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Universals in a Universal Language?

Exploring Verb-Syntactic Features in English as a Lingua Franca

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION
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To my children

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Tampere, October 2013
Elina Ranta

Contents

1. Introduction

The English language has served the function of a world-wide lingua franca since the mid-1900s with a scale and spread unparalleled in the linguistic history of humankind. In essence, this means that English has largely become an international vehicular language between *non-native* speakers from very diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, having simultaneously caused the number of non-native speakers surpass that of native speakers. Such a shift in the center of gravity for a language is unprecedented and thus also requires new ways of thinking and conceptualizing a language. A lot of the consequences of such a linguistic phenomenon are still unknown to us and also difficult to predict in the absence of precedents. We can only assume that when any language reaches a truly global position of the scale of English, it is bound to have a number of effects – both linguistic and non-linguistic – on the language itself, the social contexts of language use and perhaps even the overall global ecology of the world's languages. For sure, it will also have consequences for the scholarly study of English as the conventional research paradigms become subject to re-evaluation in order to meet the needs of the metamorphosing research object.

Despite having been with us for more than fifty years, serious research into this fascinating phenomenon and the new predominant function of English only began in earnest at the turn of the millennium – almost simultaneously by different individuals and research groups unaware of each other at different European universities. Although facing initial opposition from various corners of English linguistics, the significance of the phenomenon as an independent research object soon became evident even for the opponents, and in less than a decade English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has established itself as an important and vibrant field of study. Research has quickly been accumulating on various aspects of ELF: its sociolinguistic and socio-political consequences, its linguistic manifestation(s), and effects on English language teaching to mention but a few.

While all these areas that a global language is sure to affect merit further investigation, our interest in this thesis lies firmly in the linguistic domain. The observed 'ill-fittingness' of ELF with traditional linguistic concepts has only given further impetus for the linguistic scrutiny of the phenomenon – and for a reason. As Ferguson (1982: vii) put it some thirty years ago:

> much of the world's verbal communication takes place by means of languages which are not the users' mother tongue, but their second, third or nth language, acquired one way or another and used when appropriate. This kind of language use merits the attention of linguists as much as do the more traditional objects of their research.

In the case of ELF, it is its mere volume in the world that should be enough to draw linguists' attention because studying ELF most likely means studying the future of the English language as a whole. As non-native speakers are in the majority of all English speakers in today's world, and as communication between native and non-native, as well as among non-native speakers increases, non-native/second language speakers are

potentially causing language change in both of these settings. Thus, it is worth paying attention to the tendencies in second language speakers' use of the language at large.

Within the previous linguistic inquiries into ELF, pragmatics has quite clearly drawn the most scholarly attention thus far, phonology has figured prominently in a book-length study (see Jenkins 2000), and discourse features are covered in quite a number of ELF publications (see Ch. 2). However, syntactic aspects of ELF have remained surprisingly little researched – if at all. To date, I am not aware of any large-scale investigations of grammar in ELF, although references to individual features have been made here and there in different studies. The mentions have, nevertheless, been more in the fashion of 'feature spotting' than detailed analysis of specific constructions. It is the very goal of the present research project to try to fill in some of this gap. The lack of syntactic research may partly find its explanation in the fact that large enough databases for carrying out such research have only recently become available in ELF, but perhaps also partly in the false belief that such studies could not bring out anything new in addition to what has already been discovered in second language acquisition (SLA) studies (heavily concentrated on syntactic investigations of second languages). This latter-mentioned assumption we will discuss more closely below. But as for the first hindrance, I was fortunate enough to be involved in the compilation process of the *English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings* (ELFA) corpus[1], a 1-million-word database especially designed for linguistic investigation of ELF, which also rendered a detailed inquiry into syntactic features of this global 'variety' of English possible. So what does the study seek to accomplish?

The present study is a corpus-based exploration into verb-syntactic features of spoken English as a Lingua Franca. More specifically, it is a scrutiny of four frequently reoccurring non-standard verb-syntactic features of ELF from the point of view of language universals. The features looked into are the extended use of the progressive, indirect questions or embedded inversions, hypothetical *if*-clauses, and the use of the existential *there* -construction. From this research setting at least two factors requiring justification present themselves. First, the caveat mentioned above: Why look into grammatical features of ELF in the first place (other than them being largely uncharted in ELF-specific studies) – isn't it only duplicating the work that has been carried out in SLA? And secondly, why look for language universals in ELF?

As for the first question, research into English as a Lingua Franca is research on language *use* in real-life circumstances *between* different speakers, while the goal of second language acquisition research is to uncover the processes underpinning *individual learners' acquisition* of a certain code – and most often in a classroom setting (as discussed further in Ch. 2). The same speakers can, of course, assume the role of either a language user or a learner at different times, and in each role and context one thing is, of course, the same: in both cases we are looking at people speaking English as their second or non-native language (with the exclusion of the minority of English native speakers appearing in ELF contexts every now and then). Because of this, as pointed out by Mauranen (2012 and 2011), the cognitive processes affecting especially lexicogrammar in these speakers' speech are the same whatever the context. However, the shift in the research perspective, from that of a *learner* to *user*, can open up new views on the

[1] ELFA 2008. *The Corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings*. Director: Anna Mauranen. http://www.helsinki.fi/elfa/elfacorpus. (Accessed Sep 19, 2013).

linguistic output observed. Mainstream SLA has traditionally looked at learners from a 'deficit' point of view[2] trying to find explanations for why second language (L2) speakers fall short of mastering a specific (foreign) code. The explanations have usually been found in first language (L1) interference, specific communication strategies employed by L2 speakers to compensate for their lacking language skills, and/or other extra-linguistic sources (such as lack of motivation). Moreover, the reference point for L2 production has typically been Standard Language, i.e. the written code, even when judging learners' spoken language skills – not real-life spoken L1 production (see Ch. 2 and 3). This has, naturally, skewed the results at the second language speakers' disadvantage. And still further, the emphasis in these studies has been on the *differences* between L1 and L2 production.

The user perspective of ELF, on the other hand, departs from the deficit view and looks at L2 output from the same perspective as any other natural language used for communication. This means, first of all, that if spoken ELF is compared to native speaker production, the point of comparison has to be, of course, naturally occurring L1 speech, not a written standard found in reference grammars. This avenue has remained virtually unexplored in L2 studies, even despite the appearance of grammars that do document regular features of L1 *spoken* grammar. Even in some descriptive ELF studies carried out so far a common drawback has been their failure to use any kind of baseline data to support claims of 'ELF-specific' uses, or alternatively, comparisons of spoken ELF with standard (written) language. Secondly, setting ELF on a par with L1 means that also similarities between L1 and L2 language use become relevant and interesting objects of study. Thus, in the present research project, English used as a Lingua Franca is compared to English used as a Native Language – both data deriving from similar genres of authentic speech – to find out, first, if the frequent non-standard features found in ELF can also be detected in native speaker use, and if so, whether their use is actually similar in the two speaker groups. It is only through this kind of approach that we can really discover what is unique to L2/ELF communication and what is perhaps shared in all kinds of spoken communication in English, whether L1 or L2 based.

The second question presented above – why look for universals in ELF – is partly justified by what was just said, in other words by finding out what is similar in ELF to other varieties of English (as natural manifestations of language use), but also because of the specific nature of ELF. English as a Lingua Franca is an extremely rich manifestation of language contact because through and in it a multitude of languages – virtually all (major) languages in the world – come together. As Mauranen (2003: 515) notes, in such circumstances speakers are likely to rely on patterns that they assume are known and shared by most of their interlocutors, and "their guesses about what they share are likely to be most accurate in the case of most widely shared, unmarked features". Language universals, on the other hand, very often equal unmarked features (as discussed in Ch. 3). This gives rise to the hypothesis that different kinds of unmarked language universals

2 However, one should not overlook the projects in SLA that have, indeed, made serious efforts in trying to capture learners' language as a system in its own right, without the ethos of deficiency. One such major undertaking was the research project "Second Language Acquisition by Adult Immigrants" funded by the European Science Foundation (see e.g. Klein and Perdue 1997), which has greatly affected especially European SLA ever since.

would also be discernible in ELF. In fact, because of its nature as a 'hybrid language', ELF provides a particularly interesting (if not sufficient on its own) testing ground for linguistic universals.

As will also be discussed in Chapter 3, such universals are most readily to be found in spoken language. Consequently, to find evidence for or against the existence of universals in ELF, we need authentic spoken data on it and comparable reference data. Thus, the analyses in the present study are carried out on two spoken language corpora. The primary source of data comes from the afore-mentioned 1-million-word *English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings* (ELFA) corpus, and as a reference corpus the 1.7-million-word *Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English* (MICASE)[3] is used, for its close affinity in contents and construct to those of ELFA (see Ch. 4 for a more detailed account of the corpora).

On the basis of the corpus data, the study looks into some of the typical verb-syntactic features of ELF that deviate from Standard English but at the same time recur in the speech of a number of ELF speakers – independent of the speakers' respective mother tongues – and which do not seem to cause any observable miscommunication. This exploration is meant to serve three kinds of goals: descriptive, theoretical and application oriented. As pointed out above, syntactic description of ELF has been lagging behind descriptions of other aspects of language, but is in fact indispensable to many theoretical considerations on the one hand, and particularly fervently looked forward by those interested in the application of ELF findings in English language teaching (ELT) and testing in particular. Without clear descriptions of what kinds of structures are frequent, how they are used, and – in general – what works in authentic L2 interactions, we are much less equipped to develop, for instance, further theoretical models of language change or practical models of language use for international learners. Secondly, the theoretical aim of this particular study is to contribute to the on-going discussion of linguistic universals in spoken English on the basis of the descriptive findings. Here, also the comparisons to native speaker data as well as to findings from previous studies into other varieties of English play a key role. So far, spoken language universals have not been extensively studied on English speakers who have learned English as a foreign language – thus, this study will be a contribution towards filling in this gap as well. Finally, as a practical objective, the possible impact of the findings on English language teaching and testing will be considered. As the relevance of the native speaker as the model and a yardstick for the ultimate attainment in ELT has frequently been questioned with the advent of ELF, alternative models and targets are obviously needed for its replacement. Descriptions of syntactic features of authentic ELF quite naturally also serve this purpose if we so want (as discussed in more detail in Ch. 2).

To sum up, then, the research questions that the present study seeks to answer are as follows:

[3] Simpson, R. C., S. L. Briggs, J. Ovens and J. M. Swales 1999. *The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English*. Ann Arbor: The Regents of the University of Michigan.
Available at: http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micase/ (Accessed Sep 19, 2013)

1. What kinds of non-standard verb-syntactic features are there in spoken ELF that deviate from Standard English?
2. How frequent are the deviating forms and what are they like (qualitatively)?
3. To what extent are the same features to be found in spoken native language data, and to what extent is their use similar to that in ELF?
4. What might explain the findings?
5. What are the effects of the findings on English language teaching and testing?

The outline of the study is as follows: After the introduction, the central object and concept of the study, English as a Lingua Franca, will be thoroughly discussed from various perspectives in Chapter 2. This was deemed relevant for a concept that is still, in spite of the increased scholarly awareness, relatively new to many, and which still causes some confusion especially in those new to the field. That is why the origins, definitions, and previous research into ELF as well as the key conceptual changes it brings along will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter. After the account of the concept of ELF, the focus in Chapter 3 shifts on to the major theoretical underpinnings of the thesis. First, a general view on studying grammar in spoken language is provided, followed by a discussion of language universals with a specific focus on recent debates on the concept of 'vernacular universals' and 'angloversals'. Chapter 4 on materials and methods describes the databases used and the overall methodological choices made and procedures followed in carrying out the study. It is worth noting, though, that the more detailed descriptions of data retrievals and post-processing for the four features studied are given separately in connection with the discussion of each feature in Chapter 5. Chapter 5, then, constitutes the core of the study with each of the four above-mentioned non-standard features of ELF closely scrutinized in separate subsections. All the subsections begin with an overview of research literature pertaining to the feature at hand, followed by methodological considerations relevant in each case, and finally, corpus findings from both ELFA and MICASE presented and discussed with a summary of the main findings at the end of each subsection. The concluding chapter, Chapter 6, finally summarizes and reflects upon the main findings of the study as a whole.

2. English as a Lingua Franca

Prior to evolving into an independent field of study, the phenomenon of English as a Lingua Franca was referred to with an abundance of terms including 'International English', 'World English', 'Global English' or 'English as a/an International/World/Global Language' (see McArthur 2004 for a review of the use of the terms in the past). However, some of these terms – notably 'English as an International Language' and 'English as a World Language' – have also been used in the sense of either Standard English (with the assumption that Standard English caters for all global use of English, as e.g. in Greenbaum 1988), or as an umbrella term only for the varieties of English in the traditional English-speaking countries and their former colonies where English has gained a status of an official language – thus excluding non-native English speakers in other parts of the world (cf. e.g. Todd & Hancock 1986, Cheshire 1991, Trudgill & Hannah 2002). Further, terms such as 'International English' or 'World English' seem to imply that there was a uniform global variety of English – a connotation not subscribed to by lingua franca researchers. With the establishment of the research field, however, also its appellation has established to that of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), which conveniently avoids confusion with the other fields of English linguistics that take different varieties of the language as their research objects.

The term *lingua franca* originally referred to a language variety spoken along the coasts of the Mediterranean by sailors, merchants, and crusaders as a common language that enabled communication in the multilingual setting. This pidgin language, spoken approximately from the 15th to the 19th century, was based on Italian but also contained elements of other Mediterranean languages such as Spanish, Arabic, Greek and Persian. Since then, however, the term *lingua franca* has come to mean any vehicular or auxiliary language that enables communication between speakers who do not share any other language. The basic definition of a lingua franca is thus solely *functional* (cf. e.g. Samarin 1987: 371). English as a Lingua Franca can accordingly be defined as a vehicular language between speakers of different first languages for whom English serves as the most convenient common medium. It is important to note that while many lingua francas are pidgins, the definition of a lingua franca does not postulate this – and it certainly is not the case with academic ELF as we shall see.

Despite its primarily functional definition (or perhaps just because of it) opinions still vary as to whether the concept of a lingua franca includes native speakers, or whether lingua francas are languages spoken only non-natively as second languages (see e.g. definitions by Hall 1972, Samarin 1987, and Gnutzmann 2001 for different views on the matter). The question is pertinent to ELF and will therefore be briefly touched upon here. As Samarin (1968) points out, lingua francas can be either natural, pidginized or planned languages – of which pidgins and planned languages do not, as a rule, have native speakers. We also know that a natural language which used to be spoken natively can continue as a lingua franca even after it ceases to be anyone's native language, as was the case with Latin in Europe in the Middle Ages. But what about a natural language that currently has native speakers but is also largely used as a lingua franca, such as English? Can English be called a lingua franca when it is used between, for example, an American and a Japanese speaker? While theoretical distinctions may be difficult to draw, for ELF research the question is, first and foremost, of practical interest: what kinds of situations

account as ELF situations and to what extent should native speakers be included in ELF data? As native speakers, too, do appear in real-life ELF interactions every now and then, it is quite natural not to exclude them from ELF data altogether but when defining ELF contexts, Gnutzmann's (2001) heuristic distinction provides a useful tool. According to him, the nature and context of the communication decide whether a situation can be called an ELF situation. If two speakers meet in an international setting in a non-English speaking country (i.e. on 'neutral ground') and the cause for their communication has nothing to do with 'nativeness' in the language, then, the situation should be regarded as an 'English as a lingua franca' situation. On the other hand, if the communication takes place in particular in an English-speaking country in a situation where (largely monolingual) first language (L1) English speakers are the majority, or if the cause for the communication pertains to 'native speaker language skills', we are dealing with a traditional 'English as a foreign language' situation for the second language (L2) speaker rather than a lingua franca situation.[4] The difference for native speakers lies in the fact that in an ELF situation native speakers cannot assume sovereignty over the language but they, too, are expected to accommodate their output according to the communicative situation. From a purely theoretical point of view, then, we could perhaps claim that as ELF communication essentially requires adaptation from *all* participants (whether native or non-native speakers of English), ELF as such has no 'native speakers' and it thus fits the definition of lingua francas as languages that are only spoken non-natively. From a practical viewpoint, however, this is hardly a satisfactory solution. For the purposes of the present study, native speakers are not excluded from the ELF data altogether, but when analyzing non-standard occurrences of specific syntactic structures, only the instances produced by non-native speakers were taken to be representative of 'ELF usage'. This is because native speakers are in minority in ELF anyway (see section 2.1.1), and because the point of the study was to contrast the findings with native speaker data.

The history of humankind has seen many lingua francas, some of which have been restricted to certain domains of use (such as Latin in religion and science in the Middle Ages) or to small regional areas (such as Russenorsk in the Norwegian–Russian frontier two centuries ago), and some of much wider geographical and functional currency (such as French in the Francophone world or Swahili in Eastern Africa). But never before has human history witnessed a language reach a functional and geographical scope comparable to that of English today. English is the lingua franca *sui generis* in the modern world: spoken virtually in all corners of the world, and used as a common medium from science to show business, from international politics to sub-culture communities. As pointed out in the Introduction, the situation is new and unprecedented – that is why it also calls for new approaches to the phenomenon and to language in general. What does it actually mean that a natural language becomes a 'world language'; what are the preconditions and – above all – the implications of such a process?

These are huge questions that obviously cannot be exhaustively discussed here. In-depth accounts of these matters from various viewpoints can be found in recent book-length treatises such as Mauranen (2012), Seidlhofer (2011) and Jenkins (2009) – Jenkins (2009) and Seidlhofer (2011) concentrating on the socio-political/ideological and

[4] This kind of heuristic is also applied in the compilation of the spoken ELF corpus VOICE (*Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English*) where dyadic conversations between native and non-native speakers of English do not count as ELF situations.

conceptual changes that the rise of the English language to a world language has brought with it, and Mauranen taking a closer look at the linguistic outcome of the phenomenon. These works also illustrate the diversification of ELF research into two rather different lines of inquiry: the former two representing ELF more as a movement (cf. Melchers & Shaw 2011: 213) defending second language speakers' rights to be second language speakers – with calls for changes, for example, in the English teaching practices around the world – and the latter describing the linguistic phenomenon itself. The present study is first and foremost concerned with linguistic description of ELF and thus adheres to the latter-mentioned line of research. However, as lexico-grammatical topics often find themselves at the intersection between empirical, descriptive work, and the every-day practices of language teaching, some consideration will also be given to the application of the results in educational contexts, and thus also the 'rights' of second language speakers and possible reforms in English language teaching touched upon – though issues more pertinent to the ELF 'movement'.

The main aim of the present chapter is, however, to provide a general backdrop of ELF and previous ELF research as relevant for our discussion. The chapter is divided into three main sections. We begin with an overlook of the sociolinguistic and socio-political origins of ELF (i.e. the preconditions of ELF). This is followed by the linguistic perspective to ELF, which is of primary concern for the present study. Finally, the most important field of application for ELF results – that of English language teaching and testing – is taken a brief look at as relevant for our purposes.

2.1 The Sociolinguistic and Socio-political Perspective

2.1.1 The Origins and Scope of ELF

As Kachru (1996: 907) aptly points out, English first became a lingua franca in the British Isles as non-English speaking regions of Wales, Scotland and Ireland were united to England to form Great Britain three centuries ago. The *global* spread of English, however, is attributed to mainly two factors: the British colonialism (roughly between 1600-1950) with its heyday in the late 19th century, and secondly, from the 1950's onwards, to the increasing domination of American economic, political, military and cultural power in the world. Kachru (1996: 907) divides the period of British colonialism into two so-called diasporas, the first one involving the migration of Englishmen to North America, Australia and New Zealand, resulting in new first language varieties of English (as processes such as dialect leveling took place among the English-speaking settlers), and the second diaspora involving the colonization of Asia and Africa, yielding mainly new second language varieties of English (as the local non-English speaking people learned the language of their colonizers). Still, for instance in continental Europe, English had little use outside a few seaport cities between 1500 and 1800 (see Van Essen 1997: 95). It only gradually began to gain in influence in Europe with the British and American advances in industry and technology in the 19th century, and further strengthened its position after French and German had lost on their status as international languages due to the Second World War. Since World War II, it has mainly been the aforementioned

American cultural hegemony that has motivated the spread of English and sustained its use all around the world. However, in addition to the two major historical forces, Mauranen (2012: 3) also notes the more recent effects of the rise of the Internet on the final, explosive expansion of English to a 'world language'. All in all, the developments from the 1950's onwards have been extremely rapid – indeed, less than a lifetime – which is probably why the consequences of this global spread really started to attract serious scholarly attention only around the turn of the millennium.

It is impossible to say exactly how many speakers English has today as the estimations vary according to how different speakers of the language are categorized, and who is regarded as 'a speaker of English' in the first place. However, Crystal (2003: 69) ventures a rough guess of approximately a quarter of the world's population being capable of "communicating to a useful level in English". These speakers can be further categorized into groups according to the circumstances how they learned the language or what functions they have for it. The best-known classification is probably the model developed by Kachru in 1985 (see Figure 1), which divides the speakers of English into three concentric circles.

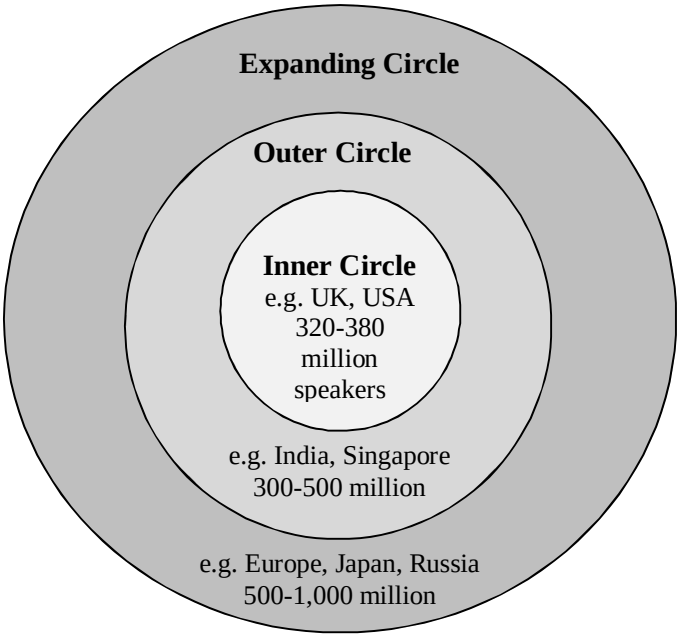

Figure 1. Kachru's (1985) classification of speakers of English. Adapted and numbers of speakers added according to Crystal (2003: 61).

In Kachru's model, the innermost circle, *the Inner Circle*, comprises the L1 or native speakers of English in the traditional English-speaking countries (the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) – the regions of the aforementioned first diaspora of English. The number of speakers in the Inner Circle is estimated to be around 320–380 million (Crystal 2003: 61). *The Outer Circle*, on the other hand, comprises speakers in the countries of the second diaspora – in other words the regions where English gained a

position as an official language due to colonialism, and where people often speak it as their second language (hence the label 'English as a second language' or ESL for this circle). Among these countries are, for instance, India, Singapore and Nigeria, and the estimated number of English speakers in these territories reaches 300–500 million (Crystal 2003: 61). In the Outer Circle, English is used as a lingua franca even *within* the national borders for so-called intranational communication between compatriots of different first language backgrounds. Finally, the third and outer-most circle, *the Expanding Circle*, covers the rest of the speakers in the English speaking world. This circle encompasses countries that do not have a colonial background but in which the status of English as an international language is recognized and the language is taught as a 'foreign language' in schools (hence the label 'English as a foreign language', EFL). Continental Europe along with China, Japan and Russia, for instance, belongs to the Expanding Circle, which is estimated to have as many as 500 million to one billion speakers of English (Crystal 2003: 61). In these countries English is needed mainly for communication beyond the national borders, in other words for international communication (see Kachru 1985: 12-15).

Although Kachru's divisions and the above-mentioned concepts are classic, they are far from unproblematic. Not only is the model based on country-by-country divisions, thus ignoring the variation between individual speakers within the countries, but also the boundaries between an 'L1' and 'ESL' speaker as well as that between an 'ESL' and 'EFL' speaker are notoriously fuzzy. The categorizations, especially as regards the ESL/EFL distinction, have been much debated in recent years (see e.g. the edited volume by Mukherjee and Hundt 2011), some researchers arguing for a continuum between ESL and EFL speakers (e.g. Gilquin & Granger 2011), and others finding a clear (typological) difference between them (e.g. Szmrecsanyi & Kortmann 2011). As alluded to above, in the present study an approach will be adopted where L1 (first or native language) speakers will be separated from the other speakers of English but no division is made between ESL and EFL speakers; these 'non-L1' speakers will be treated as one group, as 'L2 speakers'. While I fully recognize the different origins and sociolinguistic circumstances for English speakers in the Outer and Expanding Circles respectively, I still consider this type of combining appropriate as I see these speakers as having more things in common than issues keeping them apart as regards their use of English. Most notably, both groups mainly need English because of its lingua franca functions (whether *intra*- or *inter*nationally) and in both groups a majority of the speakers have learned the language only after their first language and mainly in educational settings – unlike the Inner Circle speakers who have learned the language at home and for most of whom it is needed primarily for interactions with other L1 speakers around them. For instance, Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008: 156-160) maintain that in studies on Outer Circle Englishes, the effects of classroom learning on the ensuing 'New Englishes' has been underresearched – which means that similarities to Expanding Circle Englishes, mainly learned at school, could be greater than commonly thought (see also Sridhar & Sridhar 1986 on the 'paradigm gap' between studies into New Englishes and Second Language Acquisition). In addition, Crystal (2003: 67) points to observations according to which a distinction between a 'second language' and 'foreign language' speaker in the contemporary English-speaking world has lost on its relevance since there are Expanding Circle countries where English has much more use nowadays compared to some Outer

Circle countries, and he further reminds us that the distinction in 'second' or 'foreign' language use should not be interpreted as a difference in fluency or ability (p. 6). It can also be argued that due to such factors as access to media and international traveling, people in many Expanding Circle countries are nowadays exposed to English much more than people in some Outer Circle countries. Because of these reasons both the Outer and Expanding Circle speakers will here be considered 'L2 speakers'.

But to return to Kachru's model and the estimations of speakers in different circles, the main outcome is clear: no matter how one looks at it, L2 speakers have outnumbered L1 speakers of English, and given the demographic future developments in the world, this disparity is only bound to grow in the future (Graddol 1997: 60). Crystal (2003: 69) estimates that the ratio of native to non-native speakers is presently 1:3. This is a new situation in the linguistic history: non-native speakers so clearly outnumbering native speakers of a language. But this is exactly what makes English global. As Crystal (2003: 4) points out, a great number of native speakers is not enough to make any language a 'world language' (or else Chinese would be *the* world language), but it is only when non-native speakers around the world start learning and using a certain language that it becomes global. In other words, it is the L2 speakers that make the English language a world language.

Another basic but important insight that ELF research hinges upon is the recognition of the fact that a vast majority of all communication in English in the modern world takes place, indeed, *between L2 speakers* – with no native speakers necessarily present at all. Gnutzmann (2001: 357) cites Beneke (1991) who has estimated that up to 80 per cent of all verbal exchanges in English in the world take place solely between non-native speakers. This means that the most frequent function that English nowadays serves globally is precisely the lingua franca function, and it is also the most important reason why English is learned today. For most learners of English, contacts with L1 speakers of the language are only of secondary importance – the primary motivation for learning English being the fact that through English one can connect to the world at large. In other words, English is not predominantly learned for integrative purposes anymore – as if for 'blending in' with a native speaker community and culture – but precisely because of its global instrumental value. This is what sets English (as a world language) apart from other languages that are learned and taught as 'foreign': one learns a *foreign* language usually in order to be able to communicate and sometimes integrate with its *native* speakers, but this does not (fully) apply to English anymore.

So the transitions in the use of English (from L1-L2 to predominantly L2-L2 use), in the context of use (from Inner Circle-based contexts to international contexts), and in the speaker profile (from native to predominantly non-native) have all begun to shift the center of gravity of the English speaking world from the Inner Circle towards the Outer and Expanding Circles. What are the implications of this sociolinguistic reality for English? We will turn to that next.

2.1.2 The Nature of a World Language

It has become a truism that English now is a global – one might even say a 'universal' – language, but the consequences of this obvious fact for our conceptualization of English have not always been thoroughly reflected upon. Smith (1976), over thirty years ago, was probably the first to contemplate the issue in a new light. In his stimulating article, Smith put forth that English as an "International Auxiliary Language", as he called it, "can and should be de-nationalized" (p. 41) so that "English belongs to any country which uses it and may have as wide or as limited a use...as is felt desirable" (p. 38). As examples of countries where English belonged to, Smith mentioned, for instance, Japan and Thailand (cf. the Expanding Circle), the Philippines (cf. the Outer Circle), and the United States (cf. the Inner Circle), adding that "every nation which uses it [English] does so with different tone, color, and quality" (p. 39) and that we "must become more tolerant of the English used by others. Just because the other person doesn't speak English the way we do, doesn't mean he/she is wrong or speaking incorrectly" (p. 41). Still further, Smith pointed out that one does not have to "appreciate the culture of a country whose principal language is English [cf. the Inner Circle] in order for one to use it effectively" (p. 39) but that English teaching should be about teaching learners how to communicate *their own* cultural traditions to others in English (p. 41). Finally, Smith suggested we stop using terms such as 'English as a Foreign / Second Language' and instead start teaching English as an "International Auxiliary Language" (p. 42).

Although Smith's (1976) article has not gained as much attention among today's ELF researchers as it undoubtedly should have, it obviously laid down the foundations of ELF research nearly forty years ago with its insight to what it really means for a language to be *international*. The term 'international' or 'world language' indeed implies that any language boasting this status can no more be bound only to one or a handful of nations in the world, nor can it be expected to convey only certain type of culture or be based on a linguistic code dictated by one or two nation-states. To quote the African writer Achebe's (1975) famous words: "The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use", and, I would like to add, to different kinds of forms as well. A language only becomes a world language as speakers around the world start finding ways to employ it for their own needs in their own ways, and it is no more in the hands of the native speaker minority to define how the non-native speaker majority should use the language internationally. As Widdowson (1994: 385) puts it in his well-known article on the ownership of English:

> How English develops in the world is no business whatever of native speakers in England, the United States, or anywhere else. They have no say in the matter, no right to intervene or pass judgement. They are irrelevant. The very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it. To grant such custody of the language is necessarily to arrest its development and so undermine its international status.

This is also where the 'ELF movement' debates of L2 English speakers' linguistic rights stem from. The argument is that since L2 speakers form the majority of English speakers, their English should not be compared to that of native speakers' anymore in

derogatory terms as if manifesting a deficient form of English. Instead, what the ELF 'movement' is basically saying is that non-native English should be seen as a language form of its own – with its divergences from L1 English – and non-native English speakers as fully-fledged speakers in their own right (see e.g. Seidlhofer 2011).

2.1.3 Standard English and Standard Language Ideology

Such views have, quite expectedly, met with objection especially from those who wish to preserve English around the world 'intact' by arguing that intelligibility of the language can only be maintained through adherence to Standard English (see Section 2.1.6 below for a more detailed discussion of this view and two opposing views). Whether such a claim is tenable requires some consideration of Standard English itself – and its relation to speech and writing. As this study focuses on spoken ELF, the most important question is, of course: is there a standard for spoken English that could be followed in international communication?

How to define Standard English has been a matter of perennial debates (see e.g. the contributions in Bex and Watts 1999) because there is no academy in the English-speaking world (in the same way as there is, for instance, for French) that would prescribe and codify the forms belonging or not belonging to the standard. That is also why definitions and views on the matter vary – even between the Inner Circle countries (see e.g. Milroy 1999). However, a degree of consensus on certain aspects still seems to emerge from the different views (as discussed e.g. by Jenkins 2009: 36). Firstly, Standard English is primarily associated with written language (because that is what standards in any language are created for in the first place), and secondly Standard English mainly codifies grammar and vocabulary. Thirdly, Standard English is the variety of language that the education system promotes and rests upon. All this is largely agreed. It is easily perceivable that *written language* needs a certain degree of standardization because of its 'decontextualized' nature – especially in published texts: a piece of writing is detached from the time and place of its origins – and the originator him/herself – and is thus not subject to, for instance, immediate clarification of unclear points or other negotiations between the writer and the reader. A fixed code helps to lessen the burden of the 'decoder' in such demanding (and one might even say 'abnormal') circumstances of communication.

But what about spoken communication? Whether Standard English also extends to spoken language is clearly a moot point. Again, only one thing seems to be agreed upon among most linguists: Standard English is not associated with any particular accent, although in Britain Received Pronunciation (RP) has gained position as a prestige accent in itself. Still, in many definitions of Standard English the *speech* of 'educated speakers' is mentioned – with a reference to the grammar and vocabulary these speakers use. However, there is of course no precise and exhaustive documentation of how the educated speak (in the same way as there is of written language) and thus, such conceptualizations primarily stem from our intuitions. Further, as Cheshire (1999: 130) points out, when it comes to grammar, not many 'educated speakers' necessarily speak the way we think they do. Cheshire notes that it is probably only those academics who

write the descriptions of language whose speech reflects our intuitions of 'standard spoken English', and the fact that these people's speech conforms to our impressions of Standard English is, again, due to the fact that these academics themselves "have spent long years immersed in written language" (p. 130). Thus, the association seems to be somewhat circular. Further, Cheshire (1999: 130-131) deplores the fact that our knowledge of typical spoken structures especially in more *informal* settings (also by 'the educated') is lacking. And whether structures emerging from such settings should be part of the spoken standard is, of course, another question. Cheshire (1999: 146) concludes that "[a]t the very least, it seems necessary to draw a clear distinction between spoken standard English and written standard English, and between formal and informal styles of both speaking and writing." In similar vein to Cheshire, Carter (1999: 165) on discussing the impacts of the unanalyzed concept of 'spoken standard English' on education, points out that "the precise nature of spoken standard English remains to be more fully clarified and defined" and that very "little appears to be known what exactly it is". Some fifteen years on, the situation still remains essentially the same in spite of the appearance of grammars that have taken on describing common features in spoken English (e.g. *The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, 1999 by Biber et al. and *The Cambridge Grammar of English*, 2006 by Carter and McCarthy). This descriptive work is, however, still in its early stages compared to the extent to which written standard English has been described, and for all we know, a 'standard' for spoken language is bound to be much more tolerant in the acceptable variants than a written norm. Because of this Milroy and Milroy (1985a: 26) go as far as to say that there is "no such entity as a standard spoken language" because in a strict sense "standardisation does not tolerate variability" (p. 22). Due to the ill-defined nature of the concept of 'spoken standard English', in this study the term Standard English is used in reference to standard written English as codified in prescriptive grammars, and consequently the term 'non-standard' used in reference to features that remain outside such codification. From L2 speakers' perspective, anyway, the key concern in the matter lies in the fact that their speech has traditionally – and unfairly – been compared to written standards, as education in general relies on the codified written language norms for its reference point. According to Carter (1999: 158) this has led to a situation where learners have been taught to speak in formal written English and thus required to produce "artificial and unnatural English". We will take up this point again in Section 2.3. below and in Chapter 3 when considering spoken language in more detail.

But does international spoken communication in English require the use of Standard English as the critics of 'ELF movement' insist? As for example Linell (2005: 135-137) points out, insistence on standard language to safeguard intelligibility is essentially based on a view which sees human language as a fixed code (in a similar manner to a programming language) which can only convey messages if used 'correctly'. Such a view, on the other hand, is reminiscent of what Harris (e.g. 1980 and 1987) has called 'telementation', in other words, a view of human communication as unidirectional transfer of thoughts from one mind to another by means of words. From our every-day experience as language users we know that this is *not* how communication works and that human cognition is capable of much more than that. In actual fact, when speakers communicate they actively engage in co-construction and negotiation of meaning and in dynamic 'meaning-making' through language. This happens every time – to various

degrees – when people interact, even if the speakers shared the same mother tongue, and there is essentially no reason to doubt this would not be the case in L2 communication as well. Obviously, the 'code' employed for communication has to be recognizable enough for both parties for co-construction of meaning to be possible but this does not entail that only a fixed code such as standard language provides a means for it.

Those insisting on Standard English as the only channel for international communication can, then, be seen as proponents of Standard English Ideology – a subcategory of Standard Language Ideology (see also 2.1.6 below). Although clouded in the concern for communication breakdowns, many of these proponents actually take interest in other issues that the use of standard language brings with it. As Milroy and Milroy (1985a) point out, a standard language is actually "an idea in the mind rather than a reality" (p. 23) and standardization in language becomes an ideology because, among other things, it is "motivated in the first place by various social, political and commercial needs" (p. 22). In the case of English, the mainly self-appointed guardians of language, both laypeople and linguists (see Bolinger 1980: 1-9) regard Standard English as inherently superior to any other variety of the language and wish to preserve 'the language' intact through the promotion of the standard. This action finds its motivation in the guardians' wish to actually preserve the social power structure that the use of the standard sustains especially in the Inner Circle countries. For instance, Widdowson (2003: 38-39) observes, that one of the most jealously protected areas of Standard English is its grammar just because of its 'communal' rather than 'communicative' value. What Widdowson means is that many features of grammar are redundant and thus not crucial for communicative transactions. Consequently, adhering to standard grammar becomes rather a "shibboleth" that marks off 'educated speakers' from the rest, and not a real means for maintaining intelligibility. Similarly, for example Cameron (1995) notes that grammar is strongly associated with order, tradition, authority, hierarchy, and rules, which clearly showed, for instance, in the Education Reform debate in Britain in the 1980's and 1990's as "grammar was made to symbolize various things for its conservative proponents: a commitment to traditional values as a basis for social order, to 'standards' and 'discipline' in the classroom, to moral certainties rather than moral relativism and to cultural homogeneity rather than pluralism" (Cameron 1995: 112).

From the global perspective of English, though, at least two questions arise in response to grammar and Standard English Ideology. First, if it is true that standard grammar mainly sustains social order in the Inner Circle countries, why should international speakers meticulously adhere to the standard in their speech when for these speakers the 'communal' value of English grammar plays a clearly less significant – if not insignificant altogether – role than for L1 speakers in their societies? Further, if requiring all native speakers to speak 'the standard' offends their identities, why should this be less so in the case of non-native speakers who also use the language not only for restricted information exchanges but for various kinds of personal and intimate communication? Secondly, we may wonder whether a strict standard is indispensable for any communication (international or intranational) if we accept the view put forth above that communication between human beings is not machine-like 'telementation' but joint, co-constructive activity.

Essentially, the fears of English falling apart and becoming unintelligible to speakers from different corners of the world is nothing new in the context of English as a

world language. As Crystal (2003: 177) notes, Noah Webster (1789) predicted some two hundred years ago that American and British English would diverge into different languages, and a century later the British philologist Henry Sweet (1877) envisioned that British, American and Australian varieties of English would become mutually unintelligible mainly because of differences in their pronunciation. None of this has still happened, and with modern mass media and increased mobility and contacts between English speakers around the world it is not likely to happen in the near future, either. Also according to Brutt-Griffler (2002: 177) a centripetal force of what she terms 'world speech community' ensures that different local and functional varieties of English revolving around it (and also interacting with each other), do not diverge too far as to become mutually unintelligible but rather converge on a common plane – otherwise, of course, the whole point of having a common world language would be lost. This last point brings us to another concept, that of a 'speech community', that we need to take a closer look in the context of a world language.

2.1.4 ELF and the Concept of Speech Community

While Standard English and the native speaker as reference points have gradually been removed in the case of Outer Circle varieties (from the 1970's onwards with the rise of the 'World Englishes' paradigm), for some reason many linguists still feel uneasy to grant the same rights to Expanding Circle speakers – although, as we noted above, there may be very little difference between the use of English in each of these Circles. The latter are still mostly offered the identification of 'a learner' (as discussed in section 2.1.5 in more detail). Applied linguists in particular started to pay attention to the emerging new 'world order' of the global English speaking community in the 1980's largely due to the publication of two separate article collections: *English for Cross-Cultural Communication* edited by Smith (1981), and *The Other Tongue* edited by Kachru (1982; see also the considerably revised edition from 1992) where a distinction between the uses and functions of English as a 'mother tongue' and 'other tongue' was articulately drawn. However, even these volumes made only sparse reference to Englishes spoken in the Expanding Circle. The most probable reason for the exclusion of Expanding Circle speakers from the 'English speaking community' thus far is the perceived lack of an English-language 'speech community' in the Expanding Circle countries. If there is no local speech community, the norms for language use have to come somewhere from outside, so Expanding Circle speakers must be dependent on native speaker norms and thus also regarded as 'learners', not fully-fledged English speakers – so goes the common line of argumentation.

However, 'speech community' is one of the concepts that requires re-thinking in a context of a world language, and ELF researchers have approached the issue from different viewpoints. One interpretation, already briefly mentioned above, is offered by Brutt-Griffler (2002). While it is true that there is no 'geographical' English speech community understood in the traditional sense *within* the Expanding Circle countries, in the context of a world language we can adopt a wider understanding of the term. The Expanding Circle speakers do not learn English in order to become members in a local,

intranational, speech community (because they have another language already in place for that) nor do majority of them want to become members in native speaker speech communities, as pointed out above, but the reason they learn English is, indeed, to become members in an international 'world speech community'. This is a term suggested and defended by Brutt-Griffler (2002: Ch 9). According to her, a 'speech community' is based first and foremost on shared subjective knowledge that "can be linguistically communicated easily and readily among the members of the group" (2002: 143). According to her, we can indeed talk about a 'world speech community' in the case of English as this shared subjective knowledge finds its expression in international organizations, international media, cosmopolitan urban centers and so on (p. 176). It is the membership in this global community that Expanding Circle speakers seek through English.

Another way of approaching the issue is to recognize that there are, indeed, local speech communities in the Expanding Circle, too, just not defined geographically but found for example within international companies and other workplaces. Mauranen (2012: 18), for instance, is somewhat critical of employing such abstract concepts as a 'global community' in ELF research for the very fact that it is a rather elusive term pointing to a number of smaller communities around the world with no real common denominator. In other words, it is akin to an 'imagined community' (cf. Anderson 1991). Also for empirical research purposes, a 'global community' is very difficult to operationalize. For this particular reason, as an alternative to a 'speech community', the concept of a 'community of practice' has been applied and discussed in many ELF studies (e.g. Dewey 2006, Seidlhofer 2007, Ehrenreich 2009, Hynninen 2011). Unlike an imagined community, a community of practice denotes a real community of people coming together around a common enterprise and interacting directly with each other (in English). But as Mauranen (2012: 23) notes, this concept, too, has its shortcomings in ELF contexts – as does the notion of a 'discourse community' (cf. Swales 1990). Neither discourse community nor a community of practice accounts for, for instance, the mobility of the speakers between different 'speech communities' or multilingualism of the speakers – both inherent in ELF contexts as Mauranen (2012: 20, 23) observes. However, both concepts do denote communities in which the members co-construct and regulate the linguistic norms by themselves, which is also what, according to Mauranen (2012: 20) happens in ELF. Self-regulation of the norms is also what makes the speakers 'fully-fledged' users of the language (as opposed to norm-depending imitators of native English). In order to account for the mobility of the speakers, Mauranen (2012: 21) discusses social network analysis (cf. e.g. Milroy & Milroy 1985b). This model could be used, for instance, to explain how possible new linguistic patterns spread in ELF – i.e. along with mobile individuals moving from one group to another (see section 2.2.2 below). Nevertheless, according to Mauranen, none of the traditional existing concepts of speech (or other) communities alone can readily be applied to ELF. As she (2012: 23) notes:

> we need to conceptualize an ELF community as one that builds on the strengths of the established notion of language community as the site of shaping language and regulating norms, but with strong components that add non-locality, non-permanence, speaker mobility, and multilingualism to it.

For empirical purposes, however, it is most practical to zero in on one typical 'ELF community' to begin charting the phenomenon in more detail – rather than try to capture ELF in its more abstract sense (as a kind of 'imagined community' spanning the whole world). Academia is one of the most typical ELF communities in today's world and thus chosen as the focus in the present study, as will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

The discussion of the applicable terms for 'ELF communities' makes obvious the fact that as there is no one, uniform global 'ELF community', there is also no one uniform linguistic entity called "English as a Lingua Franca" either. One of the recurring questions from those new to ELF research is precisely the question whether ELF can be defined as a language variety of its own. Since ELF is primarily a functional concept and represents a postmodern understanding of language (see e.g. Graddol 1994 for a brief history of approaches to language, from structuralist to sociolinguist to postmodern), it sits ill with any traditional (structuralist or sociolinguistic) conceptualizations of a 'language variety' based on the concept of a unified speech community. Certainly, ELF researchers themselves have never suggested there was one monolithic variety of ELF spoken the whole world over (see e.g. Jenkins 2004: 65). At most, tentative references to the emergence of possible local varieties of ELF have been made, such as 'Euro-English' for Europe (Jenkins et al. 2001) or even 'Nordic English' for Scandinavia (McArthur 2003) – which have been criticized based on the traditional conceptualizations of a language variety (see e.g. Mollin 2006 for criticism towards 'Euro-English' on the basis of, for instance, it not manifesting enough common linguistic features to be called a variety of its own). Also academic ELF in the present study is not intended to represent 'all' ELF in the world but is simply tapped here as an influential instance of ELF, as one of its *functional* varieties.

2.1.5 Learners, Users, and Native Speakers

As mentioned above, English speakers in the Expanding Circle (in particular) are still largely identified as 'learners', whatever the purpose and circumstances for their use of English. But along with the notion of a speech community, this conceptualization, too, needs rethinking in the context of a global language. Let us first discuss the issue from the ELF 'movement' point of view – i.e. from the perspective of L2 speakers' 'right' to their own kind of English – because this will also have implications for future scenarios of English language teaching (discussed in section 2.3 below).

In essence, ELF research is about a paradigm shift, or a number of them. One of the most important ones is the recognition of non-native English speakers as *users* of the language when they are outside educational settings, *not* as perpetual, linguistically deficient *learners* forever striving to "become natives" or near-native (as assiduously advocated by Seidlhofer, e.g. 2001, 2004 and 2011). Up until these days the strong learner metaphor – derived from second language acquisition (SLA) research – has prevailed as the only identification available especially for the Expanding Circle

speakers, regardless of the context of language use (i.e. whether as a lingua franca in the 'real world' or an object of study in a classroom).

From the ELF movement perspective, the basic problem with the term 'learner' in an ELF context is that it is implicitly linked to the native speaker reference point. 'Language learners' are expected to strive for native-like proficiency and will stay learners until they have reached this goal. However, in ELF contexts the whole issue of nativeness is ill-fitting and irrelevant for many reasons. Firstly, as pointed out above, lingua franca situations are essentially regarded as situations where native speakers, too, must adapt their delivery and ways of communicating to suit a given international situation and to converge on a common ground with their non-native interlocutors – and for this to happen, native speakers, too, will need some awareness raising, education and perhaps practice in international ELF communication. There is already anecdotal evidence of native speakers being the underdog in international settings where the majority of participants are non-native speakers: it is not unheard of that non-native speakers may understand each other perfectly well and the discussion may flow fluently while the native speaker participant cannot follow the conversation – and perhaps uses such language him/herself that the non-native speakers have difficulties understanding[5] as in the case of what Seidlhofer (e.g. 2011: 135) terms 'unilateral idiomaticity'. Various studies have, indeed, demonstrated that a native speaker is not necessarily the most intelligible interlocutor in cross-linguistic/cultural communication (e.g. Smith 1992), and on the contrary, it is a commonplace experience for many non-native speakers that another non-native speaker is actually easier to comprehend (cf. e.g. Shaw et al. 2009, Suviniitty 2012). So, one can ask, does nativeness add any value in ELF communication worth aspiring for?

Secondly, from previous research we know that it is very difficult to "become" a native speaker or even a near-native speaker after a certain (fairly young) age (see e.g. Davies 2003 and Coulmas 1981 for discussions on who counts as a native speaker and on what grounds). This is pointedly illustrated by the fact that if someone succeeds in this, the person is called an 'exceptional learner' just because that is what it is: exceptional. Birdsong (2004) has reviewed a number of studies on the 'ultimate attainment' of L2 speakers and notes that in various studies only 5-15 % of learners of foreign languages have been conceived of as having attained a level close to a native speaker – even though the studies reviewed were all carried out with L2 speakers who had been living in the 'target language country' for several years. Corresponding percentages for L2 users *not* living in a native speaker environment would inevitably have to be even lower. So, the question arises: why should the native speaker competence be the ultimate goal for L2 learning if the vast majority never attain it?

Further, Cook (2002: 9-10) on discussing L2 speakers in general (not just those of English), notes that L2 speakers seem to be the only group of speakers in modern linguistics whose speech is criticized against another group to which they can never

[5] See e.g. Phillipson's (2006) reference to John Simpson's, the chief editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, personal experience as a native speaker of English among non-native speakers in international activities. Simpson reports that "my English is more difficult to understand than the English of my continental colleagues, simply because this is a functional language for communication between second-language users, and my variety is a functional language for communication between native speakers" (quoted in Phillipson 2006: 21).

belong. For all other groups, Cook observes, it is politically incorrect (in academic discourse) to say that women, for instance, speak worse than men or New Yorkers worse than Bostonians. And yet, according to Cook (2002: 9): "[s]ome people continue to insist that L2 users are a special case where the goal of one group is to be like another group: the ultimate state of L2 learning is indeed to pass as native". L2 users are, indeed, a special case but in a different way, as Cook (2002: Ch. 1 and 13) shows. He pursues the paradigm shift from 'learner' to 'user' and points out the obvious fact that L2 learners will, of course, become L2 users of the language, not L1 speakers. Cook notes, for instance, that L2 speakers often have different uses for the language than native speakers, and that the minds of L2 speakers are different from people who only know one language (i.e. from monolingual native speakers) because of the very fact that they can make use of two (or more) languages in their thinking and communication (Cook 2002: Ch. 1). He also disclaims the practice of grouping all L1 speakers together as a unified group – be their language skills what they may – but treating L2 users as individual speakers with their 'individual' errors (p. 3).

The very same problematic is discussed by Brutt-Griffler (2002: Ch. 7 and 8) who in her book makes a convincing case about the fact that when we consider the development of 'world English' we cannot look at it from the individual-based SLA perspective but we have to perceive it as what she calls 'macroacquisition' – as *group acquisition* of the language. Similarly to Cook, Brutt-Griffler points out that because SLA takes an individual learner as its unit of analysis, it is easy to accuse the individual of 'errors' or defects where s/he deviates from the native speaker norm, while in the case of whole groups of people it is politically out of line to ascribe groups of speakers as 'defective' or 'erroneous' in the way they use (a) language. This same realization is also echoed in a well-known quotation from Jenkins (2000: 160) according to which "[t]here is really no justification for doggedly persisting in referring to an item as 'an error' if the vast majority of the world's L2 English speakers produce and understand it."

Finally, as for instance Davies (2003: 8) points out, being a 'native speaker' – or, one could add, an L2 speaker for that matter – is very much a question of self-ascription. This is also postulated in Johnson and Johnson's (1998: 227) definition of the native speaker concept as they say that:

> A native speaker is traditionally considered to be a person who, having acquired a language in infancy, has expertise and intuitions about its grammaticality, uses it automatically, accurately and creatively, and *identifies with a community in which it is spoken*. [Emphasis added.]

If we assume that the community in which English is spoken refers here to the Inner Circle countries, it was already pointed out that for ELF speakers that is not the community most of them want or need to identify with as only a minority of English L2 speakers will wish to integrate to an English-speaking culture and country. Thus, imposing this kind of 'native identity' on L2 speakers is not only questionable but also pointless. Many recent studies have also pointed to ELF speakers' self-identification as L2 or ELF speakers without the burden of striving to be 'native-like' (cf. e.g. Ranta 2010, Shaw et al. 2009, Jenkins 2007, Erling & Bartlett 2006). In other words, ELF speakers

are starting to adopt the language as *their own* and to identify with an 'ELF community', as it were.

But even if we were not primarily concerned with L2 speakers' identities and 'linguistic rights', there are a number of other theoretical and methodological reasons, too, for drawing a distinction between second language acquisition (SLA) and second language use (SLU), and hence L2 *learners* and *users* as Mauranen (2012; see also Mauranen 2011) convincingly argues. Linguistic research on ELF is research on *second language use*, and because essential to the present study, Mauranen's analysis of the two domains will be discussed in some detail in what follows.

The differences between SLA and SLU boil down to the fact that SLA typically takes place in a language classroom, whereas SLU is language use in the 'real world'. According to Mauranen (2012: 4), it is the peculiar social environment of a classroom that positions L2 speakers almost exclusively as 'learners', with the educational goals totally controlling the norms of interaction. In classrooms, Standard English functions as the externally imposed norm that learners are expected to adhere to or else they will get corrected – and they will also have to accept the corrections because that is why they are in the classroom: committed to acquiring the given norms (p. 6). As a consequence, learners' cognitive orientation is heavily biased towards language form – also because mastery of forms is what they are ultimately evaluated on (p. 7). But as Mauranen (2012: 7) points out, authentic real-life communication can only be simulated in class but not "assessed [...] for success or effectiveness outside it". Further, learners in ELT classrooms typically share an L1 and/or cultural background (p. 5) which contributes to the fact that comprehensibility in interaction in L2 does not need to be top priority for learners as they can always fall back on their shared linguistic and cultural knowledge in case of possible communicative breakdowns in L2. Nevertheless, for learners the target language discourse conventions are axiomatic: learners are supposed to emulate native speaker conventions as closely as possible to avoid communicative breakdowns from ensuing (p. 8).

