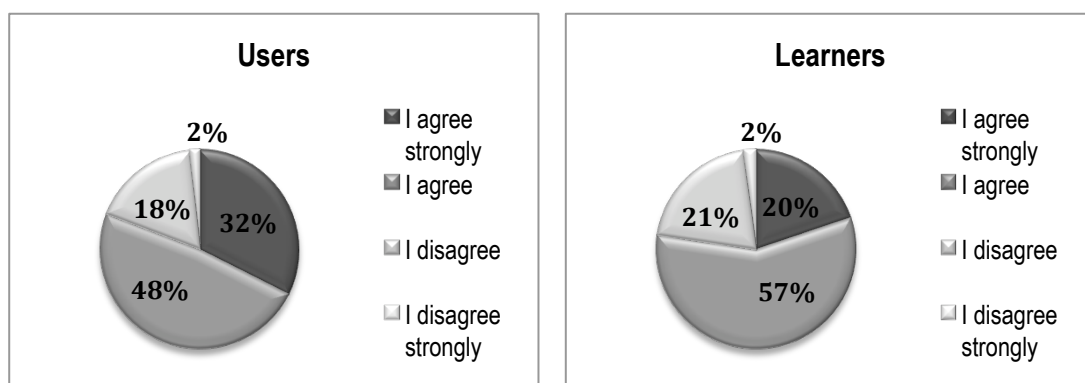


Figure 3: Perception as learners or users of English

At first glance, one can see that nearly one third (32%) of all participants display strong agreement on considering themselves as users of English, whereas only one fifth (20%) strongly agree on considering themselves as learners of English. Conversely, the number of “I agree” indications is higher for being perceived as a learner (57%) than as a user of English (48%). All in all, the total share of agreement on either statement is very similar, because 80% of all participants show agreement with the user statement and only slightly less, namely 77%, agree on the learner statement. Thus, it can be inferred that many participants perceive themselves as both, learners and users of English, at the same time. Consequently, the initial hypothesis whether students perceive themselves as users of ELF or learners of EFL cannot be answered in a

straightforward manner when interpreting these results. If the presupposition that users of ELF defined themselves overwhelmingly as users of English could be upheld and that the opposite were true for users of EFL, then such similar answer patterns for these two statements would not be possible.

Obviously, the survey participants cannot simply be categorized in one of these two denominations. This observation could support the argument that ELF is an additional means of communication rather than replacing other codes. European students who are not English native speakers are both, learners of English as a foreign language as well as users of English as a lingua franca. Yet, one could claim that the higher percentage of strong agreements on the user statement indicates that European students are slightly more inclined to perceive themselves as users than learners of English. Even if the total share of agreement is highly similar when comparing the learner and the user statement, more students are strongly convinced of their status as English language users. When conceptualizing ELF in section 2.2, it has been claimed that speakers' confidence in their own ways of using English for expressing their individual thoughts plays a crucial role in establishing a wider acceptance of ELF. Since my empirical findings display a greater share of strong agreement for the user statement, I would suggest that European students are on their way to becoming confident users of ELF, who use English for their own means and in their own ways, rather than perceiving themselves as only learners who use limited possibilities in a foreign language.

Drawing connections between the participants' sex and their self-perceptions of being users or learners of English does not lead to any significant results. For this reason, it is legitimate to claim that female and male participants share the same perceptions. As a further possible interrelation, potential connections between the frequency of English use and the two statements currently under discussion have been assumed. It was hypothesized that frequent users will mostly define themselves as users, whereas infrequent users will tend to define themselves as learners of English. On the one hand, the chi-square test reveals a significant Pearson chi-square co-efficient for the user statement ($p < .001$). On the other hand, however, there seems to be no connection between the frequency of English use and the perception as being a learner of English. This could be seen as a further indication of the assumption that self-perceptions as being a user or a learner should not be treated as direct oppositions, nor do these categories seem to be directly related. The following graph displays the different answer patterns of frequent and infrequent English users for the user statement.

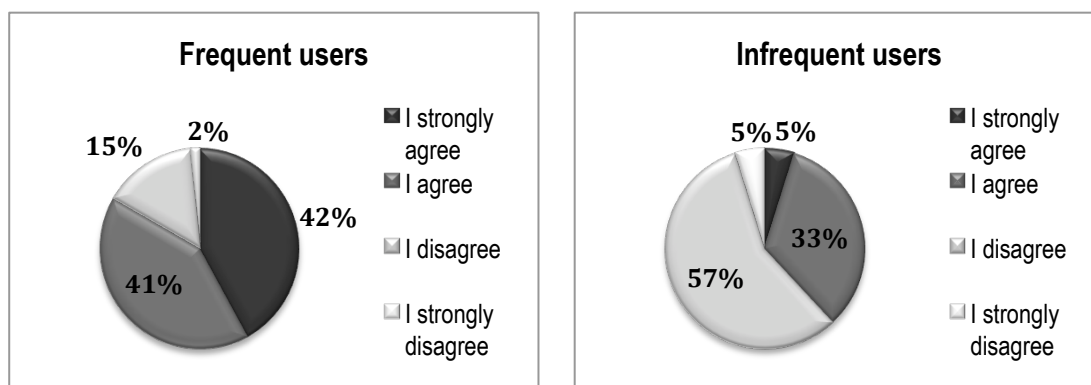


Figure 4: User statement: Frequent – Infrequent users

As can be seen in these pie charts, supported by chi-square analysis ($p < .001$, $\chi^2 = 23.606$) frequent users ($N = 138$) show overwhelmingly more agreement for being identified as a user rather than a learner of English than infrequent users ($N = 21$). In brief, 83% of the participants who use English more than 4 times per week indicate agreement on the user statement, whereas only 38% of the students who use English less than once a week identify themselves as users of English. This finding supports the hypothesis that the frequency of English use and self-perceptions as users of English are interrelated.

At the beginning of this sub-section, it was hypothesized that students who perceive themselves as users of English could be more likely to define themselves as users of ELF rather than learners of EFL. One could claim that my empirical findings can be soundly compared to previously discussed attempts to conceptualize users of ELF, since it can be assumed that frequent language use also results in higher language competence and experience. Following this argumentation, the empirical findings, which indicate that students who use English frequently define themselves as users rather than learners of English, support this initial hypothesis. In contrast, the empirical findings do not support the hypothesis that students who perceive themselves as learners of English could be defined as rather using EFL, since a chi-square analysis revealed no significant interrelations between the frequency of English use and self-perceptions as learners, nor have further analyses suggested any other relations between the learner statement and variables incorporated in the questionnaire survey. These results indicate that it is not legitimate to treat perceptions as users or learners of English as direct oppositions or even as distinctive categories reflecting English language experience and competence. If this were the case, then the majority of infrequent users would define themselves as learners, since the majority of frequent users perceive themselves as users of English,

rather than learners. Hence, the absence of significant relations between the frequency of language use and the perception as being a learner of English, when, at the same time, findings indicate a significant connection between the frequency of using English and self-perceptions as users of English, suggest that the labels ‘learner’ and ‘user’ are, as was argued before, open to interpretation and highly complex issues.

Summarizing the findings concerning students’ attitudes connected to self-perceptions of being users or learners of English, one can claim that the survey **participants cannot simply be categorized** as either defining themselves as learners or users. Due to the highly similar share of agreement towards both statements, it can be inferred that many participants perceive themselves as both. Since 80% of the students agreed on the user statement and 77% displayed agreement on the learner statement, the initial hypothesis whether students perceive themselves as users of ELF or learners of EFL cannot be answered in a straightforward manner. Additionally, the presupposition that ELF users would categorize themselves as users and students who perceive English as a foreign language would define themselves mostly as learners cannot be upheld due to the similar answer patterns for both statements. However the greater share of strong agreement on the user statement suggests a trend among European students to perceive themselves as confident users of ELF rather than learners of EFL, which may point to a growing acceptance of ELF among students in Europe. Chi-square analyses only revealed significant results for the **relation between the frequency of English use and the user statement**. All other participant groupings did not lead to significantly different answer patterns. Frequent users show overwhelmingly more agreement on being identified as a user of English (83%) than infrequent users (38%). Hence, the hypothesis that frequent users will mostly define themselves as users, whereas infrequent users will define themselves as learners of English has been confirmed.

6.3.2. Perceptions of linguistic imperialism

As has been shown through the theoretical reflections of this paper, linguistic imperialism is a highly interesting issue for ELF research. In the previous parts of this paper, the scholarly debate concerning this topic occupied a rather prominent place. To discover whether European students perceive English as a possible threat for their respective mother tongues, the following two statements were included in the empirical investigation:

- The promotion of English usage devalues my mother tongue.
- My mother tongue will not lose prestige through an increasing use of English.

As can be seen at first glance, these two statements concern the same basic issue, differing only in the choice of vocabulary and the use of a negation in the second sentence. The decision to include two separate statements for inquiring into the same issue is based on the assumption that linguistic imperialism is a delicate topic. As has been repeatedly pointed out in the previous parts of this paper, scholarly debate is controversial and heated. In order to avoid the danger of influencing participants in any way through the formulation of the statements, I chose to include both a positive and a negative formulation in the questionnaires. The negatively formulated statement has been codified reversely, which makes a direct comparison between the average answers possible because it compensates for the negation. Prior to analysis, it was hypothesized that answer patterns of the two statements do not differ significantly and that linguistic fears are not common among European students. Running a correlation test supported the hypothesized connection between these two statements, however, the correlation is weaker than expected ($r=-.292, p<.001$), since only approximately 8,5% of answers can be explained by the relationship between the imperialistic statements. Interestingly, the negative coefficient implies an inverse relationship, which suggests that some participants who agree that the promotion of English devalues their mother tongue, are not likely to think that their mother tongue will lose prestige through an increasing use of English and vice versa. This finding is rather striking and underlines the high complexity of this topic area. A questionnaire survey alone cannot account for intricate factors which might influence students' perceptions of linguistic imperialism since one cannot request clarification or further information. Hence, only methodological triangulation with qualitative research methods like interactive interview sessions would make a deeper investigation of influencing factors and fine details of students' attitudes possible. Before driving the discussion of possible ways to inquire into the complex issue of views about linguistic imperialism any further, answer patterns of all participants as elicited by my questionnaire survey need to be analyzed in detail.