In contrast, as Mauranen (2012) notes, real-life second language *use* functions on very different kinds of tenets. In an SLU situation, the speakers do not share an L1 and may know very little about each other's culture or the Anglo-American ones, rendering the 'target culture' norms irrelevant as a common ground. Thus, in SLU natural, spontaneous norms arise to safeguard mutual intelligibility (Mauranen 2012: 6). Unlike in SLA, in SLU guaranteeing mutual comprehensibility is of heightened importance to all participants and it has been shown that ELF speakers are not only aware of this but also try to pre-empt misunderstandings with specific strategies such as enhanced explicitness (Mauranen 2006b and 2007; Kaur 2009). But the ways in which intelligibility is safeguarded do not have to (and often do not) follow monolingual native speaker conventions (as in SLA settings) but whatever seems to work in the interaction may be adopted for use in communication (p. 8) – whether it means diverging from the standard or, for example, mixing languages. As Mauranen (2012: 6) pointedly puts it, the only linguistic authority in SLU is communicative efficiency, and lingua franca speakers also orient cognitively to contents over form (p. 7).

Further, the cognitive load in ELF situations is bound to be far heavier than in classroom settings. This is due to the fact that as the multitude of speakers using English for international communication around the world increases and diversifies, it means that

many more cultures, accents, and proficiency levels, for instance, come into play. Juggling and understanding all the different cultural backgrounds and communication patterns, among other things, makes an ELF situation much more challenging than an EFL class, where learners quickly get used to each others' ways of speaking due to regular contact (Mauranen 2012: 7). In passing we may note here that this is also why a claim put forward by Svartvik and Leech (2006: 235) that ELF was a 'Low' or 'less demanding' variety of English for global communication seems untenable. It may be true that linguistically, some structural features will be streamlined, and some vocabulary items done away with in ELF, but this does not make ELF 'less demanding' language use. In ELF communication the output is more unpredictable than, for instance, in Standard English (see e.g. Mauranen 2011: 162), and common ground has to be negotiated locally, which requires more sensitivity from the speakers and adaptability towards each other, be the linguistic structures what they may.

A kind of borderline case between SLA and SLU could be so-called Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) where learners are supposed to acquire new subject matter in a foreign language but with an emphasis also on language learning. In such a setting the goal of mutual understanding is also of higher priority than the form, but similarly to language classroom contexts, CLIL differs from ELF on the first language grounds, because CLIL students, too, typically share an L1 (Mauranen, Hynninen & Ranta 2010: 185).

Despite these obvious differences, SLA and SLU naturally have things in common as well. In either context we are, of course, looking at *second language* speakers, and as Mauranen (2012: 4) notes, the bilingual processing mechanisms as such are, quite naturally, bound to be the same whether the speakers are in an SLA or SLU situation. Therefore, we can also expect to find similar processes in operation in SLU as those postulated by SLA research. However, I hasten to add immediately that there are also caveats in this kind of hypothesising, and exercising due caution vis-à-vis some of the 'taken-for-granted' explanations deriving from SLA is in order. As pointed out in the Introduction, in SLA, learners' deviating forms from the target language have very often been ascribed to, for instance, transfer from the learners' respective L1's. This has happened regardless of the fact that the same kind of deviation may be present in the output of a number of learners coming from typologically versatile L1 backgrounds (cf. e.g. the transfer explanations in articles in Swan and Smith 2001). For example, Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008) maintain that transfer has probably played an all too important a role in explaining phenomena in Outer Circle Englishes, and the same may well be true of L2 English at large. One of the aims of the present study is, indeed, to consider the plausibility of the transfer explanation in relation to the features studied.

Yet, similarities in processing mechanisms between SLA and SLU are well to be expected. Another important observation (Mauranen 2012: 4) is that we can also assume that the speakers' second languages are "less well entrenched than their first", which might show in things like ease and speed of retrieval of linguistic items from the memory. This we will discuss in more detail in Section 2.2.2 below, but obviously it is a phenomenon present both in SLA and SLU.

Nevertheless, similarities of cognitive processing in SLA and SLU do not automatically mean that also the speakers' identities in the two contexts were the same. The same speakers may, of course, alternate in the roles of learners and users, but as

Mauranen (2012: 4) puts it: "The learner position outweighs any other social parameters in a classroom setting, whereas outside the classroom other social parameters override learner status." Thus, defining all second language speakers as perpetual learners, whatever the context, can be seen as both patronizing and reductive as constantly pointed out in ELF literature and also for example by Firth and Wagner (1997) in an earlier piece of criticism towards the SLA paradigm.

2.1.6 Three Views on English as a World Language

To end and sum up our sociolinguistic and sociopolitical review of ELF, let us still take a look at the concept from a more ideological point of view – i.e. from that of the ELF 'movement' – as this will have consequences for our discussion of the application of the results in school contexts.

In the literature, basically three different stances to the globalization of English can be distinguished, the awareness of which also helps to understand the position of ELF in the linguistic field. Melchers and Shaw (2003: 30) call these three views the conservative, the radical, and the liberal view. In the following, these will be briefly introduced in a somewhat simplified manner. The views, taken together, can also be seen as forming an instance of a philosophical line of argumentation from thesis, via antithesis to synthesis.

The first view, the conservative one, was already alluded to in our discussion of Standard English above. It is the conservatives that see Standard English as the only true and real form of English that should be used and adhered to also in international communication (thus the subtle equation of 'International English' and 'Standard English' by some scholars as pointed out earlier). The proponents of the conservative view hold that it is in the non-standard-English speakers' (usually considered the less powerful in society) interest to learn Standard English because it is through the standard language (i.e. through linguistic imitation of the more powerful) that they can gain credibility and move upwards in society. For the conservatives, only true proficiency in English is the native / standard language proficiency, and they will want to eradicate 'errors' from non-native speakers' English (be it an Outer or Expanding Circle variety). They are also concerned with English becoming unintelligible internationally if codified standard language is not followed. Some of the best-known protagonists of this view include Quirk (1985 & 1990) and Honey (1997). Quirk (1985: 6), for instance, in his much-quoted article, positing that non-native speakers' needs to use English even in Outer Circle countries are "arguably well catered for by a single monochrome standard form that looks as good on paper as it sounds in speech".

The conservative stance originates in Standard Language Ideology and puristic/nationalistic views of language (cf. Thomas 1991). Thus, the conservatives have been criticized, among other things, for not being able to show what it is that is supposed to make Standard English linguistically superior to other forms of English (see e.g. Trudgill's 1998 review of Honey 1997), and for seeking to preserve the global hegemony and power of the core English-speaking countries (Britain, the United States) through their linguistic control. Further, as hinted at earlier, empirical evidence for the need of a

strict linguistic standard to maintain intelligibility is, in fact, hard to find. In sum, we can say that the conservatives do celebrate and welcome the spread of English, and are, indeed, willing to give 'equal rights' to all speakers of English but only on their own terms, through the acquisition and use of Standard English. In other words, they are happy with the Inner Circle based balance of power, and consider it best everyone accommodate to this *status quo*.

If we take the conservative view as 'the thesis' in a philosophical argumentation, the second view, the radical view can, then again, be at least partly interpreted as the 'antithesis' of it. The radicals are concerned with the inequalities that English as a dominating (or in the radicals' terms 'oppressing') world language is bound to bring about between speakers of different languages and people of different socio-economic backgrounds. The radicals maintain that English has too much power in the world. They fear that English will encroach on non-English speakers' linguistic human rights, and that it will gradually abolish other, minor languages and cultures in the world and along with that force new identities on speakers of other languages and homogenize the cultures of the world. The radicals would like to see an end to the global spread of English (in any form, be it local or not), and would rather introduce an artificial language, such as Esperanto, as a common world language because of its presumed neutrality as no-one's native language and its dissociation with any particular culture.

As proponents of this view, we find names such as Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1998; see also Skutnabb-Kangas 2000) – Phillipson being probably the most outspoken advocate of them all. In his book titled *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992), Phillipson criticizes the hegemony of English which he sees privileging the core country native speakers. He maintains that English was enforced on people in the British and American colonies and that even in the post-colonial world the dominant position that English gained was not a coincidence, but deliberately planned political action stated as a goal, for example, in British governmental reports (1992: 151) and executed first and foremost through the British Council. Other sources refer to similar action on the part of the US (see e.g. Heath 1992: 220 on proposals made by the second president of the United States, John Adams, on spreading American English around the world) and actions taken by the Fulbright Center in this vein. The significance of such action is, according to Phillipson (1992: 136-172), that the dominance of English will help the United States and Britain to distribute their own ideologies and culture globally, by which means they are also able to strengthen their economic, political and military power in the world. As a primary means for today's linguistic imperialism, Phillipson points to English language teaching as he notes that Britain and the US are the largest producers of English language teaching materials and methodologies, which can lead to them dictating what kind of English is learned world-wide and how. In short, it is this perceived imbalance of power that radicals seek to change by ending the hegemony of English.

The ideas of radicals have also met with criticism. For instance, Brumfit (1982) considers the whole concept of linguistic imperialism naive because, as he sees it, the world ultimately needs a common language, and for those who do not wish to communicate in the common language the only choice is to become exploited or be "at the mercy of decisions made outside" (p. 2). Brutt-Griffler (2002), on the other hand, notes that as regards the period of colonialism, the British rather refrained from teaching English to all their colonial subjects but it was the people themselves in the colonies who

realized that knowing English improved their career prospects and thus sought to learn English of their own will. Further, the radicals' aspirations of adopting an artificial language as a world language have been considered unrealistic since history has shown that, for various reasons, none of the planned languages (e.g. Esperanto, Interlingua, Novial, Volapük etc.) have ever really succeeded (see Large 1985 for proposed reasons for this.)

This is where the liberal view, as a kind of synthesis of the two other views, steps in. What this view holds, in essence, is that a common world language is needed, and since English is already in place as one, why not adopt it – but at the same time make it a more neutral or democratic language for everyone by toning down the centrality of the native speaker, the core countries and the L1 varieties of English, and thus also the cultural hegemony that has been said to come with the language. Liberals consider all varieties of English linguistically equal and thus also speakers of different varieties (whether native or non-native) deserve to be treated equally. Supposed 'errors' are not defined against Standard English but in relation to a given context and situation, putting communicative competence and speakers' local needs in focus. Advocates of the Outer Circle Englishes have adopted this view (e.g. Kachru 1991) and it is the liberal view where also the ELF 'movement' obviously finds its origin. As discussed above, ELF movement recognizes the fact that few L2 speakers seek to identify with native speakers or the native speaker cultures through English but instead wish to identify with other L2 speakers, whether globally or locally in their own country/region. The liberal view holds that English speakers around the world should have a free choice in terms of linguistic and cultural identification while still being able to communicate internationally. In other words, liberals approve of the wide spread and use of English but, at the same time, strive to ensure linguistically equal opportunities for everyone.

Despite – or perhaps just because of – the attempts of ELF movement to synthesize the radical and conservative concerns, it has received its fair share of criticism from both camps. The radicals maintain that a natural language cannot be neutralized or stripped of its cultural baggage, and thus see ELF as yet another scheme to spread English further in the world (cf. e.g. Pennycook 1999). The conservatives, on the other hand, resort to the arguments – often based on misconceptions – that 'keeping' second language learners from learning Standard English (which ELF does *not* postulate) is keeping them from getting ahead in their lives. Or they make linguistic appeals saying that without Standard English international communication will gradually become impossible, as the language is bound to break into mutually unintelligible varieties, and so the status of the world language is undermined – which is not likely to happen as discussed earlier.

To sum up this section on sociolinguistic perspectives to ELF, we can say that the ELF 'movement' with its claims for L2 speakers' rights to their own kind of English stems from the tradition of critical linguistics but it has also grown out of the mere recognition of the sociolinguistic facts of today's English-speaking world: the fact that English is used and learned primarily because of its instrumental lingua franca function between L2 speakers, the fact that there are more non-native than native speakers of English in the world, and the fact that due to this, the center of gravity of the language is shifting more and more towards the Outer and Expanding Circle users. The most

intriguing question for a linguist, then, is: What are the linguistic consequences of such shifts? Let us turn to that next.

2.2 The Linguistic Perspective

Before delving into the linguistic conceptualization of ELF, though, one common source of confusion in this context needs clarification: the difference between the concepts of 'English as a Lingua Franca' and 'interlanguage'. Regrettably, confusing these concepts is not infrequent even in ELF literature itself. Yet, the concepts are completely separate, coming from different research fields and used for conceptualizing different phenomena. Also for understanding the possibilities of applying ELF results in school contexts (see section 2.3 below) maintaining a clear difference between the two is crucial and therefore briefly addressed here first.

2.2.1 ELF and Interlanguage

Even though the conceptual difference between an L2 learner and user, discussed above (see Section 2.1.5), is relatively easy to accept, mixing up ELF and the idea of 'interlanguage' (as proposed by Corder 1967 and Selinker 1972) still seems common. However, the concept of 'interlanguage' essentially pertains to individuals' language learning and has in-built the idea of progression towards a certain, fixed code through a series of definable proficiency levels – whereas ELF as a concept does not zero in on individuals' language skills, is not a fixed code and thus also cannot form a continuum of prescribed linguistic stages for speakers to aim for. In what follows, I will try to clarify these matters further (see also Ranta 2009).

The most typical type of confusion between the concepts is that ELF, with its calls for recognition of L2 English in its own right, is regarded as a new kind of proficiency ladder for L2 speakers with reformed steps and a reformed end-point of the continuum – as a kind of more realistic version of the interlanguage continuum, which traditionally has held onto the goal of native speaker competence as the ultimate attainment in second language learning. However, while the shift towards a more realistic ultimate attainment for L2 speakers is very welcome (see Section 2.3 below) and has gradually started to materialize in a more recent line of thinking in applied linguistics, changing the ultimate goal of learning does not mean that the concept of 'interlanguage' was interchanged with that of ELF. Even if the end-point of the proficiency scale was a 'proficient non-native speaker' (instead of the traditional 'proficient native speaker'), the other principles of interlanguage still remain the same. In other words, interlanguage studies need *some* kind of *prescribed code* to be able to form a continuum on which learners with varying proficiency levels can be placed. And further, the interlanguage proficiency levels always pertain to an *individual*'s (developing) language skills. All this is very well if our purpose really is to study individual speakers' progression in their L2 towards a certain linguistic goal. This is obviously what SLA studies are concerned with

and as such there is absolutely no reason to disparage this line of research or the concept of 'interlanguage' in itself.

But ELF research, on the other hand, is *not* primarily interested in studying or defining individuals' proficiency levels or linguistic competence but looks at L2 English use more as a collective action. It is the more general kinds of qualities and features of interaction (beyond varying levels of competence) emerging from ELF data that are of interest to ELF researchers. This obviously means that unlike in SLA, ELF research does not focus on individuals' (potential) progression in their language skills. Individual ELF speakers may, of course, develop more and more sophisticated ways of interacting as they become more experienced with the use of English. This way they also increase their possibilities to manage in more and more demanding ELF situations (such as in academic discussions), but how individual speakers develop is essentially of interest to SLA/interlanguage research. In ELF research, in contrast, pairs or groups of people and their successful or unsuccessful communication through ELF are of main interest. This entails two things. First, ELF research is interested in finding any traces of linguistic 'progression' that the participants *as a group* might bring about in interaction. And secondly, it is not so much the individuals in isolation who fail or succeed in ELF situations but rather the participants together with their use (or non-use) of different kinds of interactional strategies. Thus, in ELF contexts, 'proficiency levels' have to be determined in relation to the communicative situation at hand, not in relation to language *per se* (as stages in some kind of fixed code). Those who manage in the most challenging situations may be regarded as 'proficient ELF speakers' on the grounds that they will most probably manage also in other, less demanding contexts. But ELF as such does not represent a continuum in terms of individual learners' language skills.

This is because of the fact that ELF is not a uniform code. In contrast, ELF is whatever it is in a situation where two (or more) speakers need to communicate through a lingua franca – which happens to be English. Thus, ELF ranges from tourist contacts to intimate relationships between married couples who share English as their (only) common language, and anything in between. The proficiency levels of speakers, understood in the SLA sense, are bound to vary tremendously – even of the interlocutors in the same communicative situation – but that is what ELF is, and this reality has to be accepted as a fact also in ELF research if we want to stay true to the research object. Rather than a code, then, we can perhaps depict ELF as a series of more or less demanding communicative situations where speakers come with whatever their language skills to tackle the communicative tasks at hand. ELF is a phenomenon that is 'happening' around us all the time, a manifestation of multifaceted, complex, global linguistic development. Harnessing this kind of huge research object for scientific scrutiny is, of course, challenging, and as alluded to already, such a global elephant can only be eaten bit by bit: studying various kinds of ELF communities and *functional* varieties one at the time, and seeing if the accumulating data brings forth re-current phenomena and developments[6].

Consequently, the basic tenets of ELF and SLA are different and the fields set out to answer different kinds of research questions. Learner language studies are ultimately interested in the learner's underlying *competence* (in the Chomskyan sense of the term) and use *performance* only as an indicator of this inner knowledge of L2 – and gather data

[6] Results in this vein have, indeed, already started to emerge, as will be discussed in section 2.2.3 below.

mainly through elicitation and/or classroom observation. ELF research, in contrast, is more interested in the actual perceptible *performance* of the second language speakers in real-life events (i.e. L2 *use*, as discussed before), in a similar way as research into L1 native language or contact languages are, and uses that as its point of departure. Even though SLA has also capitalized on non-classroom data, for instance in the large-scale research project "Second Language Acquisition by Adult Immigrants" (see e.g. Perdue 1993a and 1993b), it still mainly looks at individuals 'alone' with their language competence/performance. ELF research, on the other hand, is about what functions in communication, and thus it would not make sense to study speakers in isolation in ELF.

Results from linguistic inquiries into ELF can, of course, be applied in English language teaching (as will be discussed in 2.3 below in more detail) and this is where ELF and SLA meet. From successful (especially from demanding successful) ELF speech events we can 'filter' the features and qualities that make the events successful – or that do not disturb successful communication – and pass on this information also to language learners in classrooms. For example, the results from ELF studies such as the present one may well feed in to the description of a 'proficient non-native speaker' for SLA purposes and thus help to define the ultimate goal – i.e. the more realistic level of 'ultimate attainment' – for second language learning, if we so want. From the language teaching perspective, then, it is useful to start empirical descriptions of ELF with the most challenging ELF use and domains (such as academic discourse in the ELFA corpus) so that we can gradually begin to see what the realistic 'ultimate attainment' for non-native English speakers is (see Mauranen 2003). But defining the 'proficiency levels' along the way to this ultimate goal in terms of ELF would be immensely difficult because of the very fact that the concept of ELF does not naturally bend to defining stages in linguistic competence in the SLA sense.

We will continue with the themes of application of the results in section 2.3 below, but for now, let us finally concentrate on what ELF as a linguistic phenomenon *is* instead of what it is not.

2.2.2 Linguistic Conceptualization of ELF

The most thorough outline so far of what ELF might mean in purely linguistic terms is undoubtedly found in Mauranen (2012: Ch. 2). That is why this framework will be discussed in some length here, and also adopted as the backbone of the present study. However, other relevant sources from earlier research will also be taken a due account of in trying to conceptualize ELF linguistically.

In the early 1970's, Whinnom (1971) launched the term "tertiary hybridization" to describe a process commonly leading to pidginization of a language. Although for instance academic ELF is a far cry of a pidgin – if we take the term to refer to highly reduced lexico-grammar and restricted use of the language only for specific communicative purposes (cf. e.g. Winford's 2003: 270 definition of a prototypical pidgin) – the process Whinnom describes is of interest to ELF research as well. Whinnom (1971) draws an analogy between biological and linguistic hybridization and defines "tertiary hybridization" in language as something that takes place when second language

speakers' speech "interbreeds" and the resulting hybrid becomes to be used as a common medium of communication in circumstances where contact with native speakers is restricted so that a native speaker model as target is removed. According to Whinnom, this happens because the speakers' "motive can only be improved communication with each other" (p. 106) and not the resemblance of the 'target-language' model. A similar kind of process seems to be going on in ELF as well. One of the reasons why the process does not lead to pidginization in ELF, however, is most likely due to the fact that most ELF speakers have had the native speaker / Standard English as a model and norm at school and in this sense the native speaker model is not entirely removed in most ELF interactions.

Mauranen's (2012) conceptualization of ELF somewhat echoes Whinnom's thoughts but also puts things into ELF-specific perspective. According to Mauranen ELF is essentially a hybrid language, which she more specifically defines as 'second-order contact between similects' (2012: 29). By a 'similect' Mauranen refers to a 'variety' of English (or lect) that arises from contact between English and another language such as Finnish or Swedish, producing what, in lay terms, is known as, for instance, 'Finglish' or 'Swinglish' respectively. These lects display features of the L1 (e.g. Finnish or Swedish) of their speakers but are still understandable to speakers from other L1 backgrounds. In this sense they resemble regional dialects of a language, but as opposed to dialects, they never develop or undergo linguistic changes because they are not used for communication between the speakers of the same L1 (i.e. for example, Finnish speakers have no need to speak to each other in English among themselves). As Mauranen (2012: 29) puts it: these L1-based lects "remain forever first-generation hybrids: each generation's, each speaker's idiolect is a new hybrid" and thus they arise "in parallel, not in mutual interaction" (hence the term 'similect'). But what makes ELF a complex matter is that in ELF communication, large numbers of these similects come into contact with each other rendering ELF a contact between hybrids – or 'second-order language contact' as Mauranen (2012: 29) calls it. According to her, this phenomenon can be equalled to dialect contact because the similects in contact are related in that they are "kinds of English" (Mauranen 2012: 30). Further, from previous research into contact linguistics we know that processes such as simplification (especially in grammar and phonology) and levelling (i.e. convergence of grammatical systems in contact) typically take place when dialects, or languages, come into contact with each other, and thus we can predict that this is also likely to happen in ELF (Mauranen 2012: 30-31) in the long run. Locally and temporarily, this may even happen during one conversation as interlocutors converge on a grammatical form or pronunciation that diverges from the Standard – but this may not lead to any lasting change in the language.

Also Meierkord (2004) has contemplated the linguistic characteristics of ELF and the processes leading to possible language change in it. She approaches the issue from the angle of more traditional contact language phenomena and proposes that what ELF as a linguistic concept comes closest to is actually koineization. This term refers to the mixing (and, in the long run, levelling) of different regional or L2 varieties of a single language. As opposed to a pidgin, a koiné is not as drastically reduced even if some simplification does occur, and a koiné is not completely detached from the language it issues from (cf. Samarin 1971: 133). In Trudgill's (1986: 107) words, koineization is a process which "consists of the levelling out of minority and otherwise marked speech forms, and of

simplification, which involves, crucially, a reduction in irregularities". Whether koineization proceeds to produce a new stable language variety cannot be determined in advance as the process may stop at any point along the way. Siegel (1993: 6), for instance, says the following:

> At first, there is a prekoine stage when various forms of the varieties are used concurrently and inconsistently. Leveling has begun and some simplification may have occurred, but few forms have emerged as the accepted compromise. It may be that koineization does not proceed past this unstable stage.

If stabilization occurs, in the long run, and common norms are distilled from the varieties in contact, a stabilized koiné has emerged. And further, if the koiné begins to be adopted as L1, we can refer to a nativized koiné (Siegel 1993: 6-7). As noted above, ELF cannot be said to have uniform global norms but it may well be said to be in a prekoiné stage where perhaps some levelling out of marked forms is in progress – as also Mauranen observed.

On the whole, ELF provides a feasible testing ground for hypotheses from contact linguistics because it manifests contact with virtually all (major) languages in the world, and is in itself a contact language. The main difference between contact linguistic research and ELF research lies only in the complexity of the research object: contact linguistics has traditionally worked with only two or a few languages in contact whereas in ELF a multitude of (typologically different) languages come together. Because of this last-mentioned fact, ELF also offers an opportunity for testing hypotheses of language universals. As noted above, the phenomena of simplification and levelling, for example, have been attributed to loss of marked forms in language, and thus steering the language towards 'naturalness'. While defining what is natural or simple in language is bordering on impossible (as will be discussed further in Ch. 3), Mauranen (2012: 32) maintains that in lingua franca communication where speakers "seek optimal common denominators, a globally valid solution is in all probability one that is as widely unmarked as possible". In other words, when speakers try to safeguard communication in a very complex linguistic setting, it is reasonable to assume that their interlocutor will understand the kinds of forms and features that are most widespread in languages in general. This way, ELF use could possibly tend towards what is universal in language (Mauranen 2012: 32). Also back in 1980's, Mühlhäusler (1986: 115) (on discussing pidgins) observed that: "For relatively homogenous groups, such as Japanese plantation workers in Hawaii…transfer would seem to have been perfectly viable, as universal solutions become necessary mainly in heterogeneous communities" and: "The more different their [various pidgins'] linguistic background, the less likely is substratum influence, and the more speakers will rely on universal strategies" (p. 125). Thus, also in ELF – as a composite of heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds – it is to be expected that speakers avoid falling back on unique features or transfer from their L1, and instead rely on what they think is universally comprehensible. The aspects of language universals will be dealt with more closely in Chapter 3 below.

Mauranen (2012) further discusses in detail the possible propagation of new language forms in ELF (ultimately leading to language change). As opposed to traditional, close-knit communities characterised by 'strong ties' between the speakers,

ELF communities are more loose and unstable manifesting 'weak ties' between their members. Mauranen (2012: 27) cites Milroy and Milroy (1985b) who in their application of social network theory to linguistic contexts have put forth that weak ties create more favourable contexts for language change than strong ties. In ELF, the speakers are mobile, often moving from one 'ELF community' to another and in doing so also function as agents of language change – taking the possible new linguistic innovations from one community to another. Yet, because of the above-mentioned fact that ELF consists of forever renewable similects, Mauranen (2012: 28) is cautious of predicting any kind of "sweeping homogenisation" of ELF in large scale. It may also be added that the fact that these renewable similects typically arise from educational settings where Standard English still prevails as the norm, probably hinders fast changes. However, the magnitude of ELF as a global phenomenon is still very likely to affect the whole of the English language in the long run – especially the more infrequently occurring forms susceptible to change. Mauranen (2012: 33-34) estimates that possible changes will start to show in a few decades, based on the assumptions that language change takes approximately three generations to happen and we are now witnessing the first generation of global ELF. The history of English has already shown that large groups of second language speakers can, indeed, have an influence on even the first language speakers' way of using the language. McWhorter (2002), for example, maintains that this happened to the English language during the Old English period as large groups of Scandinavians invaded the British isles and adopted but also altered the language of their new home – so much so that English morphology as we know it today is considerably simpler than that of any other Germanic language.

But even major changes in language begin with individuals and their cognition. So moving on from macrosocial linguistic aspects to the level of individuals, Mauranen (2012: 37) observes an important difference between L1 and L2 users in terms of cognition (already briefly noted above). On account of the fact that L2 speakers have had less exposure to English during their lifetime than L1 speakers, it is reasonable to assume that language forms are not as deeply entrenched in L2 users' minds as in L1 speakers'. A similar kind of observation is also made by Birdsong (2004: 85) who notes that L1 and L2 grammars are different by nature in their end-state realization. He writes:

> the end state of L2A[cquisition] may be non-deterministic, and thereby differ qualitatively from the L1A[cquisition] end state. As a result, the idealization of the mature grammar as a "steady-state grammar" must be finessed: compared with L1, the L2 steady state seems "unsteady", as it admits more variability in surface realizations and more uncertainty of intuitions. This is the nature of an indeterminate end-state L2 grammar, and as such this outcome should not be confused with "backsliding" or ongoing grammatical re-presentation, which would suggest learning still in progress.

However, as Mauranen (2012: 38) notes, it is quite obvious that not *all* dysfluencies found in L2 speakers' speech are due to 'less deep' entrenchment because, for example, reformulations, hesitations, pauses and the like are just normal features of speech for any language user. What is different in L2 speakers' speech, though, is the phenomenon that Mauranen (2012: 41) calls 'approximation'. As the less deeply entrenched language

forms require more effort in retrieving and processing in L2 speech, L2 users may start resorting to processing shortcuts and thus only approximating the target forms. As Mauranen (2012: 42) reminds us, memory for sense in language is stronger than memory for form – thus, the approximations usually retain the meaning of the ENL expression but may use a different wording (such as *building stones* for *building blocks*). The approximations, however, give the interlocutors enough clue to go on and often other speakers may adopt these approximations for use as well – thus they become mutually understood and shared items in conversation.

The fact that these kinds of non-standard items may end up in frequent use in ELF interaction can, in turn, be seen as a form of *accommodation* to one's interlocutor's speech. According to, for instance, Jenkins' (2000) and Mauranen's (2012: 50-51) findings, accommodation is a common phenomenon in ELF (see also section 2.2.3 below). It is the repeated or prolonged accommodation in interaction that most likely leads to language change in the long run (although it is difficult to say how 'long-term' the accommodation has to be). Another form of accommodation may find its expression also in *enhanced explicitness*, which is a proactive strategy often observed in ELF studies (e.g. Mauranen 2007). When there is not much common ground between speakers, they try to ensure that their messages get across by making their utterances as clear as possible both semantically and formally. Messages are also often co-constructed by ELF speakers in interaction, which can be interpreted as a sign of *enhanced cooperativeness* in ELF (see Mauranen 2012: 52).

These are just some of the general qualities of lingua-franca communication that large ELF databases are starting to make visible to us. The next section provides a more detailed account of what has been found out of linguistic 'ELF features' in previous studies. The focus will be on grammatical features as relevant for the present study.

2.2.3 Previous Research on ELF features

Despite its diversity, or just because of it, the possible linguistic tendencies emerging from ELF data are particularly interesting. These 'ELF features' started to draw researchers' attention first around the turn of the millennium, but in the last ten years or so the growth in the number of such studies has been exponential. Some of the most prominent early pioneering empirical works on ELF are unquestionably Jenkins (2000) on phonological characteristics of ELF and their relation to intelligibility, Firth's (1996) classic study of lingua-franca English telephone calls, and Meierkord (1998) as well as the edited volume by Knapp and Meierkord (2002) on mainly pragmatic characteristics of lingua franca communication. In the last few years, however, they have been followed by a quickly accumulating body of research – not least because of the advent of large ELF corpora such as ELFA and VOICE[7]. A clear majority of the descriptive work so far

[7] VOICE. 2013. *The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English*. (version 2.0 Online). (Accessed Sep 19, 2013).
Also at the time of writing, an ELF corpus collected in Asian Expanding Circle settings, called *Asian Corpus of English* (ACE) is in preparation in Hong Kong under the supervision of Andy Kirkpatrick (see Kirkpatrick 2010).

has concentrated on pragmatics (e.g. Meierkord 2000, House 2002, Lesznyák 2004, Cogo 2007, Mortensen 2010, Pitzl 2011, Suviniitty 2012, Carey 2013, the papers in the special issue of *Intercultural Pragmatics* 2009/2 edited by House – and most of the papers in Mauranen & Ranta 2009) and the discourse level (e.g. Metsä-Ketelä 2006, 2012; Mauranen 2006b, 2007, 2010 and 2012; Hynninen 2013). Also lexis and phraseology have been touched upon (Mauranen 2012). I will not go into details of these studies here but will just note again that on the basis of this previous research, two general tendencies seem to be emerging as characteristic of ELF interactions: enhanced cooperativeness and enhanced explicitness. It seems that from the outset, ELF speakers are attuned to the complexity of the communicative situation they are engaging in and generally try to do their best to ensure their own and their interlocutor's smooth communication under the linguistically demanding and unpredictable circumstances. Mauranen (2006b) and Kaur (2009) have, in particular, observed the surprisingly low number of instances of miscommunication in ELF and propose this is at least in part due to speakers "pre-empting" potential problems in communication before they even occur.

Similar tendencies, in particular enhanced explicitness, have suggested themselves in the handful of studies carried out on the lexicogrammar of ELF. For example Dewey (2006), Ranta (2006) and Björkman (2010) observed that non-standard grammatical forms in ELF could, in various ways, serve the purpose of making what the speaker has to say more explicit e.g. by making the construction 'heavier' than necessary and thus perceptually more salient). However, as noted earlier, in-depth syntactic research on ELF has overall drawn surprisingly little scholarly attention so far. In what follows, I will review some of the (major) studies carried out on ELF grammar to this date.

One of the earliest studies that touched upon ELF syntax is Meierkord (2004). In her study, Meierkord recorded 22 hours of informal student conversations between non-native English speakers in Germany and the UK. Her 49 speakers came both from Outer and Expanding Circle countries, and Meierkord divided them into three groups according to their perceived language competence (Outer Circle speakers, Expanding Circle competent and Expanding Circle less competent speakers). The focus of the study was on a general syntactic outlook of the data and observable sentence-level syntactic processes – not particular syntactic structures as such. Meierkord found that out of the total of 2063 analyzed utterances, only 9% deviated from Standard English (although the figure varied between the three subgroups), and she describes these deviations in terms of transfer phenomena, developmental patterns and nativized forms (p. 128). She, too, found that misunderstandings were extremely rare and suggests that this is due to the fact that the speakers in her data employed strategies that "modify their utterances in a way which seems to render discourse easier to process" (Meierkord 2004: 125). As such processes Meierkord identifies segmenting and shortening of sentences into smaller units (which she calls 'simplification'), and topicalizing or fronting of elements in a sentence (which she terms 'regularisation'). Yet, such processes are typical of speech in general – as we will see in Chapter 3 – and without baseline data it is rather difficult to determine whether the use of these strategies is somehow exceptional in Meierkord's data. Further, as pointed out above, Meierkord's study does not look into individual grammatical features apart from a few examples, but the ones she discusses she classifies into different kinds of transfer or nativized phenomena according to the speakers' backgrounds. This departs

from ELF studies in general (including the present one) that aim to investigate whether there are features in ELF that recur *despite* the speakers' different linguistic backgrounds and/or varying proficiency levels.

Around the time of Meierkord's study, also first accounts of syntactic 'ELF features' started to appear, most notable of them probably being the list given in Seidlhofer (2004). The list has gained vast popularity as a set of 'known' grammatical features of ELF although Seidlhofer notes that the features have mainly emerged in small-scale seminar projects carried out on the VOICE data and are only provided so as to generate hypotheses for further research[8]. Indeed, for instance Breiteneder (2005) in her study on the zero marking of the 'third person *–s*' concludes that this feature is not particularly salient in ELF, contrary to what the list in Seidlhofer (2004) gives to understand. Some early sporadic remarks on grammatical features of ELF are also made, for instance, in Erling and Bartlett (2006) who note the non-standard use of articles, prepositions and adverbs in ELF as well as fluctuation in time, tense and aspect markers (including extended use of the progressive), and the extended use of *would* in conditional *if*-clauses. However, they do not give any quantification of their findings or study them in further detail. Also Mauranen (2012) touches upon the non-standard use of prepositions and determiners in ELF but does not delve into their syntactic patterning.

There are two previous doctoral dissertations that do look at lexicogrammar in ELF in some detail: Dewey (2006) and Björkman (2010; see also Björkman 2013), but both of these studies orient more towards what could be called 'feature spotting', i.e. identifying frequently occurring non-standard grammatical elements in ELF interactions but not analysing them in further detail in their syntactic context nor quantifying their findings sufficiently to allow for comparison with baseline data or other ELF corpora. Dewey (2006) basis his findings on a small-scale spoken corpus of ca. 61,000 words collected mainly through prompted conversations between international university MA students in an ELT and Applied Linguistics programme in the UK. Thus, the data is not entirely naturally-occurring and is biased towards speakers who take special interest in the English language – this means that the participants are not among the most typical ELF users. Dewey (2006: Ch. 4) discusses the following features emerging from his data as salient lexicogrammatical features of ELF: 3rd person singular zero, omitting the object/complement of a transitive verb, variable use of prepositions and articles, non-standard collocation patterns with high-frequency verbs, non-standard adverbial positions, and non-standard use of relative pronouns (especially *who* and *which*). He refers to these features as 'innovations' and seeks to establish some key processes motivating this kind of 'innovative use' in ELF interactions. As such processes Dewey (2006: Ch. 5) defines, for instance, exploitation of redundancy (e.g. in the case of 3rd person singular zero), semantic regularisation (e.g. in the case of prepositions), added prominence (e.g. in the case of adverbial positioning), accommodation, and explicitness and clarity of propositions. However, Dewey does not provide a detailed syntactic analysis of the structures studied, ascribing some of the 'innovative use' also to extra-linguistic factors (such as the presence or absence of an L1 speaker in the speech event).

[8] Among the features Seidlhofer (2004) gives are, for instance, dropping the third person *–s*, confusing the use of the relative pronouns *who* and *which*, invariable tag questions, and non-standard use of articles and prepositions.

Also, there is no consistent comparison of the findings to other databases, and statistical information of the occurrence of the features is scarce.

Björkman's (2010) study, on the other hand, is based on a larger spoken corpus of approximately 500,000 words of lectures and student group-work discussions recorded at a Swedish university where international engineering students and teachers use English as their lingua franca of instruction. Björkman's emphasis is on finding out whether the non-standard grammatical features found cause misunderstandings in communication and/or irritation in the interlocutors. Thus, the features are not analyzed in great syntactic detail in Björkman's study either and remain more at a level of 'spotting'. Further, frequencies are given (in addition to raw numbers) in terms of number of occurrences per one hour of speech in her data, which makes comparisons to other spoken corpora troublesome. (Björkman herself does not undertake such comparisons in her study.) Björkman (2010) gives an extensive list of non-standard forms found in the data on noun and verb phrase levels, clause level, and morphology. These include, for instance, not marking the plural on the noun, non-standard article usage, double comparatives and superlatives, non-standard formulations of the passive voice and miscellaneous tense, aspect and word order issues. For the present study, two features are worth noting in particular: under tense and aspect issues Björkman (2010: 74) discusses the use of the progressive even in sentences where the reference is to "scientific or technical phenomena that are always true or valid", and under word order she notes "word order problems" in indirect questions (p. 78). As far as misunderstandings are concerned, Björkman (2010: 85) found that of the non-standard features detected in her study, only non-standard word order in *direct* questions (accompanied by flat intonation) "resulted in overt disturbance in communication". However, generally speaking, the rate of occurrence of non-standard forms in each of Björkman's features was relatively low, indicating that the speech in her data mostly conformed to standard language (pp. 82-84). As motivation for the non-standard forms in ELF, Björkman refers to increasing explicitness and doing away with communicatively redundant features of grammar (pp. 146-147). She further remarks that "[t]he form features seem to be based on functionality. In other words, those features that do serve a function seem to be preferred by speakers in lingua franca settings whereas those that are redundant are dropped. A feature is kept if it does not interfere with communication, if it aids communication and is functional" (Björkman 2010: 147). On the other hand, Björkman also observes that similar non-standard features to those found in her data are also in evidence in other varieties of English (p.145).

Two further smaller scale studies pertaining to ELF syntax are Breiteneder's (2005) study on the "third person zero" in a spoken ELF mini corpus of 50,000 words and Dorn's (2011) investigation of the use of the progressive in the VOICE corpus. For both of these studies it is true that in quantitative terms non-standard use is not prominent in the data – which is in line with Björkman's and Meierkord's findings. Breiteneder (2005: 11) notes the similarity in non-standard use of the "third person zero" in ELF and in other varieties of English, leading her to conclude that the phenomenon is only natural in language use (as a case of rule regularisation and doing away with redundancy in grammar). Dorn (2011), on the other hand, analyzes both standard and non-standard uses of the progressive in VOICE by assigning them 'ELF-specific' functions in attempt to see how 'effective' these forms are in ELF communication. This latter way of motivating

'ELF forms' (i.e. by assigning non-standard – and standard – features specific functions) has gained considerable popularity among some ELF researchers, resulting in general claims that in ELF "form follows function" (Cogo 2008: 60; see also Cogo and Dewey 2006, Seidlhofer 2009, and Seidlhofer 2011), and generating calls for more research on the interrelationship between the two. Without a doubt, some non-standard forms may be motivated by functional criteria but whether the functions are ELF-specific or more general 'functions' in natural, spoken language is a question worth keeping in mind when looking at one's data. Also, it is debatable whether all non-standard forms can be seen as 'innovations' as put forth in Dewey (2006). Following Mauranen (2012), I am rather more inclined to see them in terms of approximations – in other words L2 speakers producing forms that approximate the 'target' items but that may deviate from them due to the forms being less deeply entrenched in L2 speakers' memories. Still – as Mauranen (2012: 42) points out – the approximate forms serve the purpose of conveying the message because they give the interlocutor enough information on what the speaker is probably going to say. I will return to these issues when discussing the findings of the present study (see Ch. 6).

In summary, the above review of lexico-grammatical studies on ELF reveals, first of all, that detailed syntactic descriptions of ELF features are still virtually non-existent. Yet, at least two general trends have begun to emerge in the body of research carried out so far. First, it seems that non-standardness in syntactic structures is, overall, relatively infrequent in ELF interactions – contrary to common beliefs (see also Mauranen 2012). And secondly, it has also become evident that non-standard grammar in these interactions has a direction, as many studies point to similar kinds of findings, and is not just a collection of random, idiosyncratic errors – as has been put forth by ELF critics (see e.g. Mollin 2006). These are important observations that I will also reflect upon in the light of my own findings at the end. But before moving on, still one note is due: at the time of selecting the features for closer scrutiny for the present study, none of the above studies had yet been published. This is to say that the selection of the features in the present study was not affected by previous research but was purely data-driven (as will be discussed further in Ch. 4).

2.3 The Educational Perspective

Finally, to end our overview of ELF, we come to the field where ELF research is expected to have the most important consequences – the field of English language teaching (ELT) and testing. This is the domain where especially the ELF 'movement' would like to see changes in light of the new 'world order' of English. Native speaker and Inner Circle –centered practices are considered out-dated, even harmful to learners, and new models and approaches to the English language called for.

The consequences of the ELF view for teaching were first outlined by Smith in 1984, but only after two decades from that started the paradigm shift to inspire more academic discussion on the directions English teaching should adopt in today's world (see e.g. McKay 2002, articles in Gnutzmann 1999a, and Canagarajah 1999 for some of the early accounts). Most of the themes have centered around topics such as the required

changes in the general socio-linguistic and political framework of ELT, the question of appropriate cultural contents for ELT, resisting cultural and linguistic imperialism, and also the status of native and non-native teachers in English teaching. The key notion in this discourse is that English teaching should move from the traditional realm of 'English as a Foreign Language' (EFL) with the native speaker focus to the conceptualization of 'English as a Lingua Franca' (ELF) with a broader understanding of English. Gnutzmann (1999b: 162-163) summarizes the main differences between teaching EFL and ELF as follows (bolding added):

> **ELF** prepares learners to communicate with non-native speakers of English from all over the world.
> **EFL** prepares learners to communicate with native speakers of English in English-speaking countries.
>
> **ELF** is neutral with regard to the different cultural backgrounds of the interlocutors. ...the interlocutors will 'negotiate' and establish some kind of common intercultural basis.
> **EFL** is based on the linguistic and sociocultural norms of native speakers of English and their respective cultures.
>
> **ELF** communication is not based on any particular national linguistic standard of English. Relying on native speaker norms (or near-native norms) cannot guarantee that the communication will be successful. On the contrary, using elaborate linguistic structures or vocabulary may even be harmful to the success of communication, if the interlocutor does not share a similar linguistic repertoire.
> **EFL** communication is based on standard English, generally British or American English. The better the learners are able to handle the grammatical rules and lexis of the standard language, the more successful they tend to be in their communication with native speakers.

Although scholarly discussions on these topics are lively and have rapidly gained in momentum and attention[9], it still seems to be the case, as Seidlhofer (2001) pointed out more than ten years ago, that the discourse about English teaching has changed more in recent years than the actual practices in English language classrooms. Also, Mauranen and Metsä-Ketelä (in their Introduction to the NJES special issue on ELF 2006) note that even though the debate of the necessity or desirability of the native speaker as a norm for L2 learners started in applied linguistics a few decades ago, it is precisely in applied linguistics (e.g. in ELT) where it seems to be the hardest to accept the consequences that the role of English as a world language is bringing with it. The conventional notions of correctness and native speaker target derived from second language acquisition have deep roots. This applies in particular to the last item on Gnutzmann's list: the linguistic norms of the language. So how could descriptive studies such as the one at hand have any

[9] As illustrated, for instance, by the fact that the 5th annual ELF conference in Istanbul in 2012 was dedicated to "Pedagogical Implications of ELF in the Expanding Circle". See also the rejoinders and debates in the newly launched *Journal of English as Lingua Franca*.

impact on ELT practices? This is our main concern in the present section. But before that, we must acknowledge some current trends in foreign language pedagogy and SLA literature that do seem to be embracing the paradigm shift that also the ELF 'movement' pursues – albeit indirectly and not always in a very consistent manner. Let us briefly consider these trends first as they seem to be paving the way for more concrete application of empirical research results in classrooms.

2.3.1 Current Trends in Support of ELF in Foreign Language Pedagogy

The notions of communicative competence (deriving from Hymes 1972) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) with their emphasis on intelligibility of communication and getting one's message across rather than on grammatical correctness have been with us since the 1970's. Also the idea of promoting intercultural communication in language teaching is well-accepted and, in essence, nothing new. These principles seem like an ideal springboard for more ELF-oriented teaching (as defined by e.g. Gnutzmann above), but the way they have *traditionally* been applied is actually sometimes very much in conflict with the basic tenets of ELF. Both CLT and teaching intercultural communication have been understood – and in some cases continue to be understood – as ways of introducing and rehearsing the 'target language, native speaker -like' ways of communicating as if there was only one correct way of communicating in English (as noted e.g. by Seidlhofer 1999: 237). Symptomatic of the phenomenon are also studies in which non-native speakers' *intercultural* skills in English have been judged by or against a native speaker of English (as, for instance, in Salo-Lee & Tuokko 1996 or Yli-Renko 1993) – while, as Modiano (2000: 33) aptly points out, it is probably the *non-native speakers* who have the most experience in cross-cultural communication in English, and could, it can be added, be expected to be more competent in evaluating someone's intercultural communication skills.

Fortunately, the understanding of intercultural communication has developed and extended since its early days much towards a view that is also compatible with ELF. Nowadays, intercultural communication is understood in terms of *both* parties meeting each other half-way, so to speak, and creating a common 'third culture' or a 'third place' (Kramsch 1993) between them. Thus, the native speaker culture as target is no more 'the only truth' and even native speakers are called for to accommodate (see e.g. Kaikkonen 2005). Language learners are encouraged to develop more general type of skills for encountering other cultures such as sensitiveness, adaptation skills, and understanding of one's own culture. These ideas resonate well with those of the proponents of an ELF-oriented approach to English teaching.

Another source that seems to be in favor of the ELF view at first glance but that is actually rather contradictory in its discourse (as demonstrated e.g. by Hynninen 2007) is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) published by the Council of Europe in 2001. This framework is meant as a Europe-wide guidebook and common reference tool for all language learning and teaching in Europe. It is based on the idea of celebrating multilingualism and -culturalism in society and plurilingualism and -culturalism on the level of an individual. It claims to advocate a fresh view to

language education where "[the aim of language education] is no longer seen as simply to achieve 'mastery' of one or two, or even three languages...with the 'ideal native speaker' as the ultimate model. Instead, the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place." (CEF 2001: 5). Further, the framework states that the highest level (C2) termed 'mastery level' is:

> not intended to imply native-speaker or near-native speaker competence. What is intended is to characterise the degree of precision, appropriateness and ease with the language which typifies the speech of those who have been highly successful learners. (CEF 2001: 36)

The CEF also uses a double term 'L2 learner/user' at points to emphasize their proclamation. Nevertheless, the contradictory discourse reveals itself in the evaluation charts where descriptors of different levels of language competence are given (intended to be used Europe-wide at all levels of language education). The native speaker standard language and the idea of a 'target culture' as ultimate goals to be learned and achieved crop up despite the good intentions, as in a descriptor for level B2 spoken competence: "can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party" (p. 74), or at the mastery level (C2): "can hold his/her own in formal discussions...at no disadvantage to native speakers" (p. 78) and "[a]ppreciates fully the sociolinguistic and sociocultural implications of language used by native speakers and can react accordingly" (p. 122).

While these goals may be appropriate for learning a language spoken only in a fairly restricted area, and for integrative purposes, the framework takes no regard of an international language. From the ELF perspective, then, the problem with CEF is that it does not differentiate between a foreign language (cf. EFL) and a lingua franca (cf. ELF). English is lumped together with other foreign languages and considered to be taught as to enable learners to communicate with native speakers in a native speaker culture. This kind of contradictory discourse illustrates how difficult it actually is to let go of the canonical native speaker ideals in language teaching practice. Yet, the acknowledgement of also language skills 'below' the ideal native speaker competence as a Europe-wide agenda is worthy and welcome.

A third hot topic in language pedagogy that seems to lend support for ELF is the socio-cultural approach based on Vygotsky's (e.g. 1978 & 1986) ideas of language and language learning. Even though Vygotsky's writings concerned first language acquisition in particular, his ideas have raised interest in second language acquisition as well (see e.g. Lantolf 2000, Lantolf & Thorne 2006). The socio-cultural approach holds that language is learned essentially in interaction with others, but we do not just imitate others when learning a language (L1 or L2) but also constantly create and 'appropriate' it for our own uses, we 'make the language our own' so to speak. The speaker is an active agent of his/her own language. In a similar vein in ELF, too, speakers are conceived of as constantly appropriating the language in joint action to suit their current socio-communicative needs. They are also not expected to only imitate the native speaker but may, and often do, use their creative capacities to modify the language as need be. In consonance with this view is the above mentioned paradigm shift from the notion of a

'L2 learner' to that of a 'L2 user' (see also the critique of the term 'learner' by Riley (2003)).

What is to be concluded from here is that several current trends in language pedagogy seem to be preparing the way for a more ELF-oriented approach in English teaching – especially those that fall in the 'social' paradigm of SLA (as opposed to the 'cognitive' one), which sees language as a social construct (see Larsen-Freeman 2007 for an overview of the different perspectives). But any radical changes are, of course, slow to take place. Even if teachers and educators were amenable, for example, to the idea of increased agency of L2 users, and the increased intercultural awareness that ELF-oriented teaching calls for, the most deep-rooted aspect of language learning and teaching, that of linguistic correctness based on Standard Language, is probably the most sensitive issue. Thus one might ask can the results of studies like the present one – where syntactic features of spoken ELF are under scrutiny – have any real implications to or application in English teaching. This is our final question of the chapter, taken up next.

2.3.2 Models for Teaching and Testing?

One common misunderstanding about ELF, found for instance in Svartvik and Leech (2006: 235) is that ELF would resemble the old proposals of Basic English (Ogden 1932) or Nuclear English (Quirk 1982: 15-28), the aim of which was to deliberately construct an artificial, simplified version of English for international communication by removing words and structures that a native speaker linguist thought would be difficult or useless for non-native speakers. This version would then be taught to non-native speakers as a norm (see Seidlhofer 2011 for a detailed account of these enterprises and their relation to ELF). However, the idea of ELF is rather the reverse: ELF is not *pre*scribed by native speakers nor linguists in advance but *de*scribed from empirical data in order to capture the authentic use of English in international settings. Whether this type of use is some ways simpler or more complex than Standard English will only become evident as results from different corpora accumulate. But most importantly, ELF is certainly not a 'variety' that could be presented and taught to learners as if an alternative to Standard English. As hinted at earlier, at most, ELF descriptions may prove valuable in fine-tuning and modifying what the ultimate goal for L2 English learning could be. – And yet, the misconception sits deep.

This is illustrated, for instance, by the fact that since its early days, the discussion of English as an international language has been accompanied by debates on 'whose' English or 'what kind of' English should be the model for L2 learners world-wide (see e.g. Smith 1984, and the debate between Quirk 1985 and Kachru 1985). With the rise of ELF research such debates have even accelerated resulting in comments like Kuo (2006: 218) who states, based on her interviews of non-native L2 English learners in a British EFL setting, that: "What seems clear in my participants' accounts is that a degree of phonological and grammatical inaccuracy can be tolerated in real world communication but that a description of such language exchange does not constitute an appropriate model for learning purposes."

This kind of debating seems to be ill-informed of what is meant by a 'model' for teaching. Very often the 'model' is perceived as the variety/-ies which the learners are

exposed to in classrooms and at the same time it is seen as the target which the learners are supposed to achieve. To answer the question how to apply ELF descriptions in teaching, however, it is necessary to draw a distinction between a 'model' for teaching and a 'target' for learning (following Smith 1984). Melchers and Shaw (2003: 191) further distinguish a third concept in a "school variety" of English: that of *exposure*, in addition to *model* and *target*. They define the three concepts as follows (emphasis added):

> *Exposure* is the English learners listen to or read. . . . The *model* is above all the teacher's usage, but also the tapes or written material they are supposed to imitate. The *target* is what we aim for pupils to learn and produce themselves. We might well want to expose learners to Shakespeare, but we will hardly set his language as a model for them to learn, still less expect them to actually produce Shakespearean English.

Converted into ELF-oriented teaching, this type of division could be realized as follows. Firstly, learners should be *exposed* to a range of different kinds of Englishes in the world, native and non-native, so as to familiarize them with the diverseness of English and make them accustomed to, for example, hearing different accents. Secondly, at least for lexico-grammatical features of the language, the *model* for teaching would, quite naturally, still have to be Standard English in the Expanding Circle where no endonormative models (yet) exist. For Outer Circle, on the other hand, the local, endonormative models could apply. For other aspects of language use, such as pragmatics and cultural sensitiveness the *model* would need to be attuned to international communication in English. But finally, it is the *target* (i.e. "what we aim for pupils to learn and produce themselves", Op.cit.) whether in terms of lexico-grammar, pragmatics or something else, that could – if we so want – constitute of the accumulating descriptions of ELF. Figure 2 below recapitulates the framework from the lexico-grammatical viewpoint in the Expanding Circle ELT.

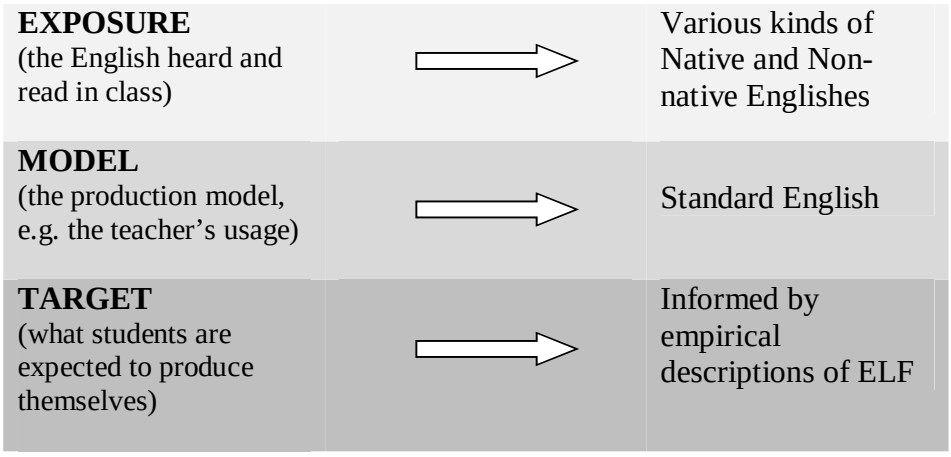

Figure 2. The division of a 'teaching model' (adapted according to Melchers and Shaw 2003) and its application to ELF-oriented teaching of lexico-grammar in the Expanding Circle.

In other words, as far as lexico-grammatical features of English are concerned, most ELF researchers fully agree with Kuo's interviewees (see the quotation above) that ELF should not constitute the *model* for teaching English (understood as, for instance, the teacher's usage). – And as observed in the discussion of the differences between ELF and interlanguage (see Section 2.2.1) it, indeed, *could* not. ELF is not a uniform variety or code that could be taught 'as an alternative' to, for instance, Standard English. Therefore, Standard English still provides the only feasible *model* for ELT, at least in the Expanding Circle. Secondly, what the above framework does not take account of, but which should obviously be kept in mind, is differences in written and spoken language. As discussed earlier (see Section 2.1.3), written language in general rests on standards to a much greater degree than spoken language, and for writing and reading in English, L2 learners would obviously have to familiarize themselves with Standard English in the future, too. And finally, it could be claimed that English teaching with Standard English as its model actually plays a key role in the whole success of ELF. Although, especially in speech, strict standards are not needed for human communication to be successful (as discussed in section 2.1.3), still an underlying common 'core' inevitably does help international speakers to interpret different variations of this 'core' that they might come across globally.

Thus, there is no reason to remove Standard English from schools altogether. But, as already pointed out, where the empirical results from ELF studies could be applied in educational settings is in defining the *target* of learning, i.e. what we expect students to produce themselves. This means first of all, that the results could inform teachers and curriculum developers about what is important in world-wide communication in English, so as to help them direct resources and allocate time in the curriculum for practising *those* features, whereas the features of less significance could be managed with less honing. Secondly, in their daily practice, teachers are often confronted with the problem, what kind of non-standardness in their students' production is still understandable (and thus acceptable) in international communication (and what, for instance, a reflection of the student's L1 to a degree rendering the message cross-culturally incomprehensible). Instead of resorting to intuitions for an answer in such situations, with the help of empirical ELF findings, teachers could actually start verifying their hunches.

But most importantly, the application of ELF descriptions to the target of learning would mean, of course, a change in evaluation practices. So even more than teachers and curriculum developers, it is the test developers who could benefit from results of real-world-data -driven studies of the actual language use of L2 English speakers. If we accept the fact put forth earlier that L2 learners will become L2 users of the language (and not L1 speakers), it entails that L2 users should also be measured against other L2 users, not against L1 speakers – especially not against some intuitive ideal of an 'educated native speaker' (a common top reference point in many rating scales), which is a level not even all L1 speakers achieve. In other words, the target for L2 speakers could be a 'proficient L2 speaker' (as noted earlier), not a 'proficient L1 speaker'[10].

[10] However, it has to be acknowledged, of course, that there will always be learners who indeed wish to acquire as-native-like-as-possible competence in English, and as for instance Tomlinson (2004) points out, it is the learners themselves who ultimately will have to decide what kind of English they want to approximate to. This is why Jenkins (e.g. 2006) calls for pluricentric practices in English teaching and testing.

Perren (1968) in the late 1960's, must have been one of the first to suggest rating scales in spoken tests be based on competent L2 speakers' use of the language rather than on vague and remote definitions of some kind of 'native speaker'. Indeed, Fulcher (2003: 93-95) points out how the most influential of the current L2 speaking tests for English still continue to hold on to the unspecified, unrealistic and idealized norm of a 'well-educated native speaker' as their top criterion reference despite heavy criticism leveled at such practices. These idealized and intuition-based criteria have resulted, for instance, in penalizing L2 speakers for features in speech that are perfectly common even in L1 production such as repetition, pauses and so-called fillers (e.g. 'er(m)'). Fulcher (2003: 97) himself regrets that empirically validated scales are still in minority in spoken tests and calls for a 'data-based approach' for producing meaningful descriptors in rating scales for spoken tests. Here results from corpora such as ELFA could be of great help. As ELFA displays successful use of English by well-educated *non-native* speakers in demanding lingua-franca settings, it would provide not only an empirically valid and better defined but also a more realistic yardstick against which L2 speakers of English could be measured. If approximating a 'well-educated' speaker is anything to go by in language testing in the first place, is of course debatable, but if such a criterion continues to be used, from the ELF perspective it would be more reasonable to test L2 speakers against 'well-educated L2 speakers' rather than such L1 speakers. There are currently international tests in use that claim to measure the test-taker's skills in *international* communication in English – one of them being the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC® run by the US-based Educational Testing Services) which includes a component for grammar in spoken production. The test web page[11] states that "the TOEIC tests are the international standard for assessing an individual's English-language proficiency level for the workforce" and that it is used "worldwide to measure the English proficiency of nonnative English-speaking people". Such tests could do well to actually base their rating scales on data-driven observations of proficient L2 speakers and setting that as the ultimate *target*.

For instance Jenkins (e.g. 2000: Ch. 8) has made repeated calls for an overhaul in L2 English testing practices – especially in pronunciation based on her study on L2-L2 ELF communication. Lowenberg (2002), on the other hand, has made a similar kind of proposal as regards testing grammar in the Expanding Circle. However, one can predict that it would undoubtedly be grammar where it would be the hardest for test-developers as well as teachers to make concessions and where the conservative attitudes will most probably continue prevailing. This is because of the 'communal' value of grammar mentioned above (see Section 2.1.3) – i.e. standard grammar representing other kinds of social values in our minds than purely a means for communicating ideas. As Widdowson alludes (2003: 38-41), the proponents of Standard English seem to have more tolerance for different kinds of pronunciation and lexis, than for grammar although one could wonder wouldn't pronunciation and lexis be the most crucial aspects of language to be kept 'unified' for maintaining mutual intelligibility – if that was really what the advocates of Standard English were concerned for.

Be that as it may, at least empirical data for test-developers has now started to appear, and from now on it is rather a matter of public and political opinion whether such data is made use of in the English language tests. The issue of grammar in speech will be

[11] See: http://www.ets.org/toeic (Accessed Aug. 21, 2013)

revisited in the next chapter in more detail as we move on to discuss spoken language in general and possible universal features of it.

3. Spoken Language and Language Universals

As the present study concentrates firmly on *spoken* ELF, it is essential to take a brief look at spoken language in itself: How does the spoken mode of language differ from the written mode in general and especially in terms of grammar? And are there some kind of common tendencies, i.e. universals to be found in spoken language? The main focus of this chapter will be on spoken *English* and especially on the *syntactic/grammatical constructions* of spoken language as relevant for the study. Thus phenomena on other levels of spoken interaction such as pragmatics and discourse will not be considered here.

It is, in fact, curious how recently spoken language has become an object of serious study in linguistics. For long, the scientific study of language was – and very much still is – imbued with a peculiar contradiction: despite the obvious fact that speech is the primary form of human language, both phylogentically and ontogenetically, the main focus of linguistics has nevertheless rested on the study of the written mode. Linell (2005) calls this peculiarity the "written language bias" in linguistics by which he means that our ways of conceptualizing *language* and in particular spoken language have been heavily influenced by observations made on written language[12]. Linell points to the western cultural stereotype according to which speech is not proper language because it is perceived as incoherent, unclear, and illogical, whereas writing is seen as the fully-fledged and correct 'language proper' (p. 11-12). Even though human speech emerged chronologically much earlier than human writing systems, it is still the characteristics of spoken language that are perceived to 'deviate' from the (implicit) written norm, and not the other way round (p. 57). Linell traces the origins of the higher status of written language to the cultural history of writing as a skill of only a few (such as scribes or monks), and to it being the mode for religious and legal documents (p. 11). Later on, a need arose for standardized and unified language for practically oriented activities such as schooling and nation-building, for which the written mode was particularly suited (Linell 2005: 14-15). Thus, written language gained in appreciation and gradually became the basis for conceptualizing and theorising about *language* in general – for both scholars and laymen – which led to the oversight of the special characteristics of spoken language altogether. But as Linell (2005: 14, 26-27) reminds us, we cannot use written language as a proxy for spoken language because written language did not historically originate in attempting to record spoken language as it occurred but it had functions of its own and consequently went through a number of adaptations for its own purposes. However, the idea that written language can be equated with spoken language has such long roots that still in today's linguistics Linell can find as many as 101 different points to demonstrate how the written language bias continues to affect the study and conceptualization of (spoken) language.

Thus, when we take to study spoken language it is essential to understand the conceptual inappropriateness of treating spoken language as a kind of subtype or – even worse – as a deficit form of the alleged 'language proper' i.e. written language. Otherwise we risk drawing false conclusions. For instance Cheshire (1999: 145), on

[12] Despite relying here on Linell's general account of the written language bias in linguistics, I do not intend to take up his position in its entirety as Linell maintains that studying individual grammatical constructions in spoken language is also a bias from written language studies.

writing about the syntactic features of speech, maintains that our written-language-based intuitions and beliefs about language have affected the models and frameworks we have developed to analyse language, and thus these models "constitute an important reason for our ignorance about the structure of the syntax of spoken language". In similar vein, Miller and Weinert (1998: Ch. 7 and 8) point to historical linguistics, typology, and language acquisition as research fields where the heavy reliance on written-language-biased assumptions and models may lead, and has led, researchers astray.

Since, according to Linell (2005: 14-15), foreign language teaching was one of the first domains that made extensive use of the written mode, it comes as no surprise that language pedagogy, too, should still suffer from this bias – as pointed out by McCarthy (1998: 18). Some kind of practice in spoken language has always been part of language learning but most of the time the input and the model to be imitated by learners were based on written language grammar and vocabulary (McCarthy 1998: 15-20), and not on the way L1 speakers themselves use the language in *spoken* interaction. McCarthy (1998: 20) further remarks that despite the fact that we now know much more about how spoken language functions – thanks to an increasing number of spoken corpora – there still seems to be a tendency in language pedagogy towards teaching what is *thought* to be proper language use instead of accepting descriptions of the spoken target language as it actually occurs between L1 speakers. This means that L2 speakers' speech continues to be falsely assessed against written (standard) language models – not against the actual practices evident in speech of L1 speakers.

In summary, the concept of 'deviance' in linguistics has traditionally been based on written language, and as written languages are more or less standardized, 'deviance', in effect, has come to mean a deviation from standard language. Yet, as alluded to in Section 2.1.3, spoken language cannot (and need not) function on standards the same way as written language, so deviance clearly cannot be defined in terms of written standards. Still, both L1 and L2 speakers have suffered from this misconceptualization – L1 speakers in ways pointed out in sociolinguistics, and L2 speakers through the school-imposed standards (on spoken language). Thus, so as not to yield to this fallacy, it is essential to briefly consider how spoken language, especially in terms of grammar, actually differs from written language.

3.1 Speech and Grammar

Studying authentic, naturally occurring speech first became possible for researchers with the advent of tape recorders in the 1950's. Still, it was not until the turn of the 1980's that research on spoken language really started gaining momentum (as attested by the booming literature on the topic from that period). Various approaches and research methods emerged including conversation analysis, discourse analysis and corpus-based analysis of transcribed speech. With corpus-based analysis, it became clear very early how unaware we – as speakers and linguists – actually were of, for instance, the grammatical structures used in everyday speech. Halliday's (1987: 57-58) anecdotal recollection of his early experiences of observing the properties of spoken language in the 1950's and 1960's is a telling example: not only were the people he observed

unconscious of the structures they had just used in their speech but also, when the structures were pointed out to them, they downright denied having used them and even claimed they never *could* use such formulations. Some, on the other hand, dismissed the structures as occasional slips. Yet, as Halliday remarks, many of these 'slips' occurred systematically in speech – but they had gone unnoticed for linguists as well, as linguists were at the time seriously debating whether some of the structures detected by Halliday could ever even occur in the English language (Halliday 1987: 57).

This anecdote goes to show that intuition is a rather poor guide when it comes to studying speech – the reason being, again, that our intuitive conceptions tend to be colored by written language. Perhaps this is because writing is the form of language we *see* every day (and thus become more conscious of it), whereas when *listening* and participating in spoken interaction we, in Widdowson's (2003: 39) words, "edit grammar out" concentrating on the meaning conveyed. This is a well-known phenomenon from psycholinguistic experiments, and is also observed by Halliday (1987: 57): when asked to repeat what one's interlocutor just said, listeners tend to give a paraphrase of the *propositional* contents of the said, not the actual wording of the utterance. Even today, *seeing* transcribed spontaneous spoken language for the first time is often a rather defamiliarizing experience to anyone new to the field. Speech – with its pauses, repairs, false starts etc. – looks a great deal messier in print than it sounds to the ear.

Fortunately, though, transcriptions of spoken language have now made us aware of the differences between the spoken and written modes. Miller and Weinert (1998: 22) list the most basic and obvious differences as follows. Spontaneous spoken language is produced in real time with no opportunity for editing, while writing is usually produced with pauses for thinking and with much editing[13]. Spontaneous spoken language is also subject to the limitations of short-term memory: both the speaker and hearer can hold only a limited number of items in their working memory at once. Speech is also typically produced face-to-face in a particular context, and it makes use of so-called paralinguistic features such as pitch, rhythm, and voice quality as well as gestures, facial expressions, eye-gaze and body postures. According to Miller and Weinert (1998: 22-23) these properties are reflected in the linguistic properties of speech in many ways. For instance, information is carefully staged in speech meaning that only a small quantity of information is assigned to each phrase (Halliday 1987 refers to this phenomenon as 'low lexical density' of speech, pointing to a lower number of content words in a spoken phrase compared to a written phrase). Further, spoken language has far less grammatical subordination and more co-ordination than writing, and the syntax of spoken language is typically fragmented and unintegrated. That is also why a sentence is not a useful analytical unit for studying spontaneous spoken language. In addition, the range of vocabulary tends to be more limited in speech compared to written language. And finally, Miller and Weinert point out that spoken language has grammatical constructions and patterns of its own that do not (typically) occur in writing, and vice versa.

This last point is particularly important for us. Very often the grammatical constructions typical of speech (that differ from those of writing) are treated as

[13] See Halliday (1987: 70) for an illuminating example of what writing might look like if it included all the editing that was done to it during the writing process. It would turn out at least as "messy" as spoken language. The essential difference is that a written text is a "ready-made" *product* whereas speech is an on-going *process*.

performance errors out of ignorance, as if the speaker was unsuccessful in trying to 'speak written language'. It is precisely in grammatical structures where the difference between spoken and written language seem to be the most difficult to accept. But as Miller and Weinert (1998: 23) themselves point out:

> The properties of spontaneous spoken language and the properties of formal written language both reflect the conditions under which they are produced. This does not mean that the properties of the former result from attempts to use the structures typical of the latter – attempts which fail because of the time constraints and the different tasks that claim attention in any face-to-face interaction. Rather, the structures of spontaneous spoken language have developed in such a way that they *can* be used in the circumstances in which conversation, for example, usually takes place. (emphasis in the original)

Miller and Weinert (1998) go on to show in their study that similar grammatical constructions appear in spoken language across different languages (English, French, Russian and others), which gives further impetus to treating spoken and written languages generally as different modes of language rather than treating spoken language features as mere performance difficulties. As pointed out above, especially second language speakers have fallen victims to the latter kind of thinking as any deviations from the written standard occurring in their speech are automatically put down to performance errors – not considering the possibility of these features being actually just typical grammatical structures of *speech* in that particular language.

Yet, it has to be noted – as commonly done in research on spoken language structures – that there are of course no definite boundaries between spoken and written language as such, and therefore, we cannot say that a particular feature *only* occurs in one or the other mode. Rather, there are genres in both modes that resemble each other more or less (cf. e.g. planned speeches and editorials vs. informal conversations and personal letters) and that differ along various dimensions according to their function – as the classic study by Biber (1988) demonstrated. However, we can still find features of 'typical speech' or 'typical writing'.

Whether spoken language, then, has a grammar of its own, has been a matter of some debates. Leech (2000), for instance, draws a distinction between what he sees as two different schools of researchers on spoken grammar: the Nottingham school (represented by the works of Carter, McCarthy and Hughes) and another school represented for example by Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan (Biber et al., 1999). The Nottingham school, according to Leech (2000: 688-689), emphasizes the "differentness" of spoken grammar from the traditional written grammar and maintains that the similarities between the two have to be empirically shown before making assumptions that they share the same grammatical framework. This group of researchers maintains that the nature of spoken language has very much been ignored in traditional models of grammar. The other school, on the other hand, underscores the "sameness" of the two modes of grammar claiming that "spoken and written language utilize the same basic grammatical repertoire" (Leech 2000: 675) but with somewhat different implementations. In other words, it is supposed that there is a scalar relation between spoken and written grammar so that different structures only have different probabilities

to occur in each mode (and thus different frequencies) – meaning that in extreme cases a particular structure may be completely missing from one or the other mode. However, as Leech himself admits (2000: 690), the difference between the two approaches may be more a matter of rhetorical emphasis than a factual difference. Still he sees the "sameness" approach as theoretically more elegant as it postulates only one grammar in a speaker's mind instead of a "split competence" between spoken and written grammar, and because it accommodates, for instance, the results from Biber's (1988) study – where he found that the difference between spoken and written grammar is not sharp but the occurrences of certain structures depend more on the *genre* of language – regardless whether it is spoken or written (Leech 2000: 629).

I find my position in Leech's discussion in line with Mauranen (2006c: 147-148): while it seems reasonable to claim that there is a common grammatical core to both speech and writing (as the "sameness" argument would hold), we must be very careful not to take written grammar as our baseline (as Leech himself seems to be doing) to only make amends to it on the basis of spoken grammar. If we truly believe in the primacy of spoken language, we obviously should start off by looking into spoken language grammar and only then see what new written grammar may have to add to our description. Nevertheless, because grammar came to be an object of study only through writing, it seems difficult to reverse our priorities in describing it. Although spoken corpora are now available and are finally being utilized for compiling grammars, especially in the English language as works such as Biber et al. (1999), and Carter and McCarthy (2006) attest, the basis for this kind of work still seems to be the written grammar – supplemented with structures found in speech. Also, terminology for describing structures in speech has often been carried over from or influenced by written grammar terminology (see e.g. Rühlemann 2006 for discussion of the inappropriate terms 'dislocation' and 'dysfluency' used in descriptions of spoken grammar).

However, some innovative researchers have risen to the challenge to look at grammar purely from the point of view of speech – which means for instance discarding the sentence and constituency based thinking about grammar. One of the first scholars to do this was David Brazil in his book *A Grammar of Speech* (1995). Brazil took as his starting point the fact that speech unfolds linearly in time so that "speakers assemble their utterances a bit at a time as they go along" (p. 21), and thus also grammar of speech has to be studied this way, i.e. linearly – not based on constituencies that speakers seek to 'bracket' as they speak. Brazil's model also stresses communication: he saw that rather than setting out to form sentences in speech, speakers set out to communicate something purposeful. This means that grammatical structures are elaborated bit by bit to satisfy communicative needs in speech – which is why Brazil called his model a 'purpose-driven' grammar. A decade later, partially influenced by Brazil's work, Sinclair and Mauranen (2006) devised another kind of analytical framework for describing grammar – especially in, but not confined to spoken discourse – in their *Linear Unit Grammar*. Their work is also based on studying grammar in a linear rather than hierarchical fashion, true to the 'one-dimensionality' of language, but based on chunking, which the authors see as the natural approach to structure.

However, the present study does not attempt to model grammar of speech as such but rather seeks to contrast perceived structures of spoken academic ELF with those of other varieties of spoken English, especially with spoken academic L1 English. In order

to do so the present study will describe the relevant features in a more traditional way (i.e. as features emerging from some kind of common core of grammar for both speech and writing) and utilize the terminology familiar from written grammars. While aware of the shortcomings of this approach, the choice is purely practical: this is the way most previous studies on spoken English have gone about analysing and reporting on their data especially in the fields of language variation and change, the results of which we will make frequent reference to.

3.2 Universals in Spoken Language

Above we adopted the view that both written and spoken grammar are likely to share a common source or core but that structures occurring in speech should be seen as primary in human language. What lends support to this view is the fact that different languages seem to share features in their spoken mode that they do not share in their standard written modes (see e.g. Miller & Weinert 1998). In other words, because spoken language is 'more natural' in many ways compared to written language (see Warren 2006), it more readily makes the true features of human language visible in general – in contrast to written modes of different languages that have undergone various kinds of deliberate modifications and interventions as they have been turned into a 'standard'. Therefore, it is in spoken language in particular where we could also expect to find manifestations of universal tendencies of language, and so a 'language universal' comes to be synonymous, in approximate terms, with a 'spoken language universal'. It is this quest for (spoken) language universals in linguistics and in English that we will turn to next. However, it has to be kept in mind, as noted by Miller and Weinert above, that even specialist in this area of linguistics (e.g. typologists) have not always resorted to spoken data for their analysis and comparisons as appeals towards this end have only begun to be voiced more recently (as discussed in Section 3.2.2 below).

In linguistics, two major methodological approaches to language universals have co-existed since the 1960's. We will briefly take a look at the two paradigms first (with also consideration of the criticism levelled at them) because of two reasons. As will be discussed in the following section, the paradigms look for explanations for language universals in different kinds of sources – therefore, for the theoretical considerations of the present work it is important to make clear which line the present study adopts (and why) as this will have consequences for the way the results are interpreted and explained. And secondly, the discussion of typological universals will provide a background for discussing possible English-specific universals in Section 3.2.2 below – which I take to be a 'subset' of typological universals. However, because intended only as a broad background for Section 3.2.2, it should be evident to the reader that the following discussion of the two major paradigms is necessarily a crude characterisation of the basic tenets of the approaches and does not serve as an exhaustive account of all the latest developments in the fields. It is also worth noting that the two views have come closer to each other in more recent years, as discussed at the end of the following section.

3.2.1 Universal Grammar and Typology

The first approach to language universals goes back to the work of Noam Chomsky and the concept of Universal Grammar (see e.g. Chomsky 1981 and 1965: Ch. 1). The starting point for this line of argumentation lies in the observation that all normally developed children acquire the structures of their mother tongue (be it whatever it may) with relative speed and perfection despite the fact that the 'input data', i.e. the language they hear around them – in particular from their immediate care-givers – is corrupt, in other words full of production errors such as false starts, grammatical inconsistencies, and hesitations. Thus, it seems that children are not learning their L1s only by imitating what they hear around them but are actually 'recovering' the grammar rules and the system of their L1 on the basis of the corrupt evidence. Also, L1s do not seem to be genetically inherited from parents since a new-born child is capable of learning *any* human language flawlessly which s/he is exposed to in early childhood – not just the one spoken by his/her biological parents. As this remarkable ability is difficult to explain with reference to any external cause, the theory postulates an innate *language acquisition device* (LAD) that all human beings are endowed with in their species-specific genetic makeup, and which is independent of any other human cognitive abilities. The LAD, in turn, carries the basic grammatical *principles* of human language inside it, in other words the Universal Grammar, which functions as a base for building competence in any particular language. All a child acquiring his/her L1 is left to do, then, is to set the more fine-grained *parameters* of these principles so that they match the input data s/he hears from the environment. – A common example would be the position of the adjective in a noun phrase: in some languages the adjective precedes the noun, while in others it follows the noun – both parameter settings are possible but the child has to infer which setting is valid for his/her L1 from the raw data available.

Thus, what this 'formalist-deductive' (see Siemund 2009) approach aspires to account for are the general principles of Universal Grammar (UG) as it is these principles that are seen to constitute the 'universalness' of human language. The principles, and consequently the level of analysis are highly abstract, and since the same principles are purportedly found in all languages in the world, it has traditionally been enough for a researcher in this paradigm to concentrate only on a restricted set of languages as his/her database. These two above-mentioned methodological tenets – the degree of abstractness of analysis and the restricted database – are also among the points which have raised the most criticism towards the Chomskyan line of research on language universals, together with the assumed language acquisition device underlying the whole theory (for an overview of the criticism see e.g. Comrie 1989: Ch. 1; and for a more recent discussion e.g. Siemund 2009). As Comrie (1989: 5) notes, the weaknesses of this research paradigm mainly stem "from the fact that the argumentation is aprioristic". The existence of an innate language acquisition device or the abstract syntactic rules generated by the UG are empirically untestable, which means that, in essence, the "acceptance of the paradigm becomes simply a matter of faith" as Comrie (1989: 5) puts it. For instance, the abstractness of the putative rules generated by the UG often make use of elements that are never overtly realized in a sentence but are hypothesized to occur at a certain intermediate stage in the syntactic analysis in the speaker's mind (such as dummy subjects). A counterexample would be impossible to construct on any empirical grounds,

and thus this kind of abstract universal is not potentially disconfirmable and "is no stronger than […] the analysis on which it is based" (Comrie 1989: 13). This leads Comrie (1989: 15) to conclude that:

> [p]utative universals which simply test the ability of linguists to come up with abstract analyses that are consistent with any conceivable set of data may tell us something about linguists, but they do not tell us anything about language.

In addition, the fact that the principles of UG are claimed to be 'domain-specific' (i.e. they do not necessarily explain the acquisition of other kinds of knowledge nor can the principles be derived from higher order principles of human cognition) is bound to weaken the explanatory power of the theory, or at least make it less fruitful, as Eckman (2004) argues. After the assumed language universals have been derived back to the innate, domain-specific UG in the human mind, any further linguistic inquiry into the nature of these universals seems to be cut off. To answer the question how and why the universals came into being in the first place or how the LAD developed, seems to be calling for expertise in evolutionary biology – something beyond most linguists (Eckman 2004: 700).

Finally, the frequent use of only one or a restricted number of languages as a database for finding language universals also seems questionable – traditionally it has been English that has provided for analyses of UG parameters. Although researchers have later turned to other languages (and overall a greater number of languages) as well, the tendency for in-depth analysis of one language at the expense of the breadth of the analysis covering many languages can, obviously, lead to false assumptions and gaps in what exactly is claimed to be universal in human language. According to Comrie (1989: 6), the UG paradigm has an in-built, aprioristic assumption about the range of variation found across languages, which paradoxically renders void the very aim of research on language universals: mapping the range of variation found in languages and the limits placed on this variation.

The second approach to language universals, and also the one that the present study leans towards, is most closely associated with and inspired by the work of Joseph H. Greenberg (see especially the seminal 1966 article by Greenberg and the *Memorandum* by Greenberg, Osgood and Jenkins 1966 in the same volume). This line of research is closely associated with research on linguistic typology – even though a quest for universal features of language might, at first sight, appear to be in conflict with the aim of typologizing individual languages based on their differences. However, as Comrie (1989: 32) notes, these two aims actually come down to being just "different facets of a single research endeavour": typology is directly concerned with (possible) variation in human languages, whereas inquiry into language universals aims to establish limits on this variation by finding out what is common to all (or nearly all) languages. In practice, the two facets cannot be isolated from each other.

The typological approach (also called the "functionalist-inductive" approach; see Siemund 2009) to language universals differs from the Chomskyan one at least in four major respects. First and foremost, typologists are concerned with what might be called surface structure universals, i.e. more concrete and observable units of language. Consequently, their work also requires a minimum of abstract analysis of data, although

this does not mean that abstractness is totally done away with as, for example, identification of different units (such as subjects) in different languages requires, in many instances, a certain level of abstractness in the analysis (see Comrie 1989: 13). However, as the proposals for language universals are stated in more concrete terms than those in the Universal Grammar approach, the universals are also testable empirically and thus subject to falsification or further analysis as data accumulates. As Comrie (1989: 15) puts it "the only language universals that are of empirical interest are those to which potential counterexamples can be constructed".

A second difference between the two approaches lies in the database used for discovering universal features of language. In the Greenbergian approach, a large set of different languages is employed. Ideally, the set should be representative genetically (i.e. including languages from different language families), areally (i.e. including languages from different parts of the world so as to guard against the influence of borrowing and diffusion between adjacent languages), and typologically (i.e. including languages with, for instance, different basic word orders) (see Comrie 1989: 10-12). The representative sample of languages is meant to guarantee the validity of asserting a "universal" feature, as it would be practically impossible to study *all* human languages, past and present, simultaneously (or at all). – The basic tenet is that the more distinct languages manifest the same feature, the more likely it is that all or majority of the world's languages display a similar pattern.

Thirdly, from what was just said it can be inferred that the linguistic features meriting "universal" status in the typological approach do not have to be absolute or deterministic in the sense that their existence in *all* languages in the world (or to the absolutely same degree) has to be guaranteed before they can be declared universals. In typological studies, probabilistic universals based on statistical effects and factors also count – in other words we can speak of universal *tendencies*, or in Greenberg et al.'s (1966: xviii) words "generalizations that tend to hold true in more than a chance number of comparisons", if a particular feature is very common even if not necessarily appearing in 100 % of the languages studied. Universals for typologists are, then, of statistical nature, and today more and more statistical analyses are being employed to discover tendencies and correlations between features in large linguistic datasets. These statistical tools help to identify systematicity in datasets that might otherwise appear chaotic.

Finally, in addition to employing eclectic databases and tools for research, typologists are also more eclectic in the explanations they propose for language universals. In the UG paradigm, the universals are traced back to innate commonalities of the human language faculty with the assumption that we are born with the mechanisms producing language universals and that these mechanisms are domain specific, i.e. only pertain to linguistic abilities (thus inhibiting any further inquiry into the matter). In other words, the explanations offered are language- and theory-internal and do not reflect, for instance, communicative needs. Typologists on the other hand turn to language-external sources of explanation which are perceived to be common to all humans. Such sources include, for instance, the physiological properties of the articulatory or auditory system, cognitive demands of language processing (such as time or memory limitations), or communicative needs (see e.g. Butterworth et al. 1984: 1) that constrain language use one way or the other. The main tenet is that language structure cannot explain language structure but the motivations have to come 'outside' of language. Such motivations can

also be called functional (as opposed to formal) explanations, and they have been classified in various different ways in the literature. Hawkins (1988: Ch. 1), for instance, sums up the most cited motivations under the labels of "communicative usefulness", "processing ease or difficulty", "perceptual salience", and "semantic transparency". Comrie (1984: 87 and 1989: 25-29), on the other hand, divides the explanations into two main categories: those relating properties of language to general human cognitive processes (e.g. perceptual salience of certain linguistic features), and those relating them to "language as a system for efficiently relating meaning and form" (1984: 87) (as apparent in the tendency to prefer transparent syntactic structures that most explicitly provide a link between the form and the semantic content of the proposition – so as to make communication more effective). The latter type Comrie (1984: 87) calls semantic-pragmatic. The categories quite naturally overlap and are interlinked, and no clear boundaries can be drawn between them as for instance perceptually salient features facilitate processing for both the speaker and the hearer and thus simultaneously aid communication. But whatever the suggested motivations for universals, the major advantage in the open-mindedness of typologists as regards the possible explanations is that it also allows for cross-disciplinary explorations, for example in cognitive psychology or phonetics, into the roots of the universals.

Some of the most cited, individuated motivations for language universals in typological research are markedness, economy, and iconicity, which are interrelated (see e.g. Bybee 2011) and of which economy and iconicity actually manifest two competing motivations for universals. In simplified terms, typological markedness refers to two opposing formal 'markings' of a linguistic category (such as the number of nouns) – one 'marked', the other 'unmarked' that "exhibit a consistently asymmetric relationship in terms of distribution and/or syntagmatic structure and/or paradigmatic complexity" (Moravcsik & Wirth 1986: 3). The category that is more widely distributed and/or simpler and/or has more subtypes is called 'unmarked', whereas the less frequent and/or more complex category with fewer subtypes is called 'marked'. For instance, the singular is typologically considered 'unmarked' as singular forms occur more frequently in languages, are usually simpler in form (in the sense of manifesting a 'zero marking') and, for example, in the case of German show a three-way gender differentiation not found in the plural, whereas the plural is 'marked' because it is less common in discourse, more complex in form (as manifested by e.g. an additional affix to the singular in many languages), and for instance in German is not as richly elaborated in terms of subtypes as the singular (see Moravcsik & Wirth 1986: 2). In addition to labelling certain linguistic categories 'marked' or 'unmarked' cross-linguistically, the same terminology is often applied within a language to distinguish various linguistic forms (or 'values') inside a grammatical category. Not all typologists approve of this use (see e.g. Croft 2003: 92), but often the form or value of a category that is zero coded in a particular language is termed unmarked, whereas the overtly coded form is marked. The zero coded, more common and less complex unmarked forms are associated with language universals – although it still remains largely unresolved what actually is simple or complex in language and why (see e.g. Dahl 2004 and the contributions in Miestamo et al. 2008). For instance, seemingly complex irregular forms may, due to their frequency of use, not appear complex at all to speakers (see e.g. Bybee 2011: 145 for a discussion of high-frequency entities and complexity). On the other hand, less complex, unmarked forms in

a language are often seen as more 'natural' and it is the basic tenet of Naturalness Theory that languages actually tend towards less complexity over time (although this is a highly controversial issue as discussed in Dahl 2004: Ch. 6 and 11).

One of the manifestations of 'naturalness' is iconicity. Iconicity refers to the relationship between the linguistic form and its semantic complexity: for instance, the increasing complexity in lexical notions is often reflected in the increasing complexity in the form in compounds (*book* vs. *storybook*) or affixation (*commercial* vs. *non-commercial*). Iconicity also accounts for the above-mentioned tendency to prefer syntactic structures that most directly provide access to the semantic content of the proposition, as evident, for instance, in isomorphic forms. By isomorphism we mean a one-to-one correspondence between forms and meanings – as visible for instance in the coding of the plural with a separate morpheme in many languages. Isomorphism and thus iconicity facilitate language processing, especially for the hearer, but may, on the other hand decrease economy in language production for the speaker as structures become 'heavier' or more complex to produce in speech. (See e.g. Croft 2003: 101-117 for a profound discussion of iconicity and isomorphism in language.)

The principle of economy, on the other hand, entails that speakers obtain to simplify their linguistic utterances to save in production, and also processing, costs. A shorter form is also assumed to increase processing efficiency for the hearer. The principle of economy in language explains why the most common grammatical categories or forms are typically 'zero marked' or have otherwise a minimal expression – while the less frequent ones are often overtly marked. Iconicity and economy are at constant competition in language but both are also seen as sources for language universals (see e.g. Bybee 2011: 142-146 and Croft 2003: 101-117).

The major criticism levelled at the typological approach relates directly to the sources of explanation employed. According to researchers sympathetic to the UG approach, by utilizing these external causes of explanation, the typologists only "push the explanation one step back" (see e.g. Gass and Selinker 2001: 205), as it were, not really accounting for the existence of universals but explaining them in terms of something else in need of an explanation. Eckman (2004) tackles this criticism with particular rigor in his article in the context of explaining SLA universals either through UG or the typological view. In essence, he points out that *any* explanation in science "pushes the explanation one step back" by referring to a more general law behind the phenomenon, and is itself in need of a higher-level explanation (see also Comrie 1989: 25). That is in the nature of science and constitutes the "explanatory ascent" in argumentation – it is only a question of the *level* of explanation with which a particular researcher is contented (Eckman 2004: 686). Eckman further points out that in the UG approach, the explanatory ascent seems to be cut off for linguists by reference to something innate and domain-specific (i.e. something not applicable to other cognitive domains in the human mind), whereas in the typological approach the explanatory ascent can continue more fruitfully as the successive "why" questions lead to "invoking more general laws" (pp. 686-687). Comrie (1989: 25) additionally notes that the strength in functional explanations is that "seemingly disparate phenomena [can] be shown to have a common explanation" (such as perceptual saliency).

Many scholars working within the typological framework of universals haste to emphasize, however, that they do not exclude the possibility of some language universals

being a result of innate properties of human beings. Comrie (1984: 88) cites structure-dependence, i.e. the fact that transformations in language are possible only within constituent structures and not on any arbitrary strings, as an example: there is no obvious functional explanation why this should be so other than saying that that is the way humans are 'programmed' to operate. Similarly, Moravcsik (2011) reminds us that functional and formal explanations are not necessarily at odds as certain universals can be explained through either approach even simultaneously (p. 83), and, on the other hand, not all grammatical phenomena can be determined by language function (alone) even if they are universal (p. 88). A common view seems to be that what is innate about language are the processing and learning mechanisms which humans possess and which produce the universals in language – not a set of abstract grammatical rules as such (see e.g. Hawkins 2004: xii).

The fusion of the explanations deriving from the two distinct schools of thought is only one example of how the approaches have come closer to each other over time. Another example would be the fact that today also scholars working within the UG framework make use of empirical data for testing hypotheses. The papers in the volume by Cornips and Corrigan (2005) aptly demonstrate the 'coming together' of the two approaches, as does Hawkins (2004) in his work on bridging the gap between formalist and functionalist theories. However, the emphases of each of the two schools are still clear, and as pointed out above, the present study builds firmly on the functionalist/typological approach. Also the search for language-specific universals (e.g. 'angloversals' discussed in the next section) that the present study focuses on can be seen as branching from the typological tradition.

3.2.2 Vernacular Universals and Angloversals

Research has shown that the above-mentioned unmarked, and thus more potentially universal, features in language are more common in informal, spoken language, and that, correspondingly, typologically marked values increase in formal and written genres (e.g. Greenberg and O'Sullivan 1974; see also Croft 2003: 112). That is why the natural locus for finding universals in language is first and foremost the spoken mode (to the extent that 'a language universal' can be regarded as a close synonym to 'a spoken language universal' as alluded to above). Further, despite the fact that the search for linguistic universals was originally a typological, cross-linguistic endeavour, in recent years the quest has also expanded to the fields concerned with language-internal variation and change such as dialectology and sociolinguistics (see e.g. the contributions in the volumes by Kortmann 2004, Nevalainen et al. 2006a, Filppula et al. 2009a, and Siemund 2011 and 2013) – which is, indeed, only a natural development as these fields are concerned especially with informal, spoken language[14]. The above-mentioned fields focus on "alternative, systemic realizations of *a given language*" (Nevalainen et al.

[14] In addition to language variationists, language universals have attracted the attention of researchers of language contact (see e.g. Winford 2003, and the papers in Siemund and Kintana 2008) and second language acquisition (e.g. Rutherford 1987, White 2004), which we will return to in 3.2.3 below.

2006b: 3, my emphasis), which resembles cross-linguistic research but only in a more regional/typologically restricted context, within one language. Also, dialects and other non-standard varieties are described as more natural manifestations of language than the – at least to some extent artificially – 'put-together', codified standard languages, and as universals are more likely to crop up in natural developments of language, non-standard spoken varieties provide, for this reason, too, a particularly promising ground for finding linguistic universals.

This premise of naturalness is the starting point also for the quest for 'vernacular universals' – a theory that will be discussed here in some detail due to its close relation to the quest for 'angloversals' (which will concern us in particular). On a preliminary note, though, it should be pointed out that the two concepts 'vernacular universals' and 'angloversals' are not always clearly distinguishable from each other even in the literature on English variation (as will be obvious from the discussion below), and the terms have often been used more or less synonymously in studies pertaining to English only. As Filppula et al. (2009b: 2) observe, an 'angloversal' can, in rough terms, be considered a "weaker" type of universal than a 'vernacular universal' but referring essentially to the same general notion. That is also why some points of criticism levelled at vernacular universals seem to be relevant for angloversals as well, and will, therefore, be discussed in what follows. However, we will also attempt to distinguish between the concepts at the end of the section, and will adopt 'angloversals' as the general conceptual backbone of the study.

The term 'vernacular universals' was launched by the sociolinguist Jack Chambers (see Chambers 2000, 2003: 265-274, and 2004) in reference to "a small number of phonological and grammatical processes [which] recur in vernaculars wherever they are spoken" (2004: 128). 'Vernaculars', on the other hand, are defined by Chambers as "informal colloquial varieties that are not codified" (2012: 262). Thus, according to Chambers, the occurrence of vernacular universals is not limited only to social and regional dialects but they are likely to emerge also in child language, pidgins and creoles, and in interlanguage varieties. Chambers concludes that "[t]herefore, they appear to be natural outgrowths, so to speak, of the language faculty, that is, the species-specific bioprogram" (2004: 128) and not due to, for instance, language contact. He cites a few strong phonological and grammatical candidates from English as examples, including the final obstruent devoicing (in words like *hundred* and *cupboard*), conjugation regularisation of irregular verb forms (such as *heared* and *thinked*), multiple negation (as in *He didn't see nothing*), and default singulars (meaning the preference for the singular form of BE in constructions like *They was the last ones* or *There's too many people here*). Chambers notes, using terminology borrowed from Brain (1974), that in so far as these processes arise naturally in child language, pidgins and other spoken varieties, the features must be 'primitive', not 'learned' (2004: 129). Despite relating vernacular universals to an innate language faculty, Chambers seems to make repeated reference especially to universal cognitive (e.g. processing) abilities of humans as a source for such features, not to an innate universal grammar in the strict Chomskyan sense as such (see e.g. Chambers 2003 and 2009). And as the same cognitive processes (such as avoiding redundancy in grammatical constructions) are assumed to be valid for speakers of any language, Chambers concludes that features meriting the status of a 'vernacular universal' cannot be merely English but their counterparts must be found in

other languages of the world as well (e.g. Chambers 2003: 273). Thus, Chambers makes a programmatic call for cross-linguistic, typological cooperation between linguists to find the 'global' vernacular roots of human language.

The general observation of recurring features in non-standard (spoken) varieties of a language is not new as such but has surfaced in the work of other linguists in past decades before Chambers. But it is especially the strong cross-linguistic claims in Chambers' outline that have caught the attention of contemporary linguists – and that have also met with reservation by typologists and variationist linguists. For instance, Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2011: 271-272) point out that the morphosyntactic candidates for vernacular universals listed by Chambers do not account for the most pervasive features even in the 46 varieties of English they studied – thus it is not plausible they would stand up to this status in other (vernacular) languages globally either. They further note that, for instance, zero copulas – one of the features Chambers puts forth as a promising candidate for a vernacular universal – are heavily typologically dependent: most languages of the world do not allow pronominal zero copulas (of the type *He ___ a sailor*) at all, and on the other hand in languages where zero copulas are used in standard language, it is, of course, no wonder that zero copulas should also emerge in the vernacular registers of that particular language.

But in addition to the global scope, the theory of vernacular universals has met with criticism for other reasons, too. Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2011: 267-274) discuss some of the major points in their article. According to them, typologists find the notion problematic first and foremost because 'vernacular universals' are contrasted with universals of non-vernacular varieties, although from the typological perspective universals apply to all varieties of language equally (see e.g. Siemund 2009). Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2011: 267-268) point out, however, that a great deal of typological work has been carried out comparing standard (written) varieties of well-documented languages with spoken varieties of less-documented languages, in other words *not* comparing the like with the like, and leaving spontaneous spoken language of well-described languages largely underresearched. The same is true for pidgins and creoles as well as the role of language contact in the emergence of universals – domains that have not been accounted for in typological studies. In this respect the notion of *vernacular* universals could actually help remedy the situation. Further, the fact that the proposed vernacular universals do not reach the level of absolute universals has discredited them in the eyes of some typologists, although – as pointed out by Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2011: 269) – it would be amazing enough for a typologist to observe a certain feature even in 70 % of the world's languages. Thus, the statistical tendencies brought forward by vernacular universals should not be downplayed only on this account.

From the sociolinguistic corner, on the other hand, Trudgill (2009) levels criticism towards the concept of vernacular universals by noting that the 'true typological split' lies not in the differences between standard and non-standard varieties as proposed by the theory, but between the so-called high-contact and low-contact varieties: in the case of English the former including for instance Standard English, the colonial varieties of English, and shift varieties such as Irish English and Welsh English, and the latter comprising of the traditional dialects of English from the British Isles and North America. Trudgill maintains that Standard English and other high-contact varieties have undergone the same simplification processes due to contact but are just at different stages

of that process because of standard language inhibiting changes, but low-contact varieties seem to have developed along a different path (towards complexification) and that is what needs explanation. Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2011: 273ff) note that what Trudgill bases his claim on are actually overall coding strategies in language, not individual morphosyntactic features and that the "even more fundamental split underlying Trudgill's division of varieties of English […] into high- and low-contact varieties [is] the one between spontaneous spoken and written varieties" (p. 273). Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2011) set out to test whether Trudgill's hypothesis of the significance of the variety type for the similarities found in the grammatical coding strategies of varieties of English can be supported on the basis of their morphosyntactic data from 46 English varieties, and they come to the conclusion that it can, although the variety types employed do not directly correspond to Trudgill's division. – Their purely quantitative study shows that the traditional L1 dialects, high-contact L1 varieties, and L2 varieties (or "New Englishes") pattern up according to how explicitly they exhibit grammatical marking: traditional dialects exhibiting the highest degree, other L1 varieties covering the middle ground and L2 varieties showing the least marking. The authors conclude that the notion of vernacular universals is useful not so much in detecting individual morphosyntactic features but in finding larger-scale, cross-linguistic coding strategies especially between spontaneous spoken varieties and written varieties (p. 285). They also see the value of the concept in looking for statistical universals instead of strictly absolute ones. But as for an individual feature to qualify as a 'vernacular universal', they lay down the following criteria (p. 272):

> "– The candidate feature should be attested in a vast majority of a given language's vernacular varieties.
> – The candidate feature should neither be patterned geographically nor according to variety type (in the case of English: L1 (high- vs. low-contact), L2, or pidgin/creole).
> – For the sake of cross-linguistic validity, the candidate feature should not be tied to a given language's typological make-up (inflectional, agglutinating, etc.).
> – The candidate feature should be cross-linguistically attested in a significant number of the world's languages (especially among the vast number of languages without a literary tradition)."

I will come back to these criteria when discussing 'angloversals' below.

Yet another piece of criticism launched at the search for vernacular universals concerns the methodology of the pursuit. Siemund (2009) maintains that looking for universals applying to 'vernacular data' alone is misinformed, and instead we should focus on the universals of specific *language domains* (such as language contact, change, acquisition and discourse) that, according to Siemund, have been shown to manifest a set of different kinds of universals, not necessarily related. Consequently, he also warns against lumping different types of varieties (L1, shift varieties, New Englishes, and pidgins and creoles) together under the same label of 'vernacular English' as this might lead to oversimplification of matters. Also Davydova et al. (2011) criticize the bunching up of different varieties of English but their main concern is the overtly quantitative

and/or surface-level bundling together of similar-looking features and assuming that they are exponents of the same phenomenon only at their face value. As alternative bases for comparing varieties of English they suggest, for instance, assessing a variety's proximity to some reference variety or looking into the possible sources of the non-standard features in a more detailed qualitative study – the source here referring to the type of variety (L1, L2 etc.) or the socio-historical origins of the variety. I fully agree that mere quantitative counting or observations of "similar-looking features" in different varieties does not lead to very profound insights of the similarities or differences between varieties, and as a corpus linguist, I practically see no other way of comparing different varieties than scrutinizing closely the linguistic context conditioning the occurrence of a certain feature in a certain variety. However, claiming that the source of difference or similarity should first and foremost be ascribed to the type of variety, domain of language or socio-historical developments of a variety in my view misses the very point put forth by the theory of vernacular universals: the question whether we can find similar underlying universal tendencies in different varieties of English/language *irrespective* of the origin of the variety. Presupposing that answers can only be found in the oft-cited processes of the established, traditional categories of language domains is similarly aprioristic as pre-theoretical assigning of language universals to an innate language acquisition device. It is true, as Davydova et al. (2011: 317) put it that "what looks the same may not in fact be the same", but if a careful qualitative analysis of a certain feature points to virtually similar linguistic conditioning of that feature in two different unrelated varieties of a language, I find it more plausible that the phenomenon is due to the same cause in both varieties – albeit from different origins – than that it is not (and then went on to find 'established' explanations in the origins of the varieties). Although not fully subscribing to the theory of vernacular universals myself (e.g. to their origin in the innate bioprogram or their global attestability), I welcome its unprejudiced opening in the discussion of linguistic universals, and think it provides a good heuristic tool for taking a fresh look at features that "look the same" in different varieties.

Also other researchers inspired by the notion of vernacular universals still have reservations about the origin of these universals in the language faculty (as proposed by Chambers) but instead see a variety of other possible causes for them, as illustrated, for example, in the articles in the volume by Filppula et al. (2009a). Basically, all the same reasons are quoted variably by different scholars as those given as potential causes for typological universals in general, as discussed in 3.2.1. above, such as processing or production constrains and markedness. However, in addition to these causes, many of the contributors in Filppula et al. (2009a) also assign language contact or second language acquisition a significant role in the emergence of universals. These motivations will be discussed in section 3.2.3 below.

Because of the criticism that the concept of 'vernacular universal' has come under (especially due to its wide-reaching scope), a more restricted, language-specific term 'angloversals' has started to gain popularity among English linguists (see e.g. Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi 2011, and Szmrecsanyi and Kortmann 2009). This term limits the scope of the search for universals to possible *English*-internal 'universals'. The term was originally launched by Mair (2003: 83-84) in reference to joint tendencies found in the Outer Circle Englishes that could not be explained historically or genetically, but which, in his view, could be a result of L2 learning strategies of the speakers of these varieties.

However, in recent years the interpretation of the term in the literature has expanded to cover other varieties of English, too, and also different kinds of motivations for the emergence of such language-internal universals. For example, in Szmrecsanyi and Kortmann's (2009: 31) definition, an 'angloversal' refers to non-standard morphosyntactic features occurring frequently in vernacular varieties of English. Yet, as Peters and Burridge (2012: 234) note, the term 'vernacular' in this context is contested. In their words: "[f]or some researchers it seems to limit the possibilities to nonstandard features of varieties of English […], while the distinction between vernacular features and informal styles of nonvernaculars is unclear". As noted above, Chambers defined a 'vernacular' as a variety that is "not codified" but Peters and Burridge (2012: 234) aptly remark that at least the quest for angloversals (as presented, for instance, in the *Handbook of Varieties of English* edited by Kortmann et al. 2004; see also e.g. Kortmann 2010: 407) has also extended beyond non-standard sociolectal variants to non-standard features that "from an L1 perspective are colloquial variants (relating to spoken or written medium) and informal variants (relating to the register or style of discourse)" – in other words, to features also found in more standard-like varieties of English (i.e. in 'non-vernaculars'). Thus, in their own discussion of Australian and New Zealand English features, Peters and Burridge (2012) draw a distinction between "vernacular" features with "strong sociolinguistic connotations" and "angloversals" which they use to refer to "informal and colloquial variants of standard English" (p. 234).

A distinction between a 'sociolinguistic' and an 'informal/colloquial' variant may, however, be rather difficult to draw in individual cases, and no such distinction is made, for example, in Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2004), who on the basis of their analyses of 46 varieties of English provide a set of 11 globally most wide-spread non-standard features of English which they label 'unrestricted angloversals' (p. 1154; see also Kortmann 2010: 407). The fact that an 'angloversal' may refer either to a more 'sociolinguistic' or just 'informal' feature is obvious from the list as it includes many colloquial or informal everyday features of spoken English in any register or style (not the kinds one would only expect to find in 'vernacular' varieties) such as "lack of inversion in main clause *yes*/*no* questions" or "*me* instead of *I* in coordinate subjects" as well as features with stronger "sociolinguistic connotations" such as "multiple negation" or "special forms or phrases for the second person plural pronoun" (2004: 1154). Thus, on the basis of the two sources cited here, the quest for angloversals can actually be interpreted as an attempt to capture frequent spoken English phenomena (in any spoken variety of the language) that deviate from standard, written language, and it is in this sense that the term is also applied in the present work. Consequently, following Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2011: 273) above, the "fundamental split" in the present thesis is understood as "the one between spontaneous spoken and written varieties". By comparing L1 spoken English to L2 spoken English in this study, we are also able to overcome the drawback pointed out by Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2011: 267-268) according to which typological work often ends up comparing *written* varieties of well-documented languages (such as L1 English) with *spoken* varieties of less-documented languages (such as L2 English).