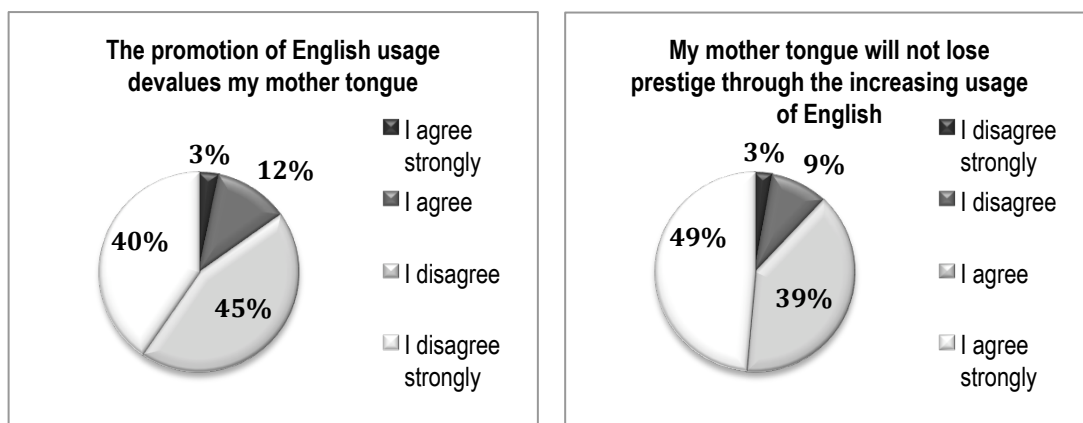


Figure 5: Attitudes connected to views on linguistic imperialism

Here, one can detect variations between the different categories. Generally, the surveyed students do not seem to fear linguistic oppression by or a loss of prestige of their mother tongues through English, since 85% and 88% of them can be argued to be opposed to imperialistic fears. Yet, the strength of agreement or disagreement towards the two statements varies. Whereas nearly half (49%) of all participants agree strongly on the second statement, only 40% showed strong disagreement on the first one. Although the total number of agreement or disagreement only varies by 3%, the participants show stronger opinions about the statement including the negation. In any case, these findings indicate that European students are not opposed to English from the outset and they do not think that English use will devalue their mother tongues. When connecting these results with the Eurobarometer findings, it could be argued that European students not only value foreign language knowledge for instrumental reasons, but they also share positive attitudes towards the use of English. Thus, one could claim that imperialistic fears, as for example expressed by Phillipson (2001, 2008), are not appropriate for European students.

When comparing female and male participants, a chi-square test only revealed significant results for the statement “The promotion of English usage devalues my mother tongue” ($p < .05$, $\chi^2 = 13.135$), whereas the statement “My mother tongue will not lose prestige through an increasing use of English” cannot account for significant differences between answer patterns of female and male students. Consequently, it is legitimate to claim that female (N=194) and male (N=55) participants display different attitudes concerning this particular statement, but not concerning views on linguistic imperialism in general.

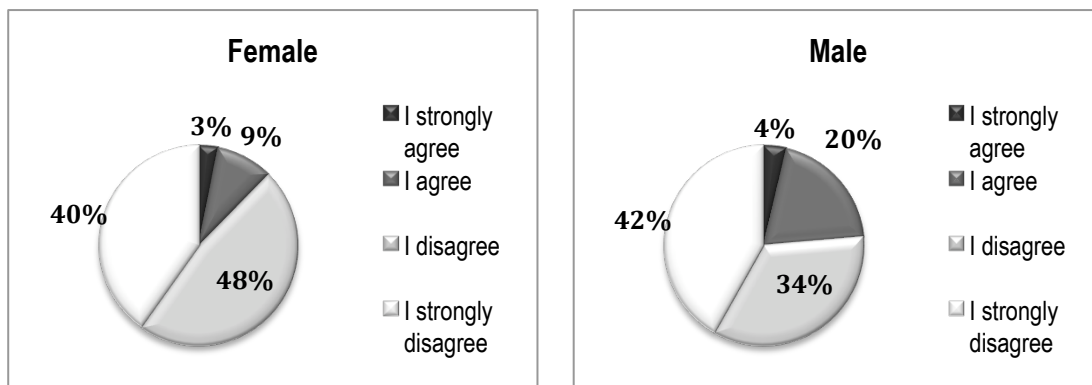


Figure 6: The promotion of English usage devalues my mother tongue: Female – Male

Looking at the answer patterns, one can observe that although the share of strong agreement is very similar, the percentage of regular agreement proves to be quite different. All in all, nearly one quarter (24%) of all male participants support the imperialistic statement, whereas only 12% of female students think that the use of English will devalue their mother tongue. Yet, the proportion of strong disagreement reveals similar patterns, because 40% female and 42% male participants display strong opposition. Thus, the main difference between male and female students lies in a shift from agreement to disagreement, which implies that male students show greater support for linguistic imperialistic theories than their female peers.

As a second interrelation, the chi-square procedure revealed significant differences between frequent (N=138) and infrequent (N=21) users, but only for the statement “My mother tongue will not lose prestige through an increasing use of English” ($p=.001$, $\chi^2=15.989$). Before analyzing the answer patterns, it was hypothesized that frequent users show less concern with linguistic imperialistic statements than infrequent users because they are more likely to be confident users of ELF, and thus more confident with their own status and do not perceive foreign languages as a threat to their mother tongues.

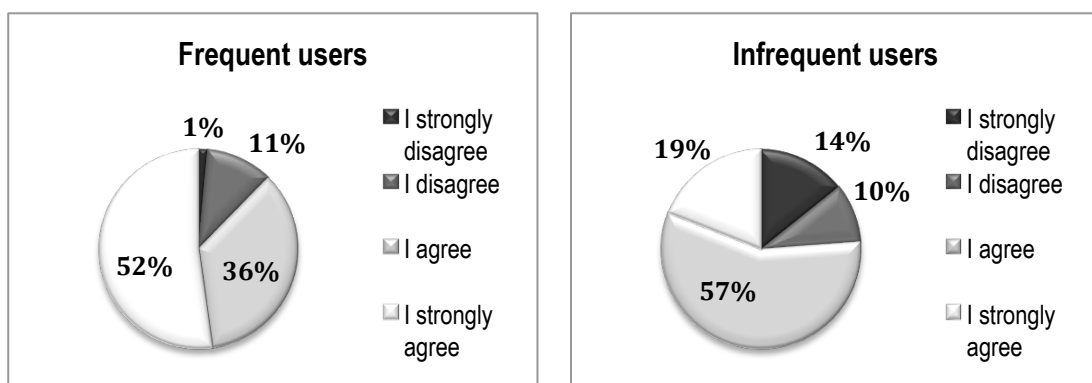


Figure 7: My mother tongue will not lose prestige though an increasing use of English: Frequent – Infrequent users

At first glance, one can observe great divergence in the shares of both agreement categories, as well as the percentage of strong disagreement between frequent and infrequent users. More than half (52%) of participants who use English frequently are strongly opposed to an imperialistic standpoint, compared to only approximately one fifth (19%) of infrequent users. Summarizing both agreement categories, a more moderate trend can be observed, since 88% of all frequent users show agreement with this negated imperialistic statement and 76% of infrequent users do so. Looking at the percentage of strong disagreement, one can observe highly different shares. Only one per cent frequent users strongly disagree, whereas 14% very infrequent users choose this answer option. As a result, it can be claimed that imperialistic fears are more likely for European students who do not use English on a frequent basis, which supports the initial hypothesis about differences between frequent and infrequent users. This finding could indicate a wide acceptance of English in Europe and contradicts some linguistic imperialistic theories. If Phillipson (e.g. 2003, 2005) were right, students who use English frequently would show greater support for claims of linguistic imperialism, because they would be confronted with it very often in their lives. Looking at my empirical findings, it seems unlikely that English is considered to be a threat to other languages in Europe because the majority of students who are regularly exposed to English do not share these fears.

Running correlation tests revealed that the statement “The promotion of English usage devalues my mother tongue” is interrelated with some other statements, although the distinct coefficients are very low, which implies that the correlations are generally rather weak. The following table gives an overview of all noteworthy correlations.

	The promotion of English usage devalues my mother tongue.
When somebody speaks English with me, I think it's important that they get their grammar right.	$r = .276^*$
When I use English, I don't worry about grammar as long as other people understand what I mean.	$r = .247^*$
When somebody speaks English with a non-native speaker accent, I cannot take their arguments seriously.	$r = .240^*$

* $p < .001$

Table 6: The promotion of English usage devalues my mother tongue: Correlations after Pearson.

As can be seen in the table above, all of these relationships are positive. The first correlation suggests that a participant agreeing on this imperialistic statement thinks that their grammar is not particularly important as long as communication is successful. The second correlation implies that those students who agree on the imperialistic statement tend to be more tolerant when it comes to their interlocutors' display of non-native pronunciation. Similarly, the last correlation hints to the possibility that students who feel that their mother tongue will be devalued by the promotion of English use tend to tolerate grammatical deviation from native speaker norms in their interlocutors' utterances. Of course, all of the stated interpretations are just as valid when interpreted the other way round, since the processed correlation tests cannot account for the direction of causality between the interrelated statements. Although these correlations might seem quite surprising, the weakness of the calculated relationships hardly justifies elaborate explanation attempts, but rather suggests interesting areas for further qualitative research. It seems as if the problematic limitations of questionnaires cannot account for the high complexity of students' views about linguistic imperialism. The fact that the second statement concerning linguistic imperialism cannot account for any noteworthy correlations due to the even lower correlation coefficients that could be processed supports this claim and the decision to dispense with further explanation attempts.

To sum up, the most important insight of the discussion of students' views about linguistic imperialism is the fact that imperialistic fears do not seem to meet wide acceptance among my survey participants. Hence, the hypothesis that **imperialistic fears are not common among European students** is supported when looking at the empirical findings, since the majority of students (85% and 88%) can be argued to be opposed to imperialistic theories. Also the second guiding hypothesis is supported by empirical data, because more **frequent users** prove to be strongly opposed to an imperialistic standpoint (52%) than **infrequent users** (19%), when discussing answers concerning the statement "My mother tongue will not lose prestige through an increasing use of English". Another significant finding that could be processed through using the chi-square procedure is the differing answer distribution between **female and male students** for the imperialistic statement "The promotion of English usage devalues my mother tongue". Here, male students show considerably greater support for linguistic imperialistic theories (24%) than female students (12%). However, these significant differences between the discussed participant groupings are only valid for

one of the two imperialistic statements included in the questionnaires, which implies that the investigated issue seems too complex for the quantitative instruments employed in my empirical investigation. The **surprising correlations** that were calculated for the statement “The promotion of English usage devalues my mother tongue” suggest interesting areas for methodological triangulation and further empirical studies, but the very weak correlation coefficients do not justify further explanation attempts on the basis of my empirical data. Basically, the answer patterns imply positive implications for a wide acceptance of English in Europe because imperialistic fears do not seem to be common among European students. Yet, further qualitative investigations would be needed to cast further light on possible factors influencing views about linguistic imperialistic theories.

6.3.3. Pronunciation

In my questionnaire survey, students had to indicate their agreement on two statements dealing with pronunciation, namely “I don’t need to sound like a native speaker to be taken seriously”, which will henceforth be referred to as ‘active pronunciation’, and “When somebody speaks English with a non-native speaker accent, I cannot take their arguments seriously”, which is labeled ‘passive pronunciation’. First of all, one should take a look at the answer patterns of all participants, which is graphically displayed in the following two charts.