But coming back to the term 'angloversal', it seems better suited for our purposes in this study than the term 'vernacular universal' for a number of reasons. The scope of the present study is, of course, limited to spoken *English* and the aim is *not* to predict or

extrapolate similarities in spoken varieties of other languages (as the theory of vernacular universals would call for). Also, academic genres (which our focus is on) can hardly be labelled 'vernacular' in the sociolinguistic sense of the term even in non-native contexts. But following Peters and Burridge (2012), also non-vernaculars may qualify as sources for angloversals. (For further considerations of the suitability of *academic* spoken language as data for such purposes, see Ch. 4.) Moreover, having adopted the view in Chapter 2 according to which in this study "Standard English" refers to the written mode, our task can be interpreted as finding out to what extent the spoken features in L1 and L2 English differ from the written standard, and whether the deviances point to the same direction between the groups – which is in line with the general search for angloversals as presented above.

Of the criticism levelled at 'vernacular universals' (see above), the points of bundling together different varieties in this pursue, and the 'problem' of vernacular universals not reaching the level of absolute universals, are also pertinent to the search of angloversals. The general counterarguments to this criticism were already provided above. But as regards the statistical prevalence of angloversals, it is important to note that, in the present study, it is first and foremost the *qualitative* similarities (or differences) in the features across the two varieties studied that will weigh more in deciding about their 'universal' nature. On the other hand, of the four criteria laid down for vernacular universals above by Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2011: 272), the first two appear relevant also for angloversals. In other words: 1) "The candidate feature should be attested in a vast majority of a given language's […] varieties" (excluding the word 'vernacular' here for the reasons discussed above), and 2) "The candidate feature should neither be patterned geographically nor according to variety type (in the case of English: L1 (high- vs. low-contact), L2, or pidgin/creole)". With these criteria in mind we set out to scrutinize our data in Chapter 5. As a final point, it is worth noting that while angloversals have been studied in Inner and Outer Circle Englishes (see e.g. Sand 2008), their possible attestation in 'EFL' varieties seems to be still largely uncharted (see Kortmann & Szmrecsanyi 2011: 286).

3.2.3 Universals in Language Contact and SLA

In Chapter 2, we noted that linguistically, ELF may manifest features akin both to contact languages and/or SLA. Therefore, it is essential to take a closer look at the motivations for universals that these particular fields have put forth.

The role of universals in language contact situations and second language acquisition (SLA) are discussed jointly here because in principle they involve a very similar process: both concern a situation where two (or more) languages come into contact with each other (first) in an individual's mind. The main difference lies in the fact that in 'untutored' language contact situations the process leads slowly to some degree of convergence or 'mixing' of the languages on a speech community level (through so-called 'group SLA', see Winford 2003: 235ff), whereas in 'tutored' SLA the desired goal is that the individual speaker learns the system of the second language *in addition* to his/her mother tongue, thus retaining two (or more) separate systems in memory

simultaneously. However, in either case the reality is that the languages coming together will be affected one way or the other in the speaker's mind (see e.g. Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008). The perennial question is whether the outcome is defined mainly by substratum influence, i.e. influence from the speaker's L1 or whether it is more due to universal linguistic processes. (A third source of changes would be possible language-internal processes in cases where a totally new language emerges as a result of contact.) Our main concern here are the universal processes detected in these circumstances as language contact situations seem to be a particularly fertile ground for their manifestation. As was pointed out in Chapter 2, the general assumption is that universals crop up in language contact situations precisely because speakers intuitively know that they cannot fall back solely on their mother tongue features – and are not (yet) capable of utilizing the target language features to the full either – for communication.

But before delving into the universals, let us briefly consider the main types of language contact situations and their outcomes found in the literature. The intensity of the contact, among other things, has been shown to affect the degree to which a language changes in contact with another. Also the component of language susceptible to change varies depending on the type of contact. Thus, in so-called language maintenance situations (e.g. Winford 2003: 11-15) where contact is limited, the recipient language changes only to a small degree mainly through borrowing, and the area most likely affected is the lexicon. On the other hand, in so-called language shift situations (e.g. Winford 2003: 15-18) where the contact is intense and which can lead even to a partial or total abandonment of a group's native language in favour of another, changes are more radical and concern first and foremost phonology and syntax – in other words, the target language is influenced by features of the L1 of those shifting to the new language. The processes involved in this kind of 'untutored' second language acquisition have been observed to be akin to those of 'tutored' SLA (see below for further discussion). Finally, as hinted at above, language contacts may also lead to creation of completely new languages in the form of bilingual mixed languages, pidgins or creoles (e.g. Winford 2003: 18-22), which involve varying degrees of lexical and syntactic accommodation on the part of the speakers involved. In addition to these main types of language contact, Winford (2003: 27-28) describes multilingual communities as extreme examples of language contact where virtually all kinds of contact-induced changes are possible including borrowing across languages, code-switching, L1 influence and various types of convergence, and where the linguistic outcomes are not necessarily easy to predict. ELF, being a "hybrid language" as discussed in Chapter 2, is a case in point. Comprising both a contact between individual speakers' L1s and English as well as the contact between the speakers' 'Englishes' – and also to some extent their L1s in, for example, negotiations of meanings of terms and concepts – ELF may potentially manifest characteristics of all of the above-mentioned language contact situations. However, having closest resemblance with a language shift/SLA situation, as described by Winford, the most likely components to be affected in ELF when compared to L1 English are presumably syntax and phonology. In the following, we will limit our discussion of universal processes to the area of syntax.

So what kinds of universal tendencies or processes have been observed to operate in syntax in contact language situations? One of the most oft-cited processes – found both in L1 and L2 acquisition as well as in creole formation – is simplification. The term itself

is actually a cover-term for a number of different processes including, for instance, rule regularization or analogical levelling as when learners extend the use of the past tense suffix *–ed* to irregular verbs like *go* or (over-)generalize, say, the plural *–s* to apply to words such as *tooths*. 'Elaborative simplification', a term by Meisel (1977), on the other hand refers to situations where speakers replace, for instance, bound morphology with periphrastic (or analytic) means to gain more transparency in production. Also isomorphism (i.e. the principle of assigning one form to one meaning, as discussed earlier) is one such means and seems to manifest a universal tendency in many language contact situations. Simplification of structure is used especially in the initial stages of learning in an attempt to systematize the target language data but also to achieve ease of perception and production (Winford 2003: 217-218) by eliminating opacity and/or redundancy in grammar. In addition to simplification, language-internal innovations may sometimes be used to serve the same purposes, as when derivational affixes are used in creative ways, yielding, for instance, *unpossible* instead of *impossible*. As Winford (2003: 220) points out, all these strategies and innovations are not necessarily or merely manifestations of incomplete mastery of L2 but actually evince the learners' command of the target language as well. Also, they seem to testify for "the need to achieve maximum regularity and transparency in the grammar" as speakers "seek optimality in structure as far as possible" (p. 220).

Another concept in addition to simplification figuring prominently in the discussion of universals in language contact situations is markedness (discussed in 3.2.1. above). In contact linguistics, markedness has, among other things, been used to explain which features are likely to be borrowed from one language to another (e.g. Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 56). The general observation is that unmarked features are more prone to borrowing and selection due to, for instance, the ease of learning associated with them, their perceptual salience, transparency, and frequency (e.g. Siegel 1999). In SLA studies, markedness and its relation to universal tendencies has been explored from two different angles – the generativist and the typological (see above). The definitions of markedness differ between the two 'schools' but the final conclusions arrived at are, in fact, very similar in both camps. Markedness in the UG approach is understood as a learner-internal phenomenon, or a consequence of the properties of the innate language faculty where the 'core grammar' in each language is unmarked and language-specific phenomena marked, thus belonging to the periphery of UG (see e.g. White 1989: Ch. 5 for a detailed discussion). The generativist approach (e.g. White 1989 and 2003) holds that similarly to L1 acquisition, also L2 learning may be constrained by the principles of UG (at least partially) as evidenced by the fact that L2 grammars do not manifest 'wild' grammars, i.e. learners do not construct sentences that would go against the principles of UG even when deviating from the target language forms. Instead, learners conform to the unmarked values of either UG or their L1 in the initial stages of SLA. Typologists, on the other hand, define markedness externally by looking at the frequency of occurrence or complexity of features cross-linguistically (as discussed above). Eckman (2011) outlines two approaches to language universals in SLA within the typological paradigm – which are very much akin to the UG approach just described. First, according to Eckman, researchers have looked into applying markedness theories on language learning with the aim of showing that the same universal principles of markedness constraining first languages are also in operation in 'L2 grammars'. Similarly to the generativist view, this

line of research has proposed that the less marked structures always win in the initial stages of language acquisition so that "[t]he less marked a structure is, the easier it is to learn, and the less marked a construction is, the more likely it is to be transferred from the native to the target language" (Eckman 2011: 625). The second line of research, according to Eckman, has concentrated on showing that the so-called interlanguage grammars of learners adhere to the same universal generalizations as first languages – to the extent that universal generalizations are more important in explaining L2 utterances than differences between the speaker's native language and target language. The goal has been to demonstrate that interlanguage grammars are the way they are because they are "specific instances of a more general phenomenon, namely, a human language" (Eckman 2011: 630).

What seems to be lying behind the universal tendencies found in contact language situations are actually the general *cognitive* or *processing* constraints common to all speakers/learners (including both L1 and L2 acquisition). Although potentially 'constraining' the processing of the structures of the new language, they also help to impose order on the incoming language data. These processing principles guide the selection of structures or 'restructuring' of the target language. Winford (2003: 226) cites Jordens' (1996) examples of such principles that include, for instance, the principle of uniqueness (one form expressing one meaning), principle of continuity (constituents belonging together are placed together), and the principle of canonical word order (main clause word order regarded as the basic word order). According to Winford (2003: 226), such processing principles seem to override the influence of L1 on L2 and other kinds of creative innovations in the target language. It is also striking that many of the universal processes discussed in the context of contact linguistics are actually similar to those discussed in connection to typological universals in general (such as isomorphism and transparency in structure), and that also the sources cited for universals in, for instance, SLA are very much like those suggested in typology (such as perceptual salience or different kinds of communicative reasons, see e.g. Gass and Ard's 1987 classification of the sources for universals in SLA).

In the context of the present study this raises the question whether similarities in structure in both L1 and ELF spoken data could be due to the same universal tendencies guiding language processing in general, especially if we keep in mind Eckman's note cited above according to which L2 grammars are just "specific instance of a more general phenomenon, namely, a human language" and the fact mentioned by Winford above that universal processes seem to control L1 influence on L2. This is what we are about to explore in Chapter 5 with the comparison of authentic language data from ELF speakers and native speakers of English.

4. Data and Methods

As became evident in the previous chapter (see 3.1.), the advent of corpus research has thrown light on many features of spoken discourse that we used to be completely unaware of. But even today, despite the tools available, such unexplored blind spots remain in linguistic descriptions and analyses largely due to the fact that it is often challenging to break out from the established theories and to see old phenomena with new eyes. However, combined with a bit of innovativeness, corpora provide an excellent tool just for that: exploring new avenues beyond the established routes. Thus, a study looking at L2 speakers not from the established 'learner' perspective but from the new 'L2 user' perspective (as ELF speakers), and entertaining the possibility of the same angloversals occurring in this kind of production as in native speaker speech, is most definitely bound to turn to corpora for its point of departure. This chapter will illuminate the data and methods of the present corpus-based study in more detail.

4.1 Data

In all corpus research, the data itself – its contents and validity for the particular study – plays a key role. Thus, we will start by looking at the databases employed for the present study. The research at hand was carried out utilizing a subset of a corpus especially designed for linguistic queries on spoken lingua franca English, *English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings* (ELFA). As a reference corpus *The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English* (MICASE) was used as it provides a close match in content and construct to ELFA but is based on native speaker data. We will have a closer look at each corpus individually below (as well as the specific subset used in the current study), but before that, let us briefly consider the rationale for a spoken academic ELF corpus and its suitability for the research questions of the study at hand.

4.1.1 Why a Spoken Academic ELF Corpus?

As pointed out earlier, English as a lingua franca – despite its global spread – has not been an object of serious study until the turn of the millennium and was, until then, not described in its own right. Prior to ELF studies, all English L2 speakers were routinely construed as learners (as discussed in Ch. 2) on their way to native speaker proficiency, and for some time now, different kinds of learner corpora have been available for researchers for tracking down the gradual development of interlanguage in ELT settings (see the pioneering work in this field by Sylviane Granger e.g. in Granger 1998 and the corpus project initiated by her, *The International Corpus of Learner English*, ICLE, in Granger et al. 2009). But as the discussion of differences between learners and users (see Section 2.1.5) illustrated, researching second language learning and second language use are two quite different things (albeit having things in common as well). When people use English as a lingua franca, they are not primarily using the language to "learn more English" (although this may well happen as a side product of the interaction) but use it

for communicating and negotiating ideas in authentic, real-life multilingual situations. In these kinds of contexts there is no external authority to impose norms on language use but an interactively co-constructed group norm evolves on the basis of what works in interaction (Mauranen 2012: 7-8 and 2011: 159). Further, as pointed out earlier, interaction in the target language in a classroom is far more predictable (with all learners sharing an L1 and/or a cultural background) than in an ELF situation where the speakers have to come to terms with a far greater variety of first languages and cultures manifesting themselves, for example, in the interlocutors' varying accents and L1 features. Thus, as stated in section 2.1.5, from a cognitive viewpoint, ELF is far more demanding than interacting in a language classroom, and also differs qualitatively from classroom communication in that in ELF speakers orient themselves to getting their messages across and making sense of their interlocutors' messages, rather than to language form as such.

Especially for these reasons, it is rather obvious that for describing and investigating ELF we cannot rely on learner corpora but need to compile databases that capture ELF as it is – with its specific characteristics in authentic environments. In the corpus compilation process the differences between learner and ELF corpora show at least in two respects. First, for learner corpora it is essential to control the learners' proficiency levels so that data is gathered from one and the same proficiency level (at least in approximate terms) because only this way the researcher gains insight into the developmental stages of the learners, and different stages can be compared. For an ELF corpus such an idea is alien as Mauranen (2011: 163) points out, because it is in the very nature of ELF that proficiency levels of speakers vary and – as stated above – this is one of the unpredictable factors that ELF speakers simply have to cope with. Secondly, learner corpora also control for the learners' first languages gathering data only from speakers of one and the same L1 in one corpus or have different components for different L1s in a larger corpus. Again, for comparative purposes, to track the effects of particular first languages on the target language, the L1s need to be represented in equal terms. In contrast, there is little point in building an ELF corpus on such criteria because, again, this is not what ELF encounters are like. However, it is important to keep the first language backgrounds in check in an ELF corpus as well so as to ensure a maximal representation of L1s in the corpus and so as not to end up with skewed data with one or a handful of first language backgrounds dominating – as this may lead to too narrow conclusions on what is typical in ELF based on possible transfer features from one speaker group only (Mauranen 2011: 163-164). These principles were followed also in compiling the ELFA corpus as described in detail in the next section (see 4.1.2.).

The ELFA corpus was the first completed ELF corpus, but other corpora have followed it, notably the *Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English* (VOICE), and the Hong Kong –based *Asian Corpus of English* (ACE). It is hardly a coincidence that all the three pioneering corpora should be spoken corpora. It is in spoken language where the nature of ELF as a co-construction through negotiated meanings and communicative cooperation is best captured. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 3, speech is unedited

and spontaneous, thus also providing a first-hand view into possible language change in progress.[15]

Academic speech was chosen as a genre for the ELFA corpus mainly for two reasons. First, when planning an ELF corpus, the research team hoped to find 'successful' ELF speech where interaction does not breakdown and the communicative goals are reached. Even though this was not a compilation criterion in itself (see Section 4.1.2. below for details on the compilation process) we expected to find such successful interactions in academic settings because English is *de facto* the vehicular language of the discourse community with many academic speakers using English regularly as their daily working language. These expectations turned out to be correct as far as the achievement of communicative goals and continuation of the speech events in the recorded events in the corpus are concerned (see Mauranen, Hynninen & Ranta 2010: 185). Also, an academic setting is linguistically particularly challenging as speakers have to be able to argue points, defend and give reasons for their views, elaborate ideas further and so on in a second language with not much help from the physical context as the topics discussed are often abstract. This puts extra pressure on language use and speakers who manage in such situations can, for a good reason, be regarded as expert users of ELF and thus also appropriate models for other ELF speakers (as discussed in Section 2.3.2). But the second main reason for concentrating only on one genre in the ELFA corpus was due to the fact that, as noted by Mauranen (2003: 520): "[f]rom a theoretical and descriptive viewpoint, delimiting the social context of a language variety is useful in controlling some of the variables that may get out of hand in a highly complex context like ELF". As ELF was a virtually unexplored language at the time of beginning the ELFA corpus project, it seemed reasonable to concentrate on one specific field first for testing hypothesis, in contrast to trying to capture "all" ELF use at once. Moreover, concentrating on just one domain allows researchers also to look into a particular discourse community as a discourse community (Mauranen 2003: 520) and study any developments, for example, in its self-regulatory behaviour or inner norms.

Descriptions of ELF based on authentic corpus data lend themselves to a number of theoretical and applicational considerations (see Mauranen 2003). Thus also the ELFA corpus seems very well suited for the descriptive, theoretical as well as applicational aims of the present study. One might question the appropriateness of academic speech in exploring spoken language universals as it was pointed out in the previous chapter that such (unmarked) universals frequently emerge in *informal* speech, and as according to the definition of 'angloversals' by Peters and Burridge (2012: 234) that we adopted, angloversals were taken to be "*informal* and colloquial variants of standard English" (emphasis added). However, Mauranen (2006c: 146) reminds us that – contrary to a common belief – in many corpus-based studies into academic spoken English in native speaker settings, this genre has been found to be *more* like spoken language in general than like academic written language. For instance, Biber (2006) discovered in his study on different spoken and written registers of university language in the American T2K-SWAL corpus that in terms of grammatical characteristics, academic speech in instructional settings is very similar to speech in other kinds of interactions and registers

[15] The first corpus project focussing on *written* ELF (in academic contexts), WrELFA, is also now underway at the University of Helsinki. See http://www.helsinki.fi/englanti/elfa/wrelfa.html (Accessed Sep. 19, 2013).

(such as service encounters, office hours or study group discussions included in the corpus) and on the other hand strikingly dissimilar to academic written registers. In Biber's (2006: 223) words:

> The surprising finding here is that the situational differences among spoken registers do not have many noteworthy linguistic consequences. Rather, all spoken registers, whether they are casual dialogues or more informational monologues, are highly similar in their typical linguistic characteristics when they are contrasted to written university registers.

Also the facts mentioned above pertaining to the academic speakers' regular use of English as a lingua franca in their working lives and the demanding linguistic context where they operate make ELFA speakers an excellent sample population for the present research questions. Not only can we hypothesize that possible universals found in such demanding ELF speech are to be found also in linguistically less demanding ELF settings, but also these speakers provide a realistic model and an attainable goal for other L2 speakers if we want to apply the results to ELT. So what does the ELFA corpus consist of in more detail? Let us now turn to that next.

4.1.2 The ELFA Corpus

The ELFA corpus is a 1-million-word corpus of spoken academic ELF, compiled at the Universities of Tampere and Helsinki between 2001-2008[16] as part of a larger research project into academic ELF (see e.g. Mauranen, Hynninen & Ranta 2010, Mauranen 2012: Ch 3, and the project website). Personally, I was involved in co-ordinating the corpus compilation process, and collecting and transcribing the data between 2004 and 2008, which offered me a great opportunity to familiarize myself closely with the contents of the corpus. The data comprises 131 hours of transcribed speech from approximately 650 different speakers in different kinds of international academic events (whether international degree programs or conferences and so on, see below) where English is used as the vehicular language between the participants. The recordings were made at the Universities of Tampere and Helsinki, as well as the Technological Universities of Tampere and Helsinki in Finland.

All the data in the corpus is authentic and naturally occurring in the sense that it was not elicited for research purposes but is "talk that would have happened anyway, whether or not a researcher was around to record it" (Cameron 2001: 20). Apart from wanting to record academic spoken ELF, the compilation criteria were external – in other words, they were not defined by linguistic (register) features but by socially based identification of the prominent genres of the academic discourse community. Such genres – or 'speech event types' to use a looser term – were selected on the basis of prototypicality, influence and prestige: Prototypicality meaning that the same genres were found and labelled similarly (by e.g. the faculties, departments and conference organisers) across the institutions including, for instance, 'lectures', 'seminars' and

[16] The compilation of ELFA was funded by the Academy of Finland 2004-2007.

'thesis defences'; the influence criterion referring to speech event types that affected a large number of people simultaneously such as introductory lecture courses or public thesis defences (thus, one-on-one type of interactions like consultation hours were not included in the data); and finally, the prestige criterion pointing to speech event types of high status in the academia such as guest lectures or plenary conference presentations (see Mauranen 2003: 522). Naturally, not all of the criteria could be fulfilled simultaneously by each recorded speech event (cf. e.g. a 'non-prestige' seminar discussion vs. a high prestige plenary presentation) but no speech events completely outside these criteria were included. As discussed above, it is important to note that no events where English was the object of study (such as ELT courses or courses meant for English majors) were recorded to safeguard the fact that English was purely used for instrumental purposes, as a lingua franca to obtain other goals (than learning it) in all the events. Further, all the speech events were recorded and transcribed in their entirety as complete sessions. Table 4.1 outlines the different speech event types and their proportions (measured in words of transcribed text) in the ELFA corpus.

Table 4.1. Distribution of speech event types in ELFA.

Speech event type	**% of all transcribed text**
Dia-/polylogic events	
Seminar discussions	33 %
PhD thesis defence discussions	20 %
Conference discussions	7 %
Lecture discussions	6 %
Panel discussion	1 %
Monologic events	
Seminar presentations	8 %
PhD thesis defence presentations	2 %
Conference presentations	9 %
Lectures	14 %

As can be seen from Table 4.1, the ELFA corpus has a built-in bias towards dialogic/polylogic events instead of monologic ones. Multi-party discussions (such as seminar and conference discussions) were favoured deliberately as these provide a direct view into the effectiveness and success of ELF communication. As discussed earlier (see Section 2.2.1), a successful ELF event is best understood as the participants' joint achievement in reaching the communicative goals, not as individual proficient performances (cf. Mauranen, Hynninen & Ranta 2010: 185). For the present study, the bias towards polylogic events was especially important as it allowed a way of checking

whether a certain linguistic feature under scrutiny caused difficulty in interaction. The share of multi-party events in ELFA is 67 % as against 33 % of monologic events.

Another external sampling criterion besides the speech events was the disciplinary domain, as it was desirable to have a full range of different academic fields represented in the corpus. Due to particular institutional emphasis on certain disciplines (e.g. the emphasis on Social Sciences in the University of Tampere), the distribution is not equally balanced between the fields, but the fields, nevertheless, cover a wide spread of disciplinary domains including both 'soft' and 'hard' sciences (see Table 4.2 below).

Table 4.2. Distribution of disciplinary domains in ELFA.

Disciplinary domain	**% of all transcribed text**
Social Sciences	29 %
Technology	19 %
Humanities	17 %
Natural Sciences	13 %
Medicine	10 %
Behavioral Sciences	7 %
Economics & Administration	5 %

In addition to the external criteria just described, one language-internal criterion was also kept track of throughout the compilation process: the speakers' first language background. This was done in attempt to ensure a maximally diverse range of first languages in the data (as discussed in Section 4.1.1.), and – given the fact that the recordings were made in Finnish universities – to control the number of Finnish native speakers in the data. The monitoring paid off as the proportion of Finnish speakers in the final data is only little over a quarter (28.5 % of all transcribed text), and the L1s represented in the corpus cover a considerable typological diversity: there are speakers from 51 different first languages ranging from African languages (e.g. Akan, Dagbani, Igbo, Kikuyu, Kihaya, Somali, Swahili) to Middle Eastern (e.g. Arabic, Persian, Turkish) to Asian (e.g. Bengali, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Uzbek), and European languages (e.g. Czech, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Swedish etc.). A full list of the languages is found in Appendix B. (In addition, see Section 4.1.3. for further discussion). Native speakers of English were not excluded from the data because their presence is a normal part of ELF interactions. However, they were not recoded in dominant/monologic positions (such as PhD examiners or lecturers) and in principle including events with long stretches of native speaker speech was avoided. The share of speech by native speakers in ELFA is thus around 5 %. For the purposes of the present study, though, all instances of non-standard use by native speakers of the linguistic features studied were excluded from the ELFA analyses, as it was desirable to keep the two speaker groups (natives and non-natives) distinct for methodological reasons (see further Section 4.2.). Moreover, no events where all speakers shared an L1

were included in the corpus so as to ensure the 'authenticity' of ELF interactions where falling back entirely on one's first language is impossible.

Apart from the L1 background, another three speaker attributes were noted down for each speaker: their gender, age group and institutional position (student / junior staff / senior staff etc.) but no attempt was made to strike a balance in these attributes in the corpus. The speaker information for each event is available in the headers of the transcriptions. Also, no control of the speakers' proficiency in English was attempted for the reasons outlined in Section 4.1.1 above, as the very aim of the corpus was to capture ELF interaction in its everyday manifestation with speakers having to accommodate to each other's varying levels of English.

The data was recorded and transcribed by a team of research assistants who all followed the same general guidelines and procedures in their work. To ensure reliability of the data, each speech event was first transcribed, then re-checked (with the soundtrack) and finally proofread by different team members respectively. However, as in any human-intensive work and projects of this size, some degree of error is inevitable. To remedy for possible errors, for instance, in transcriptions the ELFA soundfiles are available for researchers and were also utilized in the present research project when in doubt of the correctness of the transcription, or when otherwise unclear syntactic patterns called for disambiguation.

The transcription in ELFA is broad, in other words close to standard orthography, although some extra-linguistic details such as approximate lengths of pauses are included in the transcription (see Appendix A for a transcription key). The spelling is normalized to British English. These measures were taken primarily for two reasons: to facilitate computer searches and also to facilitate reading, as extremely detailed transcriptions tend to become cumbersome to follow. In the examples from ELFA given in Chapter 5, sometimes very minor adjustments have been made to the transcriptions to further facilitate intelligibility of the extracts. These include, for instance, removal of speaker tags (if not relevant for intelligibility), removal of intervening backchannelling, coughing etc. which does not affect the speaker's utterance, and removal of overlapping speech (not relevant for the interpretation or intelligibility of the utterance in focus). The symbol […] was used in the examples to indicate omission of a longer stretch of speech (by the speaker in question or an interlocutor as in the case of a longer, overlapping stretch of backchannelling) when the utterance under scrutiny called for more context and co-text to be understood but when all the intervening speech data was not considered essential for the semantic or syntactic interpretation of the utterance.

4.1.3 The Subset of ELFA for the Present Study

As noted above, the first language backgrounds of the speakers were kept in constant check during the ELFA corpus compilation process and the proportion of L1 Finnish speakers thus remained relatively low despite the surrounding matrix culture where the recordings were made. Nevertheless, for the purposes of the present study it was felt desirable to further limit the representation of native Finnish speakers in the data so as not to draw false conclusions based on possible transfer features of L1 Finnish English

speakers only. At the same time, ensuring a maximal range of L1's in the data was considered essential. For these reasons, a subset of ELFA was created to better meet the demands of the present study. The only selection criterion for the subset was that files where the proportion of speech by L1 Finnish speakers was over 50 % were discarded. However, to be able to follow the principle of maximal L1 diversity, four files (USEMD020, USEMD04A, USEMD130, and USEMD230) were included despite this criterion as the files also comprised speech by L1 speakers of languages that would have otherwise been omitted altogether or that would have had only a very minor representation in the data (such as Akan, Swahili, Amharic, Kihaya, Bengali etc.). This way 125 files or recorded speech events (out of the total of 165 in ELFA) were selected as the data for the study (see the complete list of files chosen in Appendix C).

The subset consequently has 0.76 million words (760,720 to be exact) and comprises of 97 hours of recorded and transcribed speech. There are 482 speakers altogether from 50 different first language backgrounds – the only mother tongue 'sacrificed' in the process, compared to the first languages in the whole database being Welsh. As a result, the share of speech of L1 Finnish speakers in the subset (as measured by the number of words produced in English by these speakers) was cut down to 16.3 %. The next largest L1's in the data are: German (10.2 %), Swedish (8.6 %), Russian (8 %), Dutch (7.4 %), Danish (5 %) and French (4.8 %). The share of English native speakers is 4.5 % (see Appendix B for the distribution of all the L1s in the subset). For convenience, I decided to keep to the label ELFA for the subset, too, which the reader will hopefully keep in mind when reviewing the analyses and results in Chapter 5.

4.1.4 The MICASE Corpus

In a study focussing on spoken language, it is no use turning to standard grammars for reference on what is 'normal' or frequent in speech. As discussed in Section 2.1.3 and Chapter 3, syntactic descriptions of spoken language have been (and continue to be) underrepresented in grammars (despite the few exceptions, such as Biber et al. (1999) and Carter and McCarthy (2006) mentioned earlier). Therefore, when wanting to see how spoken ELF differs or converges on spoken native speaker English, one needs a reference or baseline corpus against which to make any appropriate and reliable judgements.

The reference corpus chosen for the present study was *The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English* (MICASE)[17]. MICASE is a 1.7-million-word corpus of academic speech recorded at the University of Michigan, thus reflecting spoken North American English in academic contexts. At the time of embarking on the present research project, the MICASE corpus was the only completed corpus focusing solely on spoken academic native English (completed in 2002) which provided the closest match in construct and content to that of ELFA. The corpus of *British Academic Spoken English* (BASE)[18] was launched only some time later and furthermore has a strong bias towards monologic speech events (i.e. lectures). On the other hand, for instance, the spoken

[17] See Simpson et al. (2002), and the corpus website at: http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micase/ (Accessed Sep 19, 2013)
[18] See the website at: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/research/collect/base/ (Accessed Sep 19, 2013)

component of the *TOEFL 2000 Spoken and Written Academic Language Corpus* (T2K-SWAL) covers a variety of speech events taking place on four North American campuses but they are not necessarily 'academic' in the same sense as in ELFA, as over a half of its spoken component consists of, for example, service encounters in coffee shops and student business services. Also, it has a strong focus on *student* interactions (see Biber at al. 2004).

The MICASE corpus also comprises speech events not included in ELFA, such as one-on-one tutorials, office hour conversations, and advising consultations as well as three interviews, two campus tours and two service encounters. However, these events are in the minority in the data (23/152 of the recorded events), and the majority consists of similar events to those in ELFA such as lectures, colloquia, seminars, and student presentations. In addition, the academic disciplines covered are similar to the ones in ELFA although categorized under different labels as Humanities and Arts, Social Sciences and Education, Biological and Health Sciences, and Physical Sciences and Engineering. The MICASE data does include some non-native (as well as 'near-native') speakers, too (information based on self-reporting by the speakers) whose total production in the corpus amounts to 12 % of the transcribed text. However, in conducting the current study, a similar procedure to that with native speakers in ELFA was followed with non-native speakers in MICASE: all the non-standard instances of the linguistic features studied were removed from the MICASE analyses if produced by a non-native speaker so as to keep the native and non-native speakers' production separate for methodological purposes.

The MICASE website gives "nearly 1.8 million words" as the official size of the corpus. However, in order to be able to compare occurrence frequencies between the ELFA and MICASE data, a more precise figure was needed, and I thus took on to count the words of the MICASE files myself as this kind of exact information was not available otherwise. The word count was implemented on the fully transcribed files found on the MICASE search engine website using the exact same criteria as used for ELFA word counts. This meant, for instance, excluding file headers and all tagging from the word totals. The exact figure arrived at as a result was 1,707,510 words – which is the total cited for MICASE in all the frequency calculations and comparisons in the present study.

4.2 Methods

Let us now turn to the principles that guided the methodological choices in the study. The section is divided into two parts: explicating the choice of linguistic features explored, and considering the qualitative and quantitative approaches employed.

4.2.1 Selecting the Linguistic Features

As outlined in the Introduction, the present study compares four distinct non-standard verb-syntactic features – their occurrence and manifestations – in the ELFA and MICASE data. The features are (in the order they were studied):

1) the extended use of the progressive
2) embedded inversions (i.e. the use of the inverted word order in interrogative subordinate clauses)
3) the use of *would* in hypothetical *if*-clauses, and
4) non-concord in existential *there* constructions.

The selection may appear as a somewhat mixed bag of syntactic items but is explained by the fact that the study initiated as a purely data-driven exploration into the grammatical features of ELF. As pointed out earlier, at the time of the start of the research project, syntactic inquiries into ELF were virtually non-existent (as they still are) but various kinds of heated debates on possible 'ELF features' (and even a standard for spoken ELF) were ongoing – though fuelled mainly by anecdotal rather than empirical evidence. However, the newly-built ELFA corpus seemed to provide an excellent source for exploring any empirical manifestations of potential 'ELF features' and for looking into the possible explanative factors behind such features. Thus, the research project initiated as a quest for any grammatical features in the data that a) seemed to diverge from Standard English, b) were sufficiently prominent in the corpus to catch a researcher's eye, and c) seemed to be features not bound to any one (or a handful) of first language backgrounds. Initially, a number of features (ranging from article usage to comparative forms of the adjective) that met the criteria were identified. As it was desirable to limit the selection to a manageable set for one study with a common denominator, constructions involving non-standardness in the verb – whether in its form, syntactic position, or its otherwise 'exceptional' use – were chosen as a focus of the study. Verb constructions were deemed a particularly interesting research object because they have repeatedly been singled out as perhaps the most difficult area of English grammar for L2 speakers (cf. e.g. Leech 1987: 1). Whether such 'difficulties' were L2 speaker -specific and what might actually lie behind them, were considered important questions in the context of a global language. It was also regarded as crucial to investigate more than just one or two features simultaneously in order to gain a broader view of whatever processes or developments might be unfolding as a result of the inquiries.

To summarize, the four features stated above became the focus of the study as they all pertained to the verb, kept re-occurring in the ELFA data and did not seem to be directly linked to any single first language background. The umbrella term 'verb-syntactic' for the features under scrutiny was introduced to capture the fact that two of the features (the progressive and the use of *would* in *if*-clauses) are more clearly phenomena restricted to the form of the verb as such, whereas the other two (embedded inversions and existential *there* constructions) derive their non-standardness from the syntactic level.[19]

From a methodological viewpoint, it is also worth emphasizing that the initial selection of the features was *not* impacted by the fact that the same features have figured prominently (save, perhaps, for the hypothetical *if*-clauses) also in the research literature of varieties of English. The choice of the constructions was based only on the salience of

[19] For a critical evaluation of the methodological choices presented in this and the subsequent section, see the Conclusion (Ch. 6).

the features in the ELFA data. To me personally, it was most intriguing that I should have arrived in ELF data at features widely attested also in other (spoken) varieties of Englishes purely by data-driven methods.

4.2.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

After the selection of the features for closer scrutiny, a comparative study between the ELFA corpus and the reference corpus, MICASE was begun. From the outset it was clear that mere quantitative methods such as computing and comparing the frequencies of the features would not be enough and that at least an equal amount of emphasis in the study would fall on qualitative methods, i.e. observations of similarities and differences in the syntactic/linguistic context of the features in both corpora. Following the approach adopted to universals in Chapter 3, it is in the qualities of the features, not in their proportions, where the actual 'universalness' of a feature is considered to reside. The first goal was, though, to see whether the same features found in ELFA could be attested in native speaker data to a reasonable degree to merit further research, but after this preliminary check the main aim was to find out whether the occurrence of the non-standard use could be ascribed to similarities in the grammatical environment in each database.

Thus, we come back to the issue discussed in section 3.2.2. above: I firmly agree that by way of mere number crunching of "similar-looking features" (see Davydova et al. 2011), we cannot arrive at any insightful analyses of the nature of things we are looking at, let alone proclaim their "universalness" in linguistic terms. Features that look the same and are frequent in many unrelated varieties may, indeed, still be due to different developments, as Davydova et al. (2011) suggest, but as pointed out before (see Section 3.2.2), if the linguistic conditioning of a feature turns out to be very similar in two different varieties – no matter what the origin of the varieties – it seems to be a strong indication that the roots of the phenomenon are also the same (i.e. linked to the linguistic environment and through that to similar kinds of processing factors that apply to all speakers alike). It is true, of course, that the similarities *may* arise from processing *or* social/situational factors, but without a very careful analysis of the situational parameters it does not seem justified to claim that the non-standard linguistic features must have separate explanations in each variety. However, if the linguistic environment turns out to be very dissimilar for the non-standard features in two different varieties, that seems like a clear indication of different 'forces' operating in shaping the feature which just happens to assume the same appearance despite the different causes.

The qualitative factors looked into for each of the studied features arose partly from earlier research literature or from reference to standard grammars, and partly from my own observations of the linguistic contexts of the features in an attempt to follow any interesting leads emerging from the data. The query syntax for each feature was formed so as to retrieve as many instances as possible from each corpus. However, as neither of the corpora utilized for the study are grammatically tagged to facilitate syntactic queries, this method, quite predictably, yielded a great number of irrelevant hits among the relevant ones and led to a considerable amount of manual post-processing. Still, this was considered worth the effort for the sake of completeness of the data. In this research

report, a conscious choice was made to postpone the full description of the linguistic factors studied, the queries implemented and the post-processing measures taken for each of the four verb-syntactic features until the relevant subsections in Chapter 5. Because the features vary in nature, it was regarded as more reader-friendly to give the details separately in connection with the relevant feature so as to better allow for evaluation of the queries in their own contexts. Thus, the individual queries will not be discussed further in this section.

But since corpus research lends itself to both qualitative and quantitative methods, it would be waste of resources not to capitalize on the quantitative aspects as well. In Siemund's (2011: 3) words, statistical tools in analysing large data sets are "tremendously useful for filtering out the noise and identifying the systemic aspects concealed in seemingly chaotic data sets". He further goes on to note that in many fields in linguistics "the use of statistical analyses has more or less become a benchmark of good scientific practice" (p. 3). In the present study, statistical analyses are applied mainly in significance testing of the comparisons between the corpora to see whether the findings, differences and similarities, are of actual importance or merely due to chance in the databases. Whenever possible, the Chi square test was applied to investigate the statistical significance, but in cases where the small sample size prevented this, another analytical tool, Fisher's Exact Test was applied instead to find out the p-value. Fisher's Exact Test is, in principle, valid for all sample sizes but employed in particular with small samples (and 2x2 contingency tables). It is called an "exact test" because with it, the significance of the deviation from a null hypothesis can be computed exactly, rather than relying on an approximation that becomes exact as the sample size grows to infinity (as is the case, for instance, with Chi square tests).[20] The differences were deemed statistically significant at the level of $p < 0.01$. In addition to significance testing, frequencies of occurrence were calculated either by using normalized frequencies (in this study occurrences per 10,000 words) or by turning the absolute frequencies into percentages as the two corpora studied were of significantly different sizes.

The statistical analyses helped to gain insight into the relevance (or irrelevance) of the features for any discussions of possible language universals. However, the analyses were *not* interpreted in the sense that frequencies of the studied phenomena should be (close to) identical in both corpora before one can say anything about the universal nature of them. Instead, finding similar qualities and tendencies (in the sense of 'statistical' typological universals) was considered of particular interest and such tendencies were regarded as pointing to a common source for the emergence of the phenomena in each speaker group.

At the time of writing and conducting the present study, the ELFA corpus did not yet have a search interface of its own but the corpus searches were carried out on a CD-ROM, utilizing a standard concordancing program The WordSmith Tools 5.0[21]. MICASE, on the other hand, did have an on-line search interface of its own available[22] but for the purposes of the present study, a CD-ROM also of the MICASE corpus was used and the relevant searches carried out again with WordSmith Tools 5.0 to ensure

[20] See also, for instance, Hilbert and Krug (2012) who use Fisher's Exact Test for significance testing in their data on progressives in British and Maltese English.
[21] See: http://www.lexically.net/wordsmith/index.html for details. (Accessed Sep 19, 2013)
[22] At http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micase/ (Accessed Sep 19, 2013)

comparability of the results to those of ELFA. (The only exception is the analysis of the existential *there* constructions in MICASE, where I relied on the results by Riordan (2007) who had utilized the on-line search engine for his queries; see section 5.4. below.) Also the XML files available on the MICASE search engine website were taken advantage of particularly when having to check the L1 status of the speakers – as this information was only to be gathered from the XML file headers.

5. The Study

This chapter presents the corpus analyses and results of the four non-standard verb-syntactic features taken under scrutiny in the present study. The features are: the use of the progressive, embedded inversions, hypothetical *if*-clauses, and existential *there* constructions. All the constructions are dealt with in separate subsections of their own, each comprising a literature overview of the construction at hand, discussion of methods, report on the findings from both the ELFA and MICASE corpora, and finally a summary and discussion of the results at the end of each subsection. An overview of the study as a whole will be provided in Chapter 6.

5.1 The Progressive

Of the four non-standard verb-syntactic features of ELF that this study focuses on, we will start with a construction that has drawn the attention of English syntax researchers widely in recent years – the use of the progressive verb form.

Background

The progressive in English is formed by the auxiliary BE and the present participle of the main verb (the so-called *-ing* form). Semantically and functionally, though, the English progressive is not easily definable, and as shown by the thorough discussion of the topic by Kranich (2010: Ch. 3), it is practically impossible to assign one 'basic' meaning to this construction in English. However, following Kranich's discussion, we can generally distinguish not one but two main areas of use: the aspectual and the subjective. These categories can also be found in Quirk et al.'s (1985: 197ff.) classification, although indirectly, and differently labelled, and it is the aspectual uses that are perceived as the 'major' function of the progressive by Quirk et al. as well as by linguists in general. This function refers to the use of the progressive to express a dynamic, ongoing or repetitive activity or process which has (limited) duration and/or is temporary (see e.g. Quirk et al. 1985: 198). In reverse, this means that in Standard English the progressive cannot be applied to verbs or actions denoting states (either qualities such as *Mary **has** blue eyes*, states of mind, volition or attitude such as *She **likes** to entertain the students*, or verbs of perception as in *It **smells** of lavender*). Also momentary events or habitual activity do not take the progressive, as they, too, are perceived as non-durative (see e.g. Quirk et al. 1985: 200-206). But in addition to the aspectual functions, the use of the progressive in Standard English has also expanded to areas where the 'action-in-progress' meaning is no more applicable. Such functions are, for example, referring to (near) future (cf. ***Are** you **going** to the meeting tomorrow?*), expressing a tentative attitude or wish (cf. *I **was wondering** if you could help me*), or affective-emotional uses to express, for instance, annoyance (cf. *He **is** always **complaining***). Of these, the latter two can also be termed subjective uses, in other words, uses where the progressive conveys a speaker attitude or

emotion, emphasis, or a subjective interpretation of a situation (see Kranich 2010: 61-72). Due to this eclectic use, Comrie (1976: 38) has stated that: "in English the Progressive has extended well beyond the original definition of progressivity as the combination of continuous meaning and nonstativity." These kinds of uses beyond the aspectual function are not generally found in other languages that manifest the progressive verb form. Perhaps even more surprisingly, the comprehensive analysis of the development of the progressive in English by Kranich (2010) shows that the (typologically peculiar) subjective uses actually predominated in the English language in earlier periods, and the aspectual functions seem to have grammaticalized in the language only around the second half of the 19th century (see also e.g. Scheffer 1975: 110 for notes on many present-day functions of the progressive developing fairly late in the history of English). With the data from the ARCHER corpus (covering the period 1600-1999), Kranich (2010) is able to show that the overall frequency of progressives in English has increased as the aspectual function has established and grammaticalized over the centuries, causing simultaneously overall decrease in the subjective uses. Thus, contrary to common belief, it seems that any "new" uses that the progressive might have acquired in English in the past centuries are not the typologically curious subjective uses but actually the typologically more generic aspectual uses. Be that as it may, Quirk et al. (1985: 202) note that:

> Since the use of the progressive aspect has been undergoing grammatical extension over the past few hundred years, it is likely that its use is still changing at the present day, and that its descriptions at any one time cannot be totally systematic.

The general rising trend in the use of the progressive has been well-attested and documented in other studies, too. For instance, Scheffer (1975) goes back to Old and Middle English and Smitterberg (2005) to 19th-century data to show how the progressive has become more common in English over the centuries. But in addition to this general trend, there seems to be a particular increase even within a shorter time span, especially during the last few decades (see e.g. Mair and Hundt 1995, Mair and Leech 2006, Leech and Smith 2006, Aarts et al. 2010, and Kranich 2010). Intuition based studies have assumed the reason for this be in the increased use of stative verbs in the progressive for specific meanings (cf. ***I'm seeing*** *ghosts*), but empirical data does not seem to support this hypothesis. Instead, what for instance Kranich (2010: 222-226) finds in her data as an explanation for the overall rising frequency especially in the 20th century is a clear increase in the use of the subjective interpretative function of the progressive. In the interpretative function, the progressive is used to give a speaker-based interpretation or a 'summary' of an action or behavior expressed earlier (see Kranich 2010: 69-70) (as in *If John says that,* ***he's lying***). Earlier studies by Wright (1995) and Smitterberg (2005) support this particular finding, but along similar lines, also various kinds of other 'stylistic' explanations for the growth in the use of the progressive by native speakers have been suggested (even if some of them only on a speculative level). For example, Potter (1975: 120) refers to speakers' growing desire to make what they say "more lively and vivid", and Scheffer (1975: 110) assumes that the increased use may be due to the "latitude to convey subtle shades of meaning" that the progressive provides to the

speaker/writer. Mair and Hundt (1995: 118) partly agree in suggesting the reason be "a textlinguistic or stylistic one" and make reference to "colloquialisation" of written English, the mode they studied (see also Leech and Smith 2006 for similar reasoning), or alternatively they see it as a grammatical phenomenon so that "in cases in which the simple form can be used alongside the progressive, the latter tends to be chosen with increasing frequency". Here, Mair and Hundt refer to Schopf (1974: 26) who speculates that this kind of change might be lead by the affective-emotional use of the progressive (as in *you're always complaining*) so that gradually the simple present ceases to be "the tense customarily used to express habitual action" (Mair and Hundt 1995: 118) (see also Scheffer 1975: 110 for a similar line of argumentation).

But in L2 English, too, the use of the progressive has drawn researchers' attention for long – usually from the point of view of L2 speakers abusing the construction. For example, in Swan and Smith (2001) – an edited collection of "characteristic difficulties of learners of English" (p. ix) from different mother tongue backgrounds ranging from European languages to African and Asian languages – the progressive is singled out as 'problematic' for almost all learner groups, usually meaning that its use is extended to contexts where it, normatively speaking, 'does not belong' such as stative verbs or habits. The L1's for whose speakers the progressive is listed as a 'difficulty' in Swan and Smith (2001) are: Dutch, German, Scandinavian languages, French, Italian, Spanish/Catalan, Portuguese, Greek, Russian, Polish, Farsi, Turkish, Hindi/Urdu, Swahili, Dravidian languages, West African languages, Malay/Indonesian, and Chinese. Also, in *Longman Dictionary of Common Errors* (1996, edited by Turton and Heaton) – which is based on samples of written English from learners from over 70 different countries and which contains "the words and phrases which regularly cause difficulty for foreign learners, regardless of nationality and language background" (see Preface, v) – the use of the progressive is given extra attention in a Language Note (see 'Using progressive tenses', p. 81) where learners are warned against the use of the continuous form with stative verbs in particular.

However, the extended use of the progressive is well documented in many (native speaker) English dialects and in Outer Circle varieties of English, too. For example, Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008: 67) list the use of the progressive with stative verbs as a common feature in Outer Circle Englishes (remarking that it is "not clear why this tendency should be quite so pervasive in the New Englishes"). Similarly, an older source of Platt et al. (1984: 72-74) call the extended use of the progressive with stative verbs a "very noticeable feature of many New Englishes" (p. 72). Further, *The Electronic World Atlas of Varieties of English (eWAVE)*[23] (Kortmann & Lukenheimer 2011) lists as many as 49 varieties of English where the extended use of the progressive with stative verbs has been attested to various degrees (including e.g. Scottish and Irish English, Colloquial American English, English dialects in the North of England, Indian English, Kenyan English etc.). On the other hand, the use of the progressive in habitual contexts is found in another 38 varieties according to *eWAVE* (such as Australian English, Welsh English,

[23] This online atlas is introduced on its homepage as "an interactive database on morphosyntactic variation in spontaneous spoken English mapping 235 features […] in 48 varieties of English […] and 26 English-based Pidgins and Creoles in eight Anglophone world regions (Africa, Asia, Australia, British Isles, Caribbean, North America, Pacific, and the South Atlantic)". See: http://www.ewave-atlas.org (Accessed Sep 26, 2013).

Bahamian English, Nigerian English etc.). However, Lukenheimer (2012) notes, on the basis of a closer scrutiny of the varieties in the database that the habitual use seems to be associated first and foremost with L2 Englishes, although geographically rather evenly distributed around the world. Finally, as noted in Chapter 2, earlier mentions of the extended use of the progressive in ELF data are found in Erling and Bartlett (2006), Björkman (2010), and Dorn (2011).

It is interesting, though, that the explanations for the increased use of the progressive in L2 Englishes differ from those mentioned for L1 English. While in L1 English the phenomenon was ascribed mainly to a growing functional range for the progressive or stylistic reasons, in the case of L2 Englishes it is often put down to the differences between English and the speaker's mother tongue (see e.g. the articles in Swan and Smith 2001 or Platt et. al 1984: 73). The L2 speakers are said not to know how to use the structure properly either because it is missing from their mother tongue as a grammaticalized construction (as in German or Scandinavian languages) or because the use is different in English and the speaker's L1 (for instance in Spanish the use of the progressive is often optional in contexts where it is obligatory in English). Alternatively, reasons have been looked for in the learners' developing target language systems: Platt et al. (1984: 73) suggest the 'overuse' be due to learners over-extending the rules of appropriate use within the system (as in imitating such established uses as *She's having a good time* and extending this use to other contexts of HAVE, too; see also e.g. Kesner Bland 1988: 65-66 for similar speculation). Scheffer (1975: 111), on the other hand, goes as far as to claim that it is the increased use of the progressive by L1 speakers that has induced "abuse" of the construction by foreign speakers of English. He also makes reference to teaching-related reasons, i.e. the fact that some textbooks teach learners the progressive first in questions and negations due to its supposed easiness compared to the corresponding simple forms (p. 111). Teaching-related explanations for the phenomenon have been offered by other researchers, too. For example, Platt et al. (1984: 73) also refer to "overteaching" of the *-ing* form at school, and Römer (2005: 173) suggests that the reason may lie in "inadequate descriptions of language phenomena in teaching materials" (see also Kesner Bland 1988). In her study, Römer (2005) goes on to show that the use of the progressive in teaching materials does, indeed, differ from authentic native speaker use of the construction. But the sheer fact that the suggested reasons for the 'abuse' of the progressive in L2 production vary so greatly raises the question of the validity of these explanations.

As was pointed out above, it is true that the progressive in Standard English is rather peculiar compared to the progressives in other languages because of its many acquired subsidiary functions besides the (now) general meaning of 'action-in-progress'. And it may also well be that the descriptions of this construction in teaching materials do not always match the real life (standard) use. But the fact that the extended use is so widely attested in different kinds of L1 and L2 varieties of English around the world makes one wonder if there could still be something else behind the phenomenon. Especially the reasoning that L2 speakers abuse the progressive because it is so peculiar in English (in contrast to other languages) raises the question that if something was perceived as particularly 'odd' in a foreign language, would it rather not be that such oddity was avoided or replaced with a simpler construction (in this case the simple form) than that it became subject to overuse? What is also intriguing in the literature on

progressives and L2 speakers is the fact that studies on acquisition of grammatical morphemes of English by L2 speakers in the 1970's and 1980's showed that the progressive *-ing* was, in fact, the easiest verbal morpheme to be acquired by L2 learners, meaning that it was properly attached to and used with verbs early on (as first discovered by Dulay and Burt 1973). Also, Giacalone Ramat (1997) has found that learners of English seem to acquire the progressive earlier than learners of other languages do. This Giacalone Ramat ascribes to the progressive being "attention-catching for its frequency in [native speaker] discourse" in English (p. 281). Be that as it may, it seems that at least the progressive form in English is not particularly difficult for L2 speakers to learn and if the construction is so widely used – and 'overused' – in different Englishes around the world, it could be argued that it is not just a 'learner problem' but more widely an issue in spoken English.

Methods

In the present study, the ELFA and MICASE corpora were searched for instances of the progressive to find out what differences and similarities there might be in the use of the construction in comparable L1 and L2 data. To retrieve all possible progressives, fairly generic query syntax was used: the main search word was **ing* augmented by all the different forms of BE (both in full and contracted forms) as a context word within 7 words to the left of **ing*. The range (seven words to the left) was established through trial: as it was desirable to retrieve as many progressives as possible, the range was increased step by step, but as eight words to the left of the search word did not yield significantly more results than seven words, the limit was set at seven. Using this kind of generic query naturally yielded a considerable number of hits that were not genuine progressive forms, including non-finite clauses (such as *it is restricted to just governments* ***making*** *the decisions*), and prepositional and other phrasal expressions (such as *i think this is* ***worth considering***, and *i don't* ***mind studying*** *math*). Such cases were deleted from the data manually. Further, following Smitterberg (2005), only constructions that could clearly be classified as progressives were included in the data. Thus, instances of appositively used particles (cf. *i was sitting here* ***thinking***; or *there's a statement* ***saying***), predicative participles (cf. *we discovered that one of the spikes is* ***missing***), and gerunds (cf. *what you will be doing is* ***computing*** *the values*) were excluded from the data. Also all instances of the phrase *be going to* with future reference were deleted as the construction was considered a marker of the future tense rather than a token of the progressive aspect (see Smitterberg 2005: 26-37 for a detailed discussion of the above-mentioned constructions and their inclusion or exclusion in the retrievals of the progressive form). Finally, instances of repeated verbs where a speaker duplicates one and the same verb in an utterance were deleted (e.g. *what you are* ***controlling*** *you are* ***controlling*** *the pressure*; and *other income is basically* ***subsidising subsidising*** *the kiosk*) so that only the first instance of the repeated verb was counted in. On the other hand, if there were two different verbs in the progressive in the same utterance one after another that shared the same preceding auxiliary BE as in: *customers* ***are coming*** *and* ***asking*** *for the age of the wine*, both *-ing* forms were counted in as separate entries as they were considered important for the qualitative study, for example in finding out which verbs appear in the

progressive in each corpus. The same post-processing criteria were applied to ELFA and MICASE.

The fact that neither ELFA nor MICASE are (at least at the time of completing the study) grammatically parsed, restricted some of the analyses on the progressives. For example Aarts et al. (2010: 164) point out that when computing and comparing frequencies of progressives between different corpora, it would be important to look into the "frequency of the progressive relative to the possibility of it being used in the first place", which would mean identifying all the possible simple verb form constructions in the corpora where a speaker/writer has the opportunity to use the progressive but has chosen not to use it. Due to the technical restrictions, such analyses were clearly beyond the scope of this study so overall occurrence rates for the progressives are only given in terms of normalized absolute frequencies. However, this should not be a major problem for the present study because firstly, the genres of the corpora are similar thus increasing the likelihood that the "opportunities" for using the progressive are very much alike in both databases (but see the discussion in 5.1.1), and secondly, the main focus of the present study is not in comparing frequencies as such but concentrating on the qualitative differences and similarities inside the 'populations' of progressives in the two corpora.

Before moving on to the results, a note on the semantic analysis of the progressives is still due. Because of its rich semantic nature, classifying different uses of the progressive is far from unproblematic and necessarily involves a degree of subjectivity. Such problems are even heightened with non-native speaker data as Axelsson and Hahn's (2001) study pertinently illustrates: it was not easy even for the researchers' native speaker informants to consistently decide whether some of the progressive uses by the non-native writers in their data were 'acceptable', let alone assign only one semantic reading to them. Obviously, classifying progressives always requires a close scrutiny of the co(n)text and, in case of spoken data, sometimes also resorting to the recordings for further help and disambiguation. The advantage in the present comparative study is, however, that the classifications were made by one and the same person for both databases, thus hopefully increasing consistency in the analysis. With this general caveat in mind, let us now see what the retrievals in both corpora revealed.

5.1.1 Overview of the Use of the Progressives in ELFA and MICASE

The post-processed results of the retrievals yielded 3,414 instances of the progressive for ELFA and 12,904 for MICASE. Normalizing the frequencies to a text length of 10,000 words reveals that the progressive is used in ELFA approximately 45 times / 10,000 words and in MICASE 76 times / 10,000 words, which suggests that ELF speakers would actually use the progressive considerably less than the native speakers. This is an intriguing result in the light of the above-mentioned fact that L2 speakers are often accused of 'overuse' of the progressive. However, the finding is in line with Hundt and Vogel (2011) who in their study of written texts from EFL, ESL, and ENL varieties found that EFL and ESL writers did not overuse the construction in comparison to native speaker writers. Also Hilbert and Krug's (2012) study of spoken and written Maltese English (which they compared to British and American English) supports this finding. At

least in quantitative terms, 'overuse' of the progressive cannot be attested in ELFA either. Nevertheless, the discrepancy between the databases need not be as dramatic as it seems at first. At least one data-related factor could explain (some of) the difference. Unlike ELFA, MICASE includes recordings of lab sessions and other speech events in natural sciences where demonstrations and hands-on pair or group work are common, resulting in frequent use of the progressive as the on-going processes or immediate actions are being described or commented on as in the following examples from MICASE[24]:

(1) we're heating it up – okay it's getting warm (*MICASE*)
(2) look what we're doing. – we're measuring fish (*MICASE*)
(3) so R-N-A polymerase, is doing its thing over here. the ribosome's following right after. okay? (*MICASE*)

In addition, progressives seem to be common in the one-on-one conversations of a student and an academic advisor in MICASE as the interlocutors discuss the present state of the student's studies and make plans for future courses as in:

(4) you're not really enjoying the topic of the class (*MICASE*)
(5) you're planning on graduating in May? (*MICASE*)

These kinds of advising sessions between just two individuals are not included in ELFA at all.

However, it also seems that one particular function where the progressive is very common in L1 speech is not as salient in the ELFA data. This is the use of the progressive in metadiscoursal phrases to reflect on the on-going discussion as it evolves. Native speakers use phrases such as *do you see what i'm saying?*, *so the question i'm asking you is*, or *that's what i'm talking about* more often than non-native speakers in ELFA. When counting all the instances of the most frequently used metadiscoursal verbs *saying*, *talking*, and *thinking* in both data, the result shows that in MICASE these verbs cover 16 % of all instances of the progressive (2,079 / 12,904), whereas in ELFA they account only for 14 % (476 / 3,414). The difference is statistically significant (χ^2=9.615, df=1, p=0.00193) so it might explain some of the discrepancy between the overall frequencies of progressives in the corpora, although percentage-wise the difference is not great. Other major qualitative differences in the functions that might affect the overall frequencies are not as readily discernible. However, a smaller random sample of 300 progressives from both corpora was looked into to see whether any quantitative differences in the distributions of some of the most typical (aspectual and subjective) functions of the progressives could be detected. The aim was to compare the relative proportions of different functions *within* the found instances of the progressive (not the occurrence rates as such). To do this, each instance in the random samples was classified into one of the following eight categories, which were considered the most common functions of the progressive based on standard grammars (most notably Quirk et al. 1985, and Biber et al. 1999):

[24] Cf. Biber's (2006) study on the grammatical variation among different academic registers based on the T2K-SWAL corpus where he also found that "[i]n comparison to the other spoken university registers, progressive verbs are most common in lab sessions (almost 8% of all verb phrases)" (Biber 2006: 63).

Currency (referring to actions taking place at the moment of utterance), as in

(6) **i'm looking** right here **we're doing** this right here. I-zero-two yeah (*MICASE*)

Process (referring to actions that are changing as they evolve), as in

(7) listening implies an ear-centered culture and our culture **is becoming** increasingly eye-centered (*ELFA*)

Continuity (referring to actions or states that continue/have continued for some time or are repeated unchanged), as in

(8) at that time i **was sitting** in the committee in Geneva, that was directing where CERN would go in the future (*MICASE*)

Temporality (referring to temporary – often out-of-the-ordinary – events), as in

(9) what's the only difference between X and Y? remember **we're assuming**, a B by one rack here's your point X-Y. (*MICASE*)

Near future (referring to actions taking place in the future in a temporal proximity to the moment of utterance, used often to express one's intentions or plans), as in

(10) years ago when i heared that M-PEG-4 **is coming** i was dreaming to see the first game (on) M-PEG-4 (*ELFA*)

Background (referring to actions that set the scene or frame for something else that takes place at the same time), as in

(11) er my last question to you is one [...] which i , was thinking of when i **was writing** my my presentation of your dissertation (*ELFA*)

Attitude (referring tentatively to a present wish or attitude), as in

(12) hi this book's on reserve for, Bio three-oh-eight i **was wondering** if i could get this. (*MICASE*)

Other (any other use of the progressive, including non-standard use).

The categories may partly overlap, but in the present classification each progressive was assigned to only one of the categories on the basis of the co(n)text. The distribution (in order of frequency) for both corpora is presented in Table 5.1.1.

Table 5.1.1. The distribution of the most typical functions of the progressive in random samples of 300 progressives in ELFA and MICASE. Due to rounding, the total percentages may differ from 100 %.

	ELFA		MICASE	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Currency	101	33.7	121	40.3
Continuity	72	24.0	65	21.7
Process	69	23.0	49	16.3
Temporality	14	4.7	25	8.3
Near Future	10	3.3	18	6.0
Background	7	2.3	7	2.3
Attitude	2	0.7	6	2.0
Other	25	8.3	9	3.0
Total	300	100 %	300	99.9 %

As is discernible from the table, the order of frequency for different basic functions seems identical in both corpora. Also, comparing the percentages for individual functions in both samples reveals that the proportions are approximately of the same range although minor differences can be detected – some of them also probably due to natural variation caused by the choice of topics discussed in each corpus. The fact that L1 speakers use progressives more to reflect on the on-going discussions is observable here, too, in the category "Currency". It also seems that L1 speakers employ the progressive slightly more to refer to temporary or near future events as well as to express attitudinal shades of meaning (which could also be a reflection of the one-on-one interactions not included in the ELFA data at all). But the differences in each of the basic function categories between the two datasets are statistically non-significant. Thus, even here it is difficult to find evidence for significant 'overuse' of the progressive by L2 speakers in the functions reflecting standard use of the progressive.[25] Based on the percentages in Table 5.1.1, one could even argue for the opposite as some of the functions seem to be slightly 'underrepresented' in ELF data compared to L1 data. However, the category "Other" consisting mainly of non-standard uses of the progressive is somewhat bigger in ELFA and the difference is also statistically significant (χ^2=7.982, df=1, p=0.00473). In a closer analysis of the non-standard uses with a larger sample of progressives (see 5.1.2 below) it was found that non-standard use occurred in ELFA for 8.9 % of all the progressives and in MICASE for 2.8 %. We will return to this issue below, but all in all it

[25] For instance van Rooy (2006) and Hundt and Vogel (2011) on comparing what they term EFL and ESL varieties of English have concluded that the overuse of the progressive among EFL speakers could be attributed to the overuse of the *prototypical functions* of the construction. As the ELFA corpus includes both Expanding and Outer Circle speakers, the results from the afore-mentioned studies and the present one are not directly comparable. However, in light of the fact that a majority of the ELFA speakers are Expanding Circle (cf. 'EFL') speakers, this data does not seem to support the overuse of even the 'prototypical' functions by these speakers.

is notable that the overwhelming majority of the instances both in ELFA (91%) and MICASE (97 %) seemed to fall into the typical functional categories for the progressive.

Next, attention was paid to the individual verbs that occur in the progressive in each corpus. The twenty most common verbs for ELFA and MICASE respectively are shown in Tables 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 below.

Table 5.1.2. The rank order, number of occurrences and percentage of the 20 most frequent verbs occurring in the progressive in ELFA.

ELFA

	verb	**N**	**%***	
1.	talking	235	6.8	
2.	doing	191	5.6	
3.	going	147	4.3	
4.	trying	131	3.8	
5.	using	130	3.8	
6.	thinking	130	3.8	
7.	looking	117	3.4	
8.	working	117	3.4	
9.	saying	111	3.3	
10.	coming	100	2.9	
11.	being	86	2.5	
12.	happening	55	1.6	
13.	changing	46	1.3	
14.	making	46	1.3	
15.	taking	43	1.3	
16.	wondering	40	1.2	50 % cut-off point
17.	getting	33	1.0	
18.	running	33	1.0	
19.	asking	30	0.9	
20.	becoming	30	0.9	

* Of all progressive forms found in the ELFA data (N=3,414)

Table 5.1.3. The rank order, number of occurrences and percentage of the 20 most frequent verbs occurring in the progressive in MICASE.

	MICASE verb	N	%*	
1.	doing	942	7.3	
2.	saying	873	6.8	
3.	talking	842	6.5	
4.	going	762	5.9	
5.	trying	630	4.9	
6.	looking	585	4.5	
7.	getting	397	3.1	
8.	thinking	364	2.8	
9.	being	318	2.5	
10.	working	284	2.2	
11.	using	243	1.9	
12.	coming	219	1.7	50 % cut-off point
13.	taking	208	1.6	
14.	making	205	1.6	
15.	having	141	1.1	
16.	happening	137	1.1	
17.	asking	136	1.1	
18.	moving	124	1.0	
19.	wondering	115	0.9	
20.	reading	110	0.9	

* Of all progressive forms found in the MICASE data (N=12,904)

Looking at the distribution of the different verbs that take the progressive in each corpus, we see that the use of the progressive in MICASE is concentrated on fewer verbs than in ELFA. In MICASE only 12 verbs account for 50 % of all the progressives in the corpus whereas in ELFA the distribution is wider (and thus more even), with 16 verbs accounting for half of the instances. Also, looking at the individual verbs we can see that even though most of the twenty most common verbs appearing in the progressive in each corpus are the same, there are clear differences in the frequencies of some of the verbs. As can be expected from what was said above of the discourse-reflective use of the progressive in L1 data, *saying* appears to be more than twice as common in MICASE as in ELFA. Also *doing* is clearly more frequent in MICASE, which again may be due to the more 'hands on' type of interactions in MICASE as discussed above. But the overview of the most common verbs in the progressive shows that for both speaker groups the most common ones in conversational data are so-called high frequency verbs. In passing, this also indicates that ELF speakers do not seem to overuse such verbs compared to L1

speakers (for a lack of a more descriptive verb) as has often been claimed in various SLA studies (see e.g. Hasselgren 1994; Granger 1996).

For further analysis, all the instances of progressives in ELFA (N=3,414) and a randomly selected, equal size sample of 3,414 progressives in MICASE were taken under closer scrutiny. The results in the rest of this section refer to these samples of 3,414 instances for each corpus. To begin with, the *WordSmith* cluster analyses for the samples seem to point to the fact that was already hinted at above: in MICASE the use of the progressive is somewhat more clustered around certain fixed lexical patterns than in ELFA. MICASE has altogether 176 three-word phrases (with a minimum frequency of five) that occur with a progressive verb (such as *what's going on*, *I'm trying to*, and *we're talking about*), whereas in ELFA there are 209 such three-word bundles. However, the difference is statistically non-significant (χ^2=2.998, df=1, p=0.08339).

Also, the distribution of tenses in both corpora was checked. This was done based purely on the grammatical form of each progressive so that progressives referring to the future but formed using the present tense (e.g. *the elections **are** coming up*) were classified as instances of the present tense. Consequently, only progressives with a clear grammatical future form (e.g. *we **will be** going through your thesis chapter by chapter*) were labeled as instances of the future tense.[26] In addition to *will*, also other modal auxiliaries – not frequent in the samples – were assigned tense (either present or past) and classified accordingly. This way, the distributions of the tenses look as follows:

Table 5.1.4. Tense distribution of the progressives in ELFA and MICASE. Due to rounding, the total percentages may differ from 100 %.

	ELFA		**MICASE**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Present	2385	69.9	2669	78.2
Past	671	19.7	575	16.8
Present Perfect & Past Perfect	189	5.5	87	2.5
Future	169	5.0	83	2.4
TOTAL	3414	100.1	3414	99.9

Due to the above mentioned fact that MICASE appears to consist of more hands-on, immediate action than ELFA, it is not surprising that this is also reflected in more frequent use of the present progressive in MICASE, simultaneously lowering the proportions of other tenses. However, it is interesting to note that grammatical forms that are commonly perceived as more complex due to their multi-word construction i.e. the present perfect, past perfect and the future tense, as demonstrated in examples (13)-(15) respectively, are slightly more common in ELF than in L1 discourse. The differences in these categories are also statistically significant (for both $p<0.01$).

[26] Although *will* is a modal auxiliary in English rather than 'future tense', this procedure was used to gain a comparable overview of the uses in the large samples which had to be annotated manually.

(13) okay according to your terminology primal-dual , **have you been looking** at convex analysis (*ELFA*)

(14) and interestingly in ukraine i saw that these , all these teachers who **had been giving** these [...] who had er taught these subjects they were retained but instead they had to all of a sudden teach er history of ukraine and er ukrainian language and culture (*ELFA*)

(15) and this generation is gradually coming er to retirement yes and number of people er number of retired peop- retired people pensioners **will be increasing** (*ELFA*)

It seems that such complex verb forms are chosen in ELF even in contexts where a more straight forward simple form would do. And sometimes the preference for a complex construction results even in a formulation not found in Standard English, for instance, because of the tense used, as in the following examples:

(16) the ethics that **i have been erm explaining** to you in the beginning of my lecture (*ELFA*)

(17) **i've been investigating** this university so evaluating this universities last spring (*ELFA*)

At the same time it should be pointed out that the use of the passive voice in progressive constructions is equally (un)common in both corpora: 2.2 % of all the instances in ELFA and 2.3 % for MICASE. Examples (18) and (19) demonstrate the use of the passive progressives in ELFA, the latter example showing again how a complex passive construction is chosen over a simple one even in a context where the simpler form would do.

(18) i have tried to think over these questions since er military security **is being defined** in a new way all the time (*ELFA*)

(19) it's the power it's the the really the explosive in a positive sense explosive power of the expanding city which **is here being described** the city as as a dynamic creature not a dangerous creature (*ELFA*)

In the case of these two corpora it may be, though, that due to the slight differences in the contents, the high proportion of present progressives in MICASE simply reduces proportions of other tenses, and therefore, any far-reaching conclusions of the differences are at best tentative. But at least it would seem that ELF speakers do not shun more complex verb forms as is often assumed but use them to the same degree as (or even more than) L1 speakers. We will return to this phenomenon in the conclusion of the section.

A final finding in the overall comparisons of the samples relates to the use of the auxiliary BE in the progressive constructions. Here, a notable difference was found

between ELFA and MICASE as to whether the auxiliary is contracted or not. In ELFA up to 73 % of all progressives were preceded by a *full* auxiliary BE whereas in MICASE this percentage was only 43 % (see Table 5.1.5), contracted forms being favoured instead. The difference is statistically significant (χ^2=630.404, df=1, p=0), and this is also something that we will come back to in the discussion of the results.

Table 5.1.5. Distribution of the contracted auxiliary BE vs. the full form of BE in progressives in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA		**MICASE**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
contracted BE	920	27	1946	57
full form BE	2494	73	1468	43
TOTAL	3414	100	3414	100

But because the non-standard – especially the extended – use of the progressive has been given considerable attention in studies of both L1 and L2 data, let us now turn to the uses of the progressive in each corpus that deviate from the traditional functions assigned to the construction in standard grammars.

5.1.2 Non-standard Use of the Progressive

As noted above, the majority of the uses of the progressive in both ELFA and MICASE were found to conform to the rules of Standard English, but in the following we will turn to those 8.9 % of the ELFA progressives and 2.8 % of the MICASE progressives that did not fit into the traditional functional categories. Three main types of non-standard lexico-grammatical uses were found in both data. The categories partly overlap but for the purposes of this study each progressive was classified into a particular subgroup only once. The overall frequencies of the non-standard instances are given in Table 5.1.6 below.

Table 5.1.6. Frequencies of the non-standard uses of the progressive in the samples of 3,414 instances of the progressive in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA		**MICASE**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Stative verbs	100	2.9	53	1.6
General validity / Habitual activity	143	4.2	32	0.9
Punctual events	63	1.8	11	0.3
TOTAL	**306**	**8.9**	**96**	**2.8**

Stative Verbs

We will start with the category which is most often mentioned in connection with non-standard use of the progressive in English, namely the category of stative verbs. Contrary to standard grammar rules, so-called stative verbs seem, indeed, to take the progressive in both ELFA and MICASE. As described above, these are verbs that denote qualities (e.g. *be*, or *have* in this particular sense), perception (e.g. *feel*, *hear*, *see*, *look like*), intellectual states of mind, emotion, volition or attitude (e.g. *know*, *mean*, *understand*, *want*, *like*, *hate*), or a relation (e.g. *belong to*, *consist of*, *depend on*, *hold*, *own*). It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between this category and the next (see 5.1.3. General Validity / Habitual Activity above) as both denote stable states of affairs, but I have followed here a simple method of including in the present category only those instances of non-standard progressives that actually involve a so-called stative verb (see e.g. Quirk et al. 1985: 200-205), classifying other verbs in other categories. Stative verbs are seen as not having duration or not being processes, and therefore normative grammars require these verbs take the simple form.

However, of all the progressives found in ELFA, the *-ing* form was found in a stative verb in 2.9 % of the instances. Below are examples of such use from the ELFA corpus. The speaker's mother tongue is indicated in parentheses at the end of each example.

(20) i think the the issue of decentralisation was also important but in forestry is still not yet settled yes there are 25 26 states each is , that **is** now **having** like kind of autonomy but what about forestry is it still central (*Arabic*)

(21) i mean er er properties and relation **are belonging** to the same erm ontological general area or cat- category (*Danish*)

(22) the target of the enlargement is to establish the great europe or some western europe because if we talk about the europe it **is including** russia ukraine belarus romania and so on (*Chinese*)

(23) i think there there's a lot of things that maybe human beings have yet to learn maybe we might learn a lot from quote unquote these primitives you know who **are not thinking** the way we do you know (*Kihaya & Swahili*)

(24) sometimes we we we **are** even **considering** democracy as very new to these africans very new they have never been er they have never had any clue of democracy at all but that is not the case (*Oromo*)

This kind of use of the progressive is attested in ELFA in the speech of speakers from 31 different first languages.[27]

[27] The languages include: Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Catalan, Chinese, Croatian, Dagbani, Dangme, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Hindi, Igbo, Italian, Kihaya, Kikuyu, Latvian, Lithuanian, Nepali, Norwegian, Oromo, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, and Urdu.

However, progressives appear with stative verbs in the MICASE corpus as well (see examples 25-29 below). Occurrences are somewhat fewer than in ELFA, accounting altogether for 1.6 % of all the progressives, which is a statistically significant difference (χ^2=14.769, df=1, p=0.00012). But qualitatively the use is very similar to that in ELFA. In the following examples, all speakers are native speakers of American English.

(25) but, the structure there was so different because, i mean at that time, um, Indians **were, owning** a bunch of, land i guess

(26) first of all uh to come back to the point that we made earlier, um utility **is depending** only on current income. okay, and, the more i think about this the, the more it bothers me

(27) these are people who, who maybe for the first time **they're hearing** that you can ask a question in, such a way where y- your ego is safe and the presenter's ego is saved

(28) that's what **it's looking like** if you've got eighty-four nineteen involved at all

(29) <S2> how confident are you feeling about pre-calc concepts at this point? </S2> <S4> this new chapter, like i'm **i'm understanding**. and the stuff from before i mean i got a C-minus on the last test, but that's you know partly because there's some st- there are a couple things i was fuzzy on </S4>

In both corpora, progressives could be detected in all different kinds of stative verbs: those denoting qualities, perception, intellectual states, and relations. Statistically, ELF speakers seem to apply the progressive construction to stative verbs more often than native speakers but on the other hand, progressives with stative verbs was the most frequent type of non-standard progressives in L1 speech in MICASE. Based on the literature of non-standard L1 use of the progressive this probably is true for L1 data in general as well, as this kind of use is pointed out most frequently in various sources. But as we will see in the other two categories, there is other kind of non-standardness in L1 use, too, similar to that in L2 use.

General Validity or Habitual Activity

The second category which non-standard progressives from both corpora seem to fall into is that of general validity/truth or habitual activity. As the so-called stative verbs above, the actions denoted by these verbs are also considered stable or permanent states of affairs, which is why they cannot appear in the progressive. General Validity may include, for example, laws of nature in the one extreme but also denotations of other facts that are unchanging. By Habitual Activity, on the other hand, I refer to states that consist of series of events (see Leech and Svartvik 1994: 66) that are not temporary but perceived as recurring routines. In some cases, instances of General Validity and Habitual Activity are difficult to tell apart (as in the example from MICASE where reference is

made to God: *would you say **he is always watching** us?*), and thus, due to their semantic similarity the two categories have been collapsed for the purposes of this study. In ELFA, the progressives used for instances of general validity or habitual activity account for 4.2 % of all the progressives, which makes this category the biggest non-standard category for ELF speakers. The following examples (30-35) illustrate the use in ELFA:

(30) but i expect that we have to have the integral from zero to one because that er P it's actually a probability which **is going** from zero to one so er we have integral from zero to one of P power something multiplied by one minus P power something (*Romanian*)

(31) in principle every library is free , if you , the users **are paying** nothing for library service in my library as well and in other libraries (*Russian*)

(32) <S23> yes and they have maybe problems with finnish swedish too @@ but anyway we are talking about our <FOREIGN> skandinavisk </FOREIGN> and do you **are you speaking** swedish or are you speaking <FOREIGN> skandinavisk </FOREIGN> </S23>
<S31> well swedish </S31>
(S23: *Finnish*; S31: *Swedish*)

(33) so the 100 per cent of people in the first grade **are going** to school and then you see it continues so on and so forth until about sixth grade more or less a 100 per cent people in kerala still going to school (*Bengali & Hindi*)

(34) there are few things that it's polite if man **is doing** it for example i don't know er waiting in front of the door and that and letting woman go first (*Polish*)

(35) i'm not sure if if radical is the is the is the right word , maybe i don't know er b-women who **are** er **arguing** in every situation er with with all the gender stuff (*German*)

This use of the progressive in ELFA is found in the speech of speakers who come from 28 first language backgrounds.[28] As noted in section 2.2.3 above, the use of the progressive with general truths was also salient in Björkman's (2010: 74) ELF data, but it was also found not to interfere with intelligibility. The same is true for ELFA data.

MICASE has instances of similar kind of use, too, although to a lesser degree. Approximately 0.9 % of the progressives in MICASE occur on general truths. Compared to ELFA, the difference is statistically significant (χ^2=72.258, df=1, p=0), meaning that ELF speakers use the progressive more often in connection with 'general validity', but again, the examples from native speaker use (36-39) are qualitatively very similar to

[28] The languages are: Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Catalan, Croatian, Dagbani, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Hindi, Icelandic, Igbo, Italian, Japanese, Lithuanian, Nepali, Norwegian, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, and Twi.

those found in ELFA. All the speakers in the below examples are, again, native speakers of American English.

(36) we tend to group turtles by size not age when we look at 'em sunning themselves on a on a log [...] smaller turtles **are growing** with age. so they're getting they're getting older but they're increasing in size fairly rapidly

(37) an hour after L-S-D, the amount of serotonin that you measure in the tissue is increased. and the amount, of the serotonin metabolite five hydroxy indoleacetic acid, decreases.... and so L-S-D in the brain **is increasing** serotonin content but **decreasing**, serotonin metabolism

(38) right. and the weft threads are the ones that **are creating** these selvages. remember? these self, woven edges?

(39) for a truth to be a priori one of them, is that **it's coming** from reason, and the other one, is that **it's coming** from Kant's way which is gonna be an analysis, of the cognitive faculties okay?

What distinguishes between L1 and ELF use in this category is the fact that no clear cases of habitual activity in the progressive were found in L1 speech in the sample of 3,414 progressives – although the challenges of semantic classification pointed out above must be borne in mind. However, in ELFA, too, the number of such instances was only 10 out of 3,414 (0.3 %), which makes it a very infrequent phenomenon even in ELF speech. Still, with regard to this particular category, it might be the case that habitual activities in the progressive are predominantly a L2 phenomenon, as suggested by Lukenheimer (2012).

Punctual Events

In addition to using the progressive with stative verbs or general truths and habits, ELF speakers in particular use the progressive occasionally also in reference to punctual events or points in time that are not perceived as processes or having duration, and should, therefore, take the simple form according to normative grammar. This use accounts for 1.8 % of all the progressives found in ELFA and it is illustrated in examples (40)-(42) below.

(40) those were quite significant years and the foreign ministry **was** even **publishing** a report about it where talked about the activities and achievements during those years (*German*)

(41) one of my first revo- results of the of my research is participation in the sessions er of a group of finnish advisors to governor of st petersburg there is this group which **is starting** more than ten years ago (*Russian*)

(42) so erm conceptual modelling is a term which **is** er somehow **appearing** about 20 years ago when people tried er to understand what kind of databases they have been developing (*German*)

This kind of non-standard use is the least frequent type in ELFA. It is also interesting that over half of the instances (34/63) in this category appear in the past or the present perfect tense making reference to past events, some of the instances even referring to the past through other tenses (as in examples 41 and 42). The number of first languages displaying this kind of use in ELFA is naturally lower as the phenomenon itself is rather rare, but 13 different background languages can be found.[29]

In L1 data, too, this type of use of the progressive is the most infrequent kind and accounts only for 0.3 % of all the instances. Again, in statistical terms, ELF speakers do seem to use the progressive more in this category (χ^2=36.941, df=1, p=0). Yet, we can find examples of it in MICASE, too, as the following utterance demonstrates:

(43) this definition in de- in de- focusing on belief, uh has more of of a a philosophical conceptualization again it doesn't speak to the actual activity of autonomy. therefore i **am deciding** to use in my presentation Schutzenhofer's definition because it speaks to the practice of autonomy

Even though this kind of use is rare in L1 speech, and therefore general observations are difficult to make, it seems that similarly to ELF data, the progressive in this category occurs most often when L1 speakers refer to punctual events *in the past* (7 out of the 11 instances were either in the past or the present perfect tense).

In addition to the above mentioned categories, there were also other sporadic uses of the progressive in ELFA and MICASE (accounting altogether for less than 1 %) that could not be classified. But as regards the non-standard use represented by the categories above, there were no observable signs of this type of use causing misunderstanding or miscommunication in any of the instances in either corpus.

What is also interesting in the instances of non-standard use of the progressive (or instances where the progressive is not strictly called for but still used) in both ELFA and MICASE is that a number of these instances seem to involve either a pause (indicated by a comma in both corpora) or some kind of dysfluency between the auxiliary BE and the *–ing* form, or are preceded by a contracted form of BE as e.g. in examples (25), (27)-(29), (39), and (42) above or in the ones below:

(44) the effort to get the system , more systematic by using IT , technology and IT system approach and er for example that **you are , finding** all the services from the same address (*ELFA*: *Finnish*)

(45) metaxylem it's not there but **these are still with erm @@ really characterising** the phenotype of this mutant (*ELFA*: *Portuguese*)

[29] These are: Catalan, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, German, Norwegian, Persian, Romanian, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Swedish.

(46) job er names are not open for everybody it's just for ex- for example a nurse is always female it's al- it's always <FOREIGN> krankenschwester </FOREIGN> and **nobody's er using** the male word (*ELFA*: *German*)

(47) and then like every wife want to have er children like competing with another like er if **somebody's having** three then i should have four you know (*ELFA*: *Swahili*)

(48) the passage i was citing comes from the Second Enquiry not the Treatise but, i think the same considerations **are, working** in Hume's thinking (*MICASE*)

(49) he started doing things when he was twenty-two. okay **he was, um, he was beginning** his scientific career at about the same age that you guys, are (*MICASE*)

(50) and like everybody in this room to me is like the other ninety-nine percent, unless **you're owning** something (*MICASE*)

This observation seems to call for an explanation in the realms of speech processing and production. It seems as if the verb BE gets produced very easily in spontaneous speech as a kind of chunk with the preceding subject (as indicated especially by the contracted forms) or as a 'default' verb to aid fluency in spontaneous speech production. It looks like the speakers stop to think how to complete their utterances only after having uttered the verb BE (as indicated by the pauses and dysfluencies after the verb BE in the examples). However, they try to complete the utterances without stemming the flow of speech, i.e. without reformulations or self-repairs, and consequently, end up finishing by using the formally – but not necessarily grammatically – fitting progressive that completes the verb phrase (accidentally) begun by BE. In other words, if this is the case, it would mean that both L1 and ELF speakers prioritize fluency in speech flow over fluency in grammar – and this also leads to the occasional non-standard uses of the progressive.

5.1.3 Summary of Findings

The following table summarizes some of the main findings of the use of the progressive in ELFA and MICASE.

Table 5.1.7. Summary of the main statistical findings of the use of the progressive in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA	**MICASE**
Progressives per 10,000 words	45	76
Progressives with standard functions	91 %	97 %
Progressives with non-standard functions	8.9 %	2.8 %
Number of verbs accounting for 50 % of all the instances	16	12
Reoccurring 3-word clusters (in a sample of 3,414 progressives)	209	176
Distribution of tenses:		
Present	69.9 %	78.2 %
Past	19.7 %	16.8 %
Present & Past Perfect	5.0 %	2.5 %
Future	5.5 %	2.4 %
Progressives preceded by full auxiliary (BE)	73 %	43 %
Categories and proportions of non-standard use (of all the progressives):		
Stative verbs	2.9 %	1.6 %
General validity / Habit	4.2 %	0.9 %
Punctual events	1.8 %	0.3 %

The quantitative findings on the overall use of the progressive in this data do not support the supposed 'overuse' of the progressive by L2 speakers, but rather the contrary (although differences between the recorded speech events in the two corpora have to be kept in mind). Also qualitatively it is difficult to find any major differences between the standard functions of the progressive in ELFA and MICASE – except for the fact that in academic discussions studied here, the progressive appears in metadiscoursal comments on the on-going conversation among L1 speakers more often than among ELF speakers. This could also be a reflection of the increased use of the so-called interpretative function

of the progressive in native speaker contexts (as suggested by Kranich 2010). But in qualitative terms, it is notable that in the standard functions, ELF speakers still seem to apply the progressive in more non-conventional ways compared to L1 speakers as indicated by the somewhat higher number of trigrams found in the data (meaning that the 3-word bundles do not cluster around only certain phrases as tightly as in L1 use) and the wider range of verbs that make up half of the instances of the progressives in ELFA. Also, it is noteworthy that speakers in ELFA seem to use the progressive form slightly more in connection with more complex tenses (cf. the present perfect, past perfect, and the future) than L1 speakers and prefer full auxiliaries with progressives over the contracted forms of BE. All these clues together might point to the direction that ELF speakers prefer somewhat 'heavier' and thus more salient and prominent verb constructions than L1 speakers in their speech as if wanting to make sure that the most essential part of their message – the verb – is successfully conveyed.

But since the putative 'overuse' of the progressive commonly refers to the use of the construction in its *non-standard* functions, and as this is the phenomenon most often brought forth in the literature on L2 'abuse' of the progressive, it is more essential to focus on those findings in this study. As the comparison of the non-standard use in the two corpora indicates, it is not only ELF speakers who apply the progressive in non-traditional contexts, but (academic) L1 speakers do so as well. What is more, the categories where the non-standard use mainly seems to fall into are the same for both ELFA and MICASE speakers – with the exception of habitual activity missing from the L1 non-standard use. It is even possible to find analogical examples of the use of, for example, the same stative verbs in the progressive in both corpora. Thus, qualitatively also the non-standard use appears very similar in both L1 and ELF discourse. The only differences are to be found in the quantitative results, which show somewhat higher frequencies in each category for ELFA, and which point to a different proportional order of the categories. Progressives with stative verbs do, indeed, constitute the largest category of non-standard use for L1 speakers, but contrary to common observations in L2 literature, this is not the case for ELF speakers. In ELFA, most of the speakers' non-standard use actually occurs in connection with general truths or habits. Thus, it would be this category in particular where a certain amount of 'extended use' of the progressive is found in ELF use compared to L1 use. Instances of general truths in the progressive are present in L1 data, too, but to a lesser degree. Punctual events take the progressive least often in both corpora, and in MICASE this kind of use is, in fact, very rare, but nevertheless, examples of it can be found in both databases. Overall, ELF speakers do use the progressive in non-standard contexts three times as often as L1 speakers.

However, the fact that similar kinds of uses can be detected in both ELFA and MICASE (i.e. even in L1 *academic* discourse), seems to indicate that the extended use of the progressive is not only a second language speaker 'problem' but rather a more general feature of *spoken* English grammar. This assumption is further backed by the fact that the same phenomenon is widely attested in Outer Circle Englishes and different Inner Circle colloquial varieties as discussed above. The findings of the present study render dubious the explanations according to which the extended use by L2 speakers results from either overteaching or underteaching (due to inadequate teaching materials) of the progressive in ELT settings because similar use is found in L1 speech, too, or that it originates in differences between the L2 speakers' mother tongues and English (because in ELFA,

speakers from altogether 37 typologically different L1 backgrounds employ the structure in similar, non-standard ways).

Instead, as suggested above, at least some of the non-standard use of the progressives could quite simply find its motivation in the nature of spontaneous spoken language as a mode that capitalizes on chunks – such as a 'default' combination of the subject and the verb BE – and which makes speakers sometimes choose an ungrammatical form 'on-the-go' for the sake of fluency in the speech flow. These same constraints and strategies of speech processing naturally apply to L1 and ELF speakers alike, and thus cause similar kind of non-standardness in both speaker groups as shown by the data.

On the other hand, for the overall popularity of the progressive in spoken language another kind of explanation, but one still relating to the nature of speech, seems more likely on the basis of the data and research literature. Giacalone Ramat's (1997: 281) suggestion that L2 speakers prefer the progressive because it has caught their attention in L1 discourse for its frequency might be true, but I would like to add that it is probably not just the frequency of occurrence that makes the construction "attention-catching", but it could be the "attention-catching-ness" of the progressive *per se* that makes the construction attractive to language users. As a salient, easily perceptible periphrastic structure (with the suffix *-ing* and the preceding auxiliary BE) the progressive catches the listener's attention more effectively than a simple form, and thus makes it useful in spoken interactions – for both L1 and L2 speakers. It could be, though, that this attention-catching quality is employed in different ways by L1 and L2 speakers (as speculated in the literature discussed above). For L1 speakers the increased interpretative use of the progressive as a kind of summarizing tool, as well as the use of the progressive as a *stylistic* device help to make what they say noticed[30]. On the other hand, based on the observed preference for L2 speakers to make the progressive even 'heavier' than necessarily needed (compared to L1 data) by the use of the full auxiliary and the application of progressives in complex tenses, it could be that L2 users are exploiting the pure saliency of the structure itself for communicative purposes. Adding the ending *-ing* and the auxiliary BE to a verb makes the verb itself stand out in communication and draws the interlocutor's attention to it as the core of the message[31]. The latter use would be highly practical especially in ELF contexts where maintaining mutual intelligibility among speakers from various lingua-cultural backgrounds becomes a high priority.

As a whole, then, it seems that it is the overall feasibility of the progressive construction for spontaneous spoken language that contributes to its growing popularity in speech. It may be employed either to aid the speaker in his/her production (as in the case of non-standard progressives) or to aid the interlocutor to 'catch' the essential core of the message (as when used for stylistic or communicative purposes). It could be this versatile applicability of the progressive under the general constraints of speech production/processing that speakers of English (whether L1 or L2) find universally appealing and useful in spoken discourse. Especially, if speakers from high-prestige L1

[30] This kind of motivation is also referred to as "impressive" use of language (cf. Haspelmath 1999: 1057 and fts. 9 and 10) – impressive meaning that the speaker uses language in an innovative or unexpected way in order to be noticed and to gain social prestige as a speaker.

[31] In contrast to impressive motivations, such use would be termed "expressive" by Haspelmath – expressivity meaning that the speaker wishes to speak as clearly as possible so as to make him/herself understood by others (cf. Haspelmath 1999: 1050-51, 1057).

varieties (such as represented by MICASE), other colloquial L1 varieties, as well as speakers of L2 varieties from numerous mother tongue backgrounds end up using the construction in similar (non-standard) ways, I find it a strong indication of the fact that its 'extended' use could actually be a feature of spoken English grammar in general. At the very least, it is definitely not a mere 'learner error' or unique to ELF/L2 speakers, as the present study demonstrates. Quirk et al. (1985: 202) are likely to be right that the use of the progressive is still undergoing grammatical extension and change at the present day (as also recent studies have observed, see e.g. Leech et al. 2009), and the fact that both L1 speakers and the even larger group of L2 speakers world-wide are making use of the construction in new ways will probably only precipitate the change. Thus, contrary to being a 'problem' in spoken interaction, the extended use of the progressive might be becoming even more mainstream in the future. But even at its present stage, its status as a universal of spoken English, or angloversal, merits serious consideration.

5.2 Embedded Inversions

A second re-occurring non-standard grammatical feature in the ELFA corpus is the frequent use of so-called embedded inversions (EI's), by which I refer to indirect (i.e. embedded) questions with inverted word order. This feature relates more to the level of syntax and the position of the verb in it than to verb phrase as such (see the discussion in Ch. 4).

Background

Indirect questions can be divided into two categories: 'open-ended' WH-questions, and Yes/No-type of polar questions. These two question types have also been called 'complex' and 'simple' questions respectively (see Bliss 1984: 148), but I prefer to follow the former terms as they are widely used in English grammars, (see e.g. Quirk et al. 1985: 1050, 1053). In indirect WH-questions, according to Standard English grammar, the question word of the direct question is retained but the word order is uninverted (i.e. subject + predicate) as in example (a) below. Indirect Yes/No-questions, on the other hand, require an introductory complementizer *if* or *whether*, followed by uninverted word order, as in example (b) below.

(a) Do you understand **what he is saying**?
(b) I wonder **if they are coming**.

Still, numerous studies on varieties of English (see below) have noted that in dialects and other non-standard spoken varieties of the language, speakers often use inverted word order (i.e. predicate + subject) even in embedded questions – although inversion should be restricted to direct questions only – producing utterances such as:

(c) Do you understand **what is he saying**?
(d) I wonder **are they coming**.

In the case of L2 speakers this is considered a learner error and generally a "problem" as can be seen, for example, in Turton and Heaton's (1996) dictionary of learner errors where this feature is listed as a "common error" under several entries for question words (cf. s.v. *what*, s.v. *when*, s.v. *which*, and s.v. *why*). Also the writers in Swan and Smith (2001) find word order in indirect questions problematic for learners at least from French, Italian, Spanish/Catalan, Portuguese, Polish, Farsi, Chinese and Korean L1 backgrounds as well as for L1 speakers of Dravidian and West African languages. Interference from the speakers' respective mother tongues is offered as an explanation for half of the cases (at least in the case of Portuguese, Polish, Farsi, Chinese and Korean), but for this feature also overgeneralization of the direct question word order in English is seen as a possible source of error (see e.g. Spanish and French). For Italian, Dravidian and West African languages no explicit source is suggested. The same two explanations (transfer and overgeneralization of a rule) are also, generally speaking, frequently cited in SLA studies as motivations for this kind of deviation from the

standard, and sometimes also fossilization in the interlanguage development is referred to (see the developmental stages of inversion in interlanguage in Cazden et al. 1975: 38). However, the sheer fact that one and the same phenomenon is variably ascribed to different sources raises the question of the validity of such explanations.

Further, the explanations become all the more questionable when considering the fact that, as noted above, exactly the same feature has drawn researchers' attention in many Inner and Outer Circle varieties, too. Embedded inversions have been discussed in connection with, for example, Irish English (e.g. Filppula 1999), Belfast English in particular (Henry 1995), Scottish English (e.g. Miller 1993), and Welsh English (e.g. Thomas 1994) as well as in descriptions of so-called New Englishes in general (e.g. Mesthrie & Bhatt 2008: 81 who mention the phenomenon in connection with both Yes/No-questions and WH-questions, and Platt, Weber & Ho 1984: 127-128 who mention embedded inversions in WH-questions) and in individual studies on different varieties of New Englishes in particular (see e.g. Sridhar 1992: 144-145 for Indian English, Sand 1999: 14-143 for Jamaican English, and Schmied 2008: 459 for African Englishes). According to the *Electronic World Atlas of Varieties of English* by Kortmann and Lukenheimer (2011), inverted word order in indirect questions is pervasive in 14 different varieties of English all over the world ranging from colloquial American English and Irish English to Indian and Singapore English etc. The feature is further found to various degrees in 31 other varieties surveyed in *eWAVE*, including Welsh English, New Zealand English, dialects of the South-West and North of England, Appalachian English, Nigerian English, Kenyan English and so on. Actually, the phenomenon seems to be so pervasive that it is briefly noted even in standard grammars such as Quirk et al. (1985: 1052 note b), where it is stated that for indirect WH-questions the "subject-operator inversion is common in Irish English and dialectally". Also an older account of English grammar, Jespersen (1961: 44), mentions that the inverted word order in indirect interrogative clauses is "now extremely frequent in colloquial speech and in novels, but is not universally recognized by theorists". In ELF data, this phenomenon has earlier been noted by Björkman (2010: 78).

Despite the wide typological and geographical distribution of the feature, many researchers working in particular in contact linguistics have still preferred to look for the explanation for embedded inversions in the local substratum language(s) associated with a particular variety of English (for the proposed Celtic influence see e.g. the above-mentioned studies by Filppula 1999, Miller 1993, and Thomas 1994). Besides the SLA based learner strategy explanations, this seems to be another frequently cited source for the phenomenon. But as shown, for example, by Hilbert (2011) the substratum influence explanation is not plausible for all varieties of English even if it may explain (some of) the use, for instance, in Irish English (as its patterning somewhat differs from that in the other two varieties that Hilbert studied, namely Indian and Singapore English). Further, the world-wide occurrence of embedded inversions in itself makes it doubtful to claim that the feature could be traced back to the first or substrate language(s) of the speakers in each case or that it could be trivialized as a learner error. In actual fact, embedded inversions have been deemed one of the strongest candidates for an angloversal (see e.g. Davydova et al. 2011: 306-307).

Also Filppula et al. (2008: 194) admit that "it is hard to deny that EI could, at least partly, be explained as a kind of vernacular universal", but they find it problematic

that the feature is "clearly more general in some varieties than in some others", which the universal hypothesis, according to them, cannot account for.[32] Further, in earlier work Filppula (1999: 173) ponders on the possibility of embedded inversions being a universal feature of first- and second-language acquisition but dismisses this hypothesis mainly on the grounds that the EI construction does not seem to be necessarily any simpler compared to the standard form (as it should be according to the 'learner-language' hypothesis), and also because EI's are not common in English-based creoles. Filppula (1999) and Filppula et al. (2008) also look into the explanation of EI's being a retention of older English, especially of the Germanic 'verb second' (V2) constraint but it turns out that embedded inversions were rather infrequent in Early modern English grammar (see also Filppula 2000), and that the V2 constraint seems to be restricted to root sentences rather than other contexts in earlier and present-day Standard English (see e.g. Stockwell 1984).

From a global perspective, too – considering the fact that EI's are common in L2 speech as well – reference to historical retentions as an explanation would clearly be untenable as most L2 speakers have only learned present-day English (through tutored or untutored SLA), and the originally Germanic V2 constraint sounds implausible for speakers around the world whose first languages do not have this constraint. On the other hand, I also find it unsatisfactory to dismiss the universality hypothesis on the basis of EI's not being necessarily more simple or easier to produce than the standard form. As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, the "simplicity" hypothesis is only one of the proposed explanations for linguistic universals, and as it is almost impossible to determine which constructions are more complex or simple for different speakers, it is safer not to rely too much on the "simplicity ranking" of a feature in assessing its potential as a linguistic universal (see Dahl 2004: 39-40 for a discussion of keeping the concepts of 'complexity' and 'difficulty' separate in linguistic studies). Instead, other reasons may apply that are not immediately visible in the surface structure. Biber et al. (1999: 920-921), for instance, see embedded inversions as blurs between direct and indirect questions (see also Sand & Kolbe 2010) and along the same lines, Denison (1998: 246) calls them 'semi-quotations'.

However, more recent studies have looked more closely into the syntactic environments in which EI's occur and have proposed explanations to the phenomenon on these grounds. For instance, Sand and Kolbe (2010) in their logistic regression analysis on the factors contributing to the occurrence of EI's found that embedded inversions are most likely to occur in WH-questions when the main verb in the embedded clause is BE, the matrix verb introducing the clause (see below) is *ask* and the clause occurs in a spoken dialogue. Their study comprised all available varieties of the International Corpus of English (ICE), both written and spoken text types, and they looked into several linguistic effects on EI's including the question type (WH- vs. polar questions), matrix verb, the main verb in the embedded clause, subject length, text type, whether the embedded clause has a question orientation or not, and so on. We will return to Sand and Kolbe's findings below when discussing the findings of the present study but on the basis of their results, it seems obvious that the occurrence of EI's is governed by certain intralinguistic, syntactic factors rather than, for instance, first language transfer. Hilbert (2011), on the other hand, explains the occurrence of EI's in Indian and Singapore

[32] This problem, of course, boils down to how 'universality' is defined (as discussed in Ch. 3): as a widespread tendency in different conditions or as an invariable omnipotent phenomenon (see also below).

English in terms of unanalyzed fixed chunks consisting of an interrogative pronoun and (most often) a form of the verb BE. She finds support for her hypothesis first in the fact that embedded inversions in her data often appear in the cliticized form i.e. as fusions of the question word and the following inverting operator, which most often is the verb BE, as in *But I don't know **what's** the prize like* (Hilbert 2011: 132). Secondly, EI's in her data also occasionally manifest a double marking of the verb BE so that in addition to the cliticized BE another form of the verb follows after the subject, as in *Don't understand how**'s it is** coming up* (Hilbert 2011: 132). Thus, she suggests that embedded inversions are not due to overgeneralizing the inversion rule from main clause interrogatives to embedded interrogatives but rather find their motivation in "the use of the same available and (most) frequent fixed chunks in both types of clauses" (Hilbert 2011: 132). She further goes on to test this hypothesis of formulaic language playing a role in embedded inversions by studying what kinds of subject-verb combinations occur in EI's most frequently, and comes to the conclusion that:

> the primary factor governing the occurrence and non-occurrence of inversion in this data indeed seems to be "formulaic language", i.e. the frequency of specific strings: the more frequently a specific combination of [interrogative pronoun] + [subject] + [main verb] occurs, the more likely this string is to be inverted in both main clause and embedded interrogatives. (Hilbert 2011: 140-141)

Consequently, based on this more recent research it seems more plausible that EI's emerge as a result of different kinds of syntactic combinations in a clause in spoken English rather than as traits of transfer or imperfect learning. The only aspect apparently needing explanation (based on Filppula et al.'s 2008 article) is the varying degrees to which EI's occur in different varieties. Yet again, one may ask is it a necessary condition for a linguistic feature to merit a status of a universal that it occurs at the same rate in all varieties around the world? Or better still, would that alone be a sufficient condition? As discussed earlier (see Ch. 3 and 4), the mere occurrence rates do not necessarily say much about the 'universality' of a feature (and may even lead a researcher astray) but it is the linguistic similarities that should guide the assessment of whether a feature can be considered a language universal. In the rest of the present chapter we will compare ELFA and MICASE data for embedded inversions to see not only how frequent the feature is in ELF and L1 speech, but also to find out about the linguistic contexts where it occurs.

Methods

As retrieving this particular feature in corpus data is somewhat cumbersome, the most often employed strategy in queries for indirect questions has been to search for the matrix verbs preceding possible indirect questions. This procedure was followed in the present study, too, and both ELFA and MICASE were searched for six matrix verbs found to be common in introducing indirect questions (see e.g. Biber et al. 1999: 685): *ASK*, *KNOW*, *SEE*, *TELL*, *UNDERSTAND*, and *WONDER*. Initially also such verbs as *DEFINE*, *EXPLAIN*, *FIND OUT*, and *FIGURE OUT* – which all are frequent in academic speech – were looked into, but as they yielded only a few hits altogether, they were excluded from the final results. In

the case of indirect WH-questions, the query syntax was augmented by the seven most common interrogative words in English (*how, what, when, where, which, who,* and *why*) as context words immediately following the verb. (Only in the case of *TELL* also phrases where the WH-word appeared as the first *or* the second word after the verb were searched to include the frequent phrases where *TELL* is followed by a pronoun, as in: *Can you tell **me** how it happened*.) On the other hand, in the case of polar Yes/No-questions, context words *if* and *whether*, and the most common auxiliaries *BE, DO, HAVE, CAN, MAY, MUST, WILL, WOULD, SHALL* and *SHOULD* in their various forms immediately after the matrix verb were added to the query syntax. As can be seen in Table 5.2.1, based on this sample, the overall rate for embedded inversions in ELFA, for WH-questions and Yes/No-questions together, was 18.7 % of all the indirect questions found. The corresponding figure for MICASE was clearly lower at 3.6 % (χ^2=168.211, df=1, p=0.00).

Table 5.2.1. Overall distribution of embedded inversions and standard formations in indirect WH- and Yes/No –questions together in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA		**MICASE**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Embedded inversions	105	18.7	81	3.6
Standard formations	458	81.3	2198	96.4
TOTAL (all indirect WH- and Yes/No -questions)	563	100	2279	100

In both ELFA and MICASE, the WH-questions seemed to be more prone to inversion than Yes/No-questions (see the discussion in Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 below), which is in line with several earlier findings on the feature in different varieties of English (see e.g. comparisons in Filppula et al. 2008: 194). But now, let us look at the results for both question types in both corpora in more detail.

5.2.1 WH-questions

The query syntax for indirect WH-questions in this study was formed based on the six matrix verbs mentioned above (*ASK, KNOW, SEE, TELL, UNDERSTAND,* and *WONDER* in all their inflected forms) augmented by the seven most common question words in English (*how, what, when, where, which, who,* and *why*) as context words immediately following the verb. The retrieved results were then checked manually and all cases where the question word (*what, which,* or *who*) was found to be the subject of the indirect question or a part of the subject, as in the following examples

(1) i couldn't tell **what** was going on (*MICASE*)

(2) i still wonder **how many schools** or companies can afford these (*ELFA*)

were excluded from the data, as it would be impossible to invert the word order in these questions, and so both the direct and indirect question would look syntactically the same. Also excluded were the infinitive 'how to' constructions, as in example (3) and WH-phrases with an exclamative function as in example (4) because in these cases, too, inversion would not be possible.