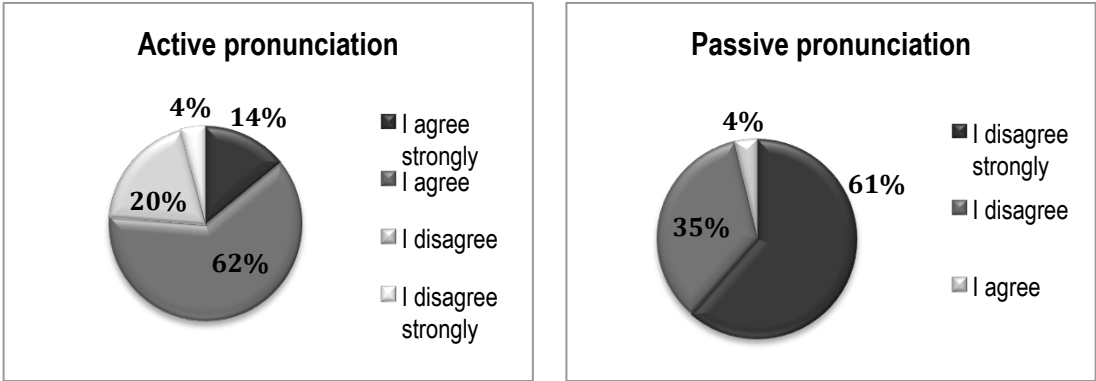


Figure 8: Statements concerning pronunciation: All participants

The answer patterns clearly indicate that the majority of all participants does not favor native speaker accents to the extent that they will either judge speakers of non-native accents to be less competent or fear to be disadvantaged for speaking English with a non-native accent. All in all, 76% think that they do not need to adhere to native speaker pronunciation norms in order to be taken seriously in a conversation and an overwhelming majority of 96% does not support the idea of disadvantaging an

interlocutor who speaks with a non-native accent. At first glance, these findings are very optimistic for emerging ELF perspectives, since European students seem to be highly tolerant of non-native accents. More than three fifths (61%) of all participants show strong disagreement concerning the idea of not taking non-native speakers seriously because of their accent. At closer examination, however, it cannot be ignored that the survey participants are much more tolerant of other people speaking with a non-standard accent than display strong confidence in their own pronunciation. Of course, a high number of students, namely 62%, agree that they do not need to sound like a native speaker to be taken seriously. Still, compared to 61% of strong disagreements for the passive pronunciation statement, only 14% seem to be strongly convinced of their own English accents. Before analyzing the answer patterns, it was hypothesized that European students are more tolerant of non-native features in their interlocutors' utterances than with their own speech, since linguistic insecurity influences their attitudes (cf. Jenkins 2007). Taking the empirical findings into consideration, one can clearly support this initial assumption.

These findings could hint at the fact that linguistic insecurity (cf. Trudgill 2003: 81) still plays a prominent role in students' minds. Even if they seem to reject traditional concepts of standard language use, the tolerance is mainly focused on their interlocutors, but when it comes to their own speaking performance, most students are less confident. Thus, I would claim that there is much conceptual work left to be done by ELF speakers in order to strengthen their confidence in their own use of English. Nevertheless, these findings may show that the conceptual seeds ELF scholars have tried to plant are slowly growing and taking roots in students' perceptions. As was claimed before when critically reflecting on Mollin's (2006, 2007) research in section 5.2, negative attitudes towards non-native speaker pronunciation in the participants' own speech should not be regarded as indicating that ELF features are not accepted. When keeping in mind that it is highly possible that a great share of my participants studies English language at university, it is not surprising that they are critical about their own display of non-native pronunciation due to their formal instruction. However, the general tendency to accept non-native features in language used by their interlocutors supports the claim that it is not legitimate to equate critical attitudes of the participants' own speech with an overall rejection of ELF. Rather, these findings underline my critical remarks on Mollin's study and show an underlying theory-practice divide between what students think is important due to their formal instruction in EFL and what they think is important for successful communication in English. On the

whole, the tolerance of other speakers' accents points to the fact that native speaker pronunciation norms are not considered as crucial for successful inter-cultural communication, which is a finding pointing to students' acceptance of the concept of ELF in society at large.

Interestingly, chi-square analysis reveals that male and female participants do not differ significantly in their answers concerning the two pronunciation statements of the questionnaire survey. Before analyzing the findings, it was assumed that female participants are more norm-oriented and will thus display less acceptance of non-native pronunciation, both in their own as well as their interlocutors' utterances. This hypothesis is based on Peter Trudgill's ([1974] 1985) theories⁵. In particular, he argues:

Sociological studies have demonstrated that women in our society are, generally speaking, more status-conscious than men. For this reason, they will be more sensitive to the social significance of social-class-related linguistic variables such as multiple negation. (Trudgill [1974] 1985: 87)

As possible explanations, Trudgill (cf. [1974] 1985): 88) names, among others, the fact that it is not unusual to anticipate a higher level of adherence to standards from women in many societies. My sample population, however, does not display any significant differences between female and male students regarding their attitudes towards native speaker pronunciation. As a possible explanation, it could be argued that attitude patterns cannot be used to make direct inferences on actually displayed features in speech. Although female and male participants share the same opinions, they need not share the same degree of norm-orientation in their utterances. Equally justifiably, it could be assumed that this specific social group, namely students, does not conform to the common social expectations concerning the linguistic behavior of women across different social categories.

Since it could be hypothesized that language competence influences language attitudes, I decided to group my participants according to the frequency of their active English use and then compare the answer patterns of the respective groups. Before analyzing the data, I hypothesized that frequent users are more confident with their own English use, and will thus display less concern with their own speech and be more tolerant with their interlocutors than infrequent users. Additionally, I was very interested in how attitudes concerning the pronunciation of their conversation partners will differ between the

⁵ It needs to be noted, though, that Trudgill investigated differences in women's and men's speech in exclusively native speaker environments. Thus, one needs to be cautious when applying his arguments to the context of ELF and English used for cross-cultural communication because of the different linguistic situations.

different groupings. In order to draw connections between the frequency of English use and attitudes, the participants are grouped according to their answers to the question “How often do you use English yourself (writing and/or speaking)?”. Keeping in mind the list of all participant groupings provided in section 6.1, those students who indicate ‘more than 4 times per week’ are grouped together as ‘frequent users’ (N=138), as well as those students who indicate ‘less than once a week’, who are named ‘infrequent users’ (N=21). However, as with the male and female participants, the chi-square test shows no significant connection between attitudes towards native speaker pronunciation and the frequency of English use. Contrary to my first assumption, the answer patterns do not differ significantly between the respective user groups. This finding is rather surprising, since those students who use English frequently in their daily lives seem to share the same degree of linguistic insecurity as those students who do not use English very often. What appeared to be a plausible theoretical hypothesis, namely that frequent language use will result in greater language competence and then also greater confidence, is refuted by the empirical findings. Of course, it should be kept in mind that the chi-square test can only account for this specific empirical investigation, which does not necessarily mean that there is no connection in reality. Since the participant groupings are highly diverse in numbers (138 vs. 21 participants), one cannot totally neglect the chance that there is simply no significant connection observable within the available sample population.

Summarizing the most important findings concerning students’ attitudes connected to pronunciation, the **differing answer patterns for the active and the passive pronunciation statement** clearly deserve special attention. As was hypothesized, my participants are much more tolerant of other people speaking with a non-native accent than accept deviations from native speaker models in their own speech. Although the majority of all participants displays positive attitudes towards non-native speaker accents as long as communicative success is not disrupted, a considerably higher share of students (61%) displays strong disagreement concerning the idea of disadvantaging an interlocutor who speaks with a non-native accent, than is strongly convinced of their own non-native accents (14%). The answer patterns support the claim that **linguistic insecurity** is an important issue for the acceptance of ELF and needs to be addressed when trying to raise awareness of and acceptance for ELF in the European context. However, displays of negative attitudes towards non-native speaker pronunciation in the participants’ own speech should not be used to reject the concept of ELF. Rather, it seems that additional qualitative investigations of a likely theory-practice divide as well

as of factors affecting feelings of linguistic insecurity could lead to stimulating insights.

A very interesting finding concerns the fact that **female and male participants** share the same opinions about pronunciation, since chi-square analyses could not account for significant findings. This implies that my survey participants do not conform to the common social expectations concerning the linguistic behavior of women when taking Trudgill's (cf. [1974] 1985: 87) theories into consideration. Hence, the initial hypothesis which assumes that female participants are more norm-orientated is not supported by empirical data. Likewise, the attitude displays of students surveyed do not support the hypothesis dealing with the supposedly different attitudes of **frequent and infrequent users**. Chi-square analysis shows no significant connection between attitudes towards native speaker pronunciation and the frequency of English use. Consequently, it is not legitimate to assume that frequent language use will result in greater language competence and greater confidence.

6.3.4. Grammar

Grammar could be argued to play an important role in standard language ideology, and of course it occupies a very prominent role in ELT classes. Therefore, students' attitudes towards the display of non-native features in their interlocutors' grammar, as well as their perceived importance of grammatical correctness in their own speech is a highly interesting issue. In order to investigate attitudes connected to grammar, the following two statements feature on the questionnaires:

- When I use English, I don't worry about grammar as long as other people understand what I mean. (henceforth referred to as 'active grammar')
- When somebody speaks English with me, I think it's important that they get their grammar right. (henceforth referred to as 'passive grammar')

Similarly to the analysis of attitudes connected to pronunciation, it was hypothesized that European students are more tolerant of non-native features in their interlocutors' utterances than with their own speech, since linguistic insecurity influences their attitudes (cf. Jenkins 2007). The following two pie charts display answer patterns of all students.

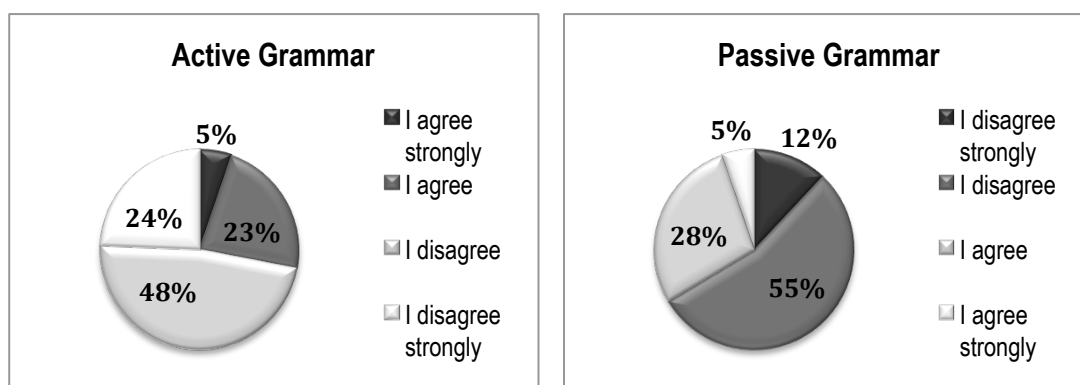


Figure 9: Attitudes connected to grammar: All participants

As can be seen by the answer patterns illustrated above, the students are more tolerant with the display of grammatically incorrect features - in native-speaker terms - in the speech of their interlocutors than they are in their own speech. Compared to only 5% of strong agreement on active grammar, 12% of the participants disagree strongly with the passive grammar statement. This means that the share of students who are strongly convinced that their interlocutors' grammar does not matter as long as they get their meaning across is more than twice as high as the percentage of students who are highly confident that their own display of grammatical features is not important. The differences are even more striking when looking at the percentages of normal agreement and disagreement. Whereas not even one quarter (23%) of the surveyed students agree that they do not worry about their grammar as long as their utterances are understood, more than half of them (55%) state that they do not think their interlocutors need to worry about grammar. Statistically, active and passive grammar prove to be related with a high significance ($p < .001$), but the correlation coefficient only displays a weak connection ($r = .371$). This finding shows that students who are tolerant with their interlocutors' grammar tend to be tolerant with their own grammar as well. As with all correlations in my empirical research, the connection is just as valid when interpreted the other way round, since inferences about the direction of causality are not possible through simple correlation calculations.