(3) but they don't know **how to do it** (*ELFA*)

(4) let me give you a hypothetical you know **how i love** hypotheticals (*MICASE*)

Although syntactically valid indirect questions, the questions checking comprehension that end with "what I mean" or "what I'm saying" were also *not* counted in due to their conventionalized nature: they are frequently used fixed phrases which – as Sand and Kolbe (2010) note – makes embedded inversion "nearly impossible" with these items. "(Do you know) what I mean/what I'm saying" –type of questions were especially frequent in the MICASE data, which could have skewed the results in an inappropriate way for the present study. Examples of the excluded utterances are:

(5) humans are like [...] haploid and like you know **what i mean**? (*MICASE*)

(6) so would you need to plot it like that or [...] do you see **what i'm saying**? (*MICASE*)

A problem often addressed in analysing embedded inversions (see e.g. Siemund 2013: 244-235) is the difficulty in deciding whether an utterance is intended as an indirect question or whether it should be interpreted as performing a direct quotation as in the examples below:

(7) every year that he increases growth he gets like ten percent of the sales, and the company, the people ask **how could you do that** that's so expensive (*MICASE*)

(8) i told you there are fourteen different kinds of serotonin receptors so you should be asking, **how do you know** it's the five-H-T-two-A one, specifically? (*MICASE*)

In disambiguating such cases, the method used by Henry (1995: 106) was followed. Decisions on the inclusion or exclusion of such utterances were made individually based on the pronouns and sequence of tenses used in the root clause and in the subclause. Thus, if the pronoun changed in the subclause (still referring to the same person or entity), like *he* / *you* in example (7), the question was deemed to be a direct quotation and thus excluded from the study. On the other hand, if the pronoun and the reference stayed the same, the question in the subclause was categorized as an indirect question, like *you* /

you in example (8), and thus included in the results. Another criterion was that if the tense changed between the root clause and the subclause (as in example 7 above), the subclause was interpreted as a direct quotation, but if the tense was unaltered (as in example 8), the sublclause was categorized as an indirect question. In other words, example (8) would represent an embedded inversion, whereas example (7) would not.

After the post-processing, ELFA yielded 375 indirect WH-questions altogether. Of these 94 were embedded inversions, which equals approximately 25 % of the sample. In MICASE, in comparison, the overall number of indirect WH-questions in this sample was 1,537 – out of which 58 were embedded inversions, equalling 3.6 % (see Table 5.2.2). The difference in quantitative proportions is clear – yet, the found instances appeared to be very similar qualitatively to those in ELFA (as discussed below). Let us first look at the ELFA data in more detail.

Table 5.2.2. Overall distribution of embedded inversions and standard formations in indirect WH-questions in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA		**MICASE**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Embedded inversions	94	25	58	3.8
Standard formations	281	75	1479	96.2
TOTAL	375	100	1537	100

Examples of embedded inversion from ELFA with different matrix verbs (underlined) include the following (with the speaker's mother tongue(s) in brackets):

(9) and it's really an important question to ask **what are they doing** yeah @so@ (*German*)

(10) in some part of the village they don't even know **who's the president** you know they're very much isolated (*Swahili*)

(11) we were just trying to see **what did you write** at the name of for this chair (*Dangme*)

(12) so we have er 20 roughly 28 per cent but tell me **why has it increased up to 30** (*Finnish* & *Swedish*)

(13) how to measure ta- tax burden do you know do you understand **what is it tax burden** (*Czech*)

(14) it actually slightly decreased over that period of time and er we were wondering **why is that happening** (*Romanian*)

The range of first languages of the speakers in whose speech embedded inversions could be attested in the data was wide, comprising altogether 21 typologically different L1s[33]. This, yet again, renders transfer-based explanations questionable.

As for the matrix verbs, KNOW (179 hits) was by far the most typical verb to introduce an indirect question, followed by SEE (99), UNDERSTAND (44), TELL (22), ASK (18) and WONDER (13). But when looking at the ratio of how strongly these verbs attract *embedded inversions*, the picture looks quite different. Most often – in relation to the total number of the hits of the verb – an embedded inversion is triggered by WONDER (8 cases of the total 13) or ASK (11/18), the percentage being almost the same for both verbs. Due to the relatively low overall frequency of the verbs, the percentages could just as well be reversed. The next in line are TELL (7/22), KNOW (42/179), UNDERSTAND (9/44), and SEE (18/99). Table 5.2.3 gives details on the sampled verbs in indirect questions in ELFA.

Table 5.2.3. Distribution of matrix verbs in all indirect questions and in embedded inversions for WH-questions in ELFA (in the order of verbs most likely to trigger EI).

	Number of indirect questions introduced by the verb	Percentage of the verb of all the verbs in the sample	Number of EI's introduced by the verb	Percentage of EI's of all the indirect questions introduced by the verb
WONDER	13	3.5 %	8	61.5 %
ASK	18	4.8 %	11	61.1 %
TELL	22	5.9 %	6	27 %
KNOW	179	47.7 %	42	23 %
UNDERSTAND	44	11.7 %	9	20 %
SEE	99	26.4 %	18	18 %
TOTAL	**375**	**100 %**	**94**	

Thus, it seems that verbs that denote questions in themselves, here WONDER and ASK, trigger embedded inversions far more often than verbs denoting declarative actions. This is in line with Sand and Kolbe's (2010) findings who found that EI's are more likely with matrix verbs that can function as reporting verbs of direct questions, especially ASK, followed by WONDER, while matrix verbs that usually do not have this function (such as KNOW and SEE) seemed to disfavour embedded inversions.

It is also noteworthy that a vast majority of the root clauses (preceding the indirect question) for embedded inversions in the data were declarative clauses (as in examples 9, 10, 11 and 14 above) – 83 out of 94 (88%), followed in frequency by interrogative root clauses (as in example 13) – 10 out of 94 (11 %), and with only one imperative clause

[33] These were: Bengali, Catalan, Chinese, Czech, Dangme, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Kikuyu, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, and Swahili.

(see example 12) – equalling 1%. Consequently, it looks like it is the semantics of the matrix verb (i.e. a verb denoting an interrogative) that causes embedded inversions rather than the interrogative orientation of the preceding root clause. This is further backed by the fact that all the root clauses for embedded inversions with ASK or WONDER were declarative clauses.

Apart from the matrix verb, also the WH-question word beginning the embedded inversion may have an effect on the formulation of the indirect question. In ELFA, *what* was by far the most likely question word to trigger embedded inversions (66 %). The next most frequent was *how* (15%), but the rest of the question words included in this search yielded only sporadic instances. Table 5.2.4 below gives an overview of the occurrence of the question words before embedded inversions.

Table 5.2.4. Distribution of WH-question words beginning embedded inversions in ELFA. (Due to rounding, the total percentages may differ from 100 % in the tables.)

	Total number of the WH-word beginning an EI	Percentage of the WH-word in all the EI's in the data
WHAT	62	66 %
HOW	14	15 %
WHY	7	7 %
WHERE	6	6 %
WHO	2	2 %
WHEN	2	2 %
WHICH	1	1 %
TOTAL	**94**	**99 %**

Further, the inner structure of the embedded question was also looked into to see what kinds of questions end up being expressed in the form of a direct question in embedded inversions. Of the 94 EI's, overwhelmingly the most typical question involved the combination *what* + BE, as in:

(15) if we know **what's** the stiffness of the environment we can accurately calculate which is the er needed er damping term (*Spanish* & *Catalan*)

(16) could you tell us **what are** typical distances among these islands (*Romanian*)

(17) i wonder **what's** the difference between these two two diagrams these two figures (*Finnish*)

BE was the predicate in 53 of the 94 EI's (equalling 56.6 %), and it always occurred in the present tense ('s/*is*/*are*). Again, this is in line with both Sand and Kolbe's (2010) and Hilbert's (2011) findings who also report that the predicate BE is more likely to attract embedded inversions in WH-questions than other verbs in their data. The next most

typical combinations of the interrogative word and predicate were *what* + DO (8.5 %), followed by *how* + BE, and *why* + BE (both 7.4 %), but they were left far behind in frequency compared to *what* + BE. Thus, it seems that it is especially the chunk *what* + BE that seems to trigger embedded inversions for ELF speakers.

Also the contraction of the predicate was paid attention to in the analysis. In the ELFA data 13 cliticized predicates were found in the embedded inversions (equalling 13.8 % of all EI's). By far the most commonly cliticized form was *what's* with 12 instances, followed by only one instance of *who's*. Of all the EI's involving the combination *what* + BE, a cliticized form was found in 22.6 % (12/53). This is lower than the percentages found for Indian (44 %) and Singapore (33 %) English respectively by Hilbert (2011, 131).

Further, following Sand and Kolbe (2010), the subject length in words in the embedded clauses was looked into as longer subjects are supposed to favour embedded inversions (see e.g. the note in Quirk et al. 1985: 1052). The average subject length in EI's in ELFA turned out to be 2.7. We will come back to these findings shortly, but let us now turn to the corresponding searches in MICASE.

Comparing the ELFA results to MICASE data shows that similar tendencies in indirect WH-questions are to be found in native speaker speech, too. Quantitatively the phenomenon is not as frequent as in ELF (as shown in Table 5.2.2 above), but the qualitative patterns are, nevertheless, very much alike. The query syntax and other criteria for the search were naturally the same as for ELFA. Due to the fact that MICASE also has some non-native speakers, all the instances of embedded inversions were checked at the post-processing stage, and only the ones produced by native speakers were taken into account. Examples of embedded inversions introduced by different matrix verbs in MICASE include the following:

(18) it's not obvious like when you see something obviously coming from there when you ask **where is it coming from** it's not clear to me

(19) Marxists wanna know **what role do the media play**, in getting all these people to say yes

(20) because he just wanted to see, **what would this person do** if you said they had a million dollars

(21) so then, you can look at the ikat and sort of try and tell **how were the threads actually tied** and dyed

(22) because people really want to understand **why do we get cycles**?

(23) now you might wonder **what is the purpose of, cancer cells**

In MICASE, too, KNOW introduces most of the indirect WH-questions (823 instances), followed by SEE (342), TELL (148), UNDERSTAND (135), WONDER (60) and ASK (29). But as in ELFA, the verbs denoting questions (ASK and WONDER) are the most likely ones to trigger embedded inversions if they appear in the preceding root clause – although ASK is

by far the strongest triggerer in MICASE. Table 5.2.5 below gives an overview of the distribution of the matrix verbs in the MICASE data.

Table 5.2.5. Distribution of matrix verbs in all indirect questions and in embedded inversions for WH-questions in MICASE (in the order of verbs most likely to trigger EI).

	Number of indirect questions introduced by the verb	Percentage of the verb of all verbs in the sample	Number of EI's introduced by the verb	Percentage of EI's of all indirect questions introduced by the verb
ASK	29	1.9 %	12	41.4 %
WONDER	60	3.9 %	3	5 %
TELL	148	9.6 %	6	4 %
KNOW	823	53.5 %	27	3.2 %
SEE	342	22.2 %	8	2.3 %
UNDERSTAND	135	8.8 %	2	1.5 %
TOTAL	**1,537**	**99.9 %**	**58**	

Also in MICASE, it seems to be the case that it is *not* the interrogative form of the root clause that triggers embedded inversions as out of the 58 cases of EI's, a majority of 47 (81%) were preceded by a declarative root clause and only 7 (12 %) by an interrogative clause, followed by 3 (5 %) imperative clauses. Thus, for native speakers, too, it seems to be the interrogative nature of the matrix verb, rather than that of the preceding clause that causes EI's to emerge.

As for the WH-words beginning an embedded inversion, the overall similarity to ELFA in the pattern is again obvious. For native speakers, too, the two most likely question words causing an inverted word order in indirect questions are *what* (63 %) and *how* (18.6 %). But unlike in ELFA, the range of WH-words occurring in embedded inversions is more limited. In this sample, there were no cases of embedded inversions beginning with *who, when* or *which* in MICASE which may also be due to pure chance as the *overall* frequency of these WH-words in all indirect questions (including the standard ones) is rather low in MICASE (2.3 % for *who*, 1.6 % for *which*, and 1.3 % for *when*). On the other hand, this may also point to formulaic use of EI's with certain question words more often than with others. We will come back to this issue in the summary of the findings (see Section 5.2.3). Table 5.2.6 below sums up the frequency and distribution of the WH-words in MICASE.

Table 5.2.6. Distribution of WH-question words beginning embedded inversions in MICASE.

	Total number of the WH-word beginning an EI	Percentage of the WH-word in all the EI's in the data
WHAT	34	59 %
HOW	13	22 %
WHY	6	10 %
WHERE	5	9 %
WHO	0	0 %
WHEN	0	0 %
WHICH	0	0 %
TOTAL	**58**	**100 %**

Also, a look at the most typical inner structure of the questions that end up being expressed as direct questions even in embedded contexts revealed similarity in pattern to ELFA. The most typical EI in MICASE also involved the combination *what* + BE (24/58 instances, equalling 41 %) as in:

(24) as i read, i asked **what was** it like to develop breasts or begin your periods a century ago?

(25) a white-eyed female and a red-eyed male are crossed. and they wanna know **what are** the phenotypes of the offspring gonna be

(26) no that's not enough you have to tell me **what's** a random sample

In the data 21 out of 24 instances were in the present tense ('s/*is*/*are*) and three in the past tense (*was*). The next most typical combinations for EI's were *what* + DO (14 %) and *why* + DO (14 %). However, for L1 speakers, too, it is clearly the chunk *what* + BE that seems to attract embedded inversion more than other combinations.

A cliticized form of the predicate was found only in 8 embedded inversions in MICASE (equalling 13.8 % of all EI's, which is exactly the same percentage as for ELFA). Of the 24 *what* + BE combinations, BE was contracted in 7 instances (29 %), which is also lower than in Indian and Singapore English in Hilbert's (2011) study but somewhat higher than in ELFA. The only other cliticized EI in MICASE was found with *where's*.

Finally, the average subject length for EI's in MICASE was also calculated and the outcome, again, turned out to be almost identical to that in ELFA. The average subject length in MICASE was 2.4 (as opposed to 2.7 in ELFA), which seems to suggest that in neither data the subjects are exceptionally long, and thus have probably a minor effect on the occurrence of embedded inversions.

To sum up, the inverted word order in indirect WH-questions is to be found in educated native speaker speech, too, but only to a lesser extent than in ELF. However, the

comparison between ELFA and MICASE data clearly shows similarity in the patterns of use of embedded WH-questions for both L2 and L1 speakers. But before drawing further conclusions, let us take a look at the second type of indirect questions in these datasets, the Yes/No-questions.

5.2.2 Yes/No-questions

As pointed out above, the overall frequency for polar Yes/No-type of indirect questions in both ELFA and MICASE was lower compared to WH-questions, and also the percentage of embedded inversions in these clauses was lower in both corpora. The same trend has been reported in a number of earlier studies on embedded inversions, so neither ELFA or MICASE seem to be exceptional in this respect. While ELFA returned 375 indirect WH-questions altogether out of which 20 % were embedded, in the case of Yes/No-questions the overall figure was 188 out of which only 11, that is 5.9 % could be classified as embedded inversions. For MICASE, the overall figure dropped from 1,537 (for WH-questions) to 742 in Yes/No-questions, and the proportion of embedded inversions from 3.6 % (for WH-questions) to 3.1 % for Yes/No-questions (see Table 5.2.7).

Table 5.2.7. Overall distribution of embedded inversions and standard formations in indirect Yes/No-questions in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA		**MICASE**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Embedded inversions	11	5.9	23	3.1
Standard formations	177	94.1	719	96.9
TOTAL	188	100	742	100

The query syntax for this search in both ELFA and MICASE consisted of the same six matrix verbs as for WH-questions (ASK, KNOW, SEE, TELL, UNDERSTAND, and WONDER in all their different tense and aspectual forms), but in this search the context words immediately to the right of the verb were *if* and *whether* (to find the standard indirect questions), and the main auxiliaries DO, HAVE and BE augmented by the auxiliaries CAN, COULD, MAY, MUST, and WILL, WOULD, SHALL and SHOULD in all their inflected forms (to uncover the embedded inversions). In the manual check, instances with a conditional *if*-clause were removed from the hits (as in: *feel free to interrupt me at any point and just ask if you have a question* / ELFA), and again only utterances by native speakers were taken into account in MICASE, and utterances by non-native speakers in ELFA.

This way, ELFA yielded 11 embedded inversions, examples of which are given below:

(27) okay so let me ask **was there any aquatic @ones@** (*Russian* & *Lithuanian*)

(28) i don't know **do we like your lifestyle so much** or why but many people say so (*Finnish*)

(29) we are correlating the signal with itself at different time (laps) to see **is it correlated or is it uncorrelated** (*Danish*)

(30) and i started then to to to wonder **has there been a path change in the case of tampere** (*German*)

Due to the low total number, the number of the mother tongues of the speakers using this construction was only six, comprising Danish, Estonian, Finnish, German, Lithuanian, and Russian. The languages are, nevertheless, typologically varied.

Also because of the low total, it was rather difficult to obtain reliable percentages for comparison, but as in the case of WH-questions, here too, it was obvious that the interrogative form of the preceding root clause was *not* the cause for an embedded inversion. In the ELFA data all but one of the eleven root clauses for embedded inversions were declaratives (and one an imperative clause). Instead, what seems to have a greater effect is, again, the matrix verb. Looking at the overall figures, KNOW, SEE and WONDER seem to introduce the most indirect Yes/No-questions in this sample, but zooming in on the verbs that are most likely to attract embedded inversions in proportion to the total number of indirect question introduced by the verb, ASK holds again the top position for ELF speakers (15 % of all questions beginning with ASK are embedded inversions). It is followed by WONDER (6.7 %), KNOW (5.8 %), and SEE (2.5 %). Of the six matrix verbs studied here TELL and UNDERSTAND did not return any embedded inversions in ELFA. Thus, it seems that the inherent interrogative semantics of the verb (in ASK and WONDER) is again the main factor behind embedded inversions, although the differences in this sample are small. Table 5.2.8 sums up the results for the distribution of the matrix verbs.

Table 5.2.8. Distribution of matrix verbs in all indirect questions and in embedded inversions for Yes/No -questions in ELFA (in the order of verbs most likely to trigger EI).

	Number of indirect questions introduced by the verb	Percentage of the verb of all verbs in the sample	Number of EI's introduced by the verb	Percentage of EI's of all indirect questions introduced by the verb
ASK	13	6.9 %	2	15 %
WONDER	30	16 %	2	6.7 %
KNOW	103	55 %	6	5.8 %
SEE	40	21 %	1	2.5 %
TELL	1	0.5 %	0	0 %
UNDERSTAND	1	0.5 %	0	0 %
TOTAL	**188**	**99.9 %**	**11**	

Also the auxiliary verbs beginning the indirect question were taken a closer look at to see if some of the sampled verbs (BE, DO, HAVE, CAN, COULD, MAY, MUST, WILL, WOULD, SHALL and SHOULD) trigger embedded inversions more often than others. The results are clear: again, an indirect question involving the verb BE will most likely take an inverted form (in 8/11 embedded inversions in ELFA, that is 73 %) as was the case with WH-questions, too. Examples from the data include:

(31) so i was just wondering ***is*** **it the normal way** that that's just the way that people are (*Finnish*)

(32) your vote counts actually but i don't really know ***was*** **it so** (*Finnish*)

Further, three of the embedded inversions beginning with BE involved the structure *there is* / *there are* as in the next example:

(33) then i've been asking ***is there*** **any measurement** er (xx) in water (*Danish*)

The only other auxiliary causing an indirect word order in an indirect question was DO in ELFA, producing three of the eleven EI's, as in:

(34) it would be more cooperative way to interact i don't know ***did*** **i convince you @er with this example@** (*Estonian*)

(35) because i would very much like to to know ***does*** **the pamphlet do anything to you** so that you feel well i have to talk to somebody about this (*Danish*)

The other auxiliary verbs searched in this study did not trigger embedded inversions in ELFA.

When looking at the indirect Yes/No -questions in MICASE, the tendencies look very similar to those in ELFA. Out of the 742 indirect Yes/No -questions 23 (3.1 %) were embedded inversions. Some examples are:

(36) did you ask **is Shannon done**?

(37) sometimes you can tell **is there m- meant to be one a waist band or, or are they the same**?

(38) i wonder **did Alina, did she do any of that kinda stuff**?

(39) do you know **are there any other scales related to other, specific diagnoses**?

(40) whenever you get an equation you can play and see **does this make i- e- uh sense in the extremes**

Most of the preceding root clauses (20/23) were again declarative, with only two interrogative clauses and one imperative. Further, in MICASE, too, the verbs introducing most indirect Yes/No -questions are KNOW (376), SEE (220), and WONDER (103), and all the other matrix verbs except for UNDERSTAND also produce EI's. But again, looking at the proportions of EI's per one verb, we can see that similarly to ELFA, ASK is again the most likely verb to trigger an embedded inversion (38 % of the indirect questions beginning with ASK), followed by WONDER (5.8 %), TELL (4.5 %), KNOW (1.6 %) and SEE (0.9 %). The quantitative results on the matrix verbs for MICASE are shown in Table 5.2.9 below.

Table 5.2.9. Distribution of matrix verbs in all indirect questions and in embedded inversions for Yes/No questions in MICASE (in the order of verbs most likely to trigger EI).

	Number of indirect questions introduced by the verb	Percentage of the verb of all verbs in the sample	Number of EI's introduced by the verb	Percentage of EI's of all indirect questions introduced by the verb
ASK	21	2.8 %	8	38 %
WONDER	103	13.9 %	6	5.8 %
KNOW	376	50.7 %	6	1.6 %
SEE	220	29.6 %	2	0.9 %
TELL	22	3 %	1	4.5 %
UNDERSTAND	0	0 %	0	0 %
TOTAL	**742**	**100 %**	**23**	

Also in the case of the auxiliaries beginning an embedded inversion in MICASE, the tendencies look very similar to those in ELFA. Out of the 23 instances of EI's, 16 were introduced by BE, equalling 70 %, as in the following examples:

(41) so when you ask ***was*** **there anything straight in this experience** of the straight line, yes.

(42) and i didn't know, ***is*** **that considered one word** so you can use slash D-F to search n a descriptor field?

(43) and i wonder ***is*** **that happening with Native American languages**?

Out of these 16 instances with BE, three involved the structure *there is* / *there are* (as in example 41 above). Another main auxiliary producing embedded inversions in MICASE was also DO (as in ELFA), but with a much lower frequency introducing only six of the total 23 EI's, as in:

(44) i was just wondering ***does*** **any of the money that comes in through athletics go, anywhere else**

Further, there was one instance of EI introduced by the auxiliary SHOULD:

(45) uh Jim asked ***should*** **this be N minus two** and the answer is no

Otherwise, the rest of the searched auxiliaries did not occur in the beginning of an embedded inversion in MICASE.

Having looked at the findings in EI's in detail above, let us now turn to a brief summary and discussion of the results.

5.2.3 Summary of Findings

All in all, the patterns of use for embedded inversions in ELFA and MICASE look strikingly similar (and also similar to findings from earlier studies). To give an overview of the comparison of the results from ELFA and MICASE, the following table sums up the main findings.

Table 5.2.10. Summary of the main findings on embedded inversions in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA	**MICASE**
EI's of all indirect questions	18.7 %	3.6 %
EI's of all indirect WH-questions	25 %	3.8 %
EI's of all indirect Yes/No-questions	5.9 %	3.1 %
Top three matrix verbs for EI's in WH-questions	WONDER (61.5 %) ASK (61.1 %) TELL (27 %)	ASK (41.4 %) WONDER (5 %) TELL (4 %)
Top three WH-words to introduce EI's	WHAT (66 %) HOW (15 %) WHY (7 %)	WHAT (59 %) HOW (22 %) WHY (10 %)
Most typical combination of the WH-word and the predicate in the EI	WHAT + BE (56 %)	WHAT + BE (41 %)
Average subject length (in words) in EI's in WH-questions	2.7	2.4
Top three matrix verbs for EI's in Yes/No-questions	ASK (15 %) WONDER (6.7 %) KNOW (5.8 %)	ASK (38 %) WONDER (5.8 %) KNOW (1.6 %)
Top two auxiliary verbs to introduce EI's in Yes/No-questions	BE (72 %) DO (27 %)	BE (70 %) DO (26 %)
Percentage of cliticized predicates in EI's in WH-questions	13.8 % (Cliticized forms of BE in *what* + BE constructions 22.6 %)	13.8 % (Cliticized forms of BE in *what* + BE constructions 29 %)
Types of matrix clause to introduce EI's	Declarative (88.5 %) Interrogative (9.5 %) Imperative (2 %)	Declarative (87 %) Interrogative (9 %) Imperative (4 %)

The only major difference between the two corpora is to be found in the frequency of embedded WH-questions (which also renders the overall difference in percentages rather large). Embedded WH-questions are clearly more frequent in ELFA (25 % of all indirect WH-questions) than in MICASE (3.7 %) and the difference is also statistically significant (χ^2=186.773, df=1, p=0.00). On the other hand, for Yes/No-questions, the difference in frequency is very small (5.9 % for ELFA and 3.1 % for MICASE) and statistically non-significant (χ^2=3.224, df=1, p=0.07258). What explains the overall different frequencies of the two question types? One reason could have to do with the insertion of the introductory *if* or *whether* in Yes/No-questions that obviously hinders the triggering of the indirect word order (for both speaker groups) as the slot for an introductory auxiliary verb is already taken, so that the word order more automatically assumes the standard form (see also Sand & Kolbe 2010 for similar reasoning). *If* is by far the most frequent complementizer of the two (which is also in line with what Biber et al. 1999, 691 found in their data). The reason why *if* (or *whether*) is inserted in indirect Yes/No-questions so easily could be related to chunking. The introductory *if* may have become part of the preceding phrase (cf. *I don't know if...* / *I was just wondering if...*) for speakers so that it forms a pre-fabricated linguistic entity in speech, and thus 'blocks' insertion of an auxiliary verb in the beginning of an indirect question. This could explain the overall lower numbers of Yes/No -embedded inversions in both data. For WH-questions, on the other hand, the WH-word cannot be replaced by anything in the indirect question and thus its presence creates an open opportunity for different kinds of word orders. For ELF speakers the obligatory WH-word in the beginning of an indirect question just triggers the indirect word order (of a direct question) more easily than for L1 speakers.

Also on the whole, the analyses on both ELFA and MICASE data seem to lend support to Hilbert's (2011) hypothesis of formulaic language use in the case of embedded inversions (especially EI's with WH-questions). Although cliticized forms are not as typical in these data as in Hilbert's study, the combination *what* + BE is by far the most common triggerer of EI's also in these corpora. Further, the interrogative words most commonly introducing EI's in WH-questions are the same for both speaker groups, L1 speakers inclining more strongly towards only certain items (WHAT, HOW, WHY, WHERE) than ELF speakers. In addition, the matrix verbs denoting interrogatives (i.e. ASK and WONDER) were also found to be associated most strongly with WH-type of EI's in this study, similarly to Sand and Kolbe's (2010) findings (with ASK being clearly the strongest infector in L1 data). For Yes/No –questions, too, ASK and WONDER cause most of the embedded inversions, and this happens for both groups especially when the predicate of the following indirect question is BE. And finally, for both speaker groups in both kinds of questions the matrix clause is most often a declarative one – and not an interrogative clause as one might assume. All the similarities in the data are hardly a coincidence as the same syntactic conditioning is clearly in operation in both of the varieties of English studied here. It is only the strength of the factors that seems to vary to some extent.

As Filppula et al. (2008) pointed out, the differences in frequencies may be difficult to account for but if the contexts that trigger EI's are so similar for both ELF and L1 speakers as this study shows, it does not seem plausible to go back to individual first (or substrate) languages to find the roots for the patterns. Likewise, the SLA based

explanations seem invalid because, on the basis of this study, the linguistic conditioning for the phenomenon appears to be virtually the same for native and non-native speakers. Thus, it does not seem too bold to suggest that embedded inversions are very likely to be a consequence of universal constraints on speech processing, whereby the use of pre-fabricated, frequent chunks comes into play. It very much looks like both ELF and L1 speakers resort to the same kinds of formulaic sequences to aid speech processing with indirect questions, which – in other words – means that spoken academic ELF actually makes use of the potential of the language in much the same way as spoken academic L1 English. Consequently, this study supports the tentative notions of embedded inversions standing a strong chance of being granted a status as a universal feature of spoken English grammar.

5.3 Hypothetical *if*-clauses

We will now turn to the third non-standard verb-syntactic feature under scrutiny in the present study: non-standard hypothetical *if*-clauses. This feature has not figured as prominently in English variationist literature as the other features studied here, but as it is a recurrent phenomenon in the ELFA data, and also noted as an ELF feature by Erling and Bartlett (2006) – and as, on the other hand, hypothetical *if*-clauses in English have been regarded as typologically somewhat curious (see below), the phenomenon deserves to be examined in more detail in the present research setting.

Background

Generally speaking, in a conditional sentence an *if*-clause (also called *protasis*) lays down a condition for the main clause (*apodosis*) which, in turn, denotes the consequence in case the proposition of the *if*-clause is true. Declerck and Reed (2001) provide a comprehensive and extremely detailed analysis and discussion of the different types of conditionals, their semantic interpretation and functions in English discourse. However, for the purposes of the present work, a less detailed framework with reference to the three canonical patterns (cf. Declerck & Reed 2001: Ch. 7) will suffice. The canonical paradigm (also commonly applied in English language teaching) distinguishes between three different kinds of *if*-clause+main clause pairings, based on the degree how "real" the condition is perceived to be. As is obvious, for instance, from the work of Declerck and Reed (2001), this paradigm does not, by far, cover all possible types of *if*-clause+main clause pairings in English conditionals (see also e.g. Maule 1988, Fulcher 1991, and Jones & Waller 2011 for criticism) but serves as a methodological and terminological starting point for our purposes. The traditional paradigm is as follows:

- 1st conditional based on a "real" condition:
  constructed with *will* and the infinitive form of the main verb in the main clause + the present tense of the verb in the *if*-clause, as in
  *I **will leave** immediately if she **comes**.*

- 2nd conditional based on an "unreal" condition with reference to present or future events: constructed with *would* and the infinitive form of the main verb in the main clause + the past tense of the verb in the *if*-clause, as in
  *I **would leave** immediately if she **came**.*

- 3rd conditional also based on an "unreal" condition but with reference to past events: constructed with *would have* and the past participle of the main verb in the main clause + the past perfect of the verb in the *if*-clause, as in
  *I **would have left** immediately if she **had come**.*

Following terminology used, for instance, by Leech and Svartvik (1994: 107), we can also say that the 1st conditional involves an *open* condition because "the truth or falsehood of what the sentence describes is 'open', i.e. unknown", whereas the 2nd and

3rd conditionals represent *hypothetical* conditions because "for this type of sentence the speaker assumes the falsehood or unlikelihood of what is described" (cf. also Leech 1987: 116-118)[34]. Comrie (1986: 92), on the other hand, observes that English makes a two-way distinction between lower (cf. the 1st conditional) and greater (cf. the 2nd and 3rd conditionals) hypotheticality, with backshifting in tense in greater hypotheticality. The term 'hypothetical' itself is contested in the literature of English conditionals (see Declerck & Reed 2001: 14-15) but here it is used primarily as a pointer to two specific clause patterns. Following Comrie's distinction, then, the focus of the present study is on the *if*-clauses with greater hypotheticality, that is 2nd and 3rd conditionals, involving backshifting of tense.

Although conditionals in general have been found to be more common in spoken than in written language (e.g. Ferguson 2001: 70; Biber 2006: 77-78), it is worth pointing out at the outset that the types of conditionals under scrutiny here are not among the most frequent ones even in spoken discourse. A number of studies (e.g. Maule 1988, Fulcher 1991, Ferguson 2001, Jones & Waller 2011) have recurrently reported that the most typical kind of conditional in spoken and written English is the so-called zero conditional, or 'course of events conditional' (see Athanasiadou & Dirven 1996), constructed with *present simple* in the main clause + *present simple* in the *if*-clause (as in: *If she **comes**, I **go***). Declerck and Reed (2001) as well as for instance Fulcher (1991) further list a great number of other kinds of combinations of main clause + *if*-clause pairings attested in spoken and written English. Proportionally, then, hypothetical conditionals occur rather infrequently: for instance, in a study of medical consultations between a doctor and a patient, Ferguson (2001: 70) found that only 10 % of the observed conditionals conformed to the patterns of a 2nd or 3rd conditional as described above. He also shows how different kinds of conditionals serve a variety of functions in spoken language apart from indicating hypothetical events, including polite directives and asserting a habitual co-occurrence of two situations (p. 78) (see also Ford 1993, Ford & Thompson 1986, Declerck & Reed 2001, and Biber 2006: 77-78). However, in the ELFA data, hypothetical *if*-clauses are salient because of their recurrent non-standard formulation, which is why they were deemed to merit further investigation in the present study.

The non-standardness that occurs in hypothetical *if*-clauses in ELFA manifests itself in the use of *would* (in 2nd conditionals) and *would have* (in 3rd conditionals) also in the *if*-clause instead of the normative past and past perfect tenses respectively. The following examples from ELFA illustrate the use:

(1) and it would also be good **if the** <COUGH> **these interventions er would be integrated** into overall planning of community forestry er to make it more effective

(2) i mean **if we would have** er all the success cases of ICT in uzbekistan er as presentations how many people would be here in this room

(3) if you only would have **if you would have compared** bremen with tampere then maybe you would have concluded erm [...]

[34] However, see Declerck and Reed (2001: Ch. 7) for notes on frequent mismatches between the canonical forms and their semantic interpretations.

(4) because **if i would have left** in one month or something she wouldn't have fixed it

This kind of non-standard use has also been attested in SLA studies. Thus, not surprisingly the collection of learner Englishes by Swan and Smith (2001) lists this feature as something causing problems for non-native English speakers from at least the following eleven L1 backgrounds: Dutch, German, Italian, Portuguese, Greek, Russian, Polish, Turkish, Hindi, as well as Dravidian and West African languages. This non-standard use is also listed as a learner error in Turton and Heaton (1996: s.v. *would*). It is more interesting, though, that the cause for this "problem" in Swan and Smith (2001) is attributed to the speakers' respective L1s in almost all of the cases mentioned (except for Hindi and Dravidian languages where this connection is not explicitly made). Sometimes the cause of the trouble is attributed to a lack of comparable structure in a learner's L1, sometimes to a different patterning of a similar structure – nevertheless, the alleged outcome is always the same: appearance of *would*/*would have* in *if*-clauses. This certainly makes the reader doubt the validity of such an all-encompassing L1-interference explanation. If the feature is so widely spread in L2 English regardless of the typology of the speakers' L1, can it really be traced back to each and every speaker's mother tongue?

What gives more cause for concern about the validity of the interference hypothesis is the fact that the same non-standard feature has been reported to occur in various native speaker varieties of English, too. Kortmann and Lukenheimer (2011) report the feature to be frequent only in Newfoundland English, Kenyan English and Palmerston English, but observe that it also occurs to various degrees in 23 other varieties represented in the *Electronic Word Atlas of Varieties of English*, including South-Western dialects of England, Irish English, Maltese English, and Ghanaian English. Further, Kellerman (1989: 107) states that it is not difficult to find examples of *would*/*would have* in *if*-clauses in American and British English, and Miller and Weinert (1998: 339) maintain, based on their data from native academic English speakers, that: "In spontaneous spoken English the past tense is frequently replaced with *would* + verb, and the pluperfect is replaced by *would* + *have* + participle" resulting in utterances such as (5) and (6) given by Miller and Weinert:

(5) If she **would come** to see things for herself...

(6) If she **would have come** to see things for herself...

and even in the insertion of a redundant *have* in the 3rd conditional *if*-clause as in:

(7) If she **hadn't've been** able to read music...

While Trudgill and Hannah (1990: 49) note that *would* in *if*-clauses is more likely to be encountered in speech than in writing, Miller and Weinert also find examples of the type (5) and (6) in edited texts by native speakers. This makes them quite unhesitatingly conclude that: "The above constructions are produced by educated speakers and are making their way into standard written English" (1998: 84). Whether the phenomenon is

only now making its way into Standard English, or whether it has always been a feature of English is an interesting question as there is also historical evidence of *would*-constructions in hypothetical *if*-clauses in English (in both 2nd and 3rd conditionals). Visser (1969: 1730-1732 and 1973: 2423-2426) reports on instances of *would* in hypothetical *if*-clauses from as early as c. 1200 and continuing to the present day. He mentions that this kind of use began to decrease after c. 1500, but now there is a new tendency to re-introduce it into Standard English (especially in the 2nd and 3rd persons) (Visser 1969: 1730).

In the literature, the use of *would have* in 3rd conditional *if*-clauses especially in American English is frequently discussed. Trudgill and Hannah (1990: 49), for instance, cite examples of non-standard 3rd conditionals arguing that in many US English dialects, *would* can be used to express a hypothetical state in a conditional clause in informal speech but that in English English this is not possible. The reports in Kortmann and Lukenheimer (2011) mentioned above (and see also Kortmann & Lukenheimer 2012) seem to suggest otherwise, though it might well be that the feature is more pronounced in American English. Also Visser (1973: 2423) confirms the observation that *would* is common in 3rd conditional *if*-clauses in AmE, but he also notes that it is frequent in "dialectal and sub-standard speech" – more often to be found in negative sentences than in affirmative ones (p. 2423). Furthermore, the redundant *have* in 3rd conditional *if*-clauses (as exemplified by Miller and Weinert above, see example 7) also seems to be typical of spoken English (see e.g. Fillmore 1985 who argues that this "intrusive have" is the explicit marker of counterfactuality in speech). The extra *have* is also noted by Kellerman (1989: 107-108) who ascribes it to both American and British speakers. But as this last phenomenon is slightly beyond the scope of the present study it will not be discussed further here.

Consequently, based on the literature it seems that the feature that originally caught my attention in the ELFA data is not entirely restricted to L2 English. Also, a look at conditionals in a wider, crosslinguistic perspective, makes the L1 interference explanation seem dubious. Comrie (1986), for instance, makes the following general note on backshifting of tense in conditional constructions in the world's languages:

> Concerning time reference [...] backshifting of tense (e.g. a formal past tense with present time reference) is found crosslinguistically in conditionals with high hypotheticality; the commonest kinds of conditionals in actual use seem to be those of low hypotheticality with future time reference and those of high hypotheticality with past time reference [...]. (Comrie 1986: 96)

Thus, globally speaking it seems that the patterning of hypothetical conditionals would be similar to that of English in many other languages in the world, which would mean that in global terms, English L2 speakers should not have particular problems with 'transferring' this feature from their L1s into English. What seems to be typologically exceptional in English, though, is that English requires a past tense even in hypothetical *if*-clauses with future time reference as in *If it rained tomorrow, we'd just stay home* (James 1982: 378).

But coming back to cross-linguistic similarities in conditionals, it is interesting to note that a universal rule seems to apply also to the linear order of the main clause and the *if*-clause in different languages. Greenberg (1963: 84-85) maintains that "[i]n

conditional statements, the conditional clause [i.e. the *if*-clause] precedes the conclusion [i.e. the main clause] as the normal order in all languages." Comrie (1986: 83) also confirms that grammars of many languages give this order as the usual one, although both orders are often possible. Further, a number of studies on spoken (and written) English have attested the same general tendency in the English language in particular (see e.g. Ford 1993, and Ford & Thompson 1986) attributing it to discourse organizational functions. The order of clauses may not directly affect the backshifting of tenses in our data but it is interesting to see whether this universal tendency applies to ELF speakers as well as to L1 speakers in the current databases. We will come back to this issue in the analysis of the data presented below.

But what might explain L1 and L2 speakers' tendency to use *would*/*would have* in *if*-clauses to such a notable degree? Kellerman (1989) attempts an answer based on his study of Dutch L2 speakers of English who are frequently found to use *would* in *if*-clauses despite their high level of linguistic achievement in English. Kellerman, too, rejects the idea of direct grammatical transfer from Dutch into English and instead sees the phenomenon mainly as a token of "avoidance of ambiguity" (or disambiguation) and "promotion of morphological symmetry" (p. 89) on the part of Dutch L2 speakers of English. Following James (1982: 398), Kellerman justifies his claim by suggesting that because the past tense is used in English both to refer to the past and to indicate a hypothetical meaning, L2 speakers want to disambiguate between the two forms in their speech – and since the hypothetical meaning is the marked meaning of the two that is also what L2 speakers want to mark in their utterances by using *would*-constructions even in a hypothetical *if*-clause (p. 101-102). However, Kellerman maintains that the above explanation only applies to "learners" (although he, too, acknowledges the use of *would* in hypothetical *if*-clauses in non-standard and informal spoken American and British English) by saying that "the greater perceived isomorphism between form and meaning and a correspondingly smaller processing load" motivates the use of *would* in *if*-clauses for learners "while in established languages such tendencies cannot realistically be associated with ease-of-processing requirements" (p. 108-109). He does not give further justification for his claim, but Kellerman, nevertheless, suggests that the tendency towards disambiguation and isomorphism in this case is a "natural tendency" (p. 109). As another piece of evidence for not treating *would* in *if*-clauses as a mere transfer phenomenon, Kellerman points out that there is also a natural tendency towards morphological symmetry in hypothetical *if*-clauses in many standard languages in the world (e.g. in many Romance languages), and also in non-standard varieties of languages that do not permit it in their standard form (as in English). Thus, it seems that it is the standard languages requiring asymmetry in the *if*-clause and main clause that constitute the typological exception. Further, the reason why L2 speakers should choose the periphrastic *would*-construction in both clauses over, for example, symmetrical past tense structures in both clauses is obvious: Kellerman himself turns again to the markedness justification by noting that *would* is an "explicit marker of hypotheticality" and thus "maximally semantically transparent" (p. 109-110) – a conclusion which is easy to accept.

Methods

But how does the situation look in the ELFA and MICASE corpora? To find out about it, all relevant standard and non-standard hypothetical *if*-clauses in both corpora were searched applying the following methods. To retrieve the non-standard *if*-clauses the search word *if* was used followed by the context words *would*/*'*d* /*wouldn't*/*would've*/*woulda*[35] six words to the right from the search word (in maximum). The range of six words was arrived at empirically – after six words the number of hits did not increase anymore in either corpus. This query syntax would return *if*-clauses comprising all the possible forms of 2nd and 3rd conditional *would*-constructions (i.e. *would*/*'*d*/*would not*/*would have*/*wouldn't have*/*would've*/*would've not*/*woulda*/*woulda not*). Further, using the search word *if* returned a few cases of *even if* and *as if*, which were also counted in.

To find the standard clauses, on the other hand, several separate searches were made. Similarly to the non-standard clause search, the search word was always *if* followed by a context word five words to the right. But to find first the standard 2nd conditional clauses, separate searches were carried out for verbs with regular and irregular past tense forms. For the regular past tense verbs the context word after *if* was simply **ed* (which returned, of course, a number of irrelevant hits with words such as *need*/*so-called*/*activity-based* etc. which were removed at the post-processing stage). Secondly, to find standard 2nd conditional *if*-clauses with irregular past tense forms, a list of most common irregular verbs in English by Leech and Svartvik (1994: 295-300) was utilized. The list has 223 verbs and is claimed to include "the majority of the English irregular verbs" (Leech and Svartvik 1994: 287). All the past tense forms of these irregular verbs were typed in as context words after *if* in several sub-searches. – Quite naturally the majority of the hits were generated by the one hundred or so high-frequency verbs of these. Finally, retrieving the standard *if*-clauses in 3rd conditionals was considerably easier: quite simply the context words *had*/*'*d*/*hadn't* were used, which would return all past perfect forms of any verb after *if* (of course, in this case, too, all irrelevant hits generated by this query syntax were removed manually afterwards).

The retrieved non-standard *if*-clauses with *would*-constructions also required considerable post-processing. Even in Standard English *would* can appear in a hypothetical *if*-clause in case it denotes volition, prediction or politeness (see e.g. Carter & McCarthy 2006: 750, 757). Thus, hits such as (8) and (9) below were excluded from the data manually.

(8) i will be very happy to send you my paper , so **if you would like to get hold of the paper by e-mail** please write down your name and e-mail address (*ELFA*)

(9) i guess if there are any questions or **if you guys would like to discuss this**, feel free now (*MICASE*)

[35] The spelling *woulda* is occasionally used in MICASE transcriptions instead of the contracted *would've* and was added to the list of context words for the sake of completeness.

Further, searching for clauses beginning with *if* unavoidably yields a number of indirect questions comprising *would* such as:

(10) i don't know **if that would be truly enough** to kind of er solve the practical normalisation problem (*ELFA*)

(11) that's a very good question. um, i wonder **if it'd be harder for them to do** (*MICASE*)

For the sake of clarity, such instances were excluded from the data although some of the instances could be interpreted simultaneously as indirect questions and conditionals. Also Quirk et al. (1985: 1054) observe that there is a close connection between conditional and interrogative *if*-clauses, which may sometimes cause ambiguity in the interpretation. Their example comes from the 1st conditional, though:

(12) I'll tell you later if I can find the time.

The above sentence can have two readings: the interrogative (cf. *I'll tell you later whether I can find the time*) or the conditional one (cf. *If I can find the time, I'll tell you later*). There were a few cases like this in hypothetical conditionals in ELFA and MICASE, too, but it was considered safest to exclude them from the data altogether, especially because the instances were rare.

Thirdly, Ferguson (2001: 76) notes that in speech it is common to find conditionals with a mere *if*-clause (i.e. without a following or preceding main clause), and this seems to be a fairly frequent phenomenon also in ELFA and MICASE. Consequently, also 'stand-alone' hypothetical *if*-clauses, such as the one in (13) below:

(13) we just walked across the street, from, that way and **if we would've come from that way**, or even come from that way, we went from campus to off campus in a matter of, oh i don't know thirty feet. that is pretty damn cool you can't get that, anywhere else. (*MICASE*)

were included in the study, although in some rare cases the missing main clause caused some trouble in deciding whether the *if*-clause was really intended as speculation (i.e. a hypothetical clause) or something else. Disambiguation in such cases was based on a close reading of the preceding and following contexts.

Finally, as regards the methods of searching for hypothetical conditional clauses, a note on the subordinators of these clauses is due. Obviously, there are plenty of other conditional subordinators in addition to *if* which can introduce a hypothetical conditional clause such as *as long as, assuming, given that, in case, provided that, supposing, unless* etc. (see Quirk et al. 1985: 1089 for a full list) but since *if* is the most common and versatile (cf. Declerck & Reed 2001: 19) of them, and since occurrences of other types of subordinators in the current data proved to be extremely rare, the decision was made to include only conditional clauses beginning with *if* in the present study.

5.3.1 Overview of the Use of the Hypothetical *if*-clauses in ELFA and MICASE

So what kinds of results did the queries produce? We will start the discussion of the findings with a brief look at the overall (mainly) quantitative results of both types of conditionals in ELFA and MICASE.

First, normalizing the overall frequency of (standard and non-standard) hypothetical *if*-clauses to 10,000 words in both corpora shows that hypothetical *if*-clauses are used 2.5 times more frequently in MICASE than in ELFA. In ELFA the normalized frequency is 2.4 / 10,000 words whereas in MICASE the corresponding figure is 6.0 / 10,000 words. As was the case with the progressive form, it is rather difficult to pinpoint a clear reason for the difference in the overall frequencies. Again, the recorded speech events in themselves probably affect the outcome as, for instance, speculating on alternative future studies and careers is a common feature in discussions between students and academic advisors – which is a type of speech event present only in MICASE. On the other hand, the difference could also reflect a potential difference in the conversational or discursive academic styles between American speakers and speakers from other parts of the world – if speculation and challenging interlocutors to think about hypothetical scenarios was more characteristic of American discourse – but such discourse features go beyond the scope of the present research project and would have to be investigated in detail in another study.

On the other hand, the mutual proportions of 2nd and 3rd conditionals in both corpora are very similar. After post-processing the retrieved hits according to the criteria outlined above, ELFA yielded 180 hypothetical *if*-clauses altogether, of which 160 were 2nd conditionals (equalling 89 % of the sample) and 20 3rd conditionals (equalling 11 %). In MICASE the total sum for hypothetical *if*-clauses was 1016, and of these 937 (92 %) were 2nd conditionals, and 79 (8 %) 3rd conditional *if*-clauses (see Table 5.3.1). Thus, the mutual ratio between the two types of hypothetical conditionals in speech was very similar in both native and non-native use and the difference is also statistically non-significant (χ^2=2.365, df=1, p=0.12409).

Table 5.3.1. Distribution of 2nd and 3rd conditional clauses in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA		**MICASE**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
2nd conditionals	160	89	937	92
3rd conditionals	20	11	79	8
TOTAL	**180**	**100**	**1016**	**100**

Also, the order of *if*-clause / main clause (*protasis* / *apodosis*) pairings was checked to see whether the universal pattern suggested by Greenberg (1963: 84-85) applied in these databases. It turned out that it did: Although both orders (*if*-clause first or second) are possible in English, in both corpora, the condition, i.e. the hypothetical *if*-clause, preceded the main clause in a majority of the cases – in 63 % of all the hits in

ELFA and 65 % of the instances in MICASE. In a little less than one third of the cases the main clause came first, and in a few cases the *if*-clause appeared independently without a main clause and could, thus, not be categorised into either group (see Table 5.3.2).

Table 5.3.2. Distribution of the order of *if*-clause / main clause in ELFA and MICASE (including both 2nd and 3rd conditionals).

	ELFA		**MICASE**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
if-clause first	114	63	660	65
if-clause second	50	28	295	29
independent *if*-clauses	16	9	61	6
TOTAL	**180**	**100**	**1016**	**100**

The result is not, of course, surprising as the same universal tendency is to be detected in most languages around the world, so it is only to be expected that the tendency shows in English produced by both native and non-native speakers, too. The result is also in line with previous studies on L1 spoken (and written) English that have attested an overwhelming use of *if*-clauses in initial positions (e.g. Ford 1993, and Ford & Thompson 1986). For instance, in Ford's (1993: 133) American English spoken data, conditional *if*-clauses appeared initially in 50 % of the cases. Ford (1993: 132-134) associates the tendency with discourse organization because the *if*-clause servers to limit the interpretation of the following main clause (see Haiman 1978), and in English discourse organizational work is most commonly attended to sentence-initially. The result from ELFA and MICASE further underscores the tendency as the percentages for both speaker groups are so similar no matter whether English was the speakers' L1 or L2 (and the difference is quite expectedly statistically non-significant: p=0.3459). It is also worth pointing out in this connection – although not studied here in detail – that, as found in many earlier studies mentioned above, the *if*-clause / main clause pairings represented a number of different combinations in addition to the traditional ELT patternings (i.e. both *if*-clause and main clause in the 2nd conditional or both in the 3rd conditional). One could find, for example, instances of 2nd conditional in the *if*-clause and 3rd conditional in the main clause, as in:

(14) if you had not described it then there would be a lot of questions (*ELFA*)

Or there were instances where the main clause was in the present tense, while the *if*-clause still presented a hypothetical condition as in:

(15) how likely are these findings to occur in the real world if you ran, the laboratory study? (*MICASE*)

This kind of variation in the clause patterns was to be found in both corpora, independent of whether the main clause preceded or followed the hypothetical *if*-clause.

But turning to the non-standard formulations of *if*-clauses, there is a clear difference in the databases in quantitative terms. Of all the hypothetical *if*-clauses in ELFA as many as 49 include *would* or *would have*, (i.e. are non-standard), which equals 27 % of the clauses (2nd and 3rd conditionals combined). In MICASE the corresponding figure for non-standard formulations is only 2 % (20 instances) (see Table 5.3.3).

Table 5.3.3. Distribution of non-standard and standard hypothetical *if*-clauses in ELFA and MICASE (including both 2nd and 3rd conditionals).

	ELFA		**MICASE**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
non-standard *if*-clauses	49	27	20	2
standard *if*-clauses	131	73	996	98
TOTAL	**180**	**100**	**1016**	**100**

The difference is statistically significant (χ^2=181.329, df=1, p=0). It would seem, then, that this feature is not common in educated native speaker speech, but in the following sections we will take a more detailed look at the two conditionals individually (as there are differences in the overall frequencies between them) and we will also investigate the qualitative aspects of each of them. However, in the current ELFA data, this feature is attested in the use of speakers from 13 different L1 backgrounds[36]. Thus, it seems to be a wide-spread feature among non-native speakers and again, most likely independent of the speaker's mother tongue as the typological variation between the attested L1s is notable. The number of L1s (13) is somewhat lower here than in the case of other grammatical features investigated in this study due to the fact that the phenomenon itself (hypothetical *if*-clauses) are relatively rare in the data in general as discussed above. But let us now have a closer look at the non-standard *if*-clauses in 2nd and 3rd conditionals respectively.

5.3.2 Second Conditionals

The overall occurrence rate for 2nd conditional *if*-clauses normalized to 10,000 words is 2 / 10,000 words for ELFA and 5 / 10,000 words for MICASE. The lower overall occurrence in ELFA might also be partly a reason for a higher ratio of non-standard formulations of *if*-clauses. In ELFA, *would* is found in 24 % of the *if*-clauses (38 / 160) produced by speakers from all the 13 different L1 backgrounds (see the previous footnote). Examples from the data are given below with the speaker's mother tongue in brackets:

[36] The languages include: Bulgarian, Dagbani, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, German, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Somali and Swedish

(16) their assistance would be provided to the developing countries only **if erm structural adjustment programmes would be implemented** in those countries (*Bulgarian*)

(17) you know it depends , if you **if you would explain to me** how you repaired your car yesterday i would not understand (*German*)

(18) most people would choose video on demand over going to movie rental shop **if their price would be the same or similar** (Romanian)

(19) it's like the second cycle so **if PRD1 would deliver this DNA into the cytosol** [...] there's a small chance that it replicates (*Finnish*)

In MICASE, on the other hand, non-standardness in second conditionals seems rather rare. The frequency is considerably lower than in ELFA at only 0.9 % (8 / 937) and the difference is quite naturally also statistically significant (χ^2=180.307, df=1, p=0) (see Table 5.3.4).

Table 5.3.4. Distribution of non-standard and standard 2nd conditional *if*-clauses in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA		**MICASE**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
non-standard *if*-clauses	38	24	8	0.9
standard *if*-clauses	122	76	929	99.1
TOTAL	**160**	**100**	**937**	**100**

However, the MICASE data reveals instances such as:

(20) if you do the reverse reacti- like **if you would add something to that** do you know what would happen?

(21) instead **if, they would get a profit**, they'd make a lot more money

(22) then in part three what we did was we kinda we com- we kinda compared the both of them, um come up with how when it's combined with an insoluble metal compound, if it's going_ **if the precipitate would then be soluble**

For further analysis, all the 160 instances of 2nd conditional *if*-clauses in ELFA and a random sample of 160 instances (but still including all the eight non-standard clauses) in MICASE were taken under closer scrutiny. It is, of course, difficult to make any far-reaching conclusions about the non-standard use in MICASE because of the low

number of non-standard instances, but the tentative results of the qualitative comparisons between ELFA and MICASE reveal some similar and dissimilar tendencies.

To begin with, the non-standard use occurs only in affirmative *if*-clauses in both corpora. The negative clauses always take the standard past tense form in these samples (in ELFA 6.3 % of all the instances were in the negative, in MICASE 8.1%) as illustrated by the following examples:

(23) i wouldn't feel happy **if i didn't have to make an effort** to talk another language you know (*ELFA*: *Spanish*)

(24) maybe a lion also rationalises when it so he thinks [...] whereas **if it he didn't think** then it would be at random you know every lion will be eating every other lion (*ELFA*: *Kihaya & Swahili*)

(25) uh-huh okay , well but you can imagine **if this wasn't here** the destruction (*ELFA*: *Finnish*)

(26) would we be better off if this, **if we weren't using the R word research** (*MICASE*)

(27) what an uninteresting world this would be **if we didn't have biology** (*MICASE*)

(28) what would happen **if we, did not, comply** (*MICASE*)

The negative formulation *if...wouldn't* + VERB is not to be found in either corpus in the second conditional *if*-clauses.

Secondly, as noted above, Visser (1969: 1730) mentions that *would* is being re-introduced into Standard English especially through clauses which have 2nd or 3rd person subjects (singular or plural). There seems to be a slight tendency towards this in both ELFA and MICASE although statistical analyses with such small numbers are not entirely reliable and indicate that the discrepancies are statistically non-significant (for ELFA 1st person vs. 2nd&3rd person: χ^2=3.054, df=1, p=0.08055, and for MICASE 1st person vs. 2nd&3rd person: the Fisher Exact p-value=0.6817). However, in ELFA, 2nd or 3rd person (singular and plural) subjects seem to be more common in the non-standard *if*-clauses: 79 % of all non-standard clauses have either one, whereas in the standard formulations the percentage for 2nd and 3rd person clauses is only 67 %. Also in MICASE, all except one of the non-standard clauses have either a 2nd or 3rd person as their subject, equaling 87.5 %, whereas for the standard clauses the corresponding percentage is 73 % (see Table 5.3.5). Thus, the mere percentages seem to support Visser's observation of *would* becoming more common especially with 2nd and 3rd persons. What is also noteworthy is that the first person *singular* does not appear in any of the non-standard *if*-clauses in ELFA or MICASE. In all the cases where the subject in a non-standard *if*-clause is the first person in ELFA or MICASE, the subject is the plural *we – I* always takes the standard formulation with the past tense of the verb in both samples.

Table 5.3.5. Distribution of subjects in standard and non-standard 2nd conditional *if*-clauses in ELFA and MICASE. (Due to rounding, the total percentages may differ from 100 %.)

	ELFA standard *if*-clauses		**ELFA** non-standard *if*-clauses		**MICASE** standard *if*-clauses		**MICASE** non-standard *if*-clauses	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
1st person	29	23.8	4	10.5	35	23.0	1	12.5
2nd person	37	30.3	9	23.7	50	32.9	2	25.0
3rd person	45	36.9	21	55.2	61	40.1	5	62.5
other (*there*)	11	9.0	4	10.5	6	3.9	0	0
TOTAL	**122**	**100**	**38**	**99.9**	**152**	**99.9**	**8**	**100**

Next, the attention was turned to the verb of the *if*-clause. First it was checked whether the regularity or irregularity of the verb had an effect on whether the verb would take *would* or the standard past tense. In both ELFA and MICASE most of the verbs were irregular anyway both in standard and non-standard *if*-clauses (see Table 5.3.6), which is, of course, only to be expected as verbs most commonly occurring in these clauses were high frequency verbs, which in English are mostly irregular. In raw numbers the irregular verbs seemed to take *would* somewhat more often but in both corpora the statistical analyses revealed that the distributions *within* the corpora were similar (i.e. the difference was statistically non-significant: for ELFA χ^2=0.854, df=1, p=0.35554, and for MICASE the Fisher Exact p-value=1.00).

However, if we compare only the effect of the irregular verb on the non-standard clause between ELFA and MICASE, we see that in ELFA irregular verbs actually *do* appear in non-standard clauses more often than is the case in MICASE. This difference is also statistically significant (χ^2=18.019, df=1, p<0.000). Thus, it seems that for ELF speakers irregular verbs in hypothetical *if*-clauses trigger the use of *would* in them more easily than for native speakers.

Table 5.3.6. Distribution of irregular and regular verbs in standard and non-standard 2nd conditional *if*-clauses in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA standard *if*-clauses		**ELFA** non-standard *if*-clauses		**MICASE** standard *if*-clauses		**MICASE** non-standard *if*-clauses	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Regular verbs	30	25	6	17	27	18	1	12.5
Irregular verbs	92	75	29	83	125	82	7	87.5
TOTAL	**122**	**100**	**35***	**100**	**152**	**100**	**8**	**100**

(*The total for non-standard *if*-clauses in ELFA differs from the total of 38 because 3 clauses did not include a main verb at all as in: *but **if you would** then you should also take into the consideration the UN*.)

Still regarding the verbal context, the time reference of the *if*-clauses was looked into to see whether reference to future events would cause more use of *would* + infinitive constructions because, as was pointed out above, James (1982: 378) has noted that using the past tense to refer to hypothetical future events in *if*-clauses is typologically exceptional in English. The overall number of *if*-clauses clearly referring to future events in both ELFA and MICASE samples was low, so again the results are only tentative, but in the case of ELFA speakers it did seem that future time reference attracted *would*-constructions in *if*-clauses somewhat more than non-future reference. In the non-standard *if*-clauses the percentage of clauses with future time reference was higher (16 %) than among the standard formulations (3 %) meaning that ELF speakers resorted to *would* + infinitive more readily if the clause referred to future events (see Table 5.3.7). The difference proved statistically almost significant (Fisher Exact p-value=0.01247).

Table 5.3.7. The effect of the future reference on the occurrence of standard vs. non-standard 2nd conditional *if*-clauses in ELFA.

ELFA	**Standard *if*-clauses**		**Non-standard *if*-clauses**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Future reference	4	3.3	6	15.8
Non-future reference	118	96.7	32	84.2
TOTAL	**122**	**100**	**38**	**100**

In MICASE this kind of effect was not to be found. There were only 4 clauses with a future time reference in the whole sample and all were formed using the standard past tense. Here the explanation could be that for native speakers the typological curiosity of their mother tongue (as perceived by speakers of other languages) does not appear that curious in the first place and would not, thus, cause any confusion in production – whereas for L2 speakers this typological anomaly in English is indeed perceived as odd and thus more prone to isomorphic re-formulations.

Finally, the mutual order of the *if*-clause and main clause and its potential effect on the use of *would* in *if*-clause was looked into in both databases. The hypothesis was that if the main clause with a *would* construction preceded the *if*-clause, it could more easily attract the use of *would* in the following *if*-clause as well. It turned out that in ELFA, the order did not have a statistically significant effect on the standardness or non-standardness of the *if*-clause (χ^2= 0.478, df=1, p=0.48919) and, in fact, the ratio of non-standard *if*-clauses proved to be higher in clauses that <u>preceded</u> the main clause than vice versa (see Table 5.3.8). But in MICASE, in contrast, the hypothesis seemed to be supported. Most of the non-standard *if*-clauses did actually follow the main clause and

despite the low overall number of occurrences the result also proved statistically significant (Fisher Exact p-value=0.0063). In other words, for native speakers it seems that *would* is inserted in an *if*-clause more readily if the *if*-clause follows the main clause (that also has a *would* construction).

Table 5.3.8. Distribution of standard and non-standard *if*-clauses preceding or following the main clause in hypothetical 2nd conditionals in ELFA and MICASE. The independent *if*-clauses (without a main clause) are excluded from the results.

	ELFA standard *if*-clauses		**ELFA** non-standard *if*-clauses		**MICASE** standard *if*-clauses		**MICASE** non-standard *if*-clauses	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
if-clause first	76	67	25	74	106	75	2	25
if-clause second	37	33	9	26	36	25	6	75
TOTAL	**113**	**100**	**34**	**100**	**142**	**100**	**8**	**100**

So what can we conclude from the above findings? Probably the most striking observation is that despite the accounts of the feature in native speaker speech in the literature, at least in MICASE, *would* does not seem to be common in 2nd conditional *if*-clauses in educated native speaker speech – as opposed to educated non-native speaker use where it certainly is common. Still, it is interesting to find similarities in the non-standard use in both speaker groups: for instance, the *if*-clauses where the non-standard *would* appears are always affirmative and tend to have 2nd or 3rd person subjects (and never have *I* as their subject). Also, for neither group the role of the main verb in the *if*-clause as a full or auxiliary verb seems to have an effect on the formulation of the construction. However, there are also differences between native and non-native use. For non-native speakers irregular verbs as well as a future time reference in the *if*-clause appear to cause more use of non-standard *would* constructions than for native speakers. And on the other hand for native speakers, one of the explaining factors for using *would* in an *if*-clause seems to spring from the order of the *if*-clause and the main clause: if the main clause precedes the *if*-clause (rather rare as it is) the likelihood for using *would* also in the *if*-clause is greater. This tendency is not to be found in ELF use. Thus, due to the somewhat checkered picture of the use of *would* in 2nd conditional hypothetical *if*-clauses – both quantitatively and qualitatively – its origins in some kind of universal motivation is not entirely undisputable. According to the literature, the feature occurs in native speaker speech, too, but perhaps it has not yet made its way into such extensive use among native speakers that even academic speakers would have adopted it. But the feature is certainly something to keep an eye on as many researchers (cf. e.g. Visser and Miller & Weinert above) have alluded in their studies. It certainly is visible in L2 English and in many dialectal native varieties of English. But before drawing any final conclusions on the hypothetical *if*-clauses in general, let us turn to the findings on the third conditionals.

5.3.3 Third Conditionals

Many of the tests that were performed on the second conditionals above were also carried out with the third conditionals. First, a look at the overall frequencies of 3rd conditional *if*-clauses in ELFA and MICASE reveals a similar tendency as was found in the 2nd conditionals: in ELFA the normalized occurrence rate is lower at 0.3 / 10,000 words, compared to the MICASE figure 0.5 / 10,000 words. However, the discrepancy is not nearly as great as with 2nd conditionals. Also, the third conditional *if*-clauses are clearly more often formed in a non-standard way in both corpora than was the case with the second conditionals (see Table 5.3.9). The proportion of non-standard formulations is still higher in ELFA – 55 % of all the found instances were formed using *would have* (instead of the standard past perfect tense) – but it is notable that the corresponding percentage for MICASE is also high at 15 %. Despite the fact that the difference between ELFA and MICASE is statistically significant (Fisher Exact p-value=0.000515) the latter finding is intriguing and indicates that non-standard 3rd conditionals are by no means a marginal feature even in educated native speaker speech. The result gives further support to the earlier findings mentioned above, according to which non-standard 3rd conditional *if*-clauses are common in native use, too (especially in American English).

Table 5.3.9. Distribution of non-standard and standard 3rd conditional *if*-clauses in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA		**MICASE**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
non-standard *if*-clauses	11	55	12	15
standard *if*-clauses	9	45	67	85
TOTAL	**20**	**100**	**79**	**100**

In ELFA, on the other hand, the L1 backgrounds of the speakers who produce non-standard 3rd conditionals are German, Dutch, Somali, Swedish, and Russian. The low number of different languages is due to the overall infrequency of the grammatical feature in ELFA but again we can see that the speakers in question come from typologically varied mother tongue backgrounds. The following examples illustrate the non-standard use in ELFA (with the speaker's mother tongue indicated in the brackets):

(31) however **if you only would have concentrated on the region of bremen** you [...] couldn't have identified erm the factors if they come from the regional level or or from the national level (*German*)

(32) lots of er questions remain questions and [...] **if i would have been starting it all over again** [...] i would have taken for example er some j- like students' translations (*Russian*)

(33) **if you would have opened dialogue if you would have let him** , for instance palestinians are crying oh we need to sit with the [...] israeli you know leaders to to talk about [...] (*Somali*)

However, MICASE speakers produce exactly similar kinds of constructions, as exemplified by the following instances from the data:

(34) we woulda been better off **if we would've done this exercise**, when you first got here

(35) now **if i would've thought ahead** i would've had you guys abandon the Sentencing Commission

(36) do you think would've been more limited in their responses to non-native speakers **if they would've had a spoken situation**

One non-standard instance was also produced by a South African English speaker in the MICASE data, but this utterance was excluded from the MICASE analysis in order to reflect only Inner Circle native speaker use in the database.

In passing, it may also be mentioned that the "intrusive have" discussed by many researchers in connection with native speaker 3rd conditional use was found only once in the MICASE data in the following example (represented by the transcription *hadn't**a***):

(37) i took a ton in how i started writing about my movies and things, that i wouldn've, **if i hadn't**a **done that** [...]

In ELFA, this kind of variant is not present at all, and also the one instance in MICASE was not included in the results discussed here.

For further analysis, all of the 20 tokens of 3rd conditional *if*-clauses in ELFA and all the 79 tokens in MICASE were studied in more detail. Again, the restrictions of a small sample have to be kept in mind. With a larger number of instances statistical analysis would be more reliable, but on the other hand, if the feature of interest is infrequent in itself, one would have to consult a number of corpora to gain a large number of tokens, and especially in the case of ELF it would have been rather difficult at the time when the study was carried out as other large-scale ELF corpora had not yet been finished.

Visser (1973: 2423) suggested above that negative 3rd conditional *if*-clauses would be more prone to the non-standard *would have* formulation than affirmative ones. In the current databases, however, this kind of tendency is not found. In ELFA, all the non-standard clauses are affirmative (as was the case with 2nd conditionals as well), and the only two instances of negative 3rd conditional *if*-clauses are produced by one and the same speaker and formed according to the standard:

(38) you describe the problems and the challenges of this double role and i think this is very good because **if you had not done it if you had not described it** then there would be a lot of questions

In MICASE, on the other hand, there is only one negative clause formed in the non-standard fashion:

(39) **if he wouldn't have burned it** it wouldn't- it would've been totally out of his character

Of all the negative clauses in the sample, this equals only 6.7 % (1 / 15), while all the other negative 3rd conditional *if*-clauses in MICASE are formed according to the standard (93.3 %) as exemplified by the following utterances:

(40) i don't know what i would be like **if that hadn't happened to me**

(41) you know what's great about this Janice is it's almost like gee it would've been better **if he hadn't found the parallel**

Thus, the result seems to follow the same tendency as in 2nd conditionals: the non-standardness occurs first and foremost in affirmative clauses (i.e. constructions such as *if...wouldn't have* + VERB are rare).

Next, the subjects of the *if*-clauses were checked to find out whether 2nd or 3rd person subjects attract more non-standard formulations (as suggested by Visser). It turned out that in ELFA the subject (whether first, or second and third) did not affect the use of *would have* in the 3rd conditional hypothetical *if*-clauses: 66 % of the standard clauses had 2nd or 3rd person subjects, while the figure was almost the same at 63 % for non-standard clauses. Thus, no statistically significant difference could be found (Fisher Exact p-value=1.0). On the whole, the distribution of different subjects was very similar for standard and non-standard clauses in ELFA (see Table 5.3.10). For MICASE, on the other hand, it looks like 2nd and 3rd person subjects together would actually attract somewhat more standard formulations (78 % of the standard *if*-clauses have 2nd or 3rd person subjects) rather than non-standard ones (where the percentage for 2nd and 3rd person subjects was only 58 %), but here, too, the difference did not prove statistically significant (Fisher Exact p-value=0.1519). Thus, in the light of the statistics, the subject does not seem to have an effect on the formulation of a 3rd conditional *if*-clause in either corpus, and so Visser's claim of non-standard *if*-clauses being particularly common with 2nd or 3rd person subjects is not supported by the analyses. Also, in contrast to the subjects in 2nd conditionals, here the first person singular subject *I* does appear in non-standard *if*-clauses, too, in both corpora.

Table 5.3.10. Distribution of subjects in standard and non-standard 3rd conditional *if*-clauses in ELFA and MICASE. (Due to rounding, totals may differ from 100 %.)

	ELFA standard *if*-clauses		**ELFA** non-standard *if*-clauses		**MICASE** standard *if*-clauses		**MICASE** non-standard *if*-clauses	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
1st person	3	33	3	27	14	21	5	42
2nd person	4	44	5	45	14	21	1	8
3rd person	2	22	2	18	38	57	6	50
other (*there*)	0	0	1	9	1	1	0	0
TOTAL	**9**	**99**	**11**	**99**	**67**	**100**	**12**	**100**

As regards the main verb in the 3rd conditional *if*-clauses, the possible impact of the regularity or irregularity of the verb was checked next (see Table 5.3.11). It became apparent that the regularity or irregularity of the main verb did not have an effect on the distribution of standard and non-standard formulations within either corpus. In both corpora, again, irregular verbs were in the majority for both standard and non-standard *if*-clauses, and no statistically significant difference could be found in the figures (for ELFA Fisher Exact p-value=0.3742; for MICASE Fisher Exact p-value=1.00). Thus, the regular or irregular inflection of the main verb does not seem to affect how the *if*-clause is formulated in hypothetical 3rd conditionals.

Table 5.3.11. Distribution of irregular and regular verbs in standard and non-standard 3rd conditional *if*-clauses in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA standard *if*-clauses		**ELFA** non-standard *if*-clauses		**MICASE** standard *if*-clauses		**MICASE** non-standard *if*-clauses	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Regular verbs	2	22	5	45.5	22	33	4	36
Irregular verbs	7	78	6	55.5	45	67	7	64
TOTAL	**9**	**100**	**11**	**100**	**67**	**100**	**11**	**100**

On the other hand, testing the possible effects of different time references in the clauses (see 2nd conditionals) was deemed irrelevant as hypothetical third conditional clauses canonically refer to past events.

Finally, the clause order (*if*-clause preceding or following the main clause) and its effect on the non-standard formulation in the *if*-clause was checked. Looking at the percentages (see Table 5.3.12) it seemed for both corpora that compared to 2nd conditionals, there was a reverse tendency according to which non-standardness in *if*-clauses increases in case *if*-clause precedes the main clause. But again, with such a small

number of instances, the difference proved statistically non-significant (for ELFA Fisher Exact p-value=0.2941; for MICASE Fisher Exact p-value=0.7359).

Table 5.3.12. Distribution of standard and non-standard *if*-clauses preceding or following the main clause in hypothetical 3rd conditionals in ELFA and MICASE. The independent *if*-clauses (without a main clause) are excluded from the results.

	ELFA standard *if*-clauses		**ELFA** non-standard *if*-clauses		**MICASE** standard *if*-clauses		**MICASE** non-standard *if*-clauses	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
if-clause first	5	62.5	8	89	39	62	8	73
if-clause second	3	37.5	1	11	24	38	3	27
TOTAL	**8**	**100**	**9**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**11**	**100**

So what can we conclude from the findings on the hypothetical *if*-clauses in both 2nd and 3rd conditionals in native and non-native speech? Let us turn to that by summarizing the main results.

5.3.4 Summary of Findings

Despite the fairly straight-forward impression that research literature gives of the use of non-standard formulation of 2nd and 3rd conditional *if*-clauses in English, a comparison of authentic native and non-native spoken data reveals a somewhat chequered and inconclusive picture of the phenomenon. For some of the alleged features it was difficult to find support in either ELFA or MICASE data, and also in some instances the findings in the two databases contradict. However, to clarify the overall picture, the following tables give an overview of the main findings on the non-standard formulations of 2nd and 3rd conditional *if*-clauses respectively in both ELFA and MICASE data.

Table 5.3.13. Overview of the results on the **2nd conditional** *if*-clauses.

	ELFA	**MICASE**
Proportion of hypothetical 2nd conditionals of all hypothetical *if*-clauses (=2nd and 3rd cond., standard and non-standard)	89 %	92 %
Overall frequency of 2nd cond. *if*-clauses (standard and non-standard)	2 / 10,000 words	5 / 10,000 words
Proportion of non-standard *if*-clauses of all 2nd cond. *if*-clauses	24 %	0.9 %
Non-standard use in affirmative / negative clauses	Only in affirmative *if*-clauses	Only in affirmative *if*-clauses
Subject in non-standard *if*-clauses	1st person: 10.5 % 2nd person: 23.7 % 3rd person: 55.2 %	1st person: 12.5 % 2nd person: 25.0 % 3rd person: 62.5 %
Statistical effect of subject on non-standard formulation of *if*-clause	No effect	No effect
NB: Subject *I* in non-standard *if*-clauses	No	No
Effect of regularity / irregularity of the verb on the non-standard formulation of *if*-clause	Irregular verbs more prone to non-standard formulation	No effect
Effect of future time reference on the non-standard formulation of *if*-clause	Some	No effect
Non-standard *if*-clause before or after main clause	Before: 74 % After: 26 %	Before: 25 % After: 75 %
Statistical effect on non-standard formulation of *if*-clause	No effect	Yes

Table 5.3.14. Overview of the results on the **3rd conditional** *if*-clauses.

	ELFA	**MICASE**
Proportion of all hypothetical *if*-clauses (=2nd and 3rd cond., standard and non-standard)	11 %	8 %
Overall frequency of 3rd cond. *if*-clauses (standard and non-standard)	0.3 / 10,000 words	0.5 / 10,000 words
Proportion of non-standard *if*-clauses of all 3rd cond. *if*-clauses	55 %	15 %
Non-standard use in affirmative / negative clauses	Only in affirmative *if*-clauses	Mainly in affirmative *if*-clauses (1 exception)
Subject in non-standard *if*-clauses Statistical effect of subject on non-standard formulation of *if*-clause	1st person: 27 % 2nd person: 45 % 3rd person: 18 % No effect	1st person: 42 % 2nd person: 8 % 3rd person: 50 % No effect
Effect of regularity / irregularity of the verb on the non-standard formulation of *if*-clause	No effect	No effect
Non-standard *if*-clause before or after main clause Statistical effect on non-standard formulation of *if*-clause	Before: 89 % After: 11 % No effect	Before: 73 % After: 27 % No effect

On the basis of the empirical findings at hand it seems that non-standardness in hypothetical 3rd conditional *if*-clauses is a clearly more pronounced feature of spoken English in general than non-standardness in hypothetical 2nd conditional *if*-clauses. In this comparison, non-standard 2nd conditional *if*-clauses appear not to have made their way into educated L1 speech, while they are very common in educated L2 English (and in many varieties of English around the world according to the literature). Also qualitatively, there are more differences in non-standard 2nd conditional *if*-clauses between L1 and ELF speakers than there are in non-standard 3rd conditional ones. Although non-standard formulation of 2nd conditional *if*-clauses seems to appear only in

affirmative clauses in both L1 and ELF speech, and the distribution of subjects in the non-standard clauses is similar for both speaker groups, still the factors that seem to have statistical importance in explaining non-standard use differ for each corpus. For ELF speakers, an irregular verb and future time reference in the *if*-clause increase the likelihood of a non-standard formulation with *would*, whereas for L1 speakers the most important factor (of the ones tested here) causing the use of *would* in an *if*-clause seems to be the order of the *if*-clause / main clause pairing: whenever the *if*-clause follows the main clause, it appears to be more prone to non-standard formulation. For ELF speakers the tendency is exactly the reverse.

In the case of 3rd conditional *if*-clauses, the results for both L1 and ELF speakers appear more similar, although here, too, it is rather challenging to find any major linguistic factors in the surrounding syntax that would seem to induce the non-standardness in the *if*-clause. Here, the characteristics of the verb itself in the *if*-clause do not seem to explain the use of *would have* in the *if*-clause for either group, nor does the subject of the clause. Still, both L1 and ELF speakers appear to use the non-standard formulation almost exclusively in affirmative *if*-clauses, and for both groups the probability of the use of *would have* seems to be greater if the *if*-clause comes before the main clause. However, the most striking finding in the case of non-standard 3rd conditional *if*-clauses is perhaps the extent to which they are used. For educated ELF speakers the use of *would have* in an *if*-clause appears to be a rule rather than an exception, and even for educated L1 speakers, this is no marginal feature in their speech.

Thus, on the basis of the present findings (and with support from other research literature), it seems reasonable to conclude that non-standard use of *would have* in hypothetical 3rd conditional *if*-clauses seems to be a quite normal feature of spoken English grammar (even among educated speakers) and thus akin to an angloversal. The feature is so frequently attested and manifests such qualitative similarities in the use of both L1 and L2 speakers that it would be difficult to ascribe it, for instance, to only interference from an L2 speaker's mother tongue. However, in the case of hypothetical 2nd conditional *if*-clauses the results of the present study do not seem to allow for a similarly straight-forward conclusion. For this feature the quantitative and qualitative characteristics do seem to differ between educated L1 and ELF speakers, and although the use of *would* in 2nd conditional *if*-clauses can be found even in educated L1 speech, its occurrence appears still to be limited.

It is subject to only speculation why 2nd and 3rd hypothetical conditionals should behave in such different ways in L1 and L2 use. One would think that the possible explanations for the use of *would* in *if*-clauses outlined by Kellerman (1989: 89) above, i.e. the "avoidance of ambiguity" and "promotion of morphological symmetry" would apply to both 2nd and 3rd conditionals for both L1 and L2 speakers alike – as this type of linguistic behavior is often perceived as "natural" (as also suggested by Kellerman himself 1989: 109). Kellerman's claims sound reasonable and plausible enough to make one wonder why they do seem to apply in all other cases but not in the case of L1 speakers' 2nd conditional *if*-clauses. Is there, indeed, something that resists this "natural tendency" in 2nd conditional *if*-clauses in educated L1 speech? One possible explanation arising from the present data could be that compared to other uses investigated here, the use of hypothetical 2nd conditional *if*-clauses is much more frequent among L1 speakers than among L2 speakers, and much more commonly used also compared to the use of 3rd

conditional *if*-clauses. This relative frequency of use could actually work for sustaining a grammatical "oddity" – as we know has happened with high-frequency irregular verbs that resist the regularization of their inflection, even though low-frequency verbs increasingly assume the regular *-ed* pattern. In fact, as we saw in the results, most of the verbs in *if*-clauses are high-frequency irregular verbs, which in itself could have a bearing in the fact that for L1 speakers these irregular past tense forms appear familiar and thus perfectly "natural" also in a hypothetical clause.

Be that as it may, at least we can infer from the data at hand that the more infrequent verb-syntactic feature, the 3rd conditional hypothetical *if*-clause seems to be conforming to a more "natural" patterning both in educated L1 and ELF use (as in many other varieties of English around the world). Its non-standard formulation is clearly not a mere "learner feature" but occurs frequently also in academic L1 use. Whether the non-standard formulation of 2nd conditional *if*-clauses will gain more prominence also in L1 speakers' use in the future remains to be seen, but for the time being it might be safest to leave any definite claims of its status as a spoken English language universal pending.

5.4 Existential there *Constructions*

The final syntactic feature examined in the present study is the English existential construction with the dummy subject *there* followed by the verb BE (as in ***There is*** *some milk in the fridge.*). Like the progressive, this construction, too, has intrigued English variationist linguists for decades due to a particular kind of non-standardness often detected in its spoken language use: the non-concord between the copula BE and the number of the post-copular noun phrase. Similar kind of non-standardness was also discernible in the ELFA data, and hence, the feature was taken under closer examination.

Background

In an existential *there* construction, the unstressed and non-deictic *there* (also called the 'expletive *there*') fills in the clause-initial position of a syntactic/grammatical subject, while the so-called notional subject of the clause is postponed only after the copula BE. This obviously reverses the default English word order – i.e. notional subject before the verb – in a clause. Nevertheless, according to Standard English grammar, the copula BE in this construction is supposed to agree in number with the postponed notional subject, in other words the post-copular noun phrase (NP) as illustrated below:

(a) There **is** just **one problem** with your argument.
(SG) (SG)
(b) There **are** just **a few problems** with your argument.
(PL) (PL)

However, numerous studies (see Britain and Sudbury 2002 for a list of studies spanning from the late 1800s to the present) on various varieties of (especially) spoken English have evinced that in actual language use the copula BE often appears in the singular irrespective of the number of the post-copular NP as illustrated by the following examples from MICASE:

(1) so it's difficult even for native speakers of Chinese to follow what's happening on the stage, cuz **there's certain distortions** that take place in the language.

(2) **there is** like **all these other, logical dependencies**, to these other principles coming from this base.

This phenomenon has been termed either 'singular agreement', 'nonconcord', 'nonagreement' or 'variable agreement', and it has often been associated with a similar kind of preference for the singular BE in other syntactic constructions as well (especially in the past tense), collectively labeled 'default singulars' (e.g. Chambers 2000, 2004). Default singulars – where the verb BE occurs in the singular with both singular and plural subjects – have been ascribed, for instance, to lower processing costs for the speaker because the number information in the verb only replicates the information already present in the subject and is, thus, redundant (Chambers 2004: 140). This grammatical

tendency is not only well attested synchronically in many present-day varieties of English but has existed in the language at least from the 1300's onwards, as demonstrated by Tagliamonte (2009: 105). However, the most intriguing finding on default singulars for us is the fact that the existential dummy subject *there* seems to be the top most resistant subject to number concord virtually in all varieties studied (see e.g. Chambers 2004, and Tagliamonte 2009, and for historical accounts of the tendency e.g. Martínez-Insua & Pérez-Guerra 2006, and Nevalainen 2006).

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that nonconcord in existential *there* constructions in particular has been reported in varieties of spoken English all around the world. According to Kortmann and Lukenheimer (2011) the feature is pervasive in 24 varieties of English – from Britain and North America to South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, and present in another 29 varieties to different degrees. Also individual studies attest to its use in present-day English, for instance, in Britain (e.g. Tagliamonte 1998, Martínez-Insua & Palacios-Martínez 2003, Pietsch 2005, Rupp 2005), the US (Crawford 2005, Riordan 2007), Canada (Meechan and Foley 1994, Walker 2007), New Zealand (Britain and Sudbury 2002, Hay and Schreier 2004), and in as far-away locations as the Falkland Islands (Britain and Sudbury 2002) and Tristan da Cunha (Schreier 2002) – to name only a few of the more recent corpus-based studies. Furthermore, individual reports on this feature in Outer Circle Englishes have started to come in (see e.g. Collins 2012 for a comparative study between Singaporean, Philippine, Indian, Hong Kong and Kenyan Englishes).

Interestingly enough, existential *there* constructions are not made any reference to whatsoever in the Swan and Smith (2001) collection of learner Englishes – which could be merely accidental – but in Turton and Heaton's (1996) dictionary of common learner errors this item is, sure enough, taken up (s.v. *there2*) with warnings against the non-concord misuse of the construction. What is particularly interesting regarding this construction in learner language context, though, is a finding made in a contemporary Finnish pedagogical grammar of English written for English learners at high school level (a grammar book in wide use in Finnish high schools), *Grammar Rules!* (Silk, Mäki & Kjisik 2003). This pedagogical grammar actually does point out the fact, in discussing existential *there*, that although "the grammatical subject determines whether the verb BE takes the singular or plural form, [...] in spoken language many speakers always use the singular" (p. 210, my translation). This is followed by an example sentence *There's a lot of cars on the road today*. Although only briefly mentioned with one exemplary sentence, such a remark on actual language use that so clearly goes against the general agenda of pedagogical/prescriptive grammars – i.e. that of safeguarding the learning of correct standard language – is a bold move and is perhaps an indication of such use really becoming mainstream, even in the eyes of pedagogues. It would be interesting to find out whether the Finnish grammar book is an exception among English pedagogical grammars around the world in this respect, but even if it was, this single example alone does point to the fact that attitudes towards 'correctness' are slowly changing as regards this particular construction – probably due to the accumulating evidence of its 'real life', authentic native use.

But why, then, should existential *there* constructions promote singular agreement even more than other 'default singular constructions'? Chambers (2004: 140-141) puts forth that as the dummy subject *there* in itself is numberless, it does not affect the

agreement pattern in any way. But because agreement comes only from the post-copular noun phrase, a look-ahead mechanism is required to analyze the properties (e.g. the number) of the notional subject, and this, of course, puts extra burden on processing for the speaker. Thus, in spontaneous fast-tempo speech, speakers tend to avoid these processing costs by relying on the most basic, 'default' form of BE, which in English happens to be the singular form of the verb.

What is even more intriguing in the findings on the existential *there* constructions in English is the fact that the contracted present tense form *there's* seems to co-occur particularly often with plural post-copular noun phrases – independent of the variety studied. The construction has made its way also into Standard English grammars. For example, Quirk et al. (1985: 1405) note that *There's some people in the waiting room* occurs alongside *There are some people in the waiting room* in informal style, with *there* often "governing a singular form of the verb […] even when the following 'notional subject' is plural". Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 242) make a similar kind of observation on the cliticized *there's* in informal style. And Biber et al. (1999: 186), basing their grammar on a large corpus of present-day American and British English, report that in conversation *there's* occurs even somewhat more frequently with plural subjects than the standard form *there are*. Biber et al. ascribe this to speech processing as the verb form in the contracted *there's,* appears to be part of a chunk "where the individual elements are not independently chosen" (p. 191) and thus, the construction is well suited to the cognitive and time constraints of spoken language. A similar kind of reasoning is found in many other sources, too (see e.g. Cheshire 1999, Martínez-Insua and Palacios-Martínez 2003, and Crawford 2005).

But in addition to these overarching general explanations for the singular agreement in existentials, researchers especially in the field of corpus linguistics have begun to look into more specific factors influencing the rate and likelihood of nonconcord in these constructions. The proposed factors can be either linguistic or extralinguistic, and Riordan (2007: 240), drawing from a wide set of earlier studies, further divides these into linguistic, processing, social, and discourse related factors. Under linguistic factors, Riordan (2007) mentions, for instance, the above discussed clitic vs. full copula BE, tense, type of the determiner in the post-copular noun phrase, polarity of the construction (whether affirmative or negative), and the presence or absence of the plural *–s* in the notional subject. Processing factors include, for example, the distance between the copula BE and the head noun of the NP, and the length of the post-copular NP. Social factors, again, comprise for instance, the speakers' age, educational level and gender, and discourse factors the discourse mode (whether monologue, interactive etc.). All these factors have gained variable support in different studies as factors 'triggering' nonconcord and have even been found to be significant in individual cases, although no categorical patterns applying in all studies have emerged thus far (see Table 2 in Riordan 2007: 239 for a summary of these findings in recent studies).

Methods

Riordan (2007) himself undertook to explore existential *there* constructions in the MICASE corpus vis-à-vis some of the factors that had previously proved to be significant in other corpus-based studies. He concentrated only on the present tense forms in declarative sentences and searched the MICASE corpus for the strings *there's*, *there is*, *there're*, *there are*, *there isn't* and *there aren't* (p. 245). The factors and their subcategories that Riordan coded for are presented in Table 5.4.1 below. The coding was done manually (p. 245). The analysis of the data focuses on the subset of tokens that contain plural post-copular NPs (as previous studies have shown that this is mainly where the concord in existentials varies). This way, Riordan was left with 1520 tokens, and in his study he contrasted singular copula constructions (*there is*, *there's*, *there isn't*) with their plural copula counterparts (*there are*, *there're*, *there aren't*) to see what factors seem to affect the occurrence of a plural NP after each group (p. 252).

Table 5.4.1. Factors and factor levels coded for in Riordan (2007).

Linguistic	
Type of determiner	Definite Cardinal Number Non-Count Quantificational Noun *No* Other Indefinite No Determiner
Polarity	Positive Negative
Plural *–s*	Present Absent
Processing	
Distance between copula and head noun of postcopular NP	0 words 1 2 3+
Postcopular sequence (i.e. length)	Minimal Extended
Dysfluency between copula and head noun of postcopular NP	Present Absent
Discourse	
Primary discourse mode	Monologue Mixed Interactive Panel
Social	
Age	17-23 24-30

	31-50 51+
Academic Role	Undergraduate Graduate Faculty Staff
Gender	Male Female

Unlike with the other syntactic features examined in the present thesis, I decided to use Riordan's (2007) study as a reference point for the results gleaned from ELFA. As Riordan (2007) had already carried out a wide-scale mapping of the same feature I was interested in, and had done it using the exact same database (MICASE) that I would have examined as my reference database, I saw little point in duplicating the work but instead decided to rely on his results from MICASE and on his methodology to a large extent for the coding, analysing, and comparing purposes of the existentials in ELFA. However, as the other three grammatical features in the present study have only been investigated for their syntactic/linguistic qualities, the same approach was adopted with the existential constructions. This means that the discourse and social factors included in Riordan's study were not taken into consideration in the present study (despite the fact that Riordan found a significant effect of the primary discourse mode and the age of the speaker on the occurrence of singular agreement in existentials). Also the fact that ELFA is not particularly balanced according to the speaker attributes, and uses a different kind of categorisation for the discourse mode, would potentially hinder reliable comparisons between MICASE and ELFA in these respects.

Thus, only the six factors listed under "Linguistic" and "Processing" factors in Table 5.4.1 above were taken into consideration when analysing the ELFA data, and the coding procedures reported in Riordan (2007) were followed closely to gain comparable results (see Section 5.4.2 for details). But besides the factors studied by Riordan, a few more additional analyses were carried out. First, the influence of the tense on the occurrence rate of singular agreement was looked into. For these purposes, I did search both MICASE and ELFA myself for all the possible (declarative) forms of *there* existentials where the distinction between singular and plural post-copular NPs could potentially be observable in the copula (i.e. the present, past, and present perfect tenses – see below). Also the general occurrence rates for existential constructions were based on these queries. Further, Riordan did not investigate the effect of the cliticized *there's* vs. *there is* on the occurrence of singular agreement in his study – hence, a supplementary analysis on both databases was implemented to examine this. (More detailed descriptions of the coding procedure are given in the discussion of each factor respectively below.)

Otherwise, my analyses follow Riordan (2007) so that the focus is on the present tense forms *there's*, *there is*, *there isn't* + plural NP vs. *there're*, *there are*, *there aren't* + plural NP. However, only clear and so-called 'prototypical' (*there* + BE + NP) cases of existential *there* constructions were included in the study, meaning that at the post-processing stage the following kinds of instances were removed from the data:

(a) The head noun of the post-copular NP missing (due to the speaker's change of plan or inaudibility of the noun on the tape), as in:

> and if **there is any (xx)** you want to discuss with or with us or or with anyone (*ELFA*)
>
> **there is a**, i forgot the Latin, exact Latin but it's attributed to Seneca anyway it says (*MICASE*)
>
> so **there is that eh** the historical facts are there, the question is, does one lead to the other? (*MICASE*)

(b) Uncertainty of the transcription (either with the existential *there* construction or the following NP, as indicated with bracketing both in ELFA and MICASE):

> **(there is of course)** a danger of eclecticism (*ELFA*)
>
> there's a **(good job.)** (*MICASE*)

(c) The NP after the existential *there* construction ellipted:

> well i mean i guess you could say that **there is** in a way because, i mean this is just like a way of classifying (*MICASE*)
>
> hm right so for Moira **there is no**, yeah right. (*MICASE*)

(d) The clause with an existential *there* construction involves a syntactic blend (in which case it is difficult to decide on the basis of the written transcription whether the NP is part of an existential *there* construction or belongs to the following clause):

> and then er **there are** <u>the traditional digital TV industry consumer electronic industry</u> **will push** for their bottom solution (*ELFA*)

(e) In cases where the existential *there* construction is repeated (in an identical or altered form), only the construction closer to the NP was included in the analysis (as indicated by underlining in the following examples).

> but you see that **there is** basically **<u>there are</u>** two types of models (*ELFA*)
>
> no but **there is** a **<u>there is</u>** a question about how sensitive, the planes you come up with are (*MICASE*)
>
> but **there is** an important_ **<u>there's</u>** another important development in this story of the twentieth century (*MICASE*)

In addition to these eliminations, also all the instances of non-standard existential *there* constructions produced by *native* speakers in ELFA were deleted, and correspondingly all those produced by *non-native* or *near-native* speakers in MICASE were also excluded from the study.

5.4.1 Overview of the Existential *there* Constructions in ELFA and MICASE

The figures in this overview are based on the results I retrieved myself by searching and coding both ELFA and MICASE. Counting in all the instances of existential *there* constructions (both standard and non-standard in all the three tenses included in the analysis) the post-processed total number of tokens for ELFA was 3,217 and for MICASE 5,601. Normalized to a text length of 10,000 words the occurrence rate for *there* existentials in ELFA reaches 42/10,000 words, whereas for MICASE the figure is somewhat lower at 33/10,000 words. However, the difference is not great so we can assume that in quantitative terms the use of existential *there* constructions is fairly equally distributed in both non-native and native speaker use.

Next, attention was shifted to the comparison of the occurrence of concord and non-concord existentials in the databases. Here the analysis focused only on those tokens in the present tense that involved a *plural* post-copular NP (as previous studies have clearly shown that non-standard *singular* agreement with *plural* post-copular NPs is greatly more prevalent than non-standard *plural* agreement with *singular* post-copular NPs). In my analysis of the relevant tokens, I arrived at the following figures in Table 5.4.2:

Table 5.4.2. Occurrence of present tense existential *there* constructions with plural NPs in ELFA and MICASE (both concord and non-concord patterns).

Existential type: concord patterns	**Number of instances**	
	ELFA	**MICASE**
There are + PL	888	799
There're + PL	0[37]	301
There aren't + PL	6	20
TOTAL	894	1120

[37] The non-existence of the contracted *there're* + PL constructions in ELFA is due to transcription conventions: in ELFA the present tense plural copula in *there* existentials is always transcribed in full (*are*) for the frequent difficulty in distinguishing the cliticized and full form in the tape recordings.

Existential type: nonconcord patterns	**Number of instances**	
	ELFA	**MICASE**
There is + PL	77	9
There's + PL	118	650
There isn't + PL	0	2
TOTAL	195	661
TOTAL (all instances)	1089	1781
% of nonconcord	17.9 %	37.1 %

Comparing the concord patterns with the non-concord patterns in the corpora reveals an interesting result: It is, in fact, the native speakers who are clearly more non-standard (37.1 %) in their production of existential *there* constructions than non-native speakers (17.9 %). The difference is also statistically highly significant (χ^2=119.12, df=1, p=0). Even when the same comparison is calculated based on all the three tenses covered in the analysis (the present, past, and present perfect tense), the same difference holds (χ^2=91.87, df=1, p=0), even though non-native speakers seem to catch up with the native speakers to some extent (see Table 5.4.3). Percentage of non-concord in all the studied tenses for ELFA is 18.6 % and for MICASE 33.9 % (see below):

Table 5.4.3. Occurrence of existential *there* constructions with plural NPs in the present, past and present perfect tenses in ELFA and MICASE (both concord and nonconcord patterns).

Existential type: concord patterns	**Number of instances**	
	ELFA	**MICASE**
There are + PL	888	799
There're + PL	0	301
There aren't + PL	6	20
There were + PL	127	236
There weren't + PL	2	14
There have been + PL	14	19
There haven't been + PL	0	1
TOTAL	1037	1390
Existential type: nonconcord patterns	**Number of instances**	
	ELFA	**MICASE**
There is + PL	77	9
There's + PL	118	650

There isn't + PL	0	2
There was + PL	26	37
There wasn't + PL	0	0
There has been + PL	10	1
There's been + PL	5	12
There hasn't been + PL	1	2
TOTAL	237	713
TOTAL (all instances)	1274	2103
% of nonconcord	18.6 %	33.9 %

This result is intriguing as it runs counter to the 'default' assumption that non-native speakers are inevitably always more non-standard in their production than (educated) native speakers.

However, a look at the distribution of nonconcord in the three tenses covered above reveals that the great discrepancy between the databases only exists in the present tense forms (see Table 5.4.4 below). Differences between the distributions in the past tense and the present perfect are not significant between ELFA and MICASE (for the past tense χ^2=1.241, df=1, p=0.2653, and for the present perfect χ^2= 0.675, df=1, p=0.4115). Also overall, a similar tendency in both native and non-native production is discernible in the comparison: Nonconcord patterns are more common in the present tense than in the past tense for both groups, but in terms of percentages, the present perfect seems to be the most prone to singular agreement for both speaker groups. Yet, it has to be kept in mind that the number of instances of existential *there* constructions in the present perfect is overall low in both corpora, which means that these percentages have to be interpreted cautiously.

Table 5.4.4. Distribution of concord and nonconcord patterns in the present, past, and present perfect tense in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA		**MICASE**	
	Concord	Nonconcord	Concord	Nonconcord
Present tense	894 (N) 82.2 %	195 (N) 17.9 %	1120 (N) 62.8 %	661 (N) 37.1 %
Past tense	129 (N) 83.2 %	26 (N) 16.7 %	250 (N) 87.1 %	37 (N) 12.9 %
Present perfect tense	14 (N) 70 %	6 (N) 30 %	20 (N) 58.9 %	14 (N) 41.2 %

A further similarity is to be found in the present tense contracted forms. For both speaker groups, the contracted form *there's* seems to co-occur with plural post-copular NPs more often than the full form *there is*. In MICASE this tendency actually predominates as almost all (98.2 %) plural NPs with singular agreement occur after the contracted form (see Table 5.4.5), whereas for ELFA this happens only in 60.5 % of the nonconcord instances. The occurrence rates are statistically significantly different (χ^2=241.467, df=1, p=0), meaning that the pattern is (quite obviously) more strongly established among native speakers, but on the other hand, the tendency is also strong in non-native speech.

Table 5.4.5. Nonconcord after the full form *there is* vs. the contracted form *there's* in ELFA and MICASE.

	ELFA		**MICASE**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**
There is + PL	77	39.5	9	1.3
There's + PL	118	60.5	650	98.6

As regards the distribution of singular agreement among non-native speakers from different first language backgrounds, the range of L1s represented in the ELFA data is wide – indeed, with 33 different first languages[38] it is the widest compared to the other three features studied within this thesis. This wide representation of typologically different languages renders dubious any assumptions that in non-native English, the feature is only due to L1 influence. Rather, on the basis of the tendencies shown above, it looks like L2 speakers are following in the footsteps of native speakers in the non-standard patterning of singular agreement in existential *there* constructions. But before jumping to conclusions, let us have a more detailed look at the various factors possibly bringing about singular agreement in spoken English.

5.4.2 Factors Influencing Nonconcord

This section follows closely Riordan (2007) in its methodological choices and analysis of data (see above) in order to enable reliable comparisons between Riordan's results on MICASE and mine on ELFA. One cannot, of course, disregard the fact that in replicating another researcher's study on a new database, some discrepancy in the coding is inevitable. Fortunately, though, Riordan (2007) documents the coding principles of his study carefully and they are fairly easy to follow.

[38] The languages are: Arabic, Bengali, Catalan, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Igbo, Italian, Japanese, Kihaya, Latvian, Lithuanian, Nepali, Norwegian, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Twi, and Uzbek.

As stated above, Riordan's analysis is based on 1,520 instances of concord and nonconcord present tense existential *there* constructions that take a plural NP. The corresponding figure for ELFA is 1,089. The factors examined in this section include: the type of the determiner preceding the post-copular NP, the polarity of the existential construction (negative vs. affirmative), the absence vs. presence of the plural *–s* in the post-copular head noun, distance (in words) between the copula and the head noun of the NP, length of the post-copular sequence (minimal vs. extended), and possible dysfluencies occurring between the copula and the head noun of the post-copular NP. The more specific coding procedures are described under each subsection respectively.

Type of Determiner

Many researchers have hypothesized that the kind of determiner preceding the post-copular NP in existential *there* constructions might have an effect on the occurrence of singular agreement in the construction. To study and code for this feature, most researchers have applied the determiner taxonomy of Milsark (1977) with its so-called weak and strong determiners (see e.g. Meechan and Foley 1994). However, Riordan (2007: 245) finds Milsark's taxonomy non-exhaustive and somewhat unclear, therefore, adopting Huddleston and Pullum's (2002) categorization of determiners instead. Following (and somewhat adapting) this taxonomy, Riordan divides determiners into six categories represented in Table 5.4.6 below (see Riordan 2007: 245-246 and 248-249 for further details).

Table 5.4.6. The types of determiners coded for with examples.

Type of Determiner	**Examples**
Definite	*the, this* (*these*), *that* (*those*), *we* (*us*), *you, all, both*
Indefinite	*a, each, every, some, any, either/neither, another, a few, a little, several, many, much, few, little, enough, sufficient*
Cardinal Numeral	*one, two, three…*
Non-Count Quantificational Noun (NCQN)	"expressions in which quantification is expressed by a head noun that is non-count and that takes an *of* prepositional phrase as a complement, as in *a lot of students*" (Riordan 2007: 248): *lot, plenty, lots, heaps, loads, remainder, rest, number, couple, bit, deal, dozens, hundreds…*
The determiner *No*	*no*
No Determiner	– Includes cases where the head noun is modified only by an adjective, and cases where the head noun is simultaneously the head and the determiner (as in "*there's only <u>nine</u> to memorize*")

All concord and nonconcord instances of *there* existentials with a plural NP in ELFA were coded following the above categorization.

The numeric comparison of the results in ELFA and MICASE (based on Riordan 2007) is presented in Tables 5.4.7 and 5.4.8. Along with the overall number of each determiner in concord and nonconcord structures together, the number of nonconcord tokens by each determiner is given.

Table 5.4.7. Number of determiners by type, and percentage of nonconcord by determiner type in ELFA.

	ELFA		
	ALL	nonconcord	% of nonconcord
Definite	52	17	32.7
Indefinite	391	65	16.6
Cardinal Numeral	133	21	15.8
NCQN	97	27	27.8
No	55	14	25.5
No Determiner	362	51	14.1

Table 5.4.8. Number of determiners by type, and percentage of nonconcord by determiner type in MICASE.

	MICASE (Riordan 2007)		
	ALL	nonconcord[39]	% of nonconcord
Definite	30	16	53.3
Indefinite	339	129	38.1
Cardinal Numeral	244	122	50.0
NCQN	245	108	44.1
No	56	21	37.5
No Determiner	606	208	34.3

The percentages for nonconcord with each determiner type in ELFA are, of course, lower to those in MICASE due to the aforementioned fact that nonconcord is, overall, lower in ELFA. But looking at the orderings by percentages in terms of the category that co-occurs most with nonconcord, the following sequences emerge:

ELFA: Definite > NCQN > *No* > Indefinite > Cardinal Numeral > No Determiner

MICASE: Definite > Cardinal Numeral > NCQN > Indefinite > *No* > No Determiner

[39] These figures are calculated on the basis of the total numbers Riordan (2007: 252) gives for each type of determiner and the percentage of nonconcord given in his Figure 1 (Riordan 2007: 253).

The ends of the spectra for both corpora are the same: Definite articles in the NP seem to trigger singular agreement most often, and NPs with no determiner the least. The categories in between have no one-on-one correspondence in order, but this is a very common outcome in all studies that have looked at the effect of the determiner type on singular agreement: no consistent ordering has been found to date (see e.g. the results in Meechan and Foley 1994, Tagliamonte 1998, Britain and Sudbury 2002, and Hay and Schreier 2004). However, the percentages for categories "Indefinite" and "*No*" are not far apart in MICASE, which means that even slight changes in the raw numbers could reverse their ordering. In addition, the fact that category "*No*" appears earlier in the ELFA scale (compared to MICASE) is actually in accordance with findings in the studies mentioned above: generally, determiner *no* tends to be associated with nonconcord in many native speaker varieties of English, but for some reason MICASE data seems to be an exception to this. Thus, the only really noteworthy difference in the orderings is the fact that Cardinal Numerals appear noticeably less frequently in singular agreement in ELFA than in MICASE (χ^2=42.791, df=1, p=0). (Again, also the other studies on native speaker data mentioned above have found numerals to be closely associated with singular agreement in different varieties of English, so there seems to be a genuine difference here between native and non-native speakers.) This difference is not easy to explain. While native speakers seem to rely on the fact that the presence of a cardinal numeral in the noun phrase 'covers' for the agreement in the copula (and thus the copula may just as well appear in the singular with a plural NP), for non-native speakers such an association is not observable. Nevertheless, other than this exception, the linguistic behavior of non-native speakers as regards the type of determiner most readily triggering nonconcord in *there* existentials does not seem to diverge greatly from that of native speakers.

Polarity

Some previous research into dialects of English (see e.g. Britain 2002, Tagliamonte 1998) has found a link between the polarity of the existential construction (i.e. affirmative vs. negative) and nonconcord – affirmative contexts showing more nonconcord than negative ones. However, there are also a number of studies where this association could not be attested (e.g. Martínez-Insua and Palacios-Martínez 2003, Hay and Schreier 2004). This is also the case with MICASE data according to Riordan (2007: 254-255). He did not find a significant effect of the polarity on the occurrence of nonconcord (p=0.9702; see Table 5.4.10 below). Following Riordan (2007), all present tense existential *there* constructions with a plural NP in ELFA were coded either as affirmative or negative – negative constructions including the cases where either the copula was negated (example 3), or the copula was followed by the negator *no* (example 4) or possibly the pronoun *nothing* (no instances in ELFA).