Students' attitudes concerning grammar can be directly compared with their attitudes towards pronunciation discussed in the previous subsection. The answer patterns could be argued to indicate linguistic insecurity, since students are less confident when actively displaying features deviating from native speaker norms. In rough contrast, they appear to be very tolerant of deviating grammar in their interlocutors' speech. On the one hand, the high tolerance for their interlocutors could indicate a growing acceptance of ELF because the surveyed students do not think that grammar should

worry their communication partners as long as the communicative success is not disrupted. On the other hand, they still insist on actively using grammatical formulations corresponding with native speaker terms.

When comparing responses by female and male students, a chi-square test reveals that sex does not influence attitudes concerning grammar. This result refutes the hypothesis that female participants are more norm-oriented and will thus display less acceptance of non-native features, both in their own as well as their interlocutors' utterances. In like manner, participants' self-perceptions as being a user or a learner of English do not influence their responses to the statements dealing with grammar or vice versa. Instead, the frequency of using English proves to be connected to attitudes concerning the grammar in their own utterances ($p=.011, \chi^2=11.056$). The chi-square procedure reveals that infrequent users (N=21), who use English less than once a week, show more support for the statement termed active grammar than students who use English more than four times per week (N=138). However, there is no connection between the passive grammar statement and the frequency of English use.

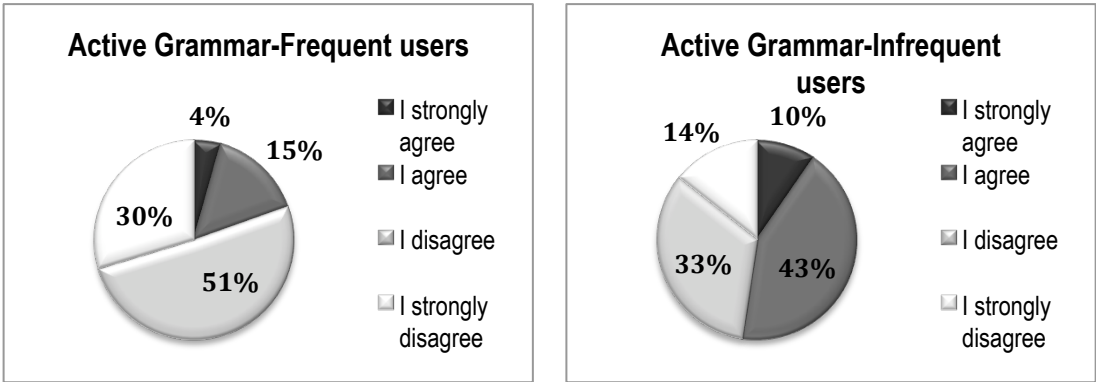


Figure 10: Active grammar: Frequent – Infrequent users

As can be seen in these graphs, only 19% of frequent users do not worry about their grammar, compared to more than half (53%) of infrequent users. Prior to data analysis, it was hypothesized that frequent users are more confident with their own English use, and will thus display less concern with their own speech and be more tolerant with their interlocutors than infrequent users. The findings, however, indicate that it is the other way round, namely that infrequent users present themselves as less worried about their grammar. The passive grammar statement did not lead to any significant differences between frequent and infrequent users, which also contradicts the initial hypothesis.

As a possible explanation, frequent users could be argued to be more competent users of English, and would thus pay more attention to their grammar because they feel able to

do so. Infrequent users, in contrast, might be content with making themselves understood and worried by other factors like missing vocabulary, and thus they might pay less attention to their grammar. Of course, this explanation could be seen as drawing on ideas of standard language ideology and the questionnaire survey itself can hardly be used to make claims about the validity of this assumption. Correlation analysis points to a weak relation between the active display of grammar and support for the statement “I make much effort to use English like a native speaker” ($r=-.336$, $p<.001$). This inverse correlation suggests that participants who think that the grammar of their utterances is important are likely to disagree with devoting effort for using English like a native speaker. This finding contradicts the explanation for the different answer patterns of frequent and infrequent users above. Theoretically speaking, it could be assumed that if this explanation bears inherent logic, the frequent users, who are more strict about their own grammar, would need to support the native speaker statement if it were true that they feel more confident with their own ability for striving towards and supporting a native standard. However, the inverse correlation suggests that participants who are strict about the grammar of their utterances do not tend to support the native speaker statement. Yet, the weakness of the calculated correlation explains why this explanation is not totally rejected, since one could legitimately claim that further qualitative research would be needed to inquire into the connection between attitudes towards grammar, perceived language competence, support for native speaker norms and frequency of language use more deeply.

As has been addressed in section 6.2 when introducing my participants’ general characteristics, one specific questionnaire item revealed significant differences between Austrian and non-Austrian students belonging to my sample group, namely the statement “When I use English, I don’t worry about grammar as long as other people understand what I mean”. The following two pie charts graphically display the answer patterns grouped by the variable of being Austrian.

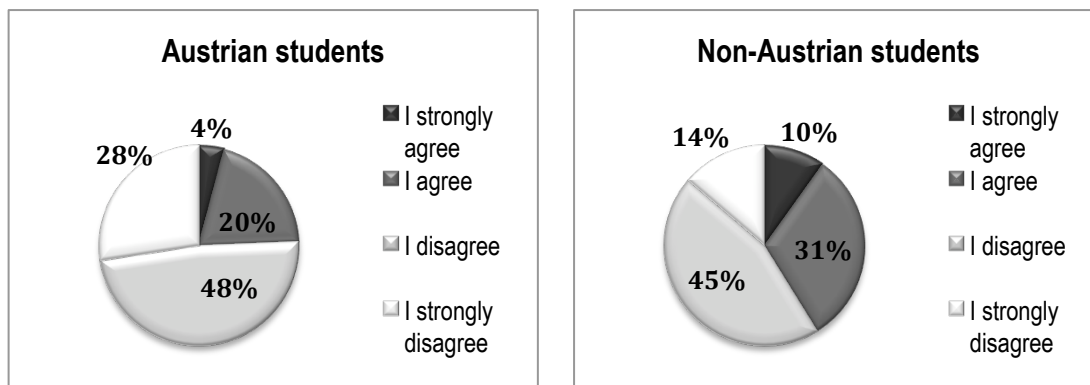


Figure 11: Active grammar: Austrian – Non-Austrian

Looking at the two pie charts, it can be seen immediately that Austrian students show less agreement on the statement concerning their own grammar. Whereas only 4% of Austrians indicate strong agreement, 10% of all non-Austrians do so. Similarly, only one fifth (20%) indicate moderate agreement compared to nearly one third (31%) of the students with other than Austrian nationalities. Accordingly, the total number of disagreement is higher for Austrians (76%) than for non-Austrians (59%). In particular, the share of Austrian students indicating strong disagreement (28%) is twice as high as the non-Austrian students' share (14%). Hence, the Austrian students of my sample group are more prone to linguistic insecurity as far as their grammar is concerned. Finding reasons based on my data is not possible due to the restricted scope of my questionnaire survey. However, it can be assumed that the influencing factors need to differ between the various nationalities. As a likely candidate, one could draw attention to ELT practices, which differ from country to country. However, only further qualitative research would lead to any definite assumptions. Another possible explanation is based on the possibility that a considerable share of my Austrian participants study English at the University of Vienna. As was argued before, this subject of study could lead to a greater norm orientation, especially concerning grammar, due to the structure and the requirements of language courses at the English department. Unfortunately, also this assumption can neither be validated nor refuted by my quantitative questionnaire survey alone.

Chi-square tests also reveal significant differences between the participants who agree on the statement "My English teachers thought that it is important to observe native speaker models as close as possible" and the participants who disagree on this specific questionnaire item, both for active ($p < .01$, $\chi^2 = 13.071$) and passive grammar ($p < .05$, $\chi^2 = 9.829$). As explained in section 6.1, the students surveyed are grouped together

according to their answers to the statement dealing with the ELT model they experienced. The group termed ‘traditional ELT’ (N=160) consists of students who agree on the statement, and correspondingly, the students who disagree on the ELT statement are grouped together under the name ‘modern ELT’ (N=89). The following pie charts display answer distributions for both grammar statements for the respective ELT model groups.

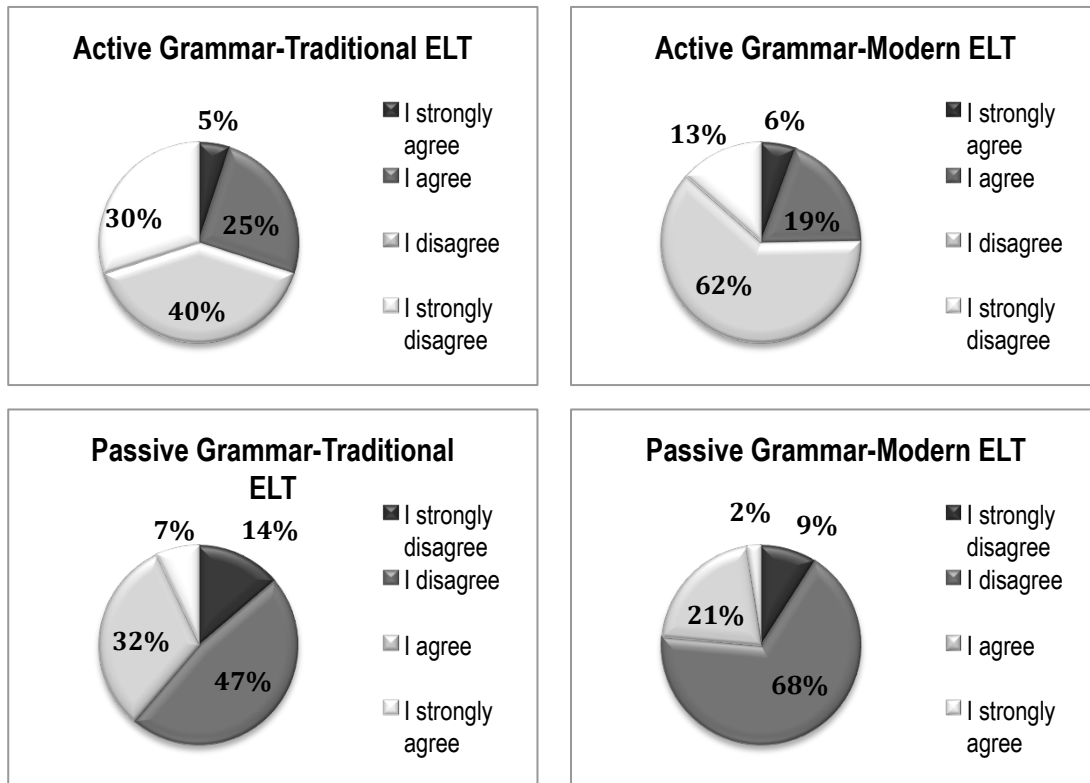


Figure 12: Active and passive grammar: Traditional – Modern ELT

The connection between former experiences in ELT classes and attitudes concerning grammar seems logical, since it could be argued that grammar is one of the most prominent themes, or even the most prominent one, in English language classes. Theoretically, it would seem likely if students who belong to the modern ELT group show higher acceptance of grammar that deviates from native speaker norms because their foreign language instruction was not exclusively focused on closely observing native speaker models. When carefully looking at the answer patterns for the modern and traditional ELT group, this initial assumption is not supported without reservations. This is a highly striking finding, which deserves further attention. 30% of students belonging to the traditional ELT group claim that they do not worry about their grammar as long as other people understand their utterances, whereas only 25% of modern ELT group members do so. Although this difference does not seem very

drastic, it cannot be simply ignored that these specific empirical findings contradict the hypothesized relation. However, when reflecting on the distribution of strong and moderate disagreement, a different picture can be drawn. 30% of traditional ELT group members display strong disagreement, whereas only 13% of modern ELT group members strongly disagree on the active grammar statement. Hence, students who have been instructed in a traditional way display stronger rejection of the idea of disregarding grammar as long as they are not constraining communicative success, which supports the initial hypothesis.

Looking at attitudes concerning grammar in other people's utterances, it can be seen that whereas more than three quarters (77%) of students belonging to the modern ELT group do not judge their interlocutors' grammar to be highly important, only 61% of traditional ELT group members do the same. Consequently, the initial assumption about the logical link between ELT practices experienced and attitudes towards grammar is supported. However, although the discussed answer patterns prove to be significantly different, the general attitude trends seem to be highly similar. Generally speaking, the majority of shares of either agreement or disagreement for the different participant groupings prove to be on the same side of the Likert scales. In other words, the majority of answers by both participant groupings displays disagreement or agreement for both statements dealing with grammar, which suggests that the overall attitude trends tend to point to the same direction.

The "third-person effect hypothesis" formulated by Davison (1983: 3) could be a possible way of explaining the general differences between active and passive grammar. Although Davison's theory is conducted to explain why people tend to overestimate the influence that mass communication exerts on the attitudes and beliefs of others, one could argue that some of his insights can be transferred to this discussion of students' attitudes. The survey participants might overestimate the possibility that their listeners will have problems to understand them if they display deviating grammatical features. Still, they seem to be convinced that they can understand other people even if they make grammar mistakes in native speaker terms. Thus, they value their own grammar as much more important than the grammar of their interlocutors. This comparison between the third-person effect and findings about students' attitudes concerning grammar might seem farfetched and taken out of context. However, when considering that Davison's theories are connected with much broader theories in social psychology, the step does not seem too presumptuous anymore. And yet, possible solutions for this dilemma seem

to be elusive. One way of leveling people's linguistic insecurity might be to raise their awareness of recent ELF research and findings about communicative success and effective inter-cultural exchange through ELF in Europe.

To sum up, answer patterns by all participants concerning grammar can be directly **compared to their attitudes connected to pronunciation**. In short, whereas 67% of the participants indicate to be tolerant with their interlocutors' non-native grammar, only 28% seem to be confident of grammatical deviation in their own utterances, even if communicative success is not affected. Although their tolerance of deviating grammar in their interlocutors' utterances supports the growing acceptance of ELF among students in Europe, one cannot ignore that my empirical findings once again hint to the assumption that **linguistic insecurity** is a prominent theme. Looking at answers by **male and female participants**, the initial hypothesis about a greater norm-orientation among female students is refuted because chi-square tests did not lead to any significant results. The **frequency of English use** only influences the attitudes connected to grammar in students' own utterances. Frequent users seem to be more concerned about the grammar of their utterances than infrequent users because only 19% of students who use English more than four times per week indicate agreement on the active grammar statement, compared to 53% of students who hardly use English regularly. These answer patterns contradict the previously formulated hypothesis that frequent users are more confident with their own English use, and will thus display less concern with their own speech. These unpredicted findings suggest interesting areas for further qualitative research to inquire deeper into complex issues concerning the connection between the frequency of language use, language competence and attitudes towards native speaker norms.

Other interesting findings connected to grammar concern the attested connections between **ELT models experienced** by the participating students and their attitudes concerning grammar which deviates from native speaker models. It could be argued that students belonging to the traditional ELT group are less likely to be tolerant with grammatical deviation in their interlocutors' speech than students belonging to the modern ELT group. However, this claim should not be perceived as a straight forward matter since more students belonging to the traditional ELT group (30%) do not worry about their own grammar as long as communicative success is guaranteed than students of the modern ELT group do (25%). These striking attitude displays clearly call for methodological triangulation with qualitative methods to shed further light on the

seemingly complex connection between ELT models experienced and attitudes displayed. The last noteworthy finding regarding students' attitudes connected to grammar concerns attested differences between **Austrian and non-Austrian students**. Austrian students are more likely to worry about their own grammar (76%) than non-Austrian students belonging to my sample group (59%). As possible explanations for these deviating attitudes, I would suggest differences in ELT practices between European countries as well as the possibility that a considerable share of my Austrian participants study English at university, which might affect their attitudes. As with virtually all other interpretation proposals, further qualitative analyses would be needed to make more specific assumptions about likely influencing factors.

6.3.5. Idiomatic language use

Attitudes towards idiomatic language use in native speaker terms appear to be an interesting aspect for discussing ELF in Europe. This assumption is based on previous studies of ELF and findings connected to idioms. One of the most interesting studies is Adolphs' (cf. 2005: 122-125) research, which indicates that idiomatic language use is strongly connected to the perceived language competence. However, recent investigations of ELF communication, for example Seidlhofer's (cf. 2006: 50) investigation, indicate that the use of native speaker idioms does not play an important role for communicative success. On the contrary, idiomatic expressions can even lead to communication problems in intercultural exchange. To inquire into students' attitudes connected to idiomatic language use, the participants had to indicate their level of agreement on the following statements:

- I don't think it is important to use native speaker idioms/sayings...
 - ... in a public debate.
 - ... in private conversation.
- Using many native speaker characteristics like idioms/sayings is important when making a statement...
 - ... in a public debate.
 - ... in private conversation.

The first statement will be referred to as 'idioms-', because the sentence includes a negation, and the second statement will henceforth be called 'idioms+'. Similar to the statements concerning linguistic imperialism, these two sentences concern the same thematic area. Since idioms could be argued to be a rather complex issue, especially when attitudes towards them are concerned, I chose to include two statements dealing

with this issue, in order to make a comparison of answer patterns possible. For this reason, the first statement was coded reversely to compensate for the negation. On the whole, one could claim that the average answer patterns are consistent, since statistical correlation analysis reveals significant relations between both statements and both statement parts, as can be seen in the following table.

	Idioms+ public debate	Idioms+ private conversation	Idioms- public debate
Idioms- public debate	.662**	.322**	x
Idioms- private conversation	.316**	.626**	.533**
Idioms+ public debate	x	.422**	.662**

** $p < .01$

Table 7: Statements concerning idiomatic language use: Correlations after Pearson

Although a correlation coefficient under .5 could be seen as displaying only weak relations, one can safely argue that the answers to both statements concerning idiomatic language use are clearly interrelated. Hence, participants who think that using idioms is important will give corresponding answers to both statements. Furthermore, the correlations in between the different parts of both statements point to the fact that students who indicate that idioms are important in a public debate tend to indicate the same for idioms used in private conversation. When looking at the following graphs, it can be seen that the answer distribution only displays minor divergence between the two statements.

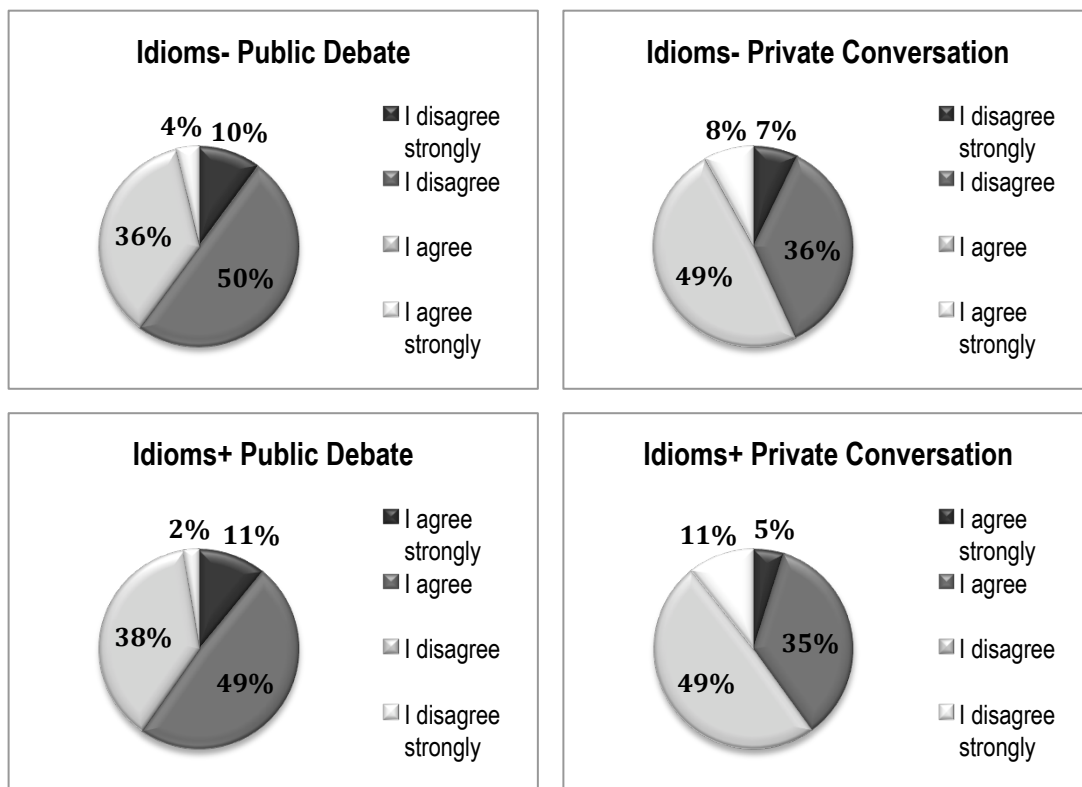


Figure 13: Attitudes connected to idiomatic language use: All participants

First of all, the findings indicate that the students perceive idiomatic language use as more important in public debates than they do in private conversations. Overall, more than half of the participants (60% for both statements) indicate either agreement or disagreement on the statements, and thus think that idiomatic language use is important when speaking in public. In contrast, only 43% (idioms-) or 40% (idioms+) of them perceive idioms to be important in private exchange. Prior to analysis, it was hypothesized that the answer patterns for both statements will prove to be correlated. Furthermore, it was assumed that the participants would judge idiomatic language use to be more important in public speeches than in private conversations (cf. Adolphs 2005). These initial hypotheses are clearly supported by my empirical findings when regarding the attested correlation between both statements dealing with idioms as well as between the different parts of each statement. Additionally, the answer patterns of all participants suggest that idiomatic language use is considered to be more important in public debate. These findings also support Adolphs' (2005) research, in which she claims that idiomatic language features in native speaker terms are closely tied to the perception of language competence. Since speech style can be argued to be more important when speaking in public, my empirical findings can be directly compared to Adolphs' argumentation.

As has been stated before, recent research on ELF communication (cf. Seidlhofer 2006: 50) points at the fact that the use of native speaker idioms does not necessarily have a positive effect on communicative success in intercultural exchange. When looking at the answer patterns concerning private conversations, the students' views seem to reflect these findings, since the majority of participants (57% and 61%) do not think that idiomatic language use is important for personal exchange. Chi-square analysis reveals no significant differences between answers by female and male participants, nor does the frequency of language use have any influence on attitudes connected to idiomatic language use. Hence, the guiding hypothesis which states that frequent users will judge idiomatic language use to be less important than infrequent users because they are more experienced in inter-cultural exchange and familiar with problems occurring through idiomatic language use (cf. Seidlhofer 2006), is refuted by my empirical data. Instead, those students who perceive themselves as users of English (N=45) display different attitudes than those students who perceive themselves as learners of English (N=37). However, this is only true for one part of the idioms-statement, namely "I don't think it is important to use native speaker idioms/sayings in private conversation" ($p=.015$, $\chi^2=10.412$). The following pie charts show answer patterns of the participant groupings termed 'users' and 'learners' for this specific part of the statement.

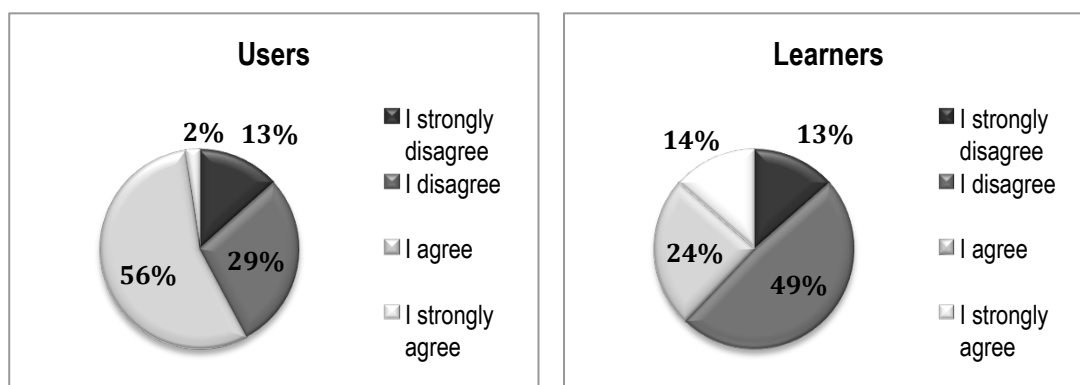


Figure 14: I don't think it is important to use native speaker idioms/sayings in private conversation: Users - Learners

Students' answers indicate that most users (58%) think that using idioms in private conversation is important, whereas most learners (62%) state that the use of idioms is not important when private exchange is concerned. As was assumed before, students perceiving themselves as users could be regarded as using ELF confidently, and students perceiving themselves as learners could be seen as mostly using EFL. Following this hypothesis, the different attitude displays suggest that users of ELF, or

students who are more confident with their role as users of English, judge idiomatic language use to be more important than learners. When now combining this claim with Adolphs' (2005) findings about the connection between idioms and perceived language competence, the results indicate a continuation of standard language ideology among those students who feel confident about their role as English users. Methodological triangulation with, for example, qualitative interview sessions would be needed to inquire more deeply into these issues. If the participants belonging to the user group can really be perceived as confident users of ELF, it seems rather surprising that they perceive idiomatic language use as more important than learners, since empirical ELF research suggests that the use of native speaker idioms does not enhance communicative success among non-native speakers. Thus, the calculated relations must be more complex, which exceeds the scope of my empirical questionnaire survey and calls for further research.

Summarizing students' attitudes connected to idiomatic language use, the most straight forward finding clearly is the fact that **students perceive idioms to be more important in public debate than in private conversation**. 60% of all participants think that idiomatic language use is important when speaking in public, which supports Adolphs' (cf. 2005: 122-125) interpretations concerning the strong link between idiomatic language use and perceived language competence. In comparison, only 43% (idioms-) and 40% (idioms+) of my participants think that using idioms is important for private exchange. These findings, as well as attested correlations between the statements idioms- and idioms+ and their different sub-parts, support my initial hypothesis. I assumed that the answer patterns of both statements will prove to be correlated, which can clearly be verified because statistically significant correlations were calculated. Besides, I hypothesized that the participants would judge idiomatic language use to be more important in public speeches than in private conversations, which is also supported by my empirical findings. The differing perception of idioms used in the public and the private domain could also support Seidlhofer's (cf. 2006: 50) claims which indicate that the use of native speaker idioms does not play an important role for establishing communicative success in international exchange. However, contrary to my first assumptions, the **frequency of English use** does not influence attitudes, nor does the **participants' sex** influence their answers. Significantly different answer patterns can only be found when comparing **learners and users**. The majority of participants who perceive themselves as users of English (58%) thinks that idiomatic language use is important in private conversation, whereas only 38% of learners indicate the same.

Hence, using idioms is perceived as more important by users than by learners. However, significant findings could only be calculated for the idioms- statement part dealing with private conversation. Thus, further interpretations would require additional qualitative research.

6.4. Establishing a profile of confident users of ELF

One of the most urgent questions driving my enquiry was the question how confident users of ELF could be defined. In ELF research so far, the endeavor to define what comprises a successful user of ELF has not attracted a great deal of attention and descriptions of expert ELF users are virtually non-existent (cf. Ferguson 2009: 124, 130; but see Prodromou 2008). In an attempt to contribute to work in this area, I decided to calculate and interpret the answer patterns concerning the statement “I make much effort to use English like a native speaker”. The hypothesis leading this investigation is the following: Those participants who tend to disagree with this statement could be perceived as confident users of ELF, who use English in their own terms to express their ideas and thoughts without clinging to a native speaker model or being restricted by standard language ideology. I looked at the answer patterns by grouping the survey participants according to the different independent variables explained in section 6.1. The discussion in this section concerns differences and similarities of the respective groups. Before starting with these specific considerations, it is vital to discuss answers by all participants. The following graph displays the distribution of agreement and disagreement concerning the statement “I make much effort to use English like a native speaker”, which will henceforth be referred to as ‘native speaker model’.

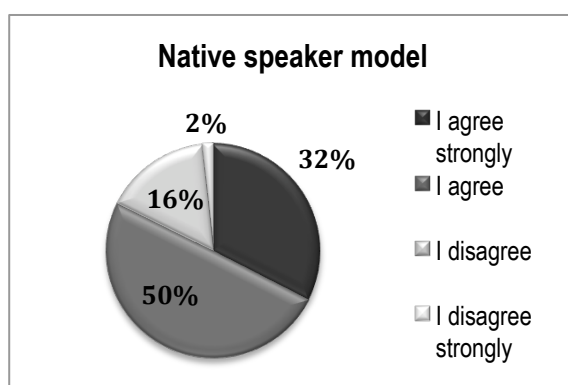


Figure 15: Native speaker model: All participants

As can be seen in this pie chart, the most common answer is ‘I agree’, since half of the participants (50%) choose this option. The next frequent category is ‘I agree strongly’

with 32%, followed by 'I disagree' and 'I disagree strongly' with 16% and 2%, respectively. From these answers, it can be claimed that an overwhelming majority, namely 82% of all participants, thinks that they need to use English according to native speaker norms because they claim to invest a lot of energy to do so. This result would seem to deny a growing acceptance of ELF. Only slightly more than one sixth (18%) of all the surveyed students can be hypothesized as using English confidently in their own terms, without giving native speaker norms a high significance in their speech production. Thus, most of the participants seem to show signs of linguistic insecurity and standard language ideology, since an adherence to native speaker norms could be argued to result in an increased awareness of linguistic features marking 'proper English' in native speaker terms and a prevalence of exonormative language use.

As an interesting interrelation possibility, I took a closer look at those participants, who consider themselves as learners of English, and those participants who state to be users. Previous to data analysis, it was hypothesized that students perceiving themselves as users will show less support for the native speaker model than learners, because they are more likely to be confident users of ELF. A chi-square test, however, reveals no significant differences between attitudes of users and learners of English, which implies that these different groups share the same opinions. Hence, the hypothesis is falsified by statistical analysis, since users do not show significantly less support for the native speaker model than learners. This result could be seen as one of the most important findings of this empirical investigation, because it indicates that it is not legitimate to equate ELF confidence, the perceived status as a language user and attitudes towards native speaker norms. Although it might seem surprising that the absence of connections is stressed as one of the major findings, it should be kept in mind that this result has implications for following attitude researches and the appropriate application of elicitation categories and instruments. Since ELF confidence, speakers' perceptions of being a language user and their attitudes towards native speaker norms do not prove to be linearly connected, nor independent categories, further attitude research needs to take this finding into consideration when designing the elicitation instruments. Moreover, the absence of linear relations suggests interesting areas for further qualitative research, which could be conducted to investigate these seemingly complex and inconsistent categories and their possibly multifaceted relations.

In like manner, grouping the participants by sex does not lead to any significant results. Thus, female and male participants display similar attitudes towards the native speaker

model, which falsifies the initial hypothesis claiming that female students will show greater support for the native speaker model because they are more norm –oriented (cf. Trudgill [1974] 1985). An interesting connection that can be drawn from my questionnaire survey is the display of attitudes towards the native speaker model according to the frequency of English use. A chi-square test supports this assumption, because it reveals significant differences between students who use English more than four times per week (N=137) and students who use English less than once a week (N=21) ($p < .001$, $\chi^2 = 21,516$). The following two pie charts illustrate the answer patterns of frequent and infrequent users.

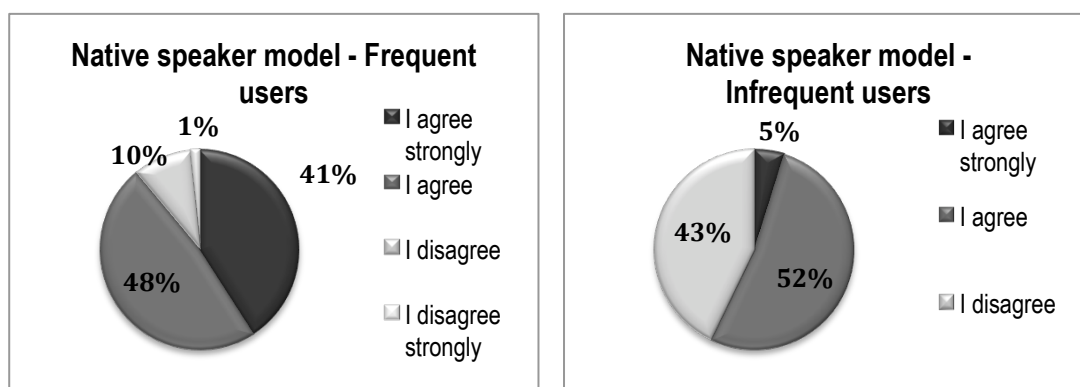


Figure 16: Native speaker model: Frequent users – Infrequent users

Juxtaposing the survey participants according to their English use, great differences between their attitudes towards the traditional native speaker model can be observed. Students who use English frequently show considerably greater support for an adherence to native speaker norms because, all in all, 89% of them indicate either strong or moderate agreement but only 57% of infrequent users tend to agree. One could claim that the different shares of strong agreement indications mainly cause the divergent attitude displays. Only 5% of infrequent users strongly support the native speaker model, compared to 41% of frequent users. Interestingly, none of those students who hardly use English actively chooses to indicate strong disagreement on this statement, although generally, the percentage of disagreement is much higher. Before looking at the results in detail, I presupposed that students who use English frequently would show less traditional attitudes towards a native speaker model. Similar to the hypothesis about users and learners, it was assumed that frequent users would show less support for the native speaker model because they are more likely to be confident users of ELF. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that being a confident user of ELF implies confidence in one’s own ways of using English to express one’s ideas. Thus, native speaker norms would be perceived as less important. In spite of these seemingly logical

implications, the empirical findings contradict this hypothesis. As a possible explanation, it could be supposed that students who hardly use English do not feel proficient enough in English for claiming that they try to use English like a native speaker.⁶ Unfortunately, the limited scope of a quantitative questionnaire survey does not provide any opportunities to inquire more deeply into issues where the pre-defined categories cannot account for the multilayered factors influencing people's attitudes, as it seems to be the case in this context.

Participants' statements about their language use do not necessarily correspond with the actually observed linguistic features in their speech. For this reason, one needs to be cautious when drawing connections between linguistic features displayed in actual language use and people's claims about their language use. A linear connection would be highly questionable and theoretically doubtful. Yet, my empirical findings about the perceived importance of native speaker norms do not indicate acceptance of ELF in Europe, since those participants who were hypothesized to be confident users of ELF display traditional attitude patterns that can be compared to standard language ideology. Although the fact that frequent users show great support for the adherence to native speaker norms does not mean that they do not display non-native linguistic features in their speech, one cannot ignore these attitude findings. For making further assumptions about possible implications, this empirical survey does not seem to be well suited and elaborate enough. Surely, these initial findings deserve more scholarly attention and further research. Treating these findings for what they are, namely displays of attitudes, and connecting them to empirical findings proving the existence of emerging ELF features in actual speech, one is certainly driven to call for raising people's awareness of and supporting acceptance for ELF. The increasing academic interest could be seen as one step on this long process.

As a last possible interrelation, the participants were grouped according to their answers to the statement "My English teachers thought that it is important to observe native speaker models as close as possible". As was stated before, the group consisting of participants displaying agreement on this statement is called 'traditional ELT model' and those students who tend to disagree are grouped together under the name of 'modern ELT model'. Although theoretically, a relation between ELT experiences and attitudes towards the native speaker model seems logical, chi-square analysis reveals no

⁶ Additionally, there is a high chance that many frequent users are students of English, which would serve as a further explanation for the unexpectedly high norm support among those students who use English frequently. This issue will be discussed in great detail towards the end of this section.

significant results among my survey participants. Prior to analysis, it was hypothesized that the modern ELT model group would show less support for the native speaker model because, through their more open-minded education, they are more confident with their own English use and more likely to perceive themselves as confident users of ELF. The absence of significant differences between the traditional and the modern ELT model group clearly dismisses this assumption.

Running statistical correlation analysis reveals some significant relations between attitudes towards the native speaker model and other statement areas, as displayed in the following table. However, the correlation coefficients are generally very low, which makes it hardly possible to draw justifiable assumptions about these interrelations.

	Native speaker model
When I use English, I don't worry about grammar as long as other people understand what I mean.	-.336**
I don't need to sound like a native speaker to be taken seriously.	-.292**
Using many native speaker characteristics like idioms/sayings is important when making a statement in private conversation.	.247**
When somebody speaks English with me, I think it's important that they get their grammar right.	-.227**
I consider myself mostly as a user of English.	.179**
I don't think it is important to use native speaker idioms/sayings in private conversation.	.157*
I don't think it is important to use native speaker idioms/sayings in a public debate.	.151*
When somebody speaks English with a non-native speaker accent, I cannot take their arguments seriously.	-.149*
My English teachers thought that it is important to observe native speaker models as close as possible.	.127*

** $p < .001$

* $p < .05$

Table 8: Native speaker model: Correlations after Pearson

Since valid correlations can hardly be based on a Pearson correlation coefficient under .5, elaborate interpretation attempts could be argued to exceed the scope of my empirical investigation. However, I want to draw some attention to the fact that attitudes towards the native speaker model are related to all linguistic levels of language use included in my questionnaires. Broadly speaking, students' perceptions of the native speaker model affect their attitudes concerning pronunciation, grammar and idiomatic language use, and vice versa. The polarity of correlations suggests that students who support a native speaker model think that they need to use native speaker pronunciation

to be taken seriously, and think that the use of grammatically correct speech in native speaker terms is important. Of course, these connections are also valid when interpreted the other way round. Surprisingly, the participants supporting the native speaker model tend to agree on the idioms+ statement concerning private conversation, but at the same time, they also tend to support the idioms- statement concerning both, private and public conversation, which is a contradiction. I would claim that this contradicting correlations suggest that the relations between adherence to a native speaker model and attitudes towards the use of native speaker norms are too complex to be fully understood through a quantitative questionnaire survey and call for methodological triangulation with qualitative methods. Yet, most correlations, no matter how small they are, suggest that support for the native speaker model is connected to the support of native speaker language features, and thus an adherence to standard language ideology. A possible implication for the endeavor to raise acceptance for ELF would then be to raise speakers' awareness of problems connected to standard language ideology for non-native speakers and for inter-cultural exchange in general, as well as strengthening critical awareness of the communicative needs of ELF interactions, instead of focusing on native English idiosyncrasies and adherence to native speaker norms.

As initially pointed out, previous discussions of connections between specific participant groups and their attitudes towards the native speaker model should lead to an outline of possible characteristics of a confident user of ELF. However, the analysis of my empirical data does not support some of the pre-formulated hypotheses and assumptions. Thus, it seems hard to insist on the argument that confident users of ELF are likely to disagree with the statement "I make much effort to use English like a native speaker", when similar theoretical assumptions could not be upheld. In particular, the absence of possible interrelations between the perception of ELT models and self-perceptions as being a user or learner of English, as well as implications drawn from relations between the frequency of English use and attitudes towards the native speaker model, counter some initial suppositions severely.

The previously discussed findings indicate that those students who show the lowest support for an adherence to native speaker norms are those **using English very infrequently**. **ELT practices** experienced, the **participants' sex** or their **self-perceptions as being a user or a learner** of English do not influence their attitudes towards the native speaker model. Obviously, this profile does not share many similarities with theoretical profiles of confident users of ELF. In particular, the low

frequency of English use does not bear much inherent logic. One of the most important findings of my empirical investigation concerns the absence of statistically significant results which would mark differences between attitudes of users and learners towards the native speaker model. This finding points at the fact that **it is not legitimate to equate ELF confidence, the perceived status as a language user and attitudes towards native speaker norms**. These results could be argued to have extensive implications for further research and possible adjustments to elicitation categories and instruments in this area of research. I feel that there is much left to explore when considering the complex interrelations between factors influencing people's attitudes.

Interestingly, those students who were initially hypothesized to be confident users of ELF display traditional attitudes connected to an adherence of native speaker norms and standard language ideology. This finding is based on the different answer patterns of frequent and infrequent English language users. Astonishingly, only 5% of infrequent users strongly support the native speaker model compared to 41% of frequent users. As has been pointed out before, these findings could result out of a **possible conflation of frequent users and students of English** among my survey participants. When taking the English department in Vienna as an example, the curriculum exclusively consists of courses that are held in English and includes specific language courses dealing with English language competence, in which students learn to use English according to native speaker models. Since there is a chance that a relatively high proportion of my participants are students of English at the University of Vienna and since these students will use English nearly daily due to their subject of study and the department's curriculum design, the possible conflation of frequent users and students of English among my survey participants cannot be ignored. Keeping in mind this problematic issue, English students could be more norm fixated due to the requirements of their lectures and courses, and therefore hardly represent language attitudes of the average European student. As a result of these restrictions, general attitude trends should rather be seen as represented by the infrequent users of my specific participant population because these students are likely to study other subjects than English. Regrettably, my questionnaire design makes it impossible to inquire more deeply into this assumption, but this issue seems to be an interesting hypothesis for further studies.

In this context, it is important to remember that people's actual language displays, their attitudes and what they report to display in their language use should not be perceived as directly connected. These empirical findings call for raising people's awareness of

ELF and to strengthen their confidence in their own ways of expressing themselves in an international environment and an inter-connected modern world. Although the discussion of these interrelations does not support my theoretical argumentation in the previous parts of this study, I would not go so far as to completely dismiss my reasoning. Rather, I am faced with considering methodological flaws in my empirical investigation. It seems as if my questionnaire design is not delicate and elaborate enough to deal with the high complexity of attitudes towards ELF. As a possible outlook, it would be highly interesting to deal with people's perceptions of native speaker models in more detail and through a more thorough research design. For example interview sessions with survey participants could be a step towards understanding certain answer patterns more precisely.

7. Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to make a contribution to an unprejudiced and open-minded academic discussion of ELF in the European context, with a special focus on attitudes towards ELF and native speaker norms. In the course of writing this paper, I became more and more aware of the fact that the spread of English is a highly politically charged topic. Looking at linguistic arguments about language spread and change, it seems legitimate to claim that appropriation processes cannot be condemned from an objective point of view since arguments against the increasing use of English by non-native speakers are often motivated by ideological and sometimes even rather emotional assumptions (cf. Spichtinger 2000: 52, 110). Equally important, the conceptualization of ELF implies that any academic inquiry into this phenomenon cannot be conducted without questioning traditional concepts and looking beyond the sometimes rigid boundaries of existing assumptions.

The discussion of attitude research by various scholars foregrounds one main argument, although the findings are as diverse as the theories underlying the many studies. Differing ideologies and theoretical assumptions have a significant impact on how the empirical findings are interpreted. It does not seem surprising if scholars supporting differing opinions about ELF will find evidence for their respective theories, even though they stand in opposition to each other. As Seidlhofer (2009: 55) points out:

[E]specially in the humanities, the insights one gains depend on what one is getting at, with what questions in mind one approaches one's subject.

The empirical investigation of this study inquires into European students' attitudes towards ELF from a broader perspective by incorporating different levels of language, such as grammar, pronunciation and idiomatic language use. Moreover, issues like linguistic imperialism and ELT experiences were incorporated in my questionnaire design, since the theoretical discussion of ELF in general and in the European context in particular indicates a high relevance of these issues for attitudes towards ELF. Hence, this study could draw on a number of diverse factors influencing language attitudes and combine them in a detailed analysis of European students' perceptions of English used in international contexts.

However, due to the quantitative character of the questionnaire survey, many issues could not be dealt with in depth, and the limited scope of the investigation meant that many questions had to remain unanswered. At the same time, the questionnaire survey

revealed interesting and potentially rewarding areas for further research through methodological triangulation and more complex, qualitative methods. The high complexity of findings based on my questionnaire survey support the assumption that attitudes towards ELF are affected by a multitude of different factors like language contact, motivation, attitudes towards native speaker norms and many more. Yet, these influences do not work in a direct manner but seem to form multifaceted relationships. This claim is supported by one of the most interesting findings of the questionnaire survey, which demonstrates that it is not legitimate to equate ELF confidence, the perceived status as a language user and attitudes towards native speaker norms. In like manner, the frequency of language use does not seem to be directly connected to students' perceptions of English used for inter-cultural exchange, nor does my participants' sex affect their attitudes in a consistent way.

The main issues that emerged suggest that undefined notions of correct English and native speaker norms lead non-native speakers to experience linguistic insecurity and strive towards native models, no matter how vague these models might be. My empirical findings, especially the juxtaposition of attitudes concerning other people's language use and the participants' attitudes towards their own use of English, particularly when grammar and pronunciation are concerned, parallel Jenkins' (2007) interpretations of standard language ideology and Adolphs' (2005) assumptions about perceptions of native speaker models. The traditional attachment to native speaker models of English when the participants' own language use is concerned suggests that standard language ideology is still present in students' minds, although their open-minded and tolerant perceptions of other people's utterances seem to indicate that changes are under way, and thus have optimistic implications for the growing acceptance of the concept of ELF in Europe.

The fact that many participants perceive themselves as learners of English should not be used as an argument for rejecting ELF. Self-perceptions are a highly delicate and complex area, influenced by a multitude of factors, which is illustrated by the fact that many participants perceive themselves as both learners and users of English at the same time. These empirical findings could point to the need of accepting the concept of ELF as an effective means of cross-cultural communication. It seems unlikely that non-native speakers can perceive themselves as independent language users if ELF is not generally accepted as a legitimate way of expressing themselves in an increasingly inter-connected world. In light of the points illustrated, one can clearly claim that

English as a lingua franca is a rewarding and also potentially challenging area for further linguistic research.

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Appendix

Questionnaire sheet (Word format)

Dear participants,
my name is Nadine Zeiss and I am a student at the University of Vienna. In the course of my diploma thesis at the English department, I am undertaking an empirical investigation. With my questionnaire survey, I wish to investigate students' attitudes towards the English language. The working title of my diploma thesis is „English as a European lingua franca – Changing attitudes in an inter-connected world“.
I am now kindly asking you to help me finish my research project with filling out my online survey. The questionnaire is designed to ask for your opinions, so there are no right or wrong answers to any questions. The completion of the survey should not take you any longer than five minutes. The findings of the questionnaire survey will be exclusively used for my diploma thesis and all your answers will be handled confidentially and anonymously.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Sex:

- female
- male

Nationality:

<input type="radio"/> Austria	<input type="radio"/> Finland	<input type="radio"/> Latvia	<input type="radio"/> Romania
<input type="radio"/> Belgium	<input type="radio"/> France	<input type="radio"/> Lithuania	<input type="radio"/> Slovakia
<input type="radio"/> Bulgaria	<input type="radio"/> Germany	<input type="radio"/> Luxembourg	<input type="radio"/> Slovenia
<input type="radio"/> Cyprus	<input type="radio"/> Greece	<input type="radio"/> Malta	<input type="radio"/> Spain
<input type="radio"/> Czech Republic	<input type="radio"/> Hungary	<input type="radio"/> Netherlands	<input type="radio"/> Sweden
<input type="radio"/> Denmark	<input type="radio"/> Ireland	<input type="radio"/> Poland	<input type="radio"/> United Kingdom
<input type="radio"/> Estonia	<input type="radio"/> Italy	<input type="radio"/> Portugal	<input type="radio"/> other

Age: _____

Are you a student?

- yes
- no

Your first language(s): _____

How often do you use English yourself (writing and/or speaking)?

- more than 4 times per week
- 3-4 times per week
- 1-2 times per week
- less than once per week

How often do you read and/or listen to English?

- more than 4 times per week
- 3-4 times per week
- 1-2 times per week
- less than once per week

Please indicate your agreement on the following statements of the list below:

I agree strongly	1			
I agree	2			
I disagree	3			
I disagree strongly	4			
I consider myself mostly as a user of English	1	2	3	4
The promotion of English usage devalues my mother tongue.	1	2	3	4
I don't need to sound like a native speaker to be taken seriously.	1	2	3	4
Using many native speaker characteristics like idioms/sayings is important when making a statement...				
... in a public debate	1	2	3	4
... in private conversation	1	2	3	4
When I use English, I don't worry about grammar as long as other people understand what I mean.	1	2	3	4
When somebody speaks English with a non-native speaker accent, I cannot take their arguments seriously.	1	2	3	4
I consider myself mostly as a learner of English	1	2	3	4
I don't think it is important to use native speaker idioms/sayings...				
... in a public debate	1	2	3	4
... in private conversation	1	2	3	4
When somebody speaks English with me, I think it's important that they get their grammar right.	1	2	3	4
I make much effort to use English like a native speaker.	1	2	3	4
My mother tongue will not lose prestige through an increasing use of English.	1	2	3	4
My English teachers thought that it is important to observe native speaker models as close as possible.	1	2	3	4

Your first language(s): Participant indications

Austrian German	German	German	German	german	German
Bosnian	German	German	german	German	German
Bulgarian	German	German	German	German	German
Bulgarian	German	german	German	German	German
Bulgarian	German	German	German	German	German
Catalan, Spanish	German	German	German	German	German
Catalan/ Spanish	German	german	German	German	German
Creole, French	german	German	German	german	german
croatian and german	german	German	German	german	German
Croatian, German	German	German	German	german	German (Upper Austrian dialect)
czech	German	German	German	German	German, English
Czech	german	German	German	German	German, English
czech	German	German	German	German	German, hungarian
czech	german	German	German	German	german, latin, english
deutsch	German	german	German	German	German, Norwegian
Deutsch	german	German	German	German	German, Spanish
Dutch	German	German	German	German	German, Upper-Austrian-Dialect
Dutch	German	german	German	German	Hungarian
dzongkha	German	German	German	German	Hungarian, German
English	German	German	german	German	italian
English	german	German	german	german	latin english
English, German	german	German	German	German	lithuanian
finnish	German	German	german	German	nederlands
Finnish	german	German	German	German	Polish
Finnish and Swedish	german	German	german	German	Polish
french	german	German	German	German	Polish
German	german	German	german	German	Polish
German	German	german	German	German	Polish
German	German	german	German	German	polish
German	German	German	German	German	polnish
German	German	German	German	German	Portuguese
German	German	German	german	German	Romanian
German	German	German	German	German	Romanian
German	German	German	German	German	Serbian
German	german	German	german	German	Slovak
German	german	German	German	German	slovene
German	german	german	German	German	Slovenian
German	german	German	German	German	slovenian
German	German	German	German	German	sloven ¹ èina
German	german	German	German	German	turkish
German	German	German	German	German	
German	german	German	German	German	

German Abstract (Deutsche Zusammenfassung)

Diese Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit ‚English as a lingua franca‘ (ELF) im europäischen Rahmen unter besonderer Bezugnahme auf Spracheinstellungen europäischer StudentInnen. Der theoretische Teil der Studie dient als Basis für die empirische Untersuchung im Rahmen dieser Arbeit und konzentriert sich auf all jene Problematiken, die für die Diskussion von ELF im Europäischen Kontext von Bedeutung sind. Aufgegriffen werden Ansätze zur Konzeptualisierung von ELF, die Verbreitung der englischen Sprache und die Situation des Englischen im Europäischen Raum. Darüber hinaus werden grundlegende Konzepte wie Sprachideologie und traditionelle Auffassungen über Sprachgruppen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Konzepts ELF aufbereitet und kritisch hinterfragt. Außerdem werden vorangegangene Untersuchungen über Spracheinstellungen zu ELF diskutiert und verglichen, um einen Rahmen für die empirische Untersuchung dieser Arbeit zu bieten. Der empirische Teil dieser Studie beschäftigt sich mit der Auswertung der Daten, die durch einen quantitativen Fragebogen an 250 europäische StudentInnen erhoben wurden. Untersucht wurden folgende fünf Themengruppen: 1) Selbsteinschätzungen als ‚learner‘ oder ‚user‘ des Englischen, 2) Einstellungen zu Theorien des Sprachimperialismus, 3) Aussprache, 4) Grammatik und 5) der Gebrauch von Redewendungen. Im Rahmen der Auswertung und Diskussion der Ergebnisse konnten Verbindungen zwischen der Häufigkeit des Englisch-Kontakts, Selbsteinschätzungen, Erfahrungen im Englisch Unterricht und Spracheinstellungen gezogen werden. Einige Daten werfen interessante Fragen bezüglich Sprachunsicherheiten und der Relevanz von ELF im Umgang mit Sprachideologien auf. Natürlich muss festgehalten werden, dass eine empirische Untersuchung mit beschränkten Mitteln keinen Anspruch auf repräsentative Ergebnisse stellen kann, dennoch aber interessante Einblicke ermöglicht. Die Komplexität der erhobenen Daten bestätigt, dass eine Vielzahl von Faktoren dynamische und miteinander verbundene Einflüsse auf die Spracheinstellungen der Partizipanten ausübt. So zeigt sich, unter anderem, dass die Häufigkeit des Sprachkontakts, Selbsteinschätzungen und Einstellungen zu englischen Muttersprache-Modellen nicht in lineare Relationen gesetzt werden können. Zusammenfassend lässt sich feststellen, dass ELF und vor allem Spracheinstellungen zu ELF noch viel Raum für weitere wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen bieten. Von großem Wert wäre hierbei der Einsatz von qualitativen Forschungsmethoden und komplexen Untersuchungsdesigns, die tiefere Einblicke ermöglichen.

Curriculum vitae (Lebenslauf)

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Date of Birth: 23 September 1986
Place of Birth: Baden b. Wien
Nationality: Austria

Education

1992-1996 Volksschule Bad Vöslau/Gainfarn
1996-2004 Bundesgymnasium Berndorf
2004 AHS Matura (Graduation)
since 2004 University of Vienna:
Anglistik und Amerikanistik (English Studies)
Publizistik und Kommunikationswissenschaft (Communication Studies)
2009 Bakk.phil. der Publizistik und Kommunikationswissenschaft
(Graduation from Communication Studies with Bachelor's Degree)

Experience

June 2002 and June 2003

Stadgemeinde Bad Vöslau
Ferialpraxis (Internship)

1 July – 25 August 2006

Camp Neshar, The New Jersey YMHA-YWHAA's Co-ed Orthodox Camp, New Jersey
www.campneshar.org
Volleyball Specialist

26 June – 16 August 2007

Camp Walden, American Camp Association
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Volleyball and High Ropes Specialist/Counsellor

18 February – 29 February 2008

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Languages

German (mother tongue), English, French