(3) the good news is that there **isn't** much to problematise about it apart from its urban centeredness (*ELFA*)

(4) they can grow in places where there is **no** bacteria (*ELFA*)

The cross-tabulated results for ELFA, followed by those for MICASE (based on Riordan 2007) are presented in Tables 5.4.9 and 5.4.10.

Table 5.4.9. The effect of polarity on nonconcord in ELFA.

	ELFA			
	Nonconcord		Concord	
	N	%	N	%
Negative	18	22.8	61	77.2
Affirmative	176	17.4	834	82.6

Table 5.4.10. The effect of polarity on nonconcord in MICASE (Riordan 2007: 255).

	MICASE			
	Nonconcord		Concord	
	N	%	N	%
Negative	40	38.5	64	61.5
Affirmative	564	49.2[40]	582	50.7[41]

Also for ELFA, it is the case that polarity does not significantly affect the choice between a concord or nonconcord construction (χ^2=1.437, df=1, p=0.2306). In ELFA, though, negative statements seem to be associated with slightly more nonconcord while in MICASE there is a reverse trend. However, the number of instances of negative existentials in ELFA is overall low (N=79), which may skew the results one way or the other. A further comparison of the proportions of negative existentials with nonconcord between ELFA and MICASE reveals that the difference is non-significant (p=0.036).

Plural –s

Meechan and Foley (1994: 72), among others, hypothesized that the overt number marking on the postcopular NP with the plural marker *–s* would trigger agreement in the copula. Riordan (2007: 246) tested this hypothesis on the MICASE data by simply coding all concord and nonconcord *there* existentials for the absence or presence of plural *–s* in

[40] The percentage has been corrected based on the numbers of instances of nonconcord and concord in affirmative sentences given by Riordan in his Table 12 (2007: 255). The original percentage he gives is 39.8, which does not match the raw numbers given in the table.

[41] Also this percentage has been corrected based on the raw numbers given in Riordan's Table 12 (2007: 255). The original percentage given by Riordan is 60.2. The corrected *p* value (based on the figures given in the above table) is 0.03562, which still counts as non-significant.

the head noun of the postcopular NP. This way, sentences such as (5) and (6) would be coded as having the plural *–s*, whereas (7) and (8) would be coded for the absence of it:

(5) so there are a lot of **gaps** in the process of er harmonisation and of course it's always problematic (*ELFA*)

(6) however this again occurs when there's **differences** in the material. (*MICASE*)

(7) in the country there are always **people** who are left out of this community and we need to get them together (*ELFA*)

(8) i know there's at least **five** of you who did that search here and i know you're all very reluctant to speak (*MICASE*)

The cross-tabulated results for both ELFA and MICASE are presented in Tables 5.4.11 and 5.4.12 below.

Table 5.4.11. The effect of plural *–s* on concord in ELFA.

	ELFA			
	Nonconcord		Concord	
	N	%	N	%
–s Present	165	17.4	781	82.6
–s Absent	29	20.3	114	79.7

Table 5.4.12. The effect of plural *–s* on concord in MICASE (Riordan 2007: 256).

	MICASE			
	Nonconcord		Concord	
	N	%	N	%
–s Present	500	38.7	793	68.3
–s Absent	104	45.8	123	54.2

Riordan (2007: 255) found a slight association between the presence of plural *–s* and increased concord in percentages (see Table 5.4.12 above) but this association proved statistically non-significant (p=0.054). In ELFA, there is no clear association between the factors, but if there is a trend, it seems to go into the same direction as that in MICASE, although the trend is even weaker (χ^2=0.683, df=1, p=0.4085).

Distance between Copula and Head Noun of Post-copular NP

Apart from the linguistic factors discussed above, also processing factors possibly influencing the concord in existential *there* constructions have been examined in earlier research. One such factor is the distance in words between the copula and the head noun of the postcopular NP. It has been hypothesized that a greater distance would be more likely to trigger nonconcord, and also evidence for this has been found in many previous studies (see e.g. Meechan and Foley 1994, Tagliamonte 1998, Britain and Sudbury 2002, and Hay and Schreier 2004). Riordan (2007: 249) coded for this factor in MICASE with a four-point scale (0, 1, 2, 3+), each value indicating the number of words intervening the copula and the head noun in the NP, from adjacent (0) to three or more words (3+) (see Examples 9-12 below). In the case of non-count quantificational nouns, Riordan says, the article *a* and the noun were coded as one word each, except for *a lot*, which was coded as a single word. In addition, hesitations and other dysfluencies such as pauses and fillers like *um* were not coded as words (Riordan 2007: 249-250).

(9) *Distance: 0*
okay there **are_advantages** and disadvantages related to this (*ELFA*)

(10) *Distance: 1*
but there**'s <u>another</u> way** that Courbet's art can be described as real also (*MICASE*)

(11) *Distance: 2*
there'**s <u>critical consumer</u> movements** around the world (*ELFA*)

(12) Distance: 3+
but there **is <u>indeed a systematic</u> order**, to what you see (*MICASE*)

These principles were followed also in coding the ELFA data. The results for each corpus are shown in Tables 5.4.13 and 5.4.14 below.

Table 5.4.13. The effect of distance (in words) on concord in ELFA.

	ELFA			
	Nonconcord		Concord	
	N	%	N	%
0	21	14.1	128	85.9
1	47	12.8	319	87.2
2	67	20.3	263	79.7
3+	59	24.2	185	75.8

Table 5.4.14. The effect of distance (in words) on concord in MICASE (Riordan 2007: 256).

	MICASE			
	Nonconcord		Concord	
	N	%	N	%
0	103	34.2	198	65.8
1	198	38.5	317	61.5
2	157	42.7	211	57.3
3+	146	43.5	190	56.5

Riordan (2007: 256) found a clear increasing trend of nonconcord from adjacent (0) to distant (3+) measured by percentages in MICASE, but statistically this did not rise to significance in his study (p=0.0675). In ELFA, the trend between adjacent and one intervening word is not, strictly speaking, linear (although the percentages are very close to one another) but a similar trend of increasing nonconcord with more intervening words is evident in ELFA, too. Also statistically, the effect in ELFA proved significant (χ^2=15.74, df=3, p=0.0013). As this kind of association of increasing nonconcord with more intervening linguistic material between the copula and the notional subject in the NP has been found in many previous studies on native varieties of English, too, it can be concluded that the linguistic behaviour of non-native speakers matches that of native speakers in this respect – the distance factor that causes nonconcord in L1 production, also seems to affect L2 production in the same way.

Length of Post-Copular Sequence

Another processing-related factor was tested in Martínez-Insua and Palcios-Martínez (2003). In their study, the researchers tested whether the length (i.e. the complexity) of the post-copular NP had an effect on the concord of the copula and the NP. They hypothesized that heavy and structurally complicated postcopular NPs would correlate with more nonconcord "because of the long distance between the two elements [i.e. the copula and the NP] which may induce the speaker to disregard the connection between them" (Martínez-Insua and Palcios-Martínez 2003: 275). By structurally complicated NPs they meant NPs containing different types of complements or modifiers *following* the head noun. These included locative or adverbial elements (as in examples 13 and 14), relative clauses (example 15), participial *–ing* clauses (example 16), and *to*-infinitive clauses (example 17).

(13) there's too many people **in our class**. (*MICASE*)

(14) there is variety of monuments **from different periods and styles** (*ELFA*)

(15) and then there's two other terms **that i wanna talk about** (*MICASE*)

(16) there is er modifier genes **influencing it with 15 decibels** (*ELFA*)

(17) there are also measures **to enlarge protected areas and stop the rotational farming** (*ELFA*)

Martínez-Insua and Palacios-Martínez (2003) applied a binary classification in their analysis, defining each instance of existential as either "minimal", i.e. having no extension on the postcopular NP at all, or "extended", i.e. having one of the above extensions on the NP. These same coding principles were followed in Riordan (2007), and, consequently, also for coding the data in ELFA. The results for ELFA and MICASE are shown below.

Table 5.4.15. The effect of the length of the postcopular NP on concord in ELFA.

	ELFA			
	Nonconcord		Concord	
	N	%	N	%
Minimal	120	17.6	561	82.6
Extended	74	18.1	334	79.7

Table 5.4.16. The effect of the length of the postcopular NP on concord in MICASE (Riordan 2007: 255).

	MICASE			
	Nonconcord		Concord	
	N	%	N	%
Minimal	199	48.3	213	51.7
Extended	405	36.6	703	63.5

Martínez-Insua and Palacios-Martínez (2003: 276) themselves found an association between extended postcopular NPs and nonconcord in the British National Corpus. However, the trend in MICASE, according to Riordan (2007: 255), is exactly the reverse, and in ELFA there is virtually no difference or effect of the complexity of the NP on the concord (χ^2=0.046, df=1, p=0.8294). Taken together, these contradicting results seem to indicate that this factor in itself is not a very reliable explanatory factor in analysing the causes behind nonconcord in existentials. The results in the three studies seem rather arbitrary, and more similar analyses on different corpora should be carried out to test the validity of this factor in the first place. In addition, the justification that Martínez-Insua and Palacios-Martínez (2003) cite as a reason for examining this factor does not sound entirely logical. The post-modification or "extension" of the NP occurring *only after* the NP does not generally increase the distance between the copula and the noun phrase (as the researchers seem to put forth), except for the possible insertion of an additional determiner before the head noun, and thus it sounds somewhat curious that what follows

the NP should distract speakers from making the right choice in number agreement previous to the NP. This factor is, thus, ignored in the further discussions of the results in the present study.

Dysfluencies between Copula and Head Noun of Post-Copular NP

Riordan himself (2007: 250) devised a third processing-related hypothesis according to which production difficulties in the existential constructions could cause speakers to slow down the tempo of their speech and thus allow more time for grammatical considerations so that speakers would "take prescriptive norms on agreement more into account". This would, thus, mean that speakers adhered more to normative agreement rules in situations where they had production difficulties, of which dysfluencies between the copula and the head noun of postcopular NP were taken as indications. Riordan (2007: 250) maintains that this slowing down could, for instance, "lead speakers to change the nature of the postcopular NP such that it agrees with the copula already produced." To test this, Riordan coded for the presence versus absence of dysfluencies between the copula and the head noun of the postcopular NP. Dysfluencies included pauses, fillers (such as *um*), and restarts (2007: 250) (see examples 18 and 19 below).

(18) Dysfluency present:
so there's no**, uh** pain objects that are sharp (*MICASE*)

(19) Dysfluency absent:
there's two models and they are both applied in the same area (*ELFA*)

Following these guidelines, I coded the ELFA data for the same factor, and the results for both corpora are again shown in the tables below.

Table 5.4.17. The effect of dysfluencies on concord in ELFA.

	ELFA			
	Nonconcord		Concord	
	N	%	N	%
Dysfluency Present	42	20.2	166	79.8
Dysfluency Absent	152	17.3	729	82.7

Table 5.4.18. The effect of dysfluencies on concord in MICASE (Riordan 2007: 257).

	MICASE			
	Nonconcord		Concord	
	N	%	N	%
Dysflueny Present	62	33.0	126	67.0
Dysfluency Absent	542	40.7	790	59.3

The outcome shows no great effect of dysfluencies on concord in non-native production in ELFA – the proportion of nonconcord remains very similar irrespective of the presence or absence of dysfluencies. The difference is also statistically non-significant (χ^2=0.993, df=1, p=0.3190). In the case of native speakers in MICASE, on the other hand, Riordan (2007: 257) found a slight tendency in support of his hypothesis that dysfluencies would be associated with *concord*. However, this result was also not statistically significant (p=0.0519). To my knowledge, this association has not been examined in any other previous study so its validity as an explanatory factor is also still somewhat pending. Yet, on the basis of ELFA and MICASE, one can conclude that in non-native speech, dysfluencies do not seem to affect concord while in native speech it might be the case that the extra processing time provided by dysfluencies between the copula and the notional subject prompt speakers to monitor their grammar more closely and make them formulate their production in accordance to the normative agreement rules.

5.4.3 Summary of Findings

The following table summarizes the main findings on existential *there* constructions in ELFA and MICASE.

Table 5.4.19. Summary of the main findings on existential *there* constructions in ELFA and MICASE. (Significant differences indicated with an asterisk.)

	ELFA	**MICASE**
Existential *there* constructions per 10,000 words (concord & nonconcord)	42	33
Overall percentage of nonconcord (all tenses)	18.6 % (*)	33.9 % (*)
Percentage of nonconcord by tense	Present 17.9 % (*) Past 16.7 % Pres. Perf. 30.0 %	Present 37.1 % (*) Past 12.9 % Pres. Perf. 41.2 %
Percentage of nonconcord with full vs. cliticized copula	there is + PL 39.5 % there's + PL 60.5 % (*)	there is + PL 1.3 % there's + PL 98.6 % (*)
Effects of other linguistic/processing factors on nonconcord:		
Order of determiner types most common with nonconcord constructions	Definite NCQN *No* Indefinite Cardinal Numeral No determiner	Definite Cardinal Numeral NCQN Indefinite *No* No determiner
Polarity (negative vs. affirmative sentence)	No effect	No effect
Plural *–s* (absent or present)	No effect	Slight effect? (= plural *–s* increases concord)
Distance between Copula and Head Noun	Significant (*) (= more intervening words increase nonconcord)	Slight effect? (= more intervening words increase nonconcord)
Dysfluencies between Copula and Head Noun	No effect	Slight effect? (= dysfluencies increase concord)

The overall picture emerging from the comparison of the two corpora seems somewhat mixed. While many of the tendencies found point to the same direction in both databases, the explanatory strength of the factors seems to vary between the corpora. However, what is probably most striking in the results is the fact that non-native speakers seem to adhere to the standard concord rules much more closely than native speakers in their use of existential *there* constructions (even despite the fact that the overall frequency of the construction is somewhat higher in ELFA than in MICASE). This indicates that the construction under scrutiny can hardly be dismissed as a mere 'learner feature' as it is actually the native speakers who 'misuse' it, as it were, more.

On the other hand, the nonconcord use is clearly more pronounced in the present tense among native speakers, whereas for non-native speakers it occurs fairly evenly in the present and past tenses. (While the category showing definitely most nonconcord in both speaker groups is the present perfect.) In addition, it is also obvious that for native speakers it is the cliticized *there's* that triggers nonconcord constructions rather than the full form *there is* (as pointed out in many standard grammars, and also the Finnish pedagogical grammar mentioned above). For non-native speakers the association is not as established but a similar strong trend cannot be ignored in the latter group's production either. As speculated in many sources, it seems to be the case that in native speaker use the cliticized present tense form *there's* has grammaticalized into an indivisible chunk introducing both singular and plural notional subjects (as suggested e.g. by Biber at al. 1999: 191). For non-native speakers something similar seems to be going on but to a somewhat lesser degree. It would definitely be interesting to carry out a diachronic follow-up study on the development of the non-native speaker use to see whether the use converges with that of native speakers more closely with time, in other words, whether *there's* is becoming a grammaticalized chunk also in L2 use. On the basis of this synchronic study we can only say that it is very well possible.

As for the other syntactic (or processing) elements accompanying the existential constructions, the general conclusion must be that the ones studied here do not bring out any clear explanatory effects for nonconcord use in either group – with the exception of distance between the copula and the head noun of the post-copular noun phrase. This is the only factor that significantly increases nonconcord among non-native speakers and does so also for native speakers but not to the same extent as for the former. Consequently, it seems that the hypothesis put forth in many previous studies is supported, according to which a greater distance between the verb BE and the subject it is supposed to agree with hinders the processing of the construction for speakers and thus causes 'accidental' nonconcord. The fact that a similar trend is discernible for both native and non-native speakers seems to suggest that the ultimate reason for the phenomenon really lies in the processing capabilities (possibly short-term memory restrictions) of human beings rather than in, for instance, language competence as such. Other linguistic and/or processing factors such as the occurrence of the plural *–s* in the notional subject and dysfluencies between the copula BE and the head noun of the post-copular noun phrase could possibly have some bearing on the increased nonconcord in native speaker use but the effects are not significant and for non-native speakers they are non-existent.

The determiner type in the notional subject, on the other hand, does have a statistical effect on nonconcord in both databases and the order of the types associated most closely with nonconcord is not entirely random between the databases either. For

both speaker groups it seems to be the definite articles that occur with nonconcord structures the most, and the category 'no determiner' the least. The other article categories in between do not occur in exactly the same order but as discussed under the relevant section above, these results comprise some oddities that seem to be specific to these databases. Previous studies on varieties of native speaker English have almost invariably shown that the article 'no' is associated with more nonconcord (see the summary of these studies in Riordan 2007: 241), and ELF speakers seem to be behaving this same way with 'no' figuring third in the order – whereas there seems to be something exceptional going on in the MICASE data, as there the article 'no' appears only second to the last. On the other hand, also cardinal numerals have previously been shown to trigger nonconcord in native speaker studies (as is the case with MICASE speakers, too) but for some reason this is not so in the ELFA data. It is this 'out-of-the-order' behaviour of the cardinal numerals in ELFA that would require an explanation but within the scope of the present study it is only possible to state that for non-native speakers the cardinal numerals seem to function to the reverse compared to native speakers, so that a numeral is more likely to *increase* concord rather than decrease it in existential *there* constructions. For the other categories 'NCQN' and 'Indefinite' no directly corresponding categories are available in other studies but on the basis of this study we can see that they seem to fall somewhere in the middle of the spectra in both ELFA and MICASE.

So what can we conclude from the analyses and comparisons presented above? The linguistic behaviour of non-native and native speakers as regards existential *there* constructions (and especially the nonconcord in the structure) seems to be more similar than dissimilar between the groups, although differences in the strength of influencing factors are observable. Those factors that point to the same direction, such as the use of the cliticized *there's* with plural notional subjects and the increasing nonconcord with more intervening words between the copula and the head noun, would suggest similar kinds of (universal) motivations relating to processing costs in speech production. On the other hand, the facts that non-natives use nonconcord structures far less than native speakers, and that they use them equally often in the present and past tenses (as opposed to the clear preference of the nonconcord in the present tense among native speakers) could hint at diverging underlying motivations for the use between the groups. At least, the nonconcord use has not grammaticalized to the same degree in non-native production as it has in native speaker speech. This casts some doubt on claiming that nonconcord existential *there* constructions occur in ELF production due to their 'universal' nature – although on the basis of the reviewed literature on L1 varieties of English, such a claim seems valid for native speakers. The universality hypothesis seems, thus, somewhat tentative in the case of ELF speakers. On the other hand, the present analysis highlights the fact that normatively 'wrong' uses may be perfectly common and wide-spread in native speaker speech and that there is no reason to shun such uses in ELF, either, as similar tendencies seem to be unfolding naturally also in spoken ELF contexts.

6. Conclusion

Having presented and discussed the results of each feature taken under scrutiny in separate subsections, let us now turn to a brief summary and reflection on the overall outcome of the study. This study began as a data-driven exploration into 'ELF-specific' syntactic features but the emerging data soon began to point to more profound issues in spoken English that would call for deeper consideration and investigation beyond ELF. Most importantly, earlier research literature very strongly suggested that the non-standard features that had caught my attention initially as 'ELF-specific' in the ELFA corpus were actually not ELF-specific at all. The comparison of spoken academic ELF with spoken academic L1 English has brought forward some intriguing findings regarding not only ELF but also spoken English in general as well as spoken academic English in particular. In this concluding chapter we will review the main findings of the study and evaluate their importance for the theoretical and applicational considerations discussed in the preceding chapters.

6.1 Interpreting the Findings

6.1.1 Brief Summary of the Findings

One of the most interesting findings in the present study is undisputedly the many instances of qualitative similarity that emerged when comparing the four selected verb-syntactic features (the progressive form, embedded inversions, hypothetical *if*-clauses and existential *there* constructions) in spoken ELF and L1 data. The similarities are not equally strong with all the features but as a whole, nevertheless, compel us to re-consider some of the 'traditional' explanations given to them especially in L2 production.

Most striking the similarities are in embedded inversions where the linguistic conditioning for the occurrence of this non-standard feature in speech appears to be virtually identical for both L1 and ELF speakers. The findings seem to point first and foremost to the exploitation of chunks or conventionalised grammatical sequences (especially *what is* / *what's* in WH-type of EI's) as the main factor behind the phenomenon.

A similar cause is likely to be in operation also in the non-standard use of the progressives in both L1 and ELF data – accompanied by factors having to do with 'on-line' production of speech. Qualitatively the non-standard *–ing* forms appear very similar in both corpora researched, and the similarities in the preceding linguistic contexts give reason to assume that it could actually be the general circumstances of speech production that govern their occurrence (as speakers complete the verb phrases begun with the grammatical sequence subject+BE 'on the fly'). On the other hand, it could also be the overall attention-catching nature of the progressive that makes it particularly feasible in spoken interaction for both L1 and ELF speakers, albeit for possibly different reasons (L1 speakers utilizing the 'impressivity' of the construction while ELF speakers capitalizing on its 'expressivity').

In the case of existential *there* constructions, on the other hand, some similar tendencies in both L1 and ELF data are, again, detected but here it is especially the native speakers whose non-standard use manifests reliance on the grammaticalized chunk *there's* to introduce both singular and plural notional subjects in the present tense. Also for the non-native speakers *there's* figures as the form that most likely causes non-standard non-concord in this construction but the association is not quite as strong. Overall, it is noteworthy that L1 speakers' production evinces a much higher degree of non-standardness with existential *there* constructions than that of ELF speakers.

Finally, with hypothetical *if*-clauses a two-fold picture emerges where the less frequent 3rd conditionals tend to a more 'natural' patterning, in other words towards rule-regularisation (or 'morphological symmetry') in the main and *if*-clause for both L1 and ELF speakers (through the replacement of the standard pluperfect in the *if*-clause with a *would have*+VERB construction). On the other hand, with the more frequent 2nd conditionals a similar kind of tendency (i.e. replacing the standard past tense in the *if*-clause with *would*+VERB) is only clearly evident for ELF speakers. The explanation could be found in the fact that, for native speakers, the more frequent occurrence of the 2nd conditionals makes the construction 'resistant' to a kind of change that is taking place with the 3rd conditionals – at least in academic speech.

6.1.2 Angloversals?

In section 3.2.2 we defined angloversals as frequently occurring features of (any variety of) spoken English that deviate from standard, written language, and that 1) are attested in a vast majority of varieties of English, and 2) are not patterned geographically or according to variety type (e.g. L1 vs. L2). Further, similarity in the linguistic conditioning of the features across varieties (i.e. similar qualitative tendencies in the constructions) was deemed a more important sign of the universal nature of a feature than equal statistical distribution, and taken as an indication that a similar source of explanation would be called for.

So could the non-standard features originally detected in the ELFA data actually be universal features of spoken English grammar, in other words angloversals? As far as the features' attestation in a number of other spoken varieties of English on the basis of research literature is concerned, it does seem so. However, as far as the linguistic conditioning of the features and their independence of the variety type are concerned, a more cautious conclusion is in order. On the basis of the individual analyses on the two corpora, the constructions seem to fall on a continuum from the most likely to least likely candidate for this status. In the light of the present results, as well as on the account of the vast number of previous studies into these constructions in other varieties of English, embedded inversions are obviously the most promising candidate, as their use both qualitatively and quantitatively conforms to an almost identical patterning in both L1 and ELF data. Consequently, this study further supports earlier research on this particular feature which has pointed to its 'universalness' in spoken English. Also the use of non-standard progressives and the non-concord in existential *there* constructions exhibit converging tendencies in use to the extent that their status as angloversals merits, in the very least, consideration. Of the hypothetical *if*-clauses, on the other hand, the use of the

non-standard third conditionals is akin to a linguistically similar pattern in the two corpora explored (although the overall low number of instances in the L1 data lays some restrictions on a more definitive conclusion), whereas the second conditionals prove both qualitatively and quantitatively different to a degree that makes their status as universals best left for future studies to decide (although on the basis of literature there seems to be universal potential in this construction, too). On account of only the two varieties that were studied here, the non-standard formulation of hypothetical 2nd conditional *if*-clauses seems to be most clearly an "L2-specific feature", not an angloversal.

But on the whole, the main differences in the comparison of the four features in ELFA and MICASE do not seem to pertain to the qualitative appearance of the features but rather to the quantitative results. The non-standard constructions seem to be clearly more common in ELF production in three of the constructions studied (progressives, embedded inversions and hypothetical *if*-clauses). What could explain the discrepancy? A likely cause here is the difference between L1 and L2 speakers pointed out by Mauranen (see the discussion in Ch. 2): that of the 'entrenchment' of linguistic items in the speakers' memories. As noted earlier, due to less exposure to L2, linguistic constructions are likely to be "less well entrenched" in the speakers' L2 repertoire than in their L1. As constructing utterances in real-time speech (with both planning and production taking place simultaneously) requires fast retrieval and organisation of grammatical elements, it is quite expected that this will increase the cognitive load more for speakers processing a non-native language than for those processing their L1, resulting in a higher degree of non-standard formulations for the non-native speakers. In this respect it would be instructive to compare the quantitative results gained from ELFA to those from, for example, corpora on Outer Circle Englishes to see whether the degree of non-standardness in ELFA was more similar to them (than to academic L1 data) in quantitative terms. However, the data clearly points to L2 speakers' more fluctuating or "unsteady" grammars (as observed e.g. by Mauranen 2012 and Birdsong 2004: 85).

What was rather unexpected, on the other hand, was the higher degree of non-standardness with the present tense existential *there* constructions among the *native* speakers. However, this obviously is a consequence of the grammaticalization of *there's* in L1 speech more clearly than in L2 speech (as discussed in section 5.4). On the whole, this kind of finding serves as an important lesson to L2 and SLA researchers: contrary to our 'default assumptions', L2 speakers may not always be the ones displaying greater non-standardness in their production.

So what are the conclusions we can draw from here as regards L2 research in general, and ELF in particular? As for L2 research, one conclusion in particular is obvious. It does seem clear that the sweeping accounts of transfer as an explaining factor for almost any non-standard feature in L2 speakers' speech must be taken with caution. At least with the structures studied here, the substratum influence from the L2 speakers' L1 seems implausible. If so many different L2 speakers from so many typologically versatile L1 backgrounds end up using the same construction in the same non-standard way – and if similar use is observable even in L1 production – the reason for such use is to be found, surely, somewhere else than in L1 interference. As the present study shows, one such reason could be found in L2 users actually 'exploiting' the linguistic affordances of their L2 in much the same way as native speakers do under similar circumstances – directing them to the same universal resources of the language.

As regards ELF, then, we can say that in the light of the present results, at least some of the structural non-standardness found in ELF seems to be 'just normal' spoken English. Thus, ELF appears to be, to a large extent, as natural in its oral manifestation as L1 speech is. Further, the results clearly support the findings of earlier ELF descriptions that – contrary to critics' beliefs – English as a Lingua Franca is not just 'a bunch of learner idiolects' imbued with individual speakers' random errors but the non-standardness has a direction. Frequent (non-standard) features and uses common to many speakers from varied mother tongue backgrounds can be detected in ELF. And what is more, the direction of non-standardness seems to be similar to that found in L1 production. The data shows also that these non-standard features do not seem to hinder communication but may possibly even contribute to its fluency. Let us turn to this next.

6.1.3 Underlying Sources and Processes of the Universals

As observed above, the use and linguistic conditioning are similar enough in at least three of the features studied in both native and non-native data to call for a common source. So what seems to explain these (non-standard) universals in the two corpora?

More often than not the findings appear to point to various factors relating to 'real-time' speech processing and production behind the non-standard uses. These factors include using perceptually salient constructions (cf. e.g. the use of the progressive) to facilitate speech processing for the interlocutor, and capitalizing on conventionalised grammatical sequences or chunks to aid production for the speaker him/herself (cf. e.g. embedded inversions, *there* constructions, and 3rd conditional *if*-clauses). Also, possibly short-term memory limitations are reflected in the non-standard use of *there's* as discussed in section 5.4. For the two afore-mentioned processes it may even be that both of them are at work simultaneously in some of the structures. For instance, *there's* is clearly a conventionalized grammatical sequence (or chunk) but it may be argued that at the same time it is phonologically more salient (with its final sibilant) than its standard counterpart *there are*. Similarly, for example in the case of *what's* in embedded inversions we can say that it seems to be used as a conventionalized grammatical sequence (or chunk) but also has structural salience in comparison to the standard formulation in which the interlocutor would perhaps have to wait for a long while until hearing the 'missing' *is* at the end of the subordinate clause. Therefore, having adopted the view in Chapter 3 that spoken grammar is primary (and not just a distortion of written grammar), we can say that the constructions studied here seem to have assumed forms that are functional in many ways in the circumstances where they are used, i.e. in the spoken mode.[42] What is more interesting, though, is that it seems that the general circumstances of on-line speech processing and production (discussed in Ch. 3) are reflected in the spoken grammar of *both* native and non-native speakers in similar kind of ways, and the affordances provided by English syntax aptly utilized by both groups to fit the circumstances of speech as mentioned before.

[42] Cf. Biber (2006: 218) who concludes on the basis of his T2K-SWAL data that those linguistic structures that are frequent in speech must be relatively easy to produce in 'real-time', while structures rare in speech but common in writing are apparently more difficult to produce under 'real-time' circumstances.

Particularly interesting in the ELFA data is the reliance on conventionalised grammatical sequences (or chunks) in the data. This is a widely acknowledged and researched phenomenon in spontaneous native speaker speech but not as much in SLA-based studies on second language speech. However, Mauranen (2012: 141ff.) has observed the use of chunks in ELF data, which goes to show, contrary to claims put forth by, for instance, Wray (2002), that also L2 users rely on memorized multi-word units to gain fluency in speech and do not build every utterance from scratch. The present findings suggest that similar kinds of sequence-based strategies are in operation in both native and non-native spontaneous speech production although reliance on such sequences appears to be more common in native speaker than in ELF speech (cf. e.g. the tighter clustering of the progressives around certain phrases in L1 speech, the somewhat higher figure for the cliticized *what's* in embedded inversions for L1 speakers, and the clear grammaticalization of the cliticized *there's* into an indivisible chunk introducing both singular and plural notional subjects in L1 use).

The main processes in operation in the non-standard constructions studied seem to be simplification of the structure and/or reduction of irregularities (i.e. rule-regularization). Although challenging to tell apart at times, simplification is perhaps most clearly discernible in the case of existential *there* constructions, whereas rule-regularization appears to be at work with the embedded inversions and hypothetical *if*-clauses. In the case of non-standard progressives it becomes more difficult to point to either process at face value as it would seem that using an 'unnecessarily heavy' progressive form, where a simple form would do, equals complication of structure rather than any kind of simplification. However, in Meisel's (1977) terms this could be a case of 'elaborative simplification' where periphrastic means are used to gain transparency in production. As discussed in section 5.1, it might be the 'attention-catching' nature of this periphrastic construction which makes it particularly feasible in spoken language for many reasons.[43] On the whole, the data does hint at somewhat greater preference for 'elaborative simplification' in the case of L2 speakers as they tend to rely more on heavier (non-standard) periphrastic structures (cf. the progressive and hypothetical *if*-clauses, as well as the fact that the auxiliary/copula BE is overall less frequently cliticized in L2 use than in L1 use). The preference for analytical, more perceptually salient structures may, on the other hand, only contribute to safeguarding against miscommunication in L2 speech between speakers from diverse backgrounds with, for instance, diverse accents.

The processes of simplification and rule-regularization are common phenomena in language contact situations and SLA (as discussed in Ch. 3) but since the present study (and earlier research literature) shows that similar tendencies can also be detected in various L1 varieties (including academic L1 English studied here), it seems that the source of the non-standard use of the structures under scrutiny lies somewhere else – i.e. in factors having to do with speech processing and production – rather than in contact phenomena *per se*. In any case, at least one source of explanation common in contact linguistics and SLA studies alike, that of substratum influence or L1 transfer, was

[43] Another interpretation could be that non-standard use of the progressive manifests simplification of the aspectual system in English grammar as the same aspectual properties are assigned to all verbs alike. But this does not seem to explain the overall 'popularity' of the progressive in speech as well as the first mentioned 'elaborative simplification'.

rendered questionable for the non-standard features in the present study, as pointed out above. Instead of mother tongue influence, the results seem to suggest that the same universal cognitive processes are in operation for both L2 and (different kinds of) L1 speakers. Put in other words, one can also interpret the results as further support for the hypothesis mentioned in Chapter 3 that in second language speech, universal processes seem to control or override L1 influence on L2.

6.1.4 ELF-Specific Phenomena?

So if spoken ELF and spoken ENL display similar kinds of non-standard tendencies owing to the nature of speech in general as was just put forth, it seems worth asking: does the data point to any ELF-specific phenomena, then?

The 'form follows function' principle (discussed in section 2.2.3) has been put forth as an ELF-specific feature in previous ELF literature. However, looking at the results of the present study, ELF speakers seem to be making use of English forms in much the same way as native speakers to gain efficiency in speech production or processing: structures that can be 'streamlined' in spoken communication are streamlined in similar ways in both speaker groups. So yes, in ELF, form does seem to follow function, but so it does in L1 production. Thus, on the basis of the present results, this principle cannot be ascribed to ELF speakers and ELF speech only. Furthermore, the structures studied here cannot surely be seen as 'innovations' by ELF speakers (cf. section 2.2.3) as the same non-standard structures appear also in L1 speech.

What emerges as a possible ELF-specific trait in the data, however, is the ELF users' greater preference for heavier, periphrastic constructions in speech. As discussed above, this generally increases transparency in discourse, and might, thus, serve to make the speakers' messages more explicit to their interlocutors[44]. This, on the other hand, functions to safeguard communication under the 'more unpredictable' circumstances of lingua franca communication compared to L1-L1 communication. Consequently, from this angle, 'enhanced explicitness', which has been previously put forth as a feature of ELF communication by various researchers, can be seen to gain support in the present study, too.

By and large, also the observation made in earlier syntactic studies of ELF according to which non-standardness is overall surprisingly low in spoken ELF grammar finds support in the present study. Non-standardness is at its lowest with the most frequent features (cf. at 8.9 % with the progressives) but does increase with the more infrequent structures (rising up to 55 % in the 3rd conditional *if*-clauses, which were the most infrequent structure of the ones studied in both corpora). This kind of tendency is only to be expected, though, due to the entrenchment factor mentioned earlier. As Mauranen (2012: 133ff.) points out, infrequent items are bound to be less well entrenched in L2 speakers' memories than some of the more common ones, causing more fluctuation in the infrequent constructions.

[44] Cf. also Meierkord's (2004: 125) observation (discussed in Ch. 2), according to which ELF speakers may be employing strategies that "modify their utterances in a way which seems to render discourse easier to process".

In summary we can say that when it comes to syntactic structures in speech, non-standardness seems to be more pronounced in ELF in quantitative terms but not necessarily in terms of quality. Different kinds of levelling of marked speech forms appear to be at work in ELF, as expected, but the processes are not entirely dissimilar to those found in L1 speech. Rather, the results seem to point to similarly 'natural' processes in ELF and L1 speech that aid spoken communication one way or the other. Thus, instead of ascribing different kinds of deficiencies to ELF speakers, one could turn the tables by even claiming that ELF speakers seem to know 'where to cut the corners' in grammar, for example, to aid fluency without causing miscommunication in interaction. As observed in Chapter 3 these kinds of strategies in L2 use may also evince L2 speakers' *command* of the target language rather than being manifestations of incomplete mastery.

The general picture that emerges from the present results is, then, rather one of "sameness" than that of "difference" between L1 and ELF speakers, thus reasserting the naturalness of L2 language use. Consequently, somewhat adapting Eckman's (2011: 630) words (see the quotation in Ch. 3) we can say that L2 grammars seem to be the way they are because they are just "specific instances of a more general phenomenon, namely a human language."

The features studied here are worth keeping an eye on in the future, too. Especially considering the mere volume of ELF use globally it may be that these features start becoming even more 'mainstream' in spoken English in the long run.

6.1.5 Spoken Academic English and ELF

The present study drew on its data from spoken *academic* language as justified by the fact that English is *de facto* the lingua franca of the academic world and thus, academic ELF one of the most salient functional varieties of ELF. Two questions arise in relation to such choice. First, the question we already touched upon in Chapter 4: If spoken language universals are most discernible in 'informal' speech, can we look for such universals in academic language – perceived to be located in the more 'formal' end of the spoken genre continuum? And secondly: To what extent can we generalize from findings on grammatical features in academic ELF to other functional varieties of ELF, considering that academic ELF speakers can be seen as 'proficient' ELF users due to their (almost) daily interaction with and in the language?

As for the first question, it was pointed out in Chapter 4, that contrary to a common belief, studies on spoken academic English have shown that academic speech clearly tends towards speech in other registers more than to formal written language. For instance Biber (2006: 214) – who discovered this in comparing the different spoken and written registers in the T2K-SWAL corpus – ascribes the finding to the different production circumstances of speech and writing. The on-line character of spoken language is naturally omnipresent in all speech, whether academic or not, and thus seems to override – at least to some extent – our expectations of formality. The present study lends further support to this finding. Frequent non-standardness could be detected in both L1 and L2 academic speech that we would not expect to find in formal academic writing. On the other hand, the non-standard constructions found were similar to features that

have been reported to be found in a number of non-standard spoken varieties of English around the world, too, thus further corroborating the findings that academic speech resembles speech "in general" more than writing. Consequently, the results of the study seem to indicate that there is inherently nothing flawed in the use of academic speech as a testing ground for potential spoken language universals. However, it has to be noted that social factors cannot be ignored altogether when it comes to academic genres, and some conscious avoidance of non-standardness may be in operation especially in native speaker speech, thus rendering academic L1 speakers' speech more standard-like in this genre than it perhaps would be in other genres. This fact may possibly show also in some of the results of the present study (as in the low manifestation of the non-standard 2nd conditional *if*-clauses in MICASE data despite the accounts of the feature in L1 speech in the literature) but whether there is such conscious avoidance is not easily verifiable with corpus tools.

What about the second question: to what extent can we generalize from this data to other ELF interactions and ELF in general? As far as our aim in the present study was to chart traces of possible spoken language universals, this goal – by definition – suggests that the results should be generalizable to spoken ELF communication at large. I see no reason to doubt that the same general universal principles (like simplification of structure) that help speakers in demanding, 'high-stakes' interactions to further their communication could not also operate in more 'low-stakes' and less demanding settings, especially as processes such as rule-regularisation are supposed to drive language towards 'naturalness'. Further, the fact that the same constructions are so widely attested in different kinds of 'vernacular' varieties of English around the world, should give more credibility to the assumption that also ELF users in different contexts (not just in academic ones) find these constructions feasible in their speech. But naturally, such an assumption can only be verified through further empirical analyses in other functional varieties of ELF.

6.2 Evaluating the Study

The present study has been the first attempt to chart syntactic features of spoken ELF in detail. The study is an exploration into this new, global 'variety' of English with a new database (the ELFA corpus) from the new *user* perspective (as defined in Ch. 2) on non-native grammar of spoken English. Moreover, unlike other syntactic studies of ELF so far, it has based its conclusions on a comparison with authentic baseline data. Consequently, the study has contributed to a number of descriptive, theoretical and methodological considerations in ELF research. First, from the descriptive angle, it has tried to shed more light on spoken English as a Lingua Franca in itself by describing in detail some of its recurrent syntactic features – an area hitherto studied surprisingly little despite the accumulating research on other (linguistic) aspects of ELF. Instead of just spotting intriguing features, the study has provided new in-depth information on some frequent verb-syntactic structures of ELF – and at the same time, as a fortunate side product, information on native speaker spoken grammar as well. Secondly, the compilation of the new database used for this study (the ELFA corpus) has contributed to

defining the concept of ELF more clearly in its decisions on what kind of data (from what kind of speakers and events) ELF research can be carried out (as discussed in Ch. 4). Naturally, it has simultaneously provided a large database for other researchers to utilize in future studies. Thirdly, the theoretical paradigm shift from seeing second language speakers only as learners to seeing them as fully-fledged users of their L2 has unveiled similarities in spoken L1 and L2 production that have hitherto gone largely unnoticed. And finally in terms of methodology, with reference to comparable baseline data, the study has been able to demonstrate more clearly what actually is 'ELF-specific' in English as a Lingua Franca, and what, in fact, more general phenomena of spoken English.

On the other hand, the study has also offered a contribution to the discussion of so-called 'angloversals' or universals in spoken English from a new perspective: that of 'foreign language' speakers'. This is an area that has only recently been taken on the agenda in English variationist studies (see e.g. Kortmann & Szmrecsanyi 2011: 286) but results of such projects remain still largely unpublished. The present exploration has demonstrated that qualitatively similar universal tendencies between spoken L1 and L2 production can be found. Drawing such a conclusion was rendered possible only because the present study compares the like with the like, in other words *spoken* L1 data with *spoken* L2 data, and does not rely on written L1 data, let alone standard language, for its point of comparison. By doing so the study has tackled the methodological drawback noted in Chapter 3 where the written mode of well-documented languages (such as L1 English) has often served as a reference point for spoken varieties of less documented languages (such as L2 English).

Without a doubt, the present study is subject to criticism in some of its methodological choices and shortcomings. For instance, concentrating on only one or two syntactic features (instead of four) would have unquestionably made more profound analyses of the selected features possible. However, being one of the pioneering studies into the grammar of spoken ELF on this level of detail, it was considered essential from the very beginning to strike a balance between the breadth and depth of the study so as to map out enough structures in reasonable depth to make wider theoretical conclusions possible instead of closely scrutinizing one or two features but not being able to conclude much beyond the structures investigated. Undoubtedly also some readers would have welcomed more fine-grained statistical analysis on the data. Basically for the same reasons as just mentioned – ELF still being a largely unexplored field in terms of syntax – it was, however, deemed more important to lay emphasis on the qualitative characteristics of the features than the quantitative ones. Also the approach to universals adopted in this study justifies the choice: universals are here seen as wide-spread *tendencies* found in different conditions rather than absolute, statistically verified omnipresent phenomena. In terms of numbers, the size of the primary database used and in some cases the number of instances of non-standard constructions that the analyses are based on could also be criticized. The subset of ELFA utilized for the study comprised less than one million words (i.e. ca. 0.76 million words). However, the choice of cutting down the data was made in order to gain in the quality of the data (as discussed in Ch. 4). It is also worth remembering that the early spoken corpora (such as the London-Lund corpus) were only around 0.5 million words in size and even the new spoken components of the ICE corpora only 0.6, and still a legion of analysis have been carried out on them. As for the

low number of instances of certain features studied (such as the 3rd conditionals in MICASE) it has to be kept in mind that the features were selected on the basis of their frequency in the ELFA data and naturally their prevalence in another corpus cannot be guaranteed from the outset (which is, of course, one of the things investigated, too, in corpus-based studies). Here it can be said, though, that the statistical methods come in as valuable indicators of the significance of the findings even if instances are few in raw numbers. Finally, pertaining to the corpora used, it would have undoubtedly been more conclusive to utilize also authentic, spoken SLA data as reference data for the present study, instead of relying on references to SLA literature as evidence, but to my knowledge suitable spoken SLA corpora (compiled in academic settings) that could have served as points of comparison do not currently exist.

However, even with these restrictions in mind, I do believe that the study has thrown important additional light on several topical issues in the debates on ELF and spoken language universals. And not only has it contributed to these debates on a theoretical level but also offers something tangible for applicational purposes, which we will turn to last, to conclude the study.

6.3 Implications and Future Directions

As discussed in sections 2.2.1 and 2.3, the applicational significance of descriptive ELF studies materializes, primarily, in ELT settings. As was noted in the discussion, descriptions of ELF may, first and foremost, be applied to forming a more realistic *target* (cf. Melchers and Shaw 2003: 191), or in other words, a more realistic level of ultimate attainment, for L2 learners. As was also pointed out, the lack of 'real-world-data' –driven descriptions of ELF has been one of the factors (together with attitudinal prejudices) preventing English language teaching and testing from developing such targets for their use. This study offers some alleviation to the problem by not only listing features that appear to be salient in ELF but by also providing a more detailed mapping of their frequency, use, and linguistic contexts of occurrence. This should make it all the more feasible for English teachers and testers to apply the results in their work if they so wish. Further, the fact that most of the features scrutinized in the present study are also attested in academic native speaker speech – and thus likely to qualify as 'just normal' features of spoken English grammar – should give even more impetus to taking the results into account when devising (and evaluating) tests and syllabi of spoken English for second language learners. Considering only teaching and testing aimed at students who are learning English for international purposes (instead of integrative purposes in an Inner Circle country) all the features studied here (including the hypothetical *if*-clauses in both 2nd and 3rd conditionals) become relevant as they all are commonly observable constructions in ELF speech that cause no confusion in communication. Such constructions should, thus, be taken as normal features of spoken ELF, not as something L2 learners are penalized for.

The results of the study also further highlight the importance of making teachers and learners aware of the differences of the written and spoken modes of language at schools. As has been well-known since research into authentic spoken language began,

spontaneous speech does not, and *need not*, follow the written standards. Still, because of the great importance traditionally assigned to written language in education, written language norms have inevitably also affected the spoken norms that schools expect their learners to adhere to, and the general idea of spoken language disseminated by schools. However, as the present study (among many others) yet again brings forth, it would be most beneficial if schools actually started helping learners to perceive what the relevance of (written) standards for speech is, and how speech actually functions on tenets of its own. Most importantly, the results obviously give further impetus to revise the taken-for-granted practice of evaluating L2 learners' speech against written standards at schools.

In section 2.1.3 we also adopted a view according to which there is no standard for speech. While in a strict sense this is true, empirical studies such as the present one may help in better formulating what structures 'spoken standard English', in very concrete terms, could consist of and thus give the concept more descriptive reality (than just being defined in terms of who speaks it, as has commonly been the case). Obviously, spoken grammars could also benefit from the results of the present study by incorporating some of the widest-spread constructions of the ones examined here (used by educated L1 and L2 speakers alike) in their descriptions. One of the features studied, the use of expletive *there's* to introduce plural notional subjects has, indeed, already made its way into descriptive spoken grammars (and even pedagogical grammars as we saw in section 5.4), but for instance the use of embedded inversions would also quite clearly merit more status in such grammars as a common feature of all spoken English, instead of being labelled merely as "dialectal" (cf. Quirk et al. 1985: 1052 note b).

Besides the practical applications, also other future undertakings to complement the present research project suggest themselves. The most obvious one would be scrutinizing further constructions that originally arose from the ELFA data as salient features of ELF but that could not be looked into in the scope of the present study. As noted earlier, these do not pertain only to verb-syntactic features but to a number of other areas in the domain of lexicogrammar as well. It would be most intriguing to see whether other likely cases of angloversals could be detected. Also, as indicated above, a more profound comparison of the found features to similar features in authentic spoken SLA data would further illuminate the relations between L1, ELF and 'learner' uses of the constructions and possibly reveal more about the suggested universal status of the features. But perhaps most importantly, the leads unfolding from the present study such as the use of chunks (or conventionalized grammatical sequences) by L2 speakers are worth tracing further. Such phenomena have not been given much emphasis in L2 research before, but as this kind of data accumulates, it may further help us to perceive the 'normality' of L2 speech instead of emphasizing its abnormality.

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Appendix A

Transcription key for ELFA

The conventions listed here are the basic transcription conventions used in the ELFA corpus. For a more detailed account, consult the ELFA Corpus Transcription Guide available at: http://www.helsinki.fi/englanti/elfa/elfacorpus

<S1>	Utterance begins
</S1>	Utterance ends
<SU></SU>	Unidentified speaker
<SS></SS>	Several simultaneous speakers
(text)	Uncertain transcription
(xx)	Unintelligible speech
[text]	Overlapping speech (approximate, shown to the nearest word, words not split by overlap tags)
@@	Laughter
@text@	Spoken laughing
,	Brief pause while speaking (up to 3 sec.)
.	Pause 3-4 sec.
<P: 05>	Pause 5 sec. or longer, rounded up to the nearest second
mhm	Backchannelling
okay	
mhm-hm	
uh-huh	
er	Hesitations
erm	
ah	

<NAME>	Mention of a participant's name (so as not to disclose the names in the transcripts)
<SIC> text </SIC>	Nonsense words
<READING> text </READING>	Reading aloud
<FOREIGN> text </FOREIGN>	Switch into a language other than English

Other events which affect the interpretation or comprehension of what is being said:

<DISC / TRACK / FILE CHANGE>
<PREPARING OVERHEAD 1:23>
<WRITING ON BLACKBOARD>
<APPLAUSE>
<WHISPERING>
<COUGH>
<GASP>
etc.

Appendix B

List of the 50 first languages of the speakers represented in the subset of ELFA utilized for the present study.

The share of each language refers to the number of words produced in English by the speakers from the particular L1 (i.e. this is *not* the share of individual speakers in the data). The percentages have been rounded, the total therefore exceeding 100 %.

I) Alphabetical Order

Akan/Twi	0.06 %
Amharic	0.1 %
Arabic	1.1 %
Bengali	1.8 %
Berber	0.01 %
Bulgarian	0.6 %
Cantonese/Chinese	0.8 %
Catalan	1.9 %
Croatian	1.8 %
Czech	1.8 %
Dagbani	1.4 %
Dangme	0.3 %
Danish	5.0 %
Dutch	7.4 %
Efilo	0.1 %
English	4.5 %
Estonian	0.4 %
Finnish	16.3 %
French	4.8 %
German	10.2 %
Greek	0.3 %
Hausa	0.1 %
Hebrew	0.03 %
Hindi	1.1 %
Hungarian	0.5 %
Icelandic	0.04 %
Igbo	0.4 %
Italian	3.0 %
Japanese	0.9 %
Kihaya	0.3 %
Kikuyu	0.8 %
Latvian	0.08 %
Lithuanian	1.9 %
Nepali	0.2 %

Norwegian	2.0 %
Oromo	0.1 %
Persian	1.2 %
Polish	2.5 %
Portuguese	2.0 %
Romanian	2.8 %
Russian	8.0 %
Somali	1.6 %
Spanish	2.5 %
Slovakian	0.07 %
Swahili	1.4 %
Swedish	8.6 %
Turkish	0.2 %
UNKNOWN	1.4 %
Urdu	0.2 %
Uzbek	0.2 %
Yoruba	0.1 %

II) Order by Proportions

Finnish	16.3 %
German	10.2 %
Swedish	8.6 %
Russian	8.0 %
Dutch	7.4 %
Danish	5.0 %
French	4.8 %
English	4.5 %
Italian	3.0 %
Romanian	2.8 %
Spanish	2.5 %
Polish	2.5 %
Portuguese	2.0 %
Norwegian	2.0 %
Catalan	1.9 %
Lithuanian	1.9 %
Bengali	1.8 %
Croatian	1.8 %
Czech	1.8 %
Somali	1.6 %
Swahili	1.4 %
UNKNOWN	1.4 %
Dagbani	1.4 %
Akan/Twi	1.3 %
Persian	1.2 %

Hindi	1.1 %
Arabic	1.1 %
Japanese	0.9 %
Kikuyu	0.8 %
Chinese/Cantonese	0.8 %
Bulgarian	0.6 %
Hungarian	0.5 %
Igbo	0.4 %
Estonian	0.4 %
Greek	0.3 %
Dangme	0.3 %
Kihaya	0.3 %
Urdu	0.2 %
Uzbek	0.2 %
Nepali	0.2 %
Turkish	0.2 %
Efilo	0.1 %
Hausa	0.1 %
Yoruba	0.1 %
Oromo	0.1 %
Amharic	0.1 %
Latvian	0.08 %
Slovakian	0.07 %
Icelandic	0.04 %
Hebrew	0.03 %
Berber	0.01 %

The only language not included in this subset of those represented in the ELFA corpus is Welsh.

Appendix C

List of the 125 files included in the subset of ELFA utilized for the present study

CDIS01A	UDEFD020	ULECD030	USEMP01A
CDIS01B	UDEFD040	ULECD040	USEMP01B
CDIS01C	UDEFD050	ULECD050	USEMP01C
CDIS01D	UDEFD060	ULECD110	USEMP01D
CDIS03B	UDEFD070	ULECD120	USEMP01E
CDIS040	UDEFD080	ULECD140	USEMP020
CDIS050	UDEFD100		USEMP03B
CDIS06B	UDEFD120	UOTH010	USEMP04D
CDIS070	UDEFD140		USEMP04E
CDIS08A		USEMD01A	USEMP050
CDIS08B	UDEFP020	USEMD01B	USEMP06B
CDIS090	UDEFP050	USEMD020	USEMP08A
	UDEFP070	USEMD04A	USEMP08B
CPRE01B	UDEFP080	USEMD050	USEMP090
CPRE02B	UDEFP100	USEMD060	USEMP11A
CPRE03C	UDEFP120	USEMD090	USEMP11B
CPRE03E	UDEFP130	USEMD100	USEMP11C
CPRE040	UDEFP140	USEMD120	USEMP12A
CPRE05G		USEMD130	USEMP12C
CPRE05I	ULEC01B	USEMD140	USEMP13A
CPRE05J	ULEC030	USEMD150	USEMP13B
CPRE06B	ULEC040	USEMD160	USEMP140
CPRE06C	ULEC050	USEMD170	USEMP15A
CPRE06D	ULEC070	USEMD180	USEMP15B
CPRE07A	ULEC090	USEMD190	
CPRE07B	ULEC130	USEMD200	
CPRE07C	ULEC150	USEMD210	
CPRE08A	ULEC160	USEMD26A	
CPRE08D	ULEC180	USEMD26B	
CPRE08E	ULEC190	USEMD230	
CPRE08F	ULEC20A	USEMD280	
CPRE08H	ULEC210	USEMD290	
CPRE08I	ULEC23A	USEMD310	
CPRE08L	ULEC240		
CPRE08P			
CPRE09A			
CPRE09B			
CPRE09C			
CPRE09D